

## Book Reviews

### *Motivating Learners, Motivating Teachers: Building the Vision in the Language Classroom*

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Publisher:

Cambridge University Press, 2014

ISBN:

1107606640

Pages:

240

When applied linguists, Zoltán Dörnyei—with his focus on the language learner—and Magdalena Kubanyiova—with her focus on the language teacher—teamed up to write *Motivating Learners, Motivating Teachers: Building the Vision in the Language Classroom*, it was a match made in motivation heaven. Their collaboration provides the language learning and teaching community with a long-awaited tenet-to-technique “vision on vision” that takes us from *thinking* motivation to *doing* motivation. The authors elaborate upon and celebrate the positive impact of language learners and teachers envisaging their potential, becoming excited about it, and taking action to transform their visions into reality. This text presents a persuasive well-documented case for the power of the imagination and how to tap into it. Zoltán and Maggie (their self-reference—not mine) captivate readers through their approachable, almost conversational writing style, sharing past successful and unsuccessful personal teaching and learning experiences (as well as those of others), and providing engaging activities that guide individuals through a journey of dynamic self-discovery to enhance their language acquisition.

The book opens with an introductory chapter that convincingly justifies the reasons why a book on vision and motivation in language education that targets both teachers and learners is necessary and ends with a summative conclusion that showcases a reader-friendly graphic organizer that contains their “main vision-building blocks” (p. 157). In between is the crux of their thoughtful deliberations, divided into three parts. First up is a theoretical overview on the role of vision in motivating human behavior. Second is a section advocating six related “envisioning” actions to motivate language learners. Third is a conclusion with recommendations for teachers who need to rekindle their passions and keep their zeal alive.

Part I, the “Theoretical Overview,” contextualizes vision, motivation, and the self in contemporary thought by first explaining what vision is and why its presence is important in a current discussion on language learning motivation and teaching. While linking the envisioning process with the creation of tangible personalized goals, Zoltán and Maggie reinforce how sensory elements and mental imagery play a pivotal role in formulating and acting upon future L2 self-guides. They draw on a multiplicity of disciplines to incorporate investigations from a variety of well-established sources—like Markus and Nurius’ (1986) *possible selves*, Higgins (1987, 1998) *self-discrepancy theory*, Dörnyei and Ushioda’s (2011) *future self guides*, Paivio’s (1986) *theory of imagery functions in performance* and Dörnyei’s (2005) *L2 motivational self system*, among others—to firmly ground their innovative ideas on a reliable and valid research foundation. Furthermore, they bring their theories to life by illustrating them in the real experiences of successful visionary individuals like Philippe Petit (who walked a tight-rope between the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in 1974), Albert Einstein, and Beethoven—individuals who made a place for themselves in the world because they had the power to imagine and to act upon those imaginings.

In Part II, Zoltán and Maggie transform premise into practice by providing insight into how teachers can infuse their classrooms with vision to impassion their learners about language. Each chapter is dedicated to one of the key facets of vision-centered motivational practice: creating the language learner’s vision, strengthening it through imagery enhancement, substantiating it by making it plausible, transforming the vision into action, keeping the vision alive, and counterbalancing it by considering failure. With any other authors this discussion could have exclusively circulated among those living in ivory towers and remained just another dry and academic treatise on motivational trends in second language acquisition. Instead, Zoltán and Maggie brought their argument to the classroom, imbuing it with inspirational stories of real teachers—both those legendary few whose names most of us recognize as well as those unfamiliar ones who might just be “all of us.” In some of their “Tool Box” excerpts, the authors share success stories of envisioning programs from research environments and classroom contexts to

make us believe that we can all successfully carry them out, too! Other “Tool Boxes” highlight artefacts produced by visionary language learners who participated in L2 possible selves activities, journal entries from researchers who observed learner participants, and summaries that re-cap major points. However, as a language teacher educator, what excited me most and kept me engaged from cover to cover were the extraordinarily creative classroom activities scattered throughout the text. Motivation-stimulating ideas are offered on everything from sharing language learning histories, autobiographies, narratives, diaries and reflective journals to creating Hollywood-style success stories and inventing Avatars!

Most experienced teachers (including me!) have felt de-motivated or even suffocated at some point during their classroom careers. What is so exciting about the third part of *Motivating Learners Motivating Teachers* is that Zoltán and Maggie recognize that teachers need to re-ignite their own flames and keep them ignited. In acknowledging this, they not only provide vindication for these feelings that often cause teachers guilt and a bit of remorse, but they also offer an avenue by which teachers can extricate themselves from a downward spiral through motivational intervention. In keeping with the guidance given on nurturing learners’ visions, the authors encourage teachers to use their passions, purposes and philosophies to vividly develop their own desired future self-images and to compare these visions with their realities in order to experience the disparity that stimulates growth and development. According to Zoltán and Maggie, in building resilience and sustaining hope, teachers can protect their visions and shield themselves against the adversity that often arises in the teaching profession and in the day-to-day grind of their classrooms.

It is no coincidence that in this *SSLT* special edition on the imagination we review Dörnyei and Kubanyiova’s *Motivating Learners, Motivating Teachers*. When the editors first contacted me about some of the aims of this special issue, they informed me that, “the purpose of the special issue is to make the point that the imagination is a central part of the learning process that is not some optional extra that we pay lip service to.” The central role of the imagination was echoed in every word of *Motivating Learners, Motivating Teachers: Building the Vision in the Language Classroom*. I highly recommend this book for all the virtues cited above. Any book that encourages me to indulge in daydreaming (really! . . . see their chapter on “creating the language learner’s vision”) is well worth picking up!

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