

Goal Complexes: The role of mastery goals and autonomous reasons for learning

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Goal complexes (Sommet & Elliot, 2017) combine achievement goals (Elliot et al., 2011) with reasons for achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and are important because of their relationship with other variables connected to successful L2 learning, such as motivation, grit, self-regulation, and growth mindsets. In short, goals are the what of classroom learning. Achievement goals might refer to mastery or performance orientations. Reasons for achievement may refer to autonomous or controlled reasons. Finally, goal complexes combine these goals and reasons for classroom achievement. An example of a goal complex is “My goal is to answer a lot of questions correctly on the test in this class because I find this a personally valuable goal”. This research-oriented presentation is divided into three parts: a description of goal complexes, including their relationship with more familiar SLA-related variables; a report on a study (N = 164) partially replicating Sommet and Elliot which showed that mastery goals, autonomous reasons, and their related goal complexes predicted TOEIC L&R scores; and a call for shifting our learners’ to mastery-orientations and growth mindsets.

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