**How can you motivate students for AVL?**

There are three basic needs for motivation for learning:

* Autonomy: being initiator of your own actions, acting out of free will
* Relatedness: being related to other learners, teacher, buddy or coach etc.
* Competence: being able to succeed in your behaviour, being in control over the results of your behaviour

To create a motivational environment for autonomous vocabulary learning, the learning setting should fulfil these needs to the maximum. This means that the teacher should:

* help students formulate their own goals and needs;
* make sure the student formulates *realistic* goals and express high expectations from him;
* provide students with information about available tools and strategies;
* let students choose tools and strategies according to their own goals and learning style;
* make sure that students are supported in their behaviour by you, fellow students, the tools etc.;
* stimulate students in positive self reflection and provide positive feedback;
* use evaluation techniques that allow students to show their learning success to others.

A result of this approach is the empowerment of students.

For motivation both internal and external factors play a role. The teacher has a task evoking the internal and providing the external motivation.

And finally: if you want to motivate your students, start with your own convictions. Develop a positive attitude towards autonomous learning and go for it in full force!

**How can you explain the benefits of AVL to your students?**

**The planning**

Expanding your vocabulary is like packing a suitcase for a long trip – sometimes you know what you will need but if it is a long trip you will need many different things (words).

**The journey**

The importance of revision and practice could be compared to how you make new friends. It is not enough to meet a person once to become friends. You have to get together several times and fairly often to create a relationship with another person. When we revise new words in different ways we create a kind of relationship with the words so that we can remember them and use them more easily.

**The destination**

Words are like possessions or skills. A new language and new words enrich our lives. The ability to understand and communicate in another language empowers you and gives control of your life.

**Three phases of motivation\***

Motivation undergoes a cycle that has at least three distinct phases: choice motivation, executive motivation and motivational retrospection.

**1. Most important motives in the 1st phase ‘Choice motivation’**

🡪 These motives lead to the selection of the goal or task to be pursued

- The most important components are the values and attitudes related to the L2. Gardner’s (1985) influential motivation theory identifies three concepts:

‘Integrative orientation’: reflects a positive disposition toward the L2 group and the desire to interact with and even become similar to valued members of that community.

‘Instrumental orientation: language learning is associated with the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary.

‘integrative motive’: a complex construct made up of three main components: (a) integrativeness (subsuming integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages and attitudes toward the L2 community); (b) attitudes toward the learning situation (comprising attitudes toward the teacher and the course); and (c) motivation (made up of motivational intensity, desire and attitudes towards learning the language).

- Another component is linguistic self-confidence. What matters in foreign languages learning is not really the objective level of one’s language abilities but rather the subjective perceptions of assurance and trust in oneself. (This is partly why some people will be able to communicate with 100 words while others will not be able to even with thousands of words.)

- Last, the learners’ initial beliefs about L2 learning also affects motivation. Unrealistic beliefs about the amount of time it will take to attain a certain level of language functioning will inevitably lead to disappointment.

**2. Most important motives in the 2nd phase ‘Executive motivation’**

🡪 This involves maintaining and protecting motivation while a particular action lasts

- The first component is related to the perceived quality of the learning experience. Humans appraise the stimuli they receive from their environment along five dimensions:

* ‘Novelty’ (degree of unexpectedness/familiarity).
* ‘Pleasantness’ (attractiveness).
* ‘Goal or need significance’ (whether the stimulus is instrumental in satisfying needs or achieving goals).
* ‘Coping potential’ (whether the individual expects to be able to cope with the event).
* ‘Self and social image’ (whether the event is compatible with social norms and the individual’s self-concept).

- The second component is the motivational role of the participants in any given learning experience: the teachers (their personal characteristics, their rapport with the students and the specific ways they model motivational values, for example, how they present tasks or give feedback and praise), the parents (various family characteristics and practices are linked with school achievement), motivational influence of the whole ‘learner group

- The third component is autonomy. ‘Autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners’. The teachers’ orientation towards autonomy, namely whether they are ‘autonomy-supporting’ or ‘controlling’, plays an important role in shaping their students’ motivation

**3. Most important motives in the 3th phase: Motivational retrospection**

This involves an evaluation of how things went after the action is completed.

- From a practical point of view the feedback, the praise and the grades that learners receive are the most significant determinants of their final self-evaluation. But they can function as double-edged swords – grades in particular. If there is too much emphasis on them, getting good grades can become more important than learning.

- An important function of the retrospective stage is for learners to consolidate and extend the repertoire of personally useful strategies, which will in turn function as a source of inspiration for future learning

- Knowledge of and skills in using various ‘learner strategies’ also have an impact on learners’ motivation in all three phases of the motivational process.

**\*From:**

Andrew D. Cohen***, Focus on the Language Learner: Styles, Strategies and Motivation*** (Applied Linguistics book.indb 03/12/2009)