

**Learner Motivation & Influential Factors in a Longitudinal Study**

By: Kaitlyn Hipple

A project funded by the Haberberger Fellowship of Lycoming College

Independent Study: Second Language Acquisition & Pedagogy

May 2018

## Table of Contents

1. Philosophy of Teaching
2. Current Research
  - a. Research questions
3. Review of Literature
  - i. The Behavioral Theory
  - ii. Cognitive Theory
  - iii. The Biological/Affective Filter
  - iv. Synthesis
  - v. Current Paradigm: Communicative Approach
  - b. What is motivation?
  - c. What affects learners' motivation?
  - d. Proposed strategies for maintaining and enhancing motivation
4. Hypotheses
5. Method
  - a. Participants
  - b. Instruments
6. Results
7. Discussion
8. Conclusion
9. References
10. Appendix

## 1. Philosophy of Teaching

My objective as a teacher is to motivate students to foster and develop independence while communicating in a second language. I will encourage my students to think individually and maintain their own level of desire for learning.

## 2. Current Research

Informed by the current literature and having models to replicate and adapt, the current research aims to answer the following questions:

1. *How does an instructor lower the students' affective filter?*
2. *How do we maintain motivation over a semester-length period?*
3. *What are the best ways in which teachers can enhance/increase learner motivation levels?*

The proposed study will include 21 second language classes at Lycoming College: German 102 A & B, 112A, 222A & 426; Spanish 101 A, B, 102A, B, C, D, 112, 222A & B, 321 A&B, 426; French 102, 112, 222, 426. Some key factors the current research is aware of are:

1. Errors caused by self-reported data
2. Students majoring in the second language tend to have a stronger intrinsic motivation versus students completing distribution
3. Questions from Busse and Walter must be adapted to elicit measurable questions regarding Lycoming College second language classes' objectives.
4. It is integral to ensure that students understand fully that this research will remain anonymous and no individual responses will be shared with faculty and staff.

### 3. Review of Literature

There are two distinct ways in which people acquire a second language: taking classes from an instructor or full immersion in the second language. In the field of applied linguistics, research is continuously being conducted so that second language instructors optimize classroom instruction. This allows instructors to elicit the best outcomes from students which in turn mimics the language immersion method. When we consider how students acquire a second language while attending an hour-long class three times a week, we are left with many unanswered questions regarding the factors that inhibit or encourage learner acquisition. One factor which researchers have shown to play a great role in SLA is learner motivation. The current research has led me to understand that the role of the teacher in the classroom is dynamic, crucial, and burdensome. However, no matter how much work/effort one puts in to designing lessons or creating rubrics, if the learner is not motivated in the classroom, then the input receiver is not able to complete tasks or acquire a second language. The present argument suggests that specific pedagogical techniques enhancing and/or strengthening learner motivation levels exist; as such, these motivation levels can be sustained over time, and perhaps even significantly increased once practitioners identify, understand, and adopt these pedagogical techniques within the curriculum.

Current researchers urge educators to consider second language acquisition to be a holistic experience that requires body, mind, and the outside world and how these three elements come together and interact; in the real world we cannot isolate our mind from our body or the world from our mind. If the overall goal of the second language classroom is to gain language proficiency, to achieve this goal, one must apply this theory while executing lesson planning. Therefore, when considering how to optimize acquisition, the current argument maintains this

philosophy while presenting new motivation variables. Atkinson et al. present a *Socio-cognitive approach* to second language acquisition that provides a model for the way in which the current research will conceptualize language learning. *Alignment* is defined as “the complex processes through which human beings affect coordinated interaction, both with other human beings and (usually human-engineered) environments, situations, tools, and affordances” (Atkinson et al. 169). In other words, this theory suggests that everything humans do is connected such as dancing, driving a car, teaching a class, baking a cake, and more. With this idea in mind, researchers argue that we must consider language acquisition to be a flowing circuit of actions that cannot take place without one another; for example, learning a second language influences how we view the world, view languages, and how we interact with one another. Therefore, language learning is a fragile mind-body-world circuit that is impressionable. The present argument translates this notion of language learning acting as a circuit to the idea of student motivation also being a cyclical vehicle which is dependent on numerous variables. The current research serves to investigate a number of these variables.

### **Theories of Motivation in Second Language Acquisition**

I will provide a brief review of the relevant literature on second language acquisition and the role motivation plays. According to current pedagogical theories of second language acquisition and the role of motivation, instructors can influence student motivation through various techniques. As a result, student motivation is impressionable and susceptible to change.

#### **i. The Behavioral Theory**

Behaviorists suggest that motivation springs from basic human drives and learning results from a combination of punishments and rewards. B.F. Skinner is regarded as the theorist of radical behaviorism as he argues that everything in life is merely a system of “antecedents

and its consequences” (Xiaohong Wen 11). The Behavioral theory is founded in the interactions humans have with their environment in terms of positive and negative reinforcements and punishments. In his article “Behavioral Theory and Language Learning”, Dr. Mehmet Demirezen discusses how babies learn their first language by observing their environment and repeating words while being rewarded by the appropriate articulation of the same sounds or syllables (136). Demirezen asserts a comparison between first language acquisition and second language acquisition. If FLA takes place due to a trial and error process, then it is suggested that SLA occurs in the same way. However, the current paradigm argues that this type of method fails to acknowledge many other aspects of language acquisition such as communication for meaning and spontaneous language creation.

The Audiolingual Method emerged from the Behaviorists Theory and demonstrates the previously regarded notion of increasing the likelihood of a behavior by positively reinforcing it and to decrease the likelihood of a behavior we punish it. In terms of second language acquisition and learner motivation, behaviorists believe that in the language laboratory, programmed texts follow this sequence: “1) the correct answer is followed by the student’s repetition of the correct answer; 2) if the student’s initial response is correct, the reward is provided to reinforce the correct answer; 3) if the student’s response to the cue is wrong, the correct answer is provided to lead the learner to the correct answer” (Xiaohong Wen 11-12). This solitary time spent in a language lab listening to audio recordings has long since been removed from current pedagogical practices. There are many flaws within the ALM such as removing learners’ ability to produce and create spontaneous language, not to mention the complete lack of face-to-face interaction. Regarding motivation, learners are not acquiring a language but rather are conditioned to know the isolated correct responses to the questions but

lack the meaning and comprehension to the question and answer. For example, if the instructor asked the question: “What animal barks?” And the student replied, “A cat” the instructor would respond with, “No, the correct answer is: a dog barks”. This instructor response makes sense for a native English speaker; however, for a student learning a second language, he/she does not understand what “cat”, “dog” or “bark” means, resulting in a loss of meaning. In short, the learner is conditioned to respond to the question of “what animal barks?” with the correct answer “a dog” but they never understand the true meaning behind the words.

The Behavioral Theory was misguided in terms of second language acquisition. Most Behaviorists argue for the Critical Period during which learners must begin language acquisition and if they do not start during the “critical period” then they will never be able to ‘catch up’. The current paradigm suggests that second language acquisition can take place at any time in a person’s life. Thus, the Behavioral Theory is disregarded, and we are one step closer to gaining a better understanding of how second language acquisition takes place.

## **ii. The Cognitive Theory**

The Cognitive Theory relies on Jean Piaget’s ideas regarding natural cognitive developmental progression and how it is motivated. His theory suggests that our brains develop in four stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. This cognitive development relates to two concepts Piaget also introduces: accommodation and assimilation. Assimilation is the process “through which the organism incorporates aspects of the environment into its preexisting cognitive structures” meanwhile accommodation is “the process through which the organism changes its existing cognitive structures to grasp the novel aspects” (Xiahong Wen 14). Piaget sheds light on the brain’s development while one acquires the first language, which in turn connects to the brain’s development while the learner acquires

more languages. Understanding how the brain's schematic structure is built with the first language informs research on second language acquisition. In addition to this theory, Jean Piaget added that learning does not affect the course of development since maturation precedes learning. Shrum and Glisan synthesize Piaget's ideas of cognitive developmental: "In this framework, the learner must be cognitively and developmentally ready to handle certain learning tasks" (24).

Piaget's cognitive approach paves the way for Vygotsky's sociocognitive Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky believes that SLA occurs by an interaction of our environment and our cognition. The ZPD is described as the distance between what a learner can do without any form of help and what they can accomplish with the help (Shrum & Glisan 24). ZPD introduces the exchange between the environment and the learner in a way that differs from the Behaviorists; ZPD relies on the role of the instructor and the input they offer learners while being aware of the cognitive abilities of the learner. This awareness of the environment, the learner's cognition, and the interaction between the two learners leads the cognitive theory to the Content-based Instruction (CBI) approach. Explained by its name, the CBI approach focuses on learning a new subject but in the second language; it maintains that educators can motivate students to learn the language based on the content. The ZPD and the CBI interact by creating learning situations that allow learners to draw on present skills and apply them to new topics while the instructor offers guidance. The instructor builds knowledge by introducing new content to the learner while providing resources and tools.

This research on the cognition of SLA profoundly informs the current paradigm of Communicative Approach by introducing for the first time the importance of content in the classroom and communication between two learners. Communicative activities offer

opportunities for learners to exchange previously unknown information. Furthermore, the interaction between the instructor and the learner is first introduced as a reciprocal exchange and no longer a one-way flowing direction of input.

### **iii. The Biological/Affective Theory**

Abraham Maslow proposed his theory of human motivation relative to the hierarchy of needs. The five basic human needs are: physiological needs, needs for security, needs for belonging, needs for esteem, and needs for self-actualization. Physiological needs refer to sleep, food, water, and excretion. Needs for security are described as physical state, employment, health, resources, and property. Furthermore, needs for belonging include aspects such as friendship, sexual intimacy, and family. The needs for esteem are confidence, achievement, self-respect, being respected by others, etc. Lastly, needs for self-actualization are described as morality, creativity, acceptance of facts, and lack of prejudice. Maslow suggests that these needs are integral in motivation. The lower level needs must be satisfied before higher levels needs can be pursued. If there is any risk whatsoever, students will not participate let alone attend the class. Likewise, if students feel any level of anxiety within the classroom that could damage their self-esteem, students are much less likely to participate which in turn inhibits second language acquisition. Maslow's theory is well-regarded even today as he has laid the foundation to understanding student motivation and inhibiting factors.

In addition, Stephen Krashen expanded on this hierarchy of needs with his theory of the affective filter (a.k.a. anxiety). This theory suggests that all learners have this malleable invisible filter that can be lowered or heightened due to external circumstances affecting a student internally. A high affective filter prohibits language acquisition from occurring, whereas a low affective filter allows the language to be acquired. This theory proves to be integral in the

current research being conducted. Illustrating the ideal, successful language learner, Krashen's claims describe a student with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety which in turn equips the student for second language acquisition. On the other hand, in low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to heighten or raise the affective filter which in turn creates a 'mental block' that prevents input from being processed properly and used for SLA. This theory of the affective filter informs the current research in considering the possible pedagogical strategies that enhance learner motivation.

#### **iv. Synthesis:**

Overall, these theories inform our understanding of how languages are acquired and provide true insight to the role of motivation. The farthest from the current paradigm is the Behavioral Theory; this theory does not account for affect, motivation, or the role of the learner in the classroom. The socio-cognitivists introduce the idea of shared interaction with the environment rather than merely receiving input as the Behaviorists had suggested. Vygotsky presents the Zone of Proximal Distance which reconfigures the roles of the instructor and the learner creating more of a collaboration. While we must consider the environment as a key factor to SLA, much of what the Biological/Affective Filter theory outlines are the basic human psychological needs. In order to acquire a second language, the lower levels of human needs must be satisfied. Therefore, it is through a synthesis of these three overarching theories that we have a better understanding of the major aspects of acquiring a second language which have lead to the current paradigm.

#### **v. Communicative Approach: Current Paradigm**

Stephen Krashen introduces another integral part of language acquisition by discussing the process of identifying learner needs: not only do instructors need to identify needs of a

learner but also identify individual learner language and learning needs. Language needs are motivated by reasons for learning, use of target language, content areas, skills, and current proficiency and desired proficiency. Learning needs are described as learning style and strategies, available resources, and background experience. The Communicative Approach of language learning calls for a Needs Analysis to be performed prior to any instruction. The traditional classroom, prior to Krashen, was teacher-centered and focused on grammar and translation; however, today's classroom is learner-centered with an emphasis on cooperation found in pair work and group work. This interaction between two learners reveals a negotiation for meaning which results in the removal of the teacher responsibility or burdensome role within the classroom, because, the teacher will not always be there to guide the language learning. This idea connects to the ZPD in how the learner's capability differs when the instructor is able to guide them. Cognitivist and Behaviorists emphasized the importance of teacher input, on the other hand, the Communicative Approach urges for instructors to adopt a different role and facilitate discussions that allow the learners to create more output.

This theory of the Communicative Approach focuses on the target language involvement in the classroom from a different perspective. Previously, the Behaviorist had the student in a language lab with a headset and they were merely listening and repeating the instructor. Now learners must have rich, authentic input while in the classroom through task-based assignments and materials. These task-based assignments allow for students to pair-up and put the 'pieces' together to find the meaning in the language. As mentioned, the teacher's role is no longer limited to correction and input but facilitating discussions and providing tools to converse with meaning. Therefore, lesson planning becomes even more so crucial, so the tasks assigned in class (and outside of the classroom) become the catalysts for the search for meaning and incite

communication. The tasks assigned encourage students to practice the language within their own world, i.e., use vocabulary that describes their daily life. By promoting the use of language through personal experiences, students gain a richer experience with the language and the language has meaning.

### **b. What is motivation?**

The goal of the current paradigm is to engage students and enable them to speak fluently in the target language. In order to attain this goal, comprehending a major aspect of SLA is the next step to achieving L2 fluency is motivation. Since the 1960s and 70s, researchers have attempted to understand self-determination theory, the macro theory of human motivation and personality. Researchers divide human actions in two categories, whether the action was self-motivated or self-determined. From here, the current titles for these items, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, emerge. Shaikholeslami and Khayyer (2006) summarize Self-determination theory in terms of the various aspects of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation. Extrinsic motivation (EM) is described as “a construct that pertains whenever an activity is done only to attain a specific outcome” (814) and is categorized in four ways: External Regulation (ERM), Introjected Regulation (IJRM), Regulation through Identification (RIM), and Integrated Regulation (IGRM). ERM is a desire to “satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed contingency” (814). IJRM shows that behaviors are “performed when there is a feeling of pressure to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancement or pride” (814). RIM occurs when “the individual has identified with personal importance of a behavior and has thus accepted its regulation as his own” (814). Lastly, IGRM occurs “when identified regulations have been fully assimilated to the self” (814). Later, these specific EM will be discussed further in terms of the current research. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation (IM) is understood as

completing an activity for inherent satisfaction instead of an external outcome (Shaikholeslami & Khayyer). In other words, IM is identified within the student who repeats “I like to learn” or takes a class as an elective. Typically, the field considers IM within a three-part taxonomy: Knowledge, Accomplishment, and Stimulation. Like the various subtypes of EM, the three subsets of IM will be discussed further in terms of the current research.

The terms extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are defined by previous research, but it is essential to understand the application of these theories in the field. Kruglanski and Higgins (2017) provide rich, empirically driven research on Motivation Science. The research suggests that motivation is a psychological factor that can be influenced and strengthened by environmental factors. Likewise, Kruglanski and Higgins argue that learning a second language is a task performed between two learners who yearn to find an answer to a question and this lack of knowing/understanding drives them to learn the L2. This drive can also be found in learners who have a desire to learn the language and thereafter go out of their way to interact with new people. Yet, a student extrinsically motivated will complete a task to satisfy required credits or perhaps simply to earn a good grade. This suggests the notion of the varying types of motivation found within learners; to understand how to sustain students’ level of motivation, one must understand all types of motivation. The “drive” that Kruglanski and Higgins investigate is known as *intrinsic motivation* (IM). IM is the rewarding of one’s self through competition or strife. Meanwhile, the other main type of motivation is known as *extrinsic motivation* (EM). Busse and Walter investigate the changes in motivation of undergraduate students studying German in their first year in the UK regarding intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. The investigators recognize the different language-learning motivations; for example, students may be studying the L2 simply to complete distribution requirements and, on the other hand, they are

motivated by their personal interests to study the L2. The latter is supported by the *Self-Determination Theory*, which is driven by *intrinsic motivation* whereas the former is referred to as *extrinsic motivation*. This suggests that educators must be cognizant of the two major types of motivation, *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*. Knowing that there are different types of motivation allows instructors to better influence and maintain the level of motivation such that there may exist types of classroom techniques that correspond to each type of motivation.

In addition to investigating the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, Busse and Walter introduce a key factor that has a great impact on student motivation. They define Self-Efficacy as self-confidence which relates to students' attitudes about themselves in the L2 classroom. The term was first introduced by Albert Bandura in the 1990s when he was investigating personality traits and analyzing their effects on classroom achievement. Stajkovic et. al report that "self-efficacy was the second (after peer assessment) strongest predictor of academic achievement" (239). Self-efficacy is broken down into four contributing factors: mastery experience (or past experience), verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, and physiological cues. Mastery experience is the empirical knowledge of a subject after having exposure to it. Verbal persuasion is when others provide the learner with encouragement or support to complete a task. Vicarious experiences occur when a student observes a peer accomplishing a task and then is able to complete the same task. Lastly, physiological cues may include sweaty palms or dry mouth which may indicate that the student is unable to complete a task (Stajkovic et. al). Much like Maslow described with the Hierarchy of Needs, humans must have their most basic needs met before they are able to complete language tasks. The classroom climate must be positive, and students must feel safe, welcome, and respected.

An example of measuring self-efficacy in the classroom is a study conducted by Busse and Walters. The researchers conducted a longitudinal study with approximately 90 participants who were first year students studying German at the beginner's level. Participants were invited to complete questionnaires (see Appendix A) which addressed several topics such as intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and effort. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed, and the audio logs were sent to the participant which allowed them to amend what was said. Busse and Walter's research suggests that this group of students was highly motivated but, on the contrary, did not have high rates of self-efficacy especially with translation, writing, grammar, listening and speaking tasks. Overall, researchers reported an increase in desire for language proficiency, but decreases in intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy over the span of a semester. This suggests that intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy are directly correlated. These results lead the current research to question what exactly affected the intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy levels over the span of a semester. Therefore, as Busse and Walter suggest, one major way in which instructors can maintain levels of motivation is to sustain students' level of self-confidence. Moreover, their research has left many questions as to why intrinsic motivation levels decreased and extrinsic motivation levels were unchanged.

The results from Busse and Walters inform the present study in predicting similar hypotheses of students maintaining extrinsic motivation while majors and minors will lose intrinsic motivation. Busse and Walters managed to identify levels of motivation and self-efficacy, but they fail to identify the factors that affect these student attributes. Therefore, it is important to the current research to examine these factors and speculate as to what instructors can manipulate and change in order to maintain motivation and self-efficacy.

**c. What affects learners' motivation?**

Busse and Walter proposed many questions within their study but did not find conclusive results. The notion of affective filter comes through their research as we consider students' attitudes about their own efforts in language learning and, more importantly for the present study, self-efficacy levels. Ruan et al. focus on beginner learners' perception of their motivation during a task-based teaching and learning environment (TBTL), which is a curriculum tool derived from the Communicative Approach: "Motivation can be either instigated and sustained or weakened by certain forces, such as the teaching and learning method or institutional/linguistic challenges (the issues that are the subject of this study), all of which might be present throughout the learning process" (Ruan et al. 173). As such, this echoes the earlier assertion made by Atkinson et al. that as language learning is a circuit of body-mind-world, motivation is also a cyclical vehicle that is constantly flowing and dependent on outside variables. Ruan et al. conducted their study in Denmark at Aalborg University and the L2 was Chinese. The researchers put great emphasis on learners' affect and considered this to be a factor in both learning and levels of motivation, especially during the beginning stages of acquiring a second language (171).

Upon conducting the study, which explored various kinds of tasks and reviewed learners' perspectives, research suggests that one should take precaution when designing tasks and that one must consider learners' affect during this preparation. Research on these task types and variables has found that (1) unfocused tasks are best used at the beginning of a language course, (2) tasks with open structures lead to higher levels of intrinsic motivation for learners by providing them with more opportunities to make their own decisions; (3) more negotiation and interaction occur in tasks involving group work; and (4) it is important to control, manipulate and balance task complexity, especially with learners at a basic language level. Results show that

unfocused tasks and tasks involving group work “are more motivating and effective for beginners learning a foreign language” (182).

These results provide the current research a thorough understanding of affect and what can trigger students’ affective filter. This research compliments the current study by providing the tools to identify students’ affective filter in lower level second language classes at Lycoming College. One difference that should be highlighted is that Busse and Walter’s and Ruan et al.’s research only focused on beginner level language classes, so the field lacks research on advanced learners placed in upper level courses. It would prove to be interesting to investigate the difference in affective filter (anxiety levels) of advanced students in comparison to novice learners. However, the current research is not focusing on this aspect of second language acquisition.

In addition, the research presented by Busse and Walter and Ruan et al. supports the notion that in the classroom the teacher should focus efforts more on communication and meaning rather than form, grammar, and fluency. This research parallels the current paradigm of the Communicative Approach. Presently, the instructor must design tasks that also consider both the learners’ affective factors and their learning situation factors – which can boost learners’ IMs – when designing a task, especially at a beginning stage of foreign language learning. Ruan et al. states that “it is also effective to integrate cultural elements into language learning tasks, since they can serve to add value to both language learning and motivation” (184). This research informs the current study for whether motivation is a learner attribute the instructor can influence. As research has noted, motivation is susceptible to change, and the instructor plays an important role as to whether the student is motivated or not.

One specific way in which Ruan et al. consider students' affect a key component in motivation levels is through the affective filter. Arie Kruglanski's work in the 90's introduces Cognitive Closure, the need to remove uneasiness, as serving as a great motivation strategy. Kruglanski discussed in her previous work that learners yearn to understand the L2, therefore, that alone is enough to motivate learners. However, Kruglanski published that research in the 90's and today the current paradigm suggests that motivation is more of a unique, hybrid for each individual learner and we are unable to make overarching assertions about motivation. J.T. Trout responds to Kruglanski's philosophical approach with a cognitively motivated approach. Trout offers an extensive review on the difference between philosophy and psychology; he suggests that we put an end to the comparison of language learning to a philosophy but rather consider it an extension of psychology. Furthermore, Trout explains that motivation is a psychological component in which students must be positively reinforced for having completed the desired task and punished for having completed an undesirable task. One key aspect of reinforcement that Trout elaborates on is the idea of goal setting; Trout asserts that in order to efficiently and meaningfully motivate students through reinforcement, the overall goal must be clear and shared by the student and the instructor. I would argue, and so does Trout, that this is no easy task. Trout suggests that if the goal of the student and the instructor do not align, then the use of negative forces can be employed, and this can override the student goal to ensure that the goal of the instructor is achieved. This empirical data is profound and fascinating; however, Trout does not conduct any concrete studies that would put this theory into practice. Therefore, the current research fails to trust in whether this theory is valid or applicable.

Trout suggests that goal setting is essential when attempting to acquire a second language. He suggests that aligning these goals between the learner and the instructor is the first step in

allowing second language acquisition to occur. Therefore, the current instrument used to evaluate students of Lycoming College and their goals includes questions about students' goals in the language classroom (gaining verbal, written, and listening proficiency).

**b. Proposed strategies for maintaining & enhancing motivation**

As it has been thoroughly established, student motivation has an important role in second language acquisition. With this idea in mind, it then begs the question of how can one enhance motivation let alone sustain it in a classroom? Ruan et al. suggest that the task designer must consider the activities assigned to students and how these tasks influence motivation. In the present digital age, one way in which many teachers are motivating students is through the integration of technology in the classroom. Wehner et al. hypothesize that the program Second Life, a virtual program that connects L2 learners and native speakers together, reinforces and strengthens student motivation. Second Life is categorized as the first type of technology involved within the second language classroom and aids L2 acquisition, rather than merely creating a social environment. Referenced in their research, Wehner et al. acknowledge that the current language learning paradigm assumes that language learning is a collaboration of a “learning through-doing” approach and participating in individualized sequence of presentational and constructivist experiences that are delivered on demand in a real-world problem context (Wehner et. al 2011). Constructivists believe that we learn through experiencing things and reflecting on these experiences while the Communicative Approach encourages students to use the target language while describing their own personal experiences.

The participants of the study were students in a beginner's level Spanish course. Many research questions were asked, but the most important ones relevant to the current research question were (1) whether the technology-based task affected students' attitude about L2 culture

and acquisition, (2) whether students' experienced lower levels of anxiety due to having access to Second Life, and lastly, (3) whether the overall learner level of motivation was more intense when they had access to Second Life. Students were encouraged to log five hours a week on the virtual life while communicating with native-Spanish speakers. The group of students that had access to the game was considered the experimental group whereas the control group did not have access to the game and merely attended a traditional classroom with no other additional extracurricular requirements. The results reveal only a slight increase in motivation among students who participated in Second Life; however, the increase was significant enough to suggest that this practice with L2 does in fact decrease student anxiety levels. It can be assumed that the instructor is able to reduce student anxiety levels and students will remain motivated. Although results were not "significant" they were impressive for such a small sample size and suggest that further research like this study be conducted again to find more conclusive results.

Regarding the current research, it is fascinating to know that practice such as this outside of the classroom decreases student anxiety levels which in turn strengthens/reinforces student motivation. The online game, Second Life, is a task that provides students with meaningful communication that is unlike what is found within the typical classroom. Therefore, this research suggests that we can successfully strengthen, if not at least maintain student motivation, through the semester by assigning participation in an online game, which required active student participation. It is important to mention that the instructor of the course was provided with a transcript or conversation log for each student. By having access to logs, the instructor was able to monitor student participation and the recorded logs served as good indicators of proficiency. Thus, the addition of technology or some form of interactive participation such as the game

Second Life should be considered a pedagogical tool that lowers anxiety and reinforces motivation in students.

As Ruan et al. suggests in their research, the tasks instructors design for students play a huge role in maintaining motivation. Therefore, it is important to go beyond one specific task and investigate various other tasks and how they influence students. Moreno-López et al. explore four different pedagogical models/tasks in the second language classroom: face-to-face classroom, face-to-face classes with a community-based learning component, face-to-face courses with an online telecollaborative language-learning component, and study abroad. Researchers hypothesize that all models, minus the traditional face-to-face, will enhance learning and increase student motivation. Each class varied in the structure and assignments. For example, the traditional classroom was focused on a textbook and grammar explanations. The CBL classroom was centered around a service learning project in which Saturdays were dedicated to reading, playing, and tutoring young native Spanish speakers. The telecollaborative language component classroom included a video chatting component that afforded students the opportunity to meet native speakers of Spanish from Mexico and talk with them about their culture, similar interests, and speak primarily in the target language (Spanish). Lastly, the study abroad component was a 3-week course that allowed students to live with a host family, have a native-speaker for a teacher, and participate in cultural excursions. Overall, the students in the three non-traditional classrooms reported lower anxiety levels and higher self-confidence. From this research we can conclude that any of the three non-traditional options are great models to eliminate or lower learners' affective filter so that they can truly acquire a second language; in other words, this means that the traditional classroom, designed around grammar explanations

and direct translations of L2 to L1, is not communicative nor does it enhance motivation. Thus, if we lower the affective filter, we can maintain student motivation.

Lastly, another aspect the study Moreno et al. addresses is the notion of student achievement over time. Earlier, the influence of self-efficacy on student achievement was established. Therefore, it is important to discuss the four models Moreno et. al investigated and the student achievement outcomes. It is important to do so because the overall goal of the L2 classroom is to promote student achievement and encourage language proficiency. Research suggests that all four models were able to achieve high rates of success among students but the question in the scope was not about student success but rather enhancing student motivation. In short, despite not predicting a correlation between student motivation and student achievement, Moreno et al. report a direct correlation between the two which reemphasizes the role of student motivation in the classroom. If we want students to succeed, we need to motivate them and lowering their affective filter achieves this.

This research greatly aids the design of the current investigation which mimics certain aspects of Moreno-Lopez's study. First, the different classroom models are evaluated to maximize student motivation at a novice level of Spanish, French, and German. Thereafter, student motivation in an upper-level Spanish course that has a travel component is analyzed. This travel course mimics the effects of the virtual life Second Life as in providing students with language immersion. Language immersion motivates students by providing native-like brain processing experience. As mentioned earlier, the two ways in which learners acquire a second language were presented: in a classroom or language immersion.

#### **4. Hypotheses:**

1. Students enrolled in second language courses completing distribution requirements or credits for a major or minor will maintain extrinsic motivation over the course of the semester
2. Students enrolled in second language courses completing credits for a major or minor will maintain extrinsic motivation however intrinsic motivation will decrease.
3. Majors, minors, and non-majors will report lower levels of self-efficacy over the course of the semester.
4. Majors, minors, and non-majors will report lower levels of effort over the course of the semester.

## **5. Method**

The design of the study includes a preliminary test for an established baseline and a posttest. An adapted version of Busse and Walter's questionnaire was utilized in the current study (see Appendix). T1 was conducted at the start of the spring semester during the fifth week of the semester and the T2 took place during the tenth week of the semester.

The researcher asked instructors to administer questionnaires to students in class in addition to reading aloud the oral consent form. (See appendix for Oral Consent and Instructor directions). All efforts were made to maintain participant anonymity.

### **a. Participants**

The sample size includes 234 students over the age of 18 attending Lycoming College enrolled in all second language classes. However, due to absences, invalid survey responses (i.e. incomplete surveys) and students who withdrew from the course, 204 students participated in the preliminary test and 197 participated in the posttest.

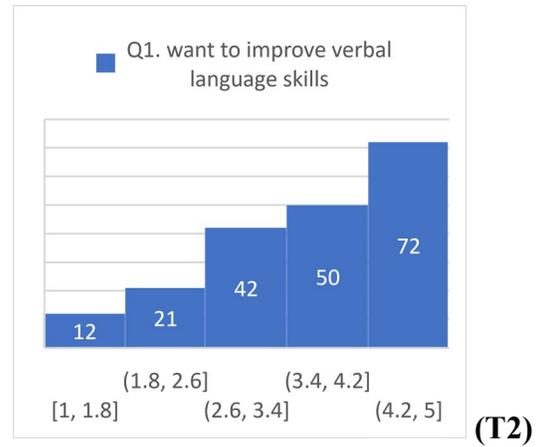
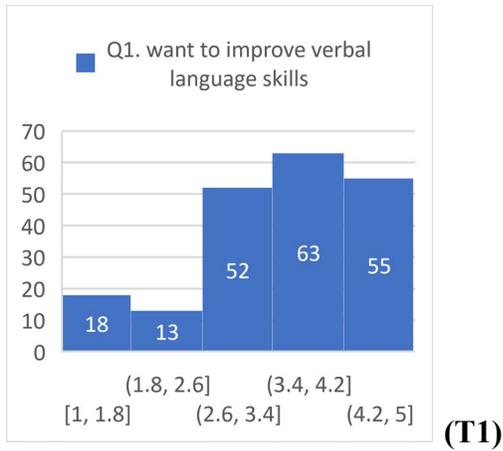
## **b. Instruments**

The researcher derived survey questions from Busse and Walter's interview questions. While creating and adapting this survey, the researcher considered the internal validity of responses, the effect of the "neutral" option on the data set, and how to quantify the questions from Busse and Walter. Busse and Walter's study consisted of interview questions which means that all responses were qualitative and would have proven to be more challenging to evaluate, compare, and analyze. Therefore, the questionnaire comprised of 31 questions focusing on Effort, Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, and Self-Efficacy. Likewise, a 5-point Likert Scale was used for participant responses (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

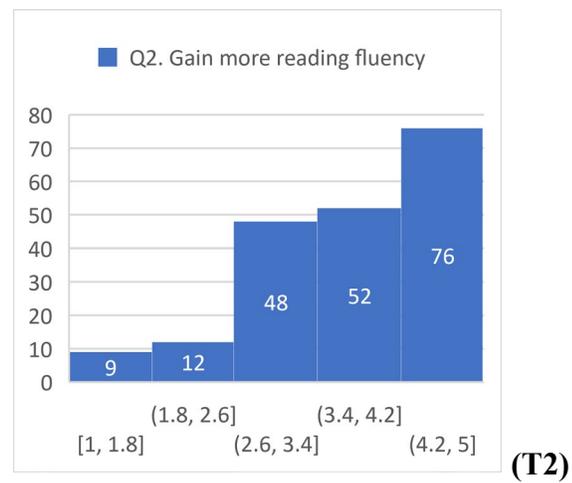
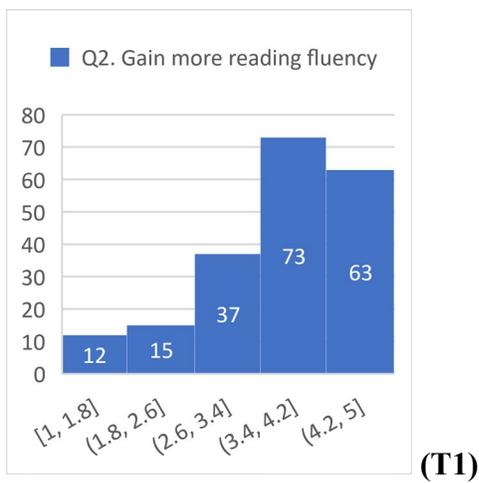
- Intrinsic motivation: 1-4, 6, 7, 20
- Extrinsic motivation: 5, 13, 17, 21, 24, 25-29
- Self-efficacy: 10a-10l, 22
- Effort: 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23
- General motivation: 8, 9, 19; 30 & 31 are qualitative open-ended questions

## **6. Results**

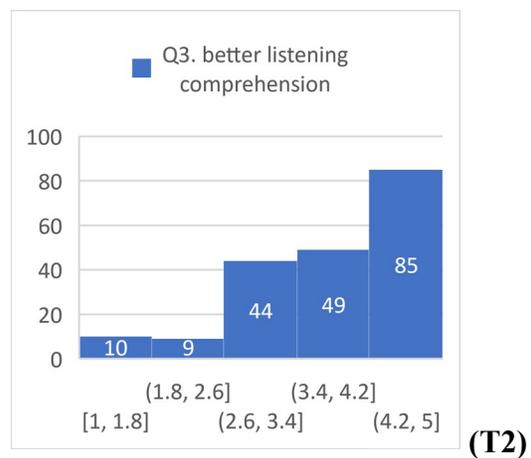
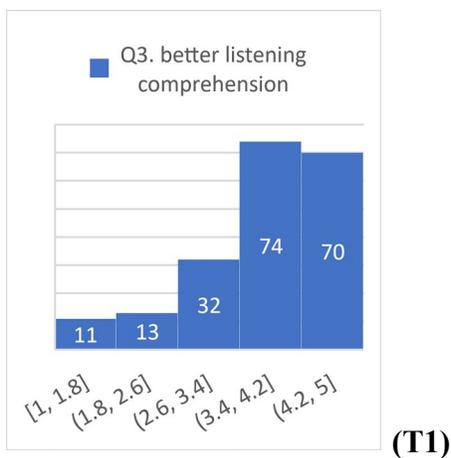
The researcher conducted a frequency distribution analysis on the two sets of data which are represented by histograms. To perform a significance comparison, the researcher calculated the percentage difference of the preliminary test data results and the posttest data results. Likewise, all agree and disagree responses were combined to "accept" and "reject" options. There were no significant findings to report regarding the Effort items of the survey, therefore, this part of the survey was excluded from the results and the discussion.



Question 1: I want to improve verbal language skills. Strongly agree responses increased by 37%



Question 2: I want to gain more reading fluency. Strongly agree responses increased by 30%.

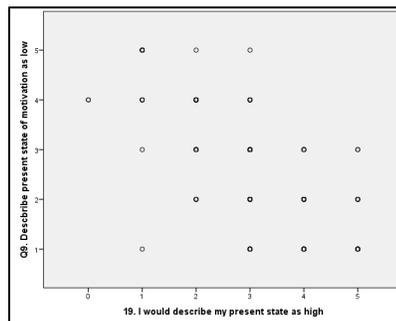
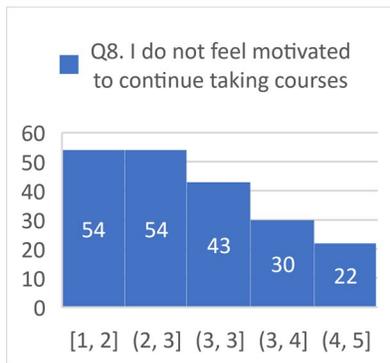


Question 3: I want to study a second language to gain better listening comprehension. Strongly agree response increased by 30%.

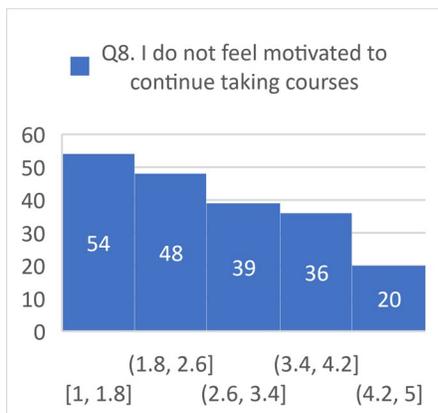
Question 4: I really enjoy learning German/French/Spanish. There was a 24% increase in positive response frequency.

Question 6: I find learning German/French/Spanish interesting. Participants responses remained stable. 69% of T1 participants responded with strongly agree or agree. 66% of T2 participants responded with strongly agree or agree.

Question 8: I do not feel motivated to continue taking second language classes. No significant change. 48/197 (T2) = majors; 78% responded with “strongly disagree.” 149/197 (T2) = non-majors, data evenly distributed across 5-items.



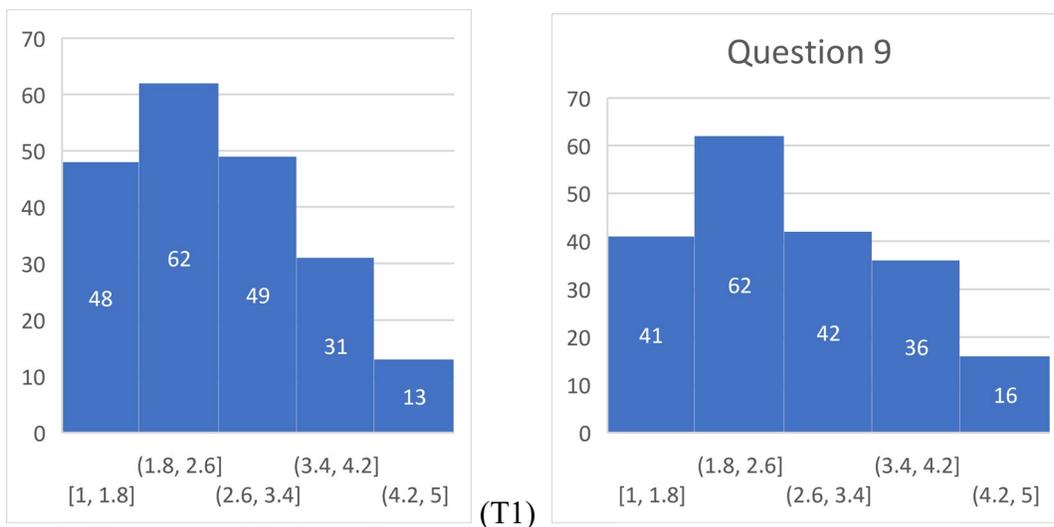
(Table 1)



Question 9: I would describe my present state of motivation for studying second language as somewhat low. 6% increase of “reject” responses.

Question 10a-j: How confident are you that you would be able to complete these tasks. 40% “accept” responses; remained unchanged at posttest.

Question 13: Interacting with a native speaker enhances my motivation. Stable “accept” responses.



Question 17: I only care about getting an A in this course: 41% ↑ increase in “reject.”

Question 18: I do not put enough effort into learning a second language. 15% decrease in “reject.”

Questions 19-24 report highly frequent “neutral” responses [~mean: 85/204; 87/197]

Questions 1-24 (T1) 2158/8240 (26%) responses “neutral”; (T2) 2220/7350 (30%) “neutral” responses

## 7. Discussion

### Motivation:

Questions 1-3 asked participants about general language learning goals and the frequency with which participants responded positively increased by 30%; however, this increase relative to our sample size is not significant since a 30% increase translates to only approximately 8-10 more participants who responded positively during the posttest than at the pretest. With this idea in mind, the argument can be made that although the results are not significant in the increase, the results are significant in that the positive responses did not decrease; therefore, they remained stable. This informs the research question of whether students will lose intrinsic motivation and students in fact did not lose IM but rather it was unchanged. The contributing factors for maintaining these levels of motivation are not identified in the study. One can speculate that questions 1-3 are highly relative to goal setting of the participants (desire to gain verbal, reading, and listening comprehension) and not necessarily their motivation in that course. As J.T. Trout explains in his research, the idea of shared goals is essential for student motivation and achievement. This introduces the idea of separating motivation into the extrinsic and intrinsic; extrinsic motivation is desiring to get an A in the class while intrinsic is desiring fluency and language proficiency. Despite not being present for the treatment of the study, these results imply that the instructors of the courses managed to successfully maintain student motivation.

Furthermore, Question 6 asked participants if they found learning German/French/Spanish interesting and 66% of participants responded positively for the pretest and the posttest. These results indicate that students maintain their intrinsic motivation for language learning. This is a highly frequent percent of positive responses which indicate that students maintain their intrinsic motivation. In contrast, question 7 asks whether language learning was an important aspect of the student's life and there was an increase in "reject" responses which suggests that students do not

consider language learning a priority or integral aspect of daily life. Thus, this begs the question of levels of intrinsic motivation.

Shaikholeslami & Khayyer describe the three types of IM: the first type, Knowledge, is the motivation for doing an activity for the feelings associated with exploring new ideas and developing knowledge. The second type, Accomplishment, refers to the sensations related to attempting to master a task or achieve a goal. The third type, Stimulation, refers to motivation based simply upon the sensation stimulated by performing the task, such as aesthetic appreciation or fun and excitement (814). Asking students whether learning a second language is an integral part of a student's life could perhaps align with the second type of IM, accomplishment. Majors agree that learning a second language is an essential part of life, which is understandable. As for non-majors, they report that learning a second language is interesting which connects to the first type of IM, knowledge. Students can appreciate acquiring a new language and they enjoy exploring the new subject.

One could argue that it is justifiable that novice learners would not report language learning as an integral part of daily life whereas on the other hand one would anticipate advanced learners having reported that. As previously stated, 66% of participants reported in the pretest and posttest that they found language learning interesting. Although students did not report language learning to be an integral aspect of life, they did report highly frequent responses for it being interesting which suggests a slight trend in that students are intrinsically motivated in the classroom. These results indicate that the instructors of the courses are successful in maintaining student motivation.

Research shows that intrinsic motivation is maintained and now it is important to examine the general motivation of students. Question 8 of the survey asked whether participants

did not feel motivated to continue to learn German/French/Spanish (Table 1). Table 1 features the results from the first set of data. 53% of participants responded to the question with “reject” and this double negative translates into students feeling motivated to continue taking a second language. Likewise, to test internal validity, question 19 asked whether participants felt motivated to continue taking second language classes. This x-y comparison of questions 8 and 19 reveals that students report being motivated to continue taking second language classes. The posttest reveals that 52% of participants responded with “reject” for question 8 which suggests that they do feel motivated to continue taking second language courses. The results from the pretest and the posttest appear to not be significantly different (there was only an increase of 2% in reject responses) which suggests that participants’ motivation has remained stable throughout the semester. This finding is significant because the researcher predicted that extrinsic motivation would remain stable while predicating intrinsic motivation would decrease. The results from analyzing question 8 indicate that intrinsic motivation stays the same. These findings indicate that second language instructors accomplish the goal of maintaining motivation.

The researcher clustered the sample size by responses to pre-survey identifier questions (completing course for distribution/major/elective) and created two distinct data sets, majors and non-majors. 48 of the 197 participants for the posttest reported taking the course to complete credits for a major; likewise, nearly 78% of majors respond to question 8 with “reject” which indicates that majors are motivated to continue to take second language courses. This evidence is not surprising; however, it is reassuring to know that majors are in fact intrinsically motivated to take language courses. On the contrary, the 149 non-majors’ responses were evenly distributed across the Likert Scale with 20% frequency for each Likert-Scale item. Due to this finding, it is difficult to conclude whether students were motivated or not to continue taking language classes.

These results do not diminish the previously established finding in that intrinsic motivation was maintained such that the desire to continue taking more second language classes is a complex survey question. There may be many reasons as to why students do not feel motivated to continue taking courses. For example, students may not be able to fit more language classes in their schedule as it could conflict with their major or other course requirements. One could unfortunately make the argument that the responses to question 8 for non-majors was so evenly distributed across the 5-item scale because the design of the Likert Scale. Likert Scales prevent normal distribution from taking place because the data has set bounds (1-5). The Likert Scale utilized in this study only had 5-items whereas many researchers recently began advocating for at least 7-9 items on the scale. By only having 5 items on the scale, the data was not able to normalize and create trends easily for all survey items; therefore, the data spread evenly rather than clustering to show significant trends in this case. On other occasions the data was able to cluster nicely to one extreme of the Likert Scale; however, in this case the participants were not motivated to cluster toward an extreme bound of the scale.

Another item on the questionnaire that evaluated general motivation is question 13. This question asked whether interacting with a native speaker enhances student motivation and 57% of preliminary test participants responded positively. Likewise, 57% of posttest participants responded positively. These numbers are unchanging which reinforces the previously foretold idea that exposure to a native speaker sustains learner motivation. This suggests that students feel intrinsically motivated to learn a second language because they can learn the L2 from a native speaker. Not only it is important to be able to learn from a native speaker, but also engaging with native speakers in fact motivates students even further. Van Patten (2003) argues that there is a role played by sociocultural factors such as affect, motivation, and the desire to identify with

native speakers (Shrum and Glisan 13). All second languages at Lycoming College have at least one available native speaker since the Fulbright Teacher's Assistants lead conversation tables. Upon further analysis, students who have a native speaker as an instructor, in addition to the FLTAs, for example Spanish 102 and German 102 courses, reported "strongly agree" to question 13 two times more frequently than the students who do not have a native speaker for an instructor. Interacting with a native speaker provides authentic, original L2 input which is arguably one of the best ways to motivate students.

Shrum and Glisan describe the current paradigm for language learning, which is known as the Communicative approach, and they advocate for the use of authentic texts. The term Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) means emphasizing the use of the target language in the classroom while promoting the exchange of unknown information between language learners. CLT focuses on communicating for meaning and providing meaningful input. One way that we can achieve this goal is by introducing authentic texts in the curriculum. Within the classroom, the use of authentic texts includes videos, audios, magazines, newspapers, literature, etc. Outside the classroom, Lycoming College students have access to the FLTAs which also provide authentic experience with the language through speaking, writing, and listening tasks. "Through exploring these materials, students have the opportunity to see and hear real language that serves a purpose" (Shrum & Glisan 85). Interacting with a native speaker provides real-time authentic experience that enhances language learning and learners' motivation.

### **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is described as personal judgement of one's abilities. 10a-10l questions prompt responses on the Likert scale: Not at all, Sort of, Fairly, and Very much. In questions 10a-e, 10g, 10h, and 10j participants reported during the preliminary test having high levels of self-efficacy

with at least 67% of each question's responses being either fairly or very much. On the contrary, questions 10f, 10i, 10k and 10l participants reported having low levels of self-efficacy: 10f asked about critically reading/evaluating texts, 10i asked about listening to and understanding a lecture, 10k asked about conversing with ease and creativity, and 10l asked about narrating in different timeframes. According to the standards outlined by ACTFL, these tasks are to be completed by advanced students, therefore it is important to consider the true proficiency of the participants responding to the questions. 67% of participants are enrolled in beginner level second language courses, therefore they are labelled as "novice learners". Therefore, since 67% of participants are labelled as novice learners, it is surprising to see that 67% of participant responses were so positive. This reveals a foil: either instructors are succeeding in lowering the affective filter or students are unaware of their own limitations. Due to limited ability in research, the researcher was unable to observe the professors during the weeks between the pretest and the posttest. However, these results suggest that instructors succeed in facilitating the extinction of fear.

In total, 40% of the self-efficacy responses reflect confidence and high levels of self-efficacy. Likewise, the posttest reports equally comparable distributed responses for questions 10a-j. Therefore, the researcher concludes that students' level of confidence and self-efficacy is stable. These results are surprising since the posttest was conducted during the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, which is likely the most challenging time of the semester; by this point in the curriculum, beginner level students are learning complex grammatical structures and course expectations have increased. Therefore, the researcher's prediction of lower levels of self-efficacy is inaccurate and self-efficacy was maintained.

Since the researcher was unable to be present during the treatment of the study, the pedagogical tools used to lower the affective filter cannot be reported although they can be

predicted. For example, one crucial way that students can lower their affective filter is by having freedom to choose where they sit in the classroom and who they work with. The ability to be comfortable with a peer is essential when it comes to communication. Likewise, every second language class requires student participation and it is important to consider the role of the instructor; does the instructor directly call out students or do students offer themselves up as volunteers?

Furthermore, feedback is another integral part of language learning and there are many ways for an instructor to give students feedback: students can receive feedback on written assignments such as in-class writing and homework; students can receive feedback in class while speaking in the second language. There are six types of teacher feedback according to Shrum and Glisan: explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. Explicit correction occurs when the instructor directly corrects what the student said by pointing out what was wrong. Recasting takes place when the teacher attempts to reformulate what the student said without the error therefore offering an alternative. Clarification request is when the teacher asks for further information or asks what the student means to say. Metalinguistic feedback is when the teacher asks the student themselves to identify their error. Elicitation is described as when the instructor repeats part of what the student said and pauses before the error which allows for the student to self-correct. Lastly, repetition is when the teacher simply repeats what the student said with a tone that highlights the error. (Shrum & Glisan 284).

Since the researcher was not present during the time of the treatment of the study, one can only speculate that a variety of these feedback techniques are being utilized within the L2 classroom. As previously established, each student learns in their own unique way; therefore, the types of feedback that a professor can use for one student may vary compared to those of another

student. This feedback directly influences students' self-efficacy which, as previously mentioned, correlates to student achievement and performance in the L2 classroom.

## **8. Conclusion**

Although results appear to be significant, the sample size of the study must be considered. Most of the results revealed a 30%-40% increase in positive responses; however, in retrospect, this is only an increase in 10-15 people. Therefore, the research does not claim to have significant findings in changes in any areas of motivation. With that being said, the significance of the findings indicates that motivation overall remained stable. This is promising information because it suggests that second language classes are doing something "right" if levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation remained the same. Since the researcher was not present during the 5 weeks between the preliminary test and the posttest, one can only speculate as to why these results suggest that student motivation remains stable. For example, the novice learner courses offer a variety of topics from culture, sport, music, linguistics, and so much more which allows each student, with their own learning style, to remain motivated and engaged. On the other hand, advanced learners study courses that are specialized topics that they have shown some interest in taking which relates back to their high reports of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, perhaps it is the very nature of learning a second language and all that this curriculum entails (i.e. culture, music, linguistics, politics, history, etc.) which motivates students and allows them to maintain that motivation.

Levels of self-efficacy were unchanged contrary to the predicted hypotheses. This suggests that students overestimate their proficiency levels. One suggested cause for this result is as students continue throughout a semester, they gain more knowledge and are introduced to a wider vocabulary, more cultural aspects of the L2, and have more practice with the language. As

mentioned previously, self-efficacy is comprised of four items: mastery experience, verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, and physiological cues. Mastery experience is the empirical knowledge of a subject after having exposure to it. Students have experienced 5 weeks of classes between the preliminary test and posttest and these five weeks have provided rich experience for students which encourages them to report high levels of perceived proficiency. Verbal persuasion is when others provide the learner with encouragement or support to complete a task. Verbal persuasion is introduced in the second language classroom early on and crucial in lowering students' affective filter. Because the present research was unable to identify and analyze each of the four different items of self-efficacy, further research should be conducted.

In conclusion, the results suggest there were no significant changes in reports of motivation and self-efficacy. Despite the hope motivation would be increased, the current result of it remaining steady is surprising and promising. The researcher would like to explore the ways that instructors maintain motivation and then present theories of ways that we can increase motivation.

For example, many participants responded to questions 30 and 31 with intrinsically motivated responses. As such, many students reported that they hope to gain fluency in the L2 so that they can better communicate with future co-workers, assist more people in their future career (i.e., nurse, doctor, lawyer), or communicate with family or neighbors. I predict that motivation levels would increase if students at Lycoming had the opportunity to take specialized topics in the L2 such as biology, chemistry, math, psychology, etc. Many students responded positively to the question of whether their future career aspirations played a role in taking a second language and almost 75% of participants responded with "very much."

Furthermore, question 31 asked participants what they hope to gain from studying the second language and roughly 40% of participants responded with “fluency.” Kruglanski presented the idea of goal setting in her cognitivist theory: realistic goals must be set, competition must be put aside, and the means that which one will employ to attain the goal must be established (176). Yang Wong suggests that in a learner-centered classroom it is essential for students to set their own goals:

Having the language learners set personal language goals increases their involvement by increasing the stake they have in the learning process. Giving students the opportunity to establish their own goals, in addition to or in collaboration with those set by the instructional program, allows students to reflect on their reasons for learning a second language, which may in turn lead to increased motivation (64).

Students report hopes to gain “fluency” from studying the L2 and this is the same goal of the instructor. Research shows that it is an integral part of motivation to have shared goals and the current research suggests that one possible cause for the maintained motivation is due to the shared goal setting.

Additionally, since students responded with the same frequency to the question regarding interacting with an L2 native speaker, I predict that motivation levels would not only stay steady but in fact increase if they had more opportunities to interact with L2 native speakers. This relates to Van Patten’s notion of desire to identify with the social group; if students had the opportunity to interact with a native speaker, then they would become more motivated. Therefore, I sustain that the FLTAs teaching conversation tables are great additions to the modern language curriculum since they motivate students. In addition to interacting with native speakers, a travel component offers full language immersion which can truly encourage students

to desire to identify with a surrounding social group. One Lycoming language professor led a trip abroad in a country that speaks the L2 and these students had prepared to study the art and history of the country prior to their arrival. These students reported high levels of motivation, self-efficacy, and effort. Therefore, I argue that even more opportunities to interact with native speakers should become available to students acquiring a second language. It is important to mention that the Lycoming College Modern Language Studies Department requires that all majors and minors are required to study abroad. Majors are required a minimum of 12 weeks in a L2 native-speaking country while minors are required a minimum of 4 weeks. This graduation requirement reflects what the theory urges. The department recognizes the unparalleled experience gained while in a foreign country.

Furthermore, one way that students can engage with native speakers is through the Second Life game Wehner et al. mentioned in their research. Students would have the opportunity to create an avatar and become as creative as they choose with this character. In doing so, this could allow for students to use a wider vocabulary than they use daily as they are required to be imaginative. This aspect of the curriculum would need to be monitored to ensure that students are properly engaging with native speakers.

Lastly, the current research was unable to thoroughly investigate students' affective filter. The affective filter is the students' level of self-confidence in the classroom. The Self-efficacy aspect of the questionnaire focused on language proficiency (ability to complete tasks) whereas the affective filter asks about student anxiety levels. One way in which I suggest students' affective filter may be lowered is by reducing the amount of weighted course assessments. Shrum and Glisan (2010) acknowledge the importance of assessments in the L2 classroom as we must evaluate, compare, and observe the progress of students in some documented format. In

addition, assessments also serve to empower students: “When students are empowered they are better able to set personal goals for learning, self-assess accurately, seek out assistance when necessary, monitor their own progress, make improvements in their performances, and participate in learning communities” (Shrum & Glisan 424). Shrum and Glisan suggest that instructors can not only motivate students, but also improve their self-confidence by involving them in the assessment process while reducing the stress of the weighted assessments. Likewise, Shrum and Glisan suggest many types of feedback and one way to provide feedback is to not give a grade at all, not a letter, not a symbol, not a coded equivalent. In removing the stress of grades, students can focus on proficiency and performance. Shrum and Glisan comment on this informal mean of assessment by suggesting that it is a great “way to obtain data and feedback concerning student progress and effectiveness of instruction without necessarily assigning formal grades” (424). Therefore, it is suggested that students would benefit from the addition of informal assessments.

Every study is characterized by limitations to the design and methodology. After much consideration, this study has a few that will be discussed here. Previous research suggests that the neutral option on the Likert Scale has the tendency to influence participants’ responses. Edwards and Smith (2018) provide a generous review of the current research presented on the neutral option being present in the Likert Scale; most researchers conclude that the neutral response option “enabled people who were ignorant about or indifferent to a subject to select no opinion or neutral instead of being forced to choose a response that did not reflect their true beliefs” (Edwards and Smith). This suggests that participants become unmotivated during the study and they are enabled to take a neutral stance which allows them to avoid choosing the “wrong” answer. However, Edwards and Smith conducted their own study eliciting responses

from participants from sensitive topics such as homosexuality, religion, and gun control. These findings suggest that participants are more likely to respond extremely when the topics are more sensitive, and they have a relationship with the issues. Otherwise, participants are unmotivated and more likely to select the neutral. With this idea in mind, the current study reveals that the number of students who responded with neutral during the posttest increased significantly from the pretest. Therefore, this can suggest that students were unmotivated while taking the survey as they did not want to take the time to reflect on the questions.

There could be other reasons as to why participants did not want to pick an extreme answer of 1 or 5, such as satisficing, ambivalence, or social desirability bias (Edwards and Smith). Satisficing is described as avoiding the cognitive effort necessary to choose a satisfactory answer. Students may have been so unmotivated that they showed little to no interest in completing the survey, so they select the easy option of neutral or respond with the most 'satisfactory' response of 'very much,' while in some cases that wasn't the 'satisfactory' response. Meanwhile, ambivalence is the desire to avoid negative feelings associated with contrasting opinions on an issue. Because students were aware they were being observed for motivation, perhaps they avoided responding to the survey with their true feelings because they thought the researcher wanted to see high levels of motivation. On the other hand, if they were unsure of the researcher's predictions, participants might have chosen the neutral to avoid all possible negative outcomes of responding positively or negatively. Lastly, social desirability bias is the reluctance in reporting honestly on survey when they are in a social situation. For instance, students in a classroom reflecting on their classroom climate, motivation, and attitude certainly constitutes a 'social situation' which also could inhibit student responses.

Other limitations of the study could stem from the Hawthorne affect, the alteration of behavior due to the awareness of being observed. Students were aware that they were being observed for motivation and one could suggest that students might have felt the need to report themselves as being motivated even though they might not have been. Likewise, the researcher was not able to be present for the study which could reveal problems in assuring student anonymity and confidence as the instructor of the course in which the student was enrolled administered the survey. Moreover, 12% of the sample size resulted in invalid responses due to absence, failure to complete the entire survey, and/or loss of retention. Lastly, although the study was designed to be longitudinal, the time between the pretest and the posttest ideally should have extended to at least 10 weeks, whereas there were only 5 weeks between T1 and T2.

For future research, I suggest that the field work to develop a better measure of motivation. The researcher aimed to use a generalized questionnaire for all levels of language learners across all languages; however, I offer the idea of creating different questionnaires for lower level learners and upper level learners. Generally, these two clusters of data are distinguishable due to the motivation for majors/minors being intrinsic and the motivation for non-majors (i.e. students completing distribution requirements) being extrinsic. Likewise, the aspects of self-efficacy are so vast that not all could be measured in this study. Thus, the argument is made that the affective filter in the broadest of terms was not measured in this study and should be investigated in the future.

Finally, the current research aimed to examine student motivation and the pedagogical tools that influence these levels. However, it proved to be a challenge to identify and explore the actual pedagogical tools in practice when the instructors were not interviewed. Interviewing instructors would have shown real insight into the classroom as to what is currently being done

to reveal such high levels of motivation across the board. The researcher can only speculate based on previous studies that professors are using a learner-centered paradigm, they are focusing on communication with meaning, and they are creating a comfortable classroom climate. Since the researcher failed to interview professors, this research is incomplete. Overall, it is suggested that in-classroom observations be conducted so that the current pedagogical techniques being utilized in the classroom can be identified. Likewise, to gain a global image of the classroom, it is essential the one-on-one interviews take place to help connect the theory to the practice.

In summary, the researcher accomplished the overall goal of measuring student motivation. The results of maintained motivation lead to further investigations that aim to identify the current tools used to motivate second language learners.

## 9. References

- Atkinson, Dwight, et al. "Alignment and Interaction in a Sociocognitive Approach to Second Language Acquisition." *Modern Language Journal*, vol. 91, no. 2, 2007, pp. 169-188.
- Busse, Vera and Catherine Walter. "Second Language Learning Motivation in Higher Education: A Longitudinal Study of Motivational Changes and Their Causes." *Modern Language Journal*, vol. 97, no. 2, 2013, pp. 435-456.
- Davidheiser, James. "Teaching German with TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling)." *Unterrichtspraxis/Teaching German*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2002, pp. 25-35.  
EBSCOhost,  
[lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2003652874&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2003652874&site=ehost-live&scope=site).
- Demirezen, Mehmet. "Behaviorist Theory and Language Learning." *Hacettepe Vniversitesi Eđitim Fakültesi Dergisi/Hacettepe University Faculty of Education Instructor*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1988, pp. 135-140.
- Edwards, Melinda L, and Brandon C Smith. "The Effects of the Neutral Response Option on the Extremeness of Participant Responses." *Incite*, 9 April 2018.  
[blogs.longwood.edu/incite/2014/05/07/the-effects-of-the-neutral-response-option-on-the-extremeness-of-participant-responses/](http://blogs.longwood.edu/incite/2014/05/07/the-effects-of-the-neutral-response-option-on-the-extremeness-of-participant-responses/).
- Kondo-Brown, Kimi. "Changes in Affective Profiles of Postsecondary Students in Lower-Level Second Language Classes." *Second Language Annals*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2013, pp. 122-136. EBSCOhost,  
[lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2013651308&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2013651308&site=ehost-live&scope=site).

- Kozaki, Yoko and Steven J. Ross. "Contextual Dynamics in Second Language Learning Motivation." *Language Learning: A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, vol. 61, no. 4, Dec. 2011, pp. 1328-1354.  
EBSCOhost, lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2012933456&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Kruglanski, Arie W., and E. Tory Higgins. "Introduction to the *Motivation Science* Special Issue." *Motivation Science* 3.3 (2017): 175-78. Print.
- Lasagabaster, David. "The Relationship between Motivation, Gender, L1 and Possible Selves in English-Medium Instruction." *International Journal of Multilingualism*, vol. 13, no. 3, Aug. 2016, pp. 315-332. EBSCOhost,  
lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2016751460&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Moreno-López, Isabel, et al. "Transforming Ways of Enhancing Second Language Acquisition in the Spanish Classroom: Experiential Learning Approaches." *Second Language Annals* 50.2 (2017): 398-409. Print.
- O'Reilly, Erin N. "Correlations among Perceived Autonomy Support, Intrinsic Motivation, and Learning Outcomes in an Intensive Second Language Program." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 4.7 (2014): 1313-18. Print.
- Pae, Tae-Il and Sang-Keun Shin. "Examining the Effects of Differential Instructional Methods on the Model of Second Language Achievement." *Learning & Individual Differences*, vol. 21, no. 2, Apr. 2011, pp. 215-222. EBSCOhost,  
doi:10.1016/j.lindif.2010.11.023.

- Ruan, Youjin, et al. "Tasks and Learner Motivation in Learning Chinese as a Second Language." *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*, vol. 28, no. 2, July 2015, pp. 170-190.
- Shaikholeslami, Raziieh and Mohammad Khayyer. "Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Learning English as a Second Language." *Psychological Reports*, vol. 99, no. 3, Dec. 2006, pp. 813-818. EBSCOhost, doi:10.2466/PR0.99.3.813-818.
- Shrum, Judith L., and Eileen W. Glisan. *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction*. Cengage Learning, 2016.
- Stajkovic, Alexander D., et al. "Test of Three Conceptual Models of Influence of the Big Five Personality Traits and Self-Efficacy on Academic Performance: A Meta-Analytic Path-Analysis." *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 120, 01 Jan. 2018, pp. 238-245. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1016/j.paid.2017.08.014.
- Toth, Paul D. and Kristin J. Davin. "The Sociocognitive Imperative of L2 Pedagogy." *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 100, no. 1 [Supplement], 2016, pp. 148-168. EBSCOhost, lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2016650685&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Trout, J. D. "Motivation and the Sense of Understanding in Theory Construction." *Motivation Science* 3.3 (2017): 304-17. Print.
- Wehner, Amy K., Andrew W. Gump, and Steve Downey. "The Effects of Second Life on the Motivation of Undergraduate Students Learning a Second Language." *Computer Assisted Language Learning: An International Journal* 24.3 (2011): 277-89. Print.

Wen, Xiaohong. "The Relationship between Motivation and Expectancy Factors and Second Language Achievement." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, vol. 52, no. 11, May 1992, p. 3902A. EBSCOhost, [lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1992017063&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://lyco2.lycoming.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=1992017063&site=ehost-live&scope=site).

## 10. Appendix

Vera Busse and Catherine Walter

455

*Intrinsic Motivation*

- I really enjoy learning German
- Learning German is a challenge which I enjoy
- I find learning German really interesting
- Learning German is one of the most important aspects in my life
- I like the challenges that learning German poses

*Self-Efficacy*

How confident are you that by the end of this academic year you will be able to

- write an essay in German?
- write a short summary of a newspaper article in German?
- write your opinion about an article in German?
- read and understand the main ideas of a German poem?
- read and understand a newspaper article?
- listen to and understand a lecture in German?
- listen to and understand a German native speaker in a tutorial?
- listen to and understand a German film?
- engage in a conversation with a native speaker about a novel?
- speak about a film with a native speaker?
- discuss a newspaper article with a native speaker?
- do well in the grammar part of the classes?
- do well when translating a short prose passage from German into English?
- do well when translating a short prose passage from English into German?

*Effort*

- I invest much time and effort on all written language assignments, such as German essays, etc.
- I am working hard at learning German
- I can honestly say that I put a lot of effort into German language classes
- RC\* I often feel that it takes too much effort to really engage with a piece of translation\*\*
- I put as much effort as possible into language assignments
- RC I think it would be too much effort to read anything other than set texts in German\*\*
- I spend a lot of time on translations

- I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn German
- I try very hard to read more than just set texts in newspapers/magazines
- I spend a lot of time on improving my grammar where I feel it to be necessary
- RC Honestly, I do not have much time to spend on language work\*\*
- I spend as much time as possible on language learning
- I try to learn as many new words as possible during language classes
- I can honestly say that I am really doing my best to learn German

*Present Motivation*

- I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German as high at the moment
- I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German as somewhat low at the moment

\*RC = reverse coded item

\*\*not retained in the factors after exploratory factor analysis

## APPENDIX B

*Interview protocols**Interview protocol time point 1*

Why do you want to study German?

Follow-ups (depending on opening statement):

- Do you have any other reasons for studying German?
- Do you relate your reasons for studying to any long-term plans that you might have?
- Did job considerations play a role for you?
- Many people think about their future and imagine what they will probably be like in the future. Do you have a picture or a sort of vision of yourself with regard to German?
- If so, what does it look like? Does it affect your motivation?
- Do you envisage using German in the future?
- Can you imagine being fluent in German?
- What do you hope to gain from studying German at university level?
- Any other kind of expectations?

Year/Class:

Expected Graduation Date:

Foreign Language Class currently enrolled in:

Are you enrolled in more than one language course studying the same language?

If yes, please indicate which ones. \_\_\_\_\_ Y // N

I am studying a foreign language to complete distribution requirements. \_\_\_\_\_ Y // N

I am studying a foreign language to complete credits for my major. \_\_\_\_\_ Y // N

I am studying a foreign language as an elective. \_\_\_\_\_ Y // N

**Strongly disagree (1) - Disagree (2) - Neutral (3) - Agree (4) - Strongly Agree (5)**

1. I study German/French/Spanish because I want to improve my verbal language skills.				
2. By studying German/French/Spanish, I hope to gain more reading fluency in German/French/Spanish.				
3. By studying German/French/Spanish, I hope to better my listening comprehension in German/French/Spanish				
4. I really enjoy learning German/French/Spanish.				
5. I am only taking this course to complete distribution requirements.				
6. I find learning German/French/Spanish interesting.				
7. Learning German/French/Spanish is one of the most important aspects of my life.				
8. I do not feel motivated to continue taking German /French/Spanish courses.				
9. I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German/French/Spanish as somewhat low				
THIS BOX WAS LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK				
10. How confident are you that by the end of this academic year you <u>can</u> :	Not at all	Sor t of	Fair ly	<u>Very much</u>
a. Write a short description of your best friend				
b. Write a 10-sentence summary of a film in the present tense				
c. Write an academic paper				
d. Read and comprehend a student schedule				
e. Read and comprehend a text on a familiar topic				
f. Read and critically evaluate texts that explore important thematic issues				
g. Listen to and understand simple questions and statements				
h. Listen to and understand announcements and directions				
i. Listen to and understand a lecture				
j. Speak about basic personal info				
k. Converse with ease and creativity				
l. Narrate and describe in different time frames				

DO NOT WRITE NAME ON PAPER

PLEASE MAKE EASILY IDENTIFIABLE MARKS

ID # \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Strongly disagree (1) - Disagree (2) - Neutral (3) - Agree (4) - Strongly Agree (5)</b>	
11. I invest too much time and effort on all written language assignments, such as German/French/Spanish essays, etc.	
12. I am working hard at learning German/French/Spanish.	
13. Interacting with a native speaker of German/French/Spanish enhances my level of motivation.	
14. I think it's too much effort to read anything other than assigned texts in German /French/Spanish	
15. I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn German/French/Spanish	
16. I spend a lot of time on improving my grammar where I feel it to be necessary	
17. I only care about getting an A in this course.	
18. I do not put enough effort into learning German/ French/Spanish.	
19. I would describe my present state of motivation for studying German/French/Spanish as high	
20. I like the challenges that learning German/French/Spanish poses.	
21. I feel motivated to learn a foreign language.	
22. I feel confident when I speak in the foreign language in class.	
23. I put as much time and effort as possible into language assignments	
24. Foreign language fluency is not my overall goal in this course.	

25. How likely are you to relate your reasons for studying to any long-term plans that you might have?  
(circle one) **Not at all** ---- **Sort of** ---- **Fairly** ---- **Very much**
26. How likely are your job considerations playing a role in studying a foreign language?  
(circle one) **Not at all** ---- **Sort of** ---- **Fairly** ---- **Very much**
27. How likely are you to use German/French/Spanish in the future?  
(circle one) **Not at all** ---- **Sort of** ---- **Fairly** ---- **Very much**
28. How likely do you imagine becoming fluent in German/French/Spanish?  
(circle one) **Not at all** ---- **Sort of** ---- **Fairly** ---- **Very much**
29. How engaged do you describe yourself in German/French/Spanish classes?  
(circle one) **Not at all** ---- **Sort of** ---- **Fairly** ---- **Very much**
30. Do you have any other reasons for studying German/French/Spanish?
31. What do you hope to gain from studying German/French/Spanish at the university level?

**Instructor Directions:**

Thank you for taking the time out of your course schedule to administer this survey.

Included in this packet are:

- Questionnaires
- Oral Consent
- Class roster w/ student assigned identification numbers

Please read the oral consent aloud to students. Then, handout the questionnaires to students while informing each individual student of their pre-determined identification number found on the class roster. Once all students have received their ID number and questionnaire, remind them to write their ID# on the top right-hand corner of their questionnaire. Lastly, this questionnaire **should not exceed 10 minutes**.

When students have finished taking the survey, they will place their own survey in the provided envelop. When all surveys have been collected, please return this **sealed and signed** packet to Kaitlyn Hipple's mailbox on the second floor of the D-wing by **no later than February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 @ 4:30PM**.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

**Oral Consent: To be read aloud by course instructor:**

The goal of this study is to evaluate, analyze, and compare motivation levels of students enrolled in foreign language classes at Lycoming College. The purpose of this current questionnaire is to establish a baseline for student motivation. Later in the semester, students will be asked to complete another questionnaire reporting motivation levels. If at any point you feel as though you cannot continue to complete the survey, please stop and make note that you were unable to complete it. Likewise, if you feel as though you would like to skip a question, please indicate that on the survey question box. The identity of participants will remain anonymous. No individual responses will be shared with any Lycoming College faculty, staff, or student; in other words, only the researcher, Kaitlyn Hipple, will have access to individual responses.

Participants will receive a predetermined identification number which you will write on the top of the first page of the survey. The professor will tell you your ID number; however, they will never have access to your individual responses. After completing the survey, please place your own questionnaire in the envelop and after everyone has completed the survey, the professor will seal and sign the envelop ensuring student anonymity.

Thank you for participating in research for an independent study/honors project funded by the Haberberger Fellowship.