

Presenter: Irina Dubinina

Title: A Self-Aware Learner: Motivating students' language learning, performance, and persistence

Abstract:

Research shows that motivation can influence language learning outcomes independently from language aptitude (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005). Language learners come to our classes with a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (La Guardia, 2009): they are simultaneously interested in the Russian language, history and culture, and seek to fulfill the language requirement, hope to develop language skills for future jobs or travel, etc. For the overwhelming majority of students, the 1st semester of any language course is always full of hopes, eagerness to work hard, and expectations that they will soon start participating fully in a language community. By the 2nd year of language study, many students feel frustrated, demotivated and fatigued to carry out the rigorous work that is required in the 2nd year. Yet, the problem does not necessarily lie in the textbook, the teaching method or the instructor himself/herself.

This paper will present one university instructor's approach to motivating them to persist in their language study. The approach builds on the Self-Determination Theory (La Guardia, 2009) which postulates that intrinsic motivation (the desire to learn a language) is driven by three basic psychological needs - autonomy (the desire to initiate and regulate one's own actions), competence (learner's feeling of mastery of the subject) and relatedness (desire to be accepted). Autonomy and competence are the key concepts for the presented approach. The paper will outline the theoretical principles of the approach and provide practical suggestions for developing learners' self-awareness, which will lead to their greater autonomy and feeling of success in learning.

Csizér, K. & Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort. *The modern language journal*, 89(1), 19-36.

Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*.

La Guardia, J. G. (2009). Developing who I am: A self-determination theory approach to the establishment of healthy identities. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(2), 90-104.