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Achieving Success in Second Language Acquisition

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4 Understanding feelings and personality in language learning

Preview

This chapter introduces you to the affective variables in learning – your feelings, personality preferences, and relationships with others involved in your learning process such as teachers and other students. Topics that this chapter addresses include:

Foreign language anxiety is the fears and uncertainties that arise when you think about studying a foreign language. There are useful coping strategies for it.

Performance anxiety is closely related to foreign language anxiety and refers to completing acts in the foreign language, such as using it in front of others in class or in the society. This chapter suggests some coping strategies.

Test anxiety is the nervousness that accompanies test preparation and test taking. This chapter will help you understand the source of this nervousness and will provide you some guidance in dealing with it.

Motivation is reflected in the reasons you study a foreign language and the reasons you do (or do not) work hard in class. There are a number of kinds of motivation, several of which are discussed in this chapter.

Self-efficacy is your feeling of competence, that you can do something. This chapter will help you understand the sources of these feelings.

Personality can have a strong effect on how you approach language-learning situations, in-class work, peer interactions, and interaction with the culture. In this chapter, you will be helped to understand not only your personality traits but also those of your classmates.

Ego boundaries refers to receptivity to external input. You will learn about thin and thick boundaries and their significance for language learning.

Defense mechanisms are the things we do to protect our self-esteem. Sometimes, these things get in the way of learning. This chapter will help you recognize the defense mechanisms that you use.

Many learners are intuitively aware of the cognitive factors described in the preceding chapter: after all, if you are having trouble remembering how to put together a sentence in the language you are learning, you are likely to know it.

If you are among those having difficulty, you may want to try out some of the suggestions made in the previous chapter. At the same time, however, you are also likely to have some feelings about your difficulties.

The truth is that the line between the cognitive and the affective (feelings) factors in language study situations is not as firm as our splitting them into two chapters suggests. There is considerable overlap. For example, if you are usually optimistic, your thinking, as well as your feelings, will tend toward the positive, and this will have an influence on the efficiency and success of your cognitive processes. If you think you can learn a language, then, usually, you more likely to be able to. So, what your feelings are and how you deal with them will make a great deal of difference to your learning success. Here we talk about **anxiety (related to fear), motivation (desire to do something), and self-efficacy (the feeling that you can do something).**

Your feelings and your cognition are frequently influenced by your personality, which filters how you interpret experience and act on your interpretations. If you tend to have a strong need for orderliness in your life, for instance, you may find the open-endedness of language learning “messy,” and this may cause you irritation, as well as make it more difficult for you to deal with the new material. It is important, then, to understand these preferences, mental filters, and habits, which are discussed in detail below.

Foreign language anxiety

Specific sources of foreign-language anxiety

Everyone feels anxious some of the time. Most of us feel some anxiety before going to the dentist or during a job interview, for instance. Anxiety is a kind of nervous-system arousal that is very functional when there is danger, but it can get in the way when we have a task to do, like learning a language. The key is that *anxiety uses up cognitive and emotional resources that then are not available for learning*. A small amount of anxiety can be helpful when we need to get going on a project, but when there is too much, it gets in the way. Many learners feel a special kind of anxiety when they are learning a foreign language. There are several reasons for this, each of which is described below:

- the amount to learn;
- the difficulty in communicating at lower levels;
- self-consciousness about mistakes; and
- the foreignness of foreign language.

Amount to learn

There is a vast body of information to learn. A language takes years to master to near-native ability. There will always be something you do not know.

Thinking about this, especially if you want everything immediately, can create immense amounts of anxiety. However, if you make a long-term learning plan and start to see how your daily steps add up to larger and larger gains in foreign language proficiency, you will probably reduce that anxiety to a great extent.

Sometimes you may find yourself approaching burnout (inability to work or focus). Under these circumstances, the best thing you can do for yourself is often to give yourself a break from study and any further input. Do something completely different for a while. If you forget a little bit, do not worry, you will have many chances to relearn it even more solidly afterward.

Difficulty in communicating

For adults in particular, the early and intermediate learning stages can be very frustrating because they want to express adult concepts but do not yet have the necessary foreign expressions. This lack of language results in a feeling of being tongue-tied and can, of course, create anxiety, as well as frustration, especially if you are in an immersion program.

Some people can accept this situation as a natural step in the language-learning process. For others, however, just accepting the fact that beginning language learners can appear tongue-tied does not help. In this case, there are ways to handle your awareness of your communication gaps.

Simplification. One way is to learn strategies for simplification. Instead of trying to say, “The obfuscation in the writer’s text organization confuses me,” or, in a different register, which you may also not yet possess, “This author’s writing is so messed up that it is impossible to understand it,” you could use a couple of short phrases to make yourself fully understood and get your message fully across: “The author writes poorly, and I cannot understand the text.”

Islands. Another way to handle this situation/reality is to work out and learn some more advanced ways of speaking about several of the topics that you know you will be speaking about frequently. These are sometimes called “islands” (see chapter 10), and they can give you moments of fluency at a level higher than your typical proficiency. (Your teacher or any native speaker can help you work these out, but you will have to practice them so that they will be under your full control and available to you when you need them.) Knowing how to simplify and having a set of islands at your beck and call can do much to allay anxiety.

Focus on the known. Perhaps the most powerful tool at your disposal is to focus on what you *can* do. For example, you might give yourself a good pat on the back for finding roundabout ways to get your meaning across when you do not have the right words for getting yourself to a popular landmark from a hotel or getting a shopkeeper to sell you what you need. You may have had to work hard and have been less than precise, but you used the language and made it work for you.

Self-consciousness about mistakes

In most language classrooms, you are expected to try to speak the language. As a learner, you make mistakes, and then you are likely to feel self-conscious about them.

It is not only common to all learners to make mistakes, it is also necessary, or you are probably playing it too safe. Nevertheless, many of us come to learning experiences expecting perfect performance. When we can't achieve 100 per cent, we can get anxious, yet it is rarely possible to achieve 100 per cent accuracy when speaking a foreign language. (Full accuracy does not occur in our native language, either; we just do not notice mistakes there in the same way that we do with foreign languages.)

If you can adopt the motto of the concrete-random learner (remember the styles we discussed in chapter 3), who learns through trial and error – a mistake is just the next step in learning, and the more mistakes the more opportunity for learning – you will be further ahead than you will if you cower in fear of the inevitable mistake. Mistakes can be your friend. This changed attitude will not only help reduce your anxiety, it will encourage you to speak and write more so that, in the long run, you actually will make fewer mistakes, thanks to all the practice.

Inside the classroom, mistakes can be more threatening to your sense of self-esteem than outside of it. You may feel judged by your teacher and classmates for your performance, and of course in some ways everything is a test, not only formally named tests. A good way to deal with the inevitable anxiety of feeling judged is to focus on *your* performance, not that of others. Put effort into observing your own progress and patterns of errors, and relate them to your learning plans. For example, after you notice that you are getting the pronouns for superiors and inferiors in Asian languages wrong regularly, put some special activities for practicing them into your study plans for the week. Your learning style will help you with starting points for these activities: for instance, an analytic learner might want to build a table of the pronouns and the situations where they should be used. On the other hand, a synthetic learner might well decide to write some dialogue among characters of different social status.

Outside the classroom, remember that the native speakers with whom you speak are not interested in judging your performance. They are interested in communicating with you. If it is not too much work for them to understand you and make themselves understood, your mistakes will not matter much and are in fact expected in a non-native speaker. Of course, if they have enough motivation to talk with you (to sell you something, to help you learn, or because they like you), they will work with you even if it does require effort on their part.

Foreignness

Foreign languages reflect foreign ways of thinking. Learning to think in different ways can upset comfortable patterns. Then we may become anxious because things are not as predictable as they used to be.

Foreign customs offer opportunities for fascinating exploration, but they also can be fraught with pitfalls that might cause you to give offense without intending to. As a decent, sensitive human being, you may feel anxious about doing the “wrong thing.”

There are ways of managing this, too. Learn as much as you can about these foreign cultures and foreign customs. The more you know, the less likely you are to make a *faux pas* – and the less anxious you are likely to feel about doing so. Also, try to think about the unfamiliar customs as adventures, not as threats, and native speakers and teachers as wanting to help you rather than criticize you. Even if you make mistakes in etiquette, most people will know you are foreign, and they will make allowances. They want to have a good relationship with you, just as you do with them.

Some learners also report not liking the language they are studying. It might be the combination of sounds that does not sound pleasant to their ear, or perhaps the manner of expressing ideas seems inaccessible or just plain weird. In some cases, learners like the language but not the culture. In both these cases – not liking the language and not liking the culture – you can experience mixed emotions (and mixed motivation) toward your learning tasks, your classmates, your teacher, and native speakers. Being aware of the source of your aversion or irritation can help, as can being clear on why you are taking the language. If your reason is not related to the language *per se*, such as wanting to spend time with a friend who is in the class, you might consider whether or not being in this particular language course is a good use of your time and whether you could perhaps accomplish your goals in some other way with fewer negative emotions.

Managing generalized feelings of anxiety

What if your anxiety is more generalized than these specific situations? What if you are almost always feeling a sense of dread and nervousness when you think about your foreign-language class or about using foreign language in a community? First, remember that anxiety is not always bad. If it is in small amounts to get you moving, or if you really are in a dangerous situation, then it's appropriate. It is only when anxiety gets in your way that you should be concerned. There are several ways in which anxiety can be managed before it becomes debilitating: through acceptance, reframing, goal-setting, and game playing.

Acceptance

Franklin Roosevelt said “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Similarly, if you get anxious about being anxious, you may end up multiplying the negative effects of your anxiety. Accept that you are anxious, analyze the source, and if it is one of the sources identified in the previous sections of this

chapter, follow some of the suggestions there. If it is more generalized, accept that you are anxious and take one or more of the following steps.

Reframing

One of the most powerful strategies you can use is called *reframing*. What this means is that you try to see something threatening as something helpful. The comment above about the importance of making mistakes is a good example. You can look at mistakes as failures, but this will damage your learning efforts. You would do much better to think of mistakes as a natural part of the learning process and realize that if you do not make mistakes, you are not learning as much as you could. The same is true for the example given about being overwhelmed by the amount to be learned. Reframing the whole into smaller pieces can take away the sense of failure and replace it with a sense of success. Reframing is a cognitive strategy in service to an affective purpose: it has to do with changing how you think about something and, as a result, how you feel about something.

Goal-setting

Perfection of language control is not necessary. *You do not have to speak like a native* to do the things you want to do in the language. So another strategy you can use is setting goals, by deciding what you want to do with the language. That will indicate how close to native-like language you need to aim for, and it can be another way to forgive yourself for making mistakes. You can evaluate your progress and performance in terms of your goal, not some kind of abstract perfection. For example, if you are learning the language in order to make foreign friends, you would aim at being able to express yourself well enough to say what you want and be understood without a lot of work on the part of the person you are talking with.

In setting goals, make them realistic. If you are a beginner and are trying to read something written for native speakers, be glad when you can figure out what the passage is about in general or even if you can understand 5–10 per cent of it.

Game playing

Make a game of trying to say as much as you can with what you know. One of the authors will try to say something with a native speaker knowing that it is probably wrong and then feel pleased when she is corrected, especially when she is working with someone who might not explain it to her if she asked directly. (This would probably be because the native speaker considered the concept too difficult for the learner's level of foreign-language proficiency.) In this case, making a mistake is strategic.

CASE STUDY

Problem

Alex has come to the university from a small town high school, where he graduated first in his class. He was used to “acing” tests and was disappointed when he got less than 100 per cent. However, his high school had no foreign language courses. Now he has to meet a foreign language requirement. Feeling that he was a strong learner who wanted to try something different, he signed up for Swahili. Now, Alex is feeling overwhelmed by the amount he is having to learn in his Swahili class, and furthermore, the system of infixes and use of aspect doesn’t make sense to him, so that he often makes mistakes in class. He has become so anxious that he doesn’t want to study French at night, and he is in danger of poor performance in class and in the exam.

Possible solutions

- (1) Within the larger framework of course goals, Alex needs to think about his personal goals in learning Swahili. If he had none in reality (other than wanting to take on a challenge), perhaps now is the time to set some, such as wanting to get an “A” in the course or wanting to be able to use the language for study abroad.
- (2) Once he is clear about his goals, he can set limits on what he makes himself responsible for. He probably does not have to learn every word in the textbook or be able to say everything his classmates can say.
- (3) Alex can make a conscious effort to stop counting his mistakes and count the number of times he succeeds in getting someone else to understand what he is trying to say.

Figure 4.1

Performance anxiety

Closely related to foreign-language anxiety, and typically a subset of it, is performance anxiety. You may experience performance anxiety when you worry about answering questions, reciting, making presentations, or doing a role play in front of your peers. Some students are concerned that they sound silly. Other students worry that their accent will be strong or that their answers will be wrong. If you belong to either of these groups, you may be suffering from performance anxiety. It might help to understand that many of your peers feel the same way – and for naught because most students are too busy worrying about their own performance to judge the performance of their peers.

Performance anxiety can occur in study abroad and other in-country situations, as well. In a way, it is similar to stage fright when one has to perform a play or a musical score in front of an audience or the blank-brain syndrome that math competitions and spelling bees sometimes bring. For language learners, though, there is an additional element in that performance anxiety can result in the

CASE STUDY

Problem

Shawna is in Kazakhstan on a visit and wants to buy some bread from a bread cart. She feels very apprehensive because she has never done this before; this is not the place she buys bread at home nor are the interpersonal verbal exchanges required similar to ones that she uses in her own language for shopping. What can she do?

Possible solutions

(1) Shawna might use the strategy of rehearse: if she has role-played this situation in advance, once she takes a big breath and starts the conversation, she will probably find that the pieces will fall into place for her.

(2) Shawna might take a friend with her, at least the first time, so that she does not have to be alone when she makes these exchanges; having gone through the experience successfully once with a friend is likely to remove any anxiety for her in the future.

Figure 4.2

near-total loss of communicative ability – suddenly, you cannot buy the bread you need at the store, and the like. In addition to resulting in the language learner potentially going hungry, that performance failure makes some learners feel like little children, and this feeling may lead them to avoiding performing at all. One of our colleagues tells the following story.

I remember vividly on my first study abroad visit to the USSR how stunning it was for me that a 3-year old child could communicate more effectively in Russian than I, although I had been studying intensively for two years – the child had had more immersion than I had in that time!!! (B. Rifkin, personal communication, December 23, 2003)

Performance anxiety is probably best handled through preparedness. One of the reasons that teachers like to do role plays in the classroom is that they prepare students for performing outside the classroom. If performance anxiety strikes in the community, often the tongue will work automatically due to the classroom practice, and you will know that you dealt with the situation at least once already. If you have not had classroom practice, you can create your own practice by rehearsing the anticipated exchanges sufficient times in advance that your brain and tongue will be on automatic, regardless of what is happening with your nerves, when you have to make those exchanges for real. (For many, the situation of using your foreign language in the community is not all that unlike musicians and actors appearing in front of audiences – very few would ever consider doing so without a lot of rehearsals and repetition. For others, it is more like a jazz performance: part of the pleasure is the improvisation.)

Test anxiety

About test anxiety

For many of us, taking tests is one of the most anxiety-provoking situations we encounter as learners. Being judged is very difficult and arouses an enormous amount of anxiety. Far more energy can go into worrying about the test and your results than into learning and performing on the test. There are a number of reasons why you might feel anxious about taking a test. Here are some of them:

- previous conditioning;
- self-image;
- consequences;
- fear and frustration caused by limited language skills; and
- “facing the music.”

Previous conditioning

Your previous experience with tests in school may have conditioned you to expect an unpleasant experience, filled with anxiety and fraught with heavy consequences. In some cases, much or even everything may depend on a single performance, and if you had a bad day, that is your bad luck. That need not be the case, however. If you had a bad day, see if you can negotiate a retest or other way of demonstrating your knowledge.

Self-image

You receive a rating, whether by a course or test grade or by assignment of a language proficiency level. A rating has an effect on our self-image, and we may end up labeling ourselves in ways that hurt our learning ability. For example, a learner may be tempted to think “I got a bad grade – I’m really a bad student.” This is very destructive and to be avoided if at all possible; it is much better to think, “I got a bad grade this time. Next time I’ll try to do better.”

Consequences

When something concrete depends on the test, such as pay increases, a future job, or parents’ willingness to continue to pay for coursework, the anxiety is compounded. If you are in this situation, try to keep the consequences out of your mind as much as possible. This is, of course, much easier to say than to do, but there are some techniques in the next section that you can use. Probably the most powerful is to think about something else – such as the content of what you are learning.

Fear and frustration

A test is a concentrated medium for kinds of anxiety we described in the previous sections, such as fear of making mistakes, frustration at difficulties

communicating, or even the sense of interpersonal failure (if in an oral interview and you feel that you have let down the person you are talking with). In a class setting, the anxieties may be spread out over time and mixed with many successes, but in a test, they are distilled into an hour or two, so it is important for you to find ways to keep them at bay.

“Facing the music”

A test can force you to face up to what you do and don't know. You may have thought you knew all the Chinese characters you needed to read news articles about the weather, but you come across something you never saw before. (This will be easier for inductive learners, who use context to figure out what something means, than for deductive ones, who want to learn in advance and not figure out.) The prospect of failure, however it may be defined by the test-taker, is a heavy threat to emotional well-being. A test is designed and usually evaluated by someone else. That means someone else has the power to decide what you should know, whether it corresponds to your interests and purposes or not.

Coping with test anxiety

Test anxiety is not easy to manage, but there are some things you can do. Here are some examples with explanations that follow:

- Manage your image of yourself.
- Manage your learning before the test.
- Managing yourself before the test (your feelings and your activities)
- Manage yourself during the tests
- Manage your relationships with those who evaluate you

You may notice that all the subheadings in this test anxiety section start with the word *managing*. There is a reason for this. Coping with the stresses that tests cause most of us is something only you can do. It therefore depends heavily on your self-regulation skills (there is more information on self-regulation in chapter 9); you need to manage your feelings, your thoughts, your activities before and during the test, and your relationships with people who rate you.

Managing self-image

Managing your self-image can contribute significantly to reducing your test anxiety. The first thing to do is to stop dwelling on your anxiety. Such negative thoughts can lead you to set up images of yourself failing, which in turn may create a negative self-fulfilling prophecy (that is, you may make yourself fail). Instead, use positive imaging of yourself. For example, imagine entering and taking the test in a cool, calm, self-confident way. That can help you build self-fulfilling prophecies in a positive direction. There is a good deal of psychological research on managing one's self-image and one's mood – mind over matter, so to speak; if you are interested, you might find many more suggestions on how

to do this in the work of the neurolinguistic programmers (Dilts, 1979; Bandler, 1985).

Managing pre-test learning

Being prepared for a test may be the best defense against test anxiety. Managing pre-test learning consists of a number of steps. First, ensure that you are keeping up in class, and if you are not, seek help from your teacher – the earlier the better. This way, nothing on the test should be a surprise to you. Second, clarify what will be on the test. Your teacher will usually indicate what is important and what is not. If you are uncertain, it is always best to ask. Obviously, not everything covered in class is equally important. Paying attention to the most important things and letting the less important ones slide by if you do not have enough time for them is the best way to spend your study time. Third, study time is important; prepare for a test a little bit every day. Cramming the night before is very counterproductive and only causes greater test anxiety. Research shows that crammers do more poorly on tests in general than students who prepare well in advance and get a good night's sleep before the test, whether or not they feel they are ready for it (E. Leaver, 1999).

Managing yourself before the test

In general, self-management techniques include relaxation, distracting yourself, and rest. Everyone has different ways to relax. Some people might soak in a hot bath; others might meditate. Another way to relax is to distract yourself with a good book, a game, or other activity that engages your mind and takes it away from the test. We highly recommend escape literature like mysteries or other fiction, for example. Even if it means you lose a little time from studying, it will pay off, because a refreshed mind is a more receptive and productive mind.

Every list of strategies for coping with test anxiety suggests that students get a good night's sleep the night before. We follow suit because evidence (cite) indicates the importance of enough sleep to physical and mental well-being. It is something like getting your mind off of the task for a little while when you are awake. When you sleep, you refresh your abilities and push anxiety away. In fact, many people find that they do a lot of mental processing when they sleep, resulting in consolidated knowledge or new ideas.

Managing yourself during the test

While in the test, focus on the task, not on “what-if” thoughts. That is, think about how to do your best on the questions or tasks you have right now. Don't think about “What if I get this one wrong?” Instead, think about strategies to “beat” the test. For example, if something is too hard or taking too much time, move on to the next thing. Another example: random learners (who choose their own order to learn things) will normally look over the whole test (if it is written) to see what is there, and the random learners may well choose the easiest parts to

CASE STUDY

Problem

Taylor is doing well in her Chinese class. She has learned many of the written characters and can guess at meanings of texts even where she does not know all the character symbols. However, she makes use of context to learn – she is highly synoptic – and this test will focus on recognition of individual characters without any context. Taylor knows that this is a task at which she is less adept and is starting to spend increasing time stewing about the test. She knows that this is not helping her but is feeling stuck with it.

Possible solutions

- (1) Taylor might first ensure that she has a solid base in recognizing the characters that could be in the test. Flashcards, if she is a visual verbalist learner (see chapter 3) might prove useful.
- (2) She could also check with the teacher to find out if there are areas she does not need to study. That leaves time to study the things the teacher thinks are important.
- (3) She could set aside a certain amount of time every day to let herself think about the test, but other than that, she should keep busy with things that block out the anxious thoughts.

Figure 4.3

do first. If you are a sequential learner (prefers to follow the set order), this is a good cross-style technique for you to use.

Managing your relationship with an interviewer

In an oral interview test, build a relationship with the interviewer, and show friendliness (but not obsequiousness). An interviewer who feels positive toward you is likely to be more helpful to you.

Also in interviews, be open about areas you don't find of interest. For example, if you don't pay attention to sports, you will have a hard time talking about them in any language, so let the interviewer know this isn't an area you have much to say about. Depending on the situation, you may be able to suggest another topic. For example, you might say something like, "I don't much like sports, so I don't know much about them, but I do know that Western music is very popular in your country. Do you like it?"

Motivation

Motivation refers to "why" – why you are studying a language in the first place, why you like reading better than listening (if you do), why you study rather than party or vice versa. When you come right down to it, motivation

is behind all the choices you make and everything you do. Here we focus on motivation in language learning.

About motivation

In this section, we look at some different approaches to general motivation and at how people can lose their motivation (demotivation).

- Some kinds of motivation
- Motivation and choices
- Losing motivation (demotivation)

Some kinds of motivation

The two best-known ways of looking at motivation are called intrinsic–extrinsic and integrative–instrumental. There is some overlap between the two approaches.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have to do with whether the motivator is more inside you or outside of you (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation is about doing something because it makes you feel happy, more whole, or because it fits in some way with something important to who you are. Extrinsic motivation has to do with doing something for such ‘outside’ reasons as money, job requirements, or passing a test. The two kinds of motivation probably overlap to some degree when the job or test, for example, are part of a career that you care a lot about, or are part of a degree program in a subject you really like. Then your work for the test or assignment may be extrinsically motivated, but the program of which it is a part brings about intrinsic motivation, too.

Within the language learning field, the classic model is the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). If you are learning a language primarily for a purpose like getting a job or fulfilling an academic requirement you are affected by instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation has to do with wanting to be accepted by another community. You may have both kinds of motivation: you are instrumentally motivated to pass a test or meet a requirement, but at the same time, you might have fallen in love with, for example, Hindu culture and want to learn Hindi for the sake of getting to know Indians better and maybe participating in their culture to some degree.

Extrinsic and instrumental motivation are similar but not exactly alike – extrinsic focuses on the fact that the reason is outside of you, whereas instrumental is about the purpose of your learning. Intrinsic and integrative motivations are even more different: intrinsic motivation has to do with what makes you feel good or whole, whereas integrative motivation is about acceptance and some form of membership in a language community.

Motivation and choices

Motivation applies not only to why you are learning a language (see chapter 1), but also to why you make the choices you do while learning. Factors that influence that motivation and hence the choices include learning style and personality, anxiety, self-efficacy (discussed below), and personal history, among other things. For example, you might have taken a trip to Thailand recently and now want to learn Thai (personal history, intrinsic), be enrolled in a program in international relations (extrinsic and indirectly intrinsic if you really like the subject), enjoy learning by talking to others rather than in a classroom and thus seek to participate in immersion learning (learning style and personality).

Another place motivation can affect your choices is in the learning strategies you use. Some years ago, one of the authors needed to learn some Arabic for a two-week stay in the Middle East. What she wanted (her motivation) was to build friendships and get her basic needs met. She also wanted a base to keep learning while abroad. Knowing that she had only a few hours to devote to the language before her departure, she decided that what she would need most was a good understanding of foreign guest etiquette and very basic language for exchanging courtesies and getting around town on her own. That's what she worked on with her teacher. Discussions of culture and etiquette were in English, but she tried to make the most of her minimal Arabic during the rest of the time, with the result that she had a splendid visit, both socially and linguistically. This is an example of how her motivation determined what and how she chose to study.

Losing motivation (demotivation)

It is possible to lack or lose motivation. Some experiences can be demotivating for you, for example a classroom in which you cannot make the most of your learning style. If you are an inductive learner, for instance, and everything is pointed out by the teacher, you may feel frustration at not being able to make your own discoveries. On the other hand, this might be a more comfortable situation if you are a deductive learner, who would rather apply what is learned than discover it.

Another demotivating situation, depending on your personality, may be feeling rejected by a speaker of the language. One of the authors felt for some time that a teacher of one of the languages she was learning did not like her. She had to work very hard to overcome the discouragement she felt and even took to meditating to clear her mind before each session with that teacher. (The story had a happy ending; not only did she learn the language well, but the teacher became a good friend.)

Anxiety can be highly demotivating. After all, who wants to face constant threats and stress? You may be tempted to cope with your anxiety by avoiding the situation that makes you anxious and justify it to yourself as something you didn't want to do anyway (this is the "sour grapes" defense: the grapes turn out

to be sour, so I didn't want them anyway). Avoiding learning and deciding you don't want it after all because it makes you anxious is unlikely to lead to success; it would be better to try some of the anxiety management techniques described above in the section on anxiety.

You can really get discouraged when you do poorly in an examination or feel that you are not as good as others in the class. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, changing your focus to doing better next time or to your own progress is a good way to cope with this kind of discouragement.

Sometimes you may have to learn the language because it is required. Some of you may find it hard to get motivated to work if you do not see any practical reason for learning the language. In this case you may need to find things that catch your interest, or better yet, make some friends from the country where the language is spoken.

Maintaining motivation

So what can you do if you are not feeling motivated to learn the language, do your homework, or speak with others in the language? Listed below are some suggestions.

- Review your goals.
- Have some fun with or through the language.
- Manage your feelings.
- Interact with other people.

Review your goals

You can review for yourself why you are learning the language. You may be able to get back to what got you into it in the first place. For example, even though you are meeting a university requirement to take a language, you chose to study Russian because you were thinking you would like to visit the cultural treasures in St. Petersburg and elsewhere in Russia. You had also met some Russians and liked them. Now you are having a hard time with Russian, and you're losing interest. Once you remind yourself of these reasons, some simple things you can do are to find a book with pictures of the great Russian museums. Go visit your friends if they are nearby. If they are farther away, try a phone call, just to renew your positive feelings and motivate yourself again.

Build in some pleasure

Find something you like related to the language and let it be your focus. For instance, you might get engaged by the culture of the people who speak the language, by the music, or by sports played by members of the culture. Then you can put some energy into learning words related to your topic of interest and into learning how to talk about it in the language. If you enjoy languages for their own sake, you might find that some of the concepts used in the language

are interesting (new grammar categories, for example). You might like creating something new with the language such as a story or simple poem. A number of good language learners find fun in playing the kind of game described in the section on anxiety, where you see how much you can do in the language with what you know. A variation on that game is adding the task of seeing how well you can learn new things without having to go back into your native language. You can use any or all of these techniques to activate your interest in your study, and you will surely come up with some of your own. Additionally, you might keep a list of things in your head that you like (music and art, science and history) or are interested in about a culture and try to learn as much as you can about each. When you get demotivated or bored with one topic, move to another; you can come back to the original topic later.

Manage your feelings

Put failures in their place. Mistakes are not statements about you and your overall competence or value. They are only obstacles for you to overcome and from which you can learn.

Instead of avoiding necessary learning situations that make you anxious or using the “sour grapes” strategy (I didn’t really want it anyway), make use of the suggestions made above for managing anxiety. Find things you enjoy doing, or find new ways to achieve the same result. For example, if you don’t like memorizing verb forms, try reading texts in the language that use different tenses and aspects. Notice the verbs and their forms. Blank out the verbs, and then go through and try to fill them in right. This way you get exposure and a way to test yourself without having to use brute memorization, and you get a sense of gradual mastery as well.

One thing that might help is the fact that most native speakers (outside your classroom) are very tolerant of learner error and accent (albeit the French have a reputation, perhaps unfairly ascribed, for intolerance of the latter).

Interact with others

Relationships with other people can make a wonderful motivator. After all, language is communication, and communication is with other people. Sometimes we learn not only for our own purposes but because it will please someone else, such as a parent, teacher, or friend. In fact, one theory says that we often learn at first to please someone else, and then, by some mental magic, that love of the other person becomes love of the subject (Mishne, 1996). (Many good teachers know this, and they use the relationships they build with students to help them learn. You can use it in the reverse direction: you get an additional benefit from your relationships to help you learn.)

Perhaps the best way to build such relationships is to make friends who speak the language. It would be ideal to use the language with them to practice conversation, but even if you cannot for some reason, you will pick up a lot about the language and culture from them, and your friendship with them will support your motivation

CASE STUDY

Problem

Elena works for a foreign company whose managers speak English. She has found that she needs to improve her English to advance in the company. Although this is not her highest priority in how to have fun, she has enrolled in an English as a Second Language program. She has been in it for about two weeks and is thinking of quitting. The others in the class seem to know more English than she does, and she misses the time she spent dancing with friends. The subject matter is boring to her; it is all about sports and politics.

Possible solutions

- (1) Elena could revisit her purpose in joining the class and visualize herself speaking with company managers and clients in much better English and succeeding in her projects.
- (2) She could find some English speakers who like to dance and go dancing (and talking) with them.
- (3) She could introduce some topics she likes into the class. Maybe a word with the teacher might help, if she cannot bring up the topics as part of the lesson.

Figure 4.4

to keep working on learning their language. A variation on this approach is to work out an exchange with them, where you spend some of the time with their language and some of the time with yours so that you both learn.

Sometimes it just helps to talk with a sympathetic person when you're frustrated or discouraged about the language learning. Teachers and friends are the obvious starting points, but you may have others you find helpful, such as the librarian or a relative. Some universities have language advisory services or language-learning skill centers; they are a good place to talk out what is going on, and they can give you advice tailored to your individual needs. Think about your social circle: perhaps there is someone you never thought of as a source of listening and possibly advice to whom you can turn.

Self-efficacy

About self-efficacy

Knowing what self-efficacy is can help you reach your goals successfully in many endeavors, not just in foreign language. To improve your sense of self-efficacy, two pieces of information will help:

- a definition of self-efficacy; and
- a description of the factors that affect self-efficacy.

Defining self-efficacy

Feelings of self-efficacy have to do with one's feeling that one can accomplish a task or project, such as learning a foreign language. It is not quite the same thing as self-confidence, which is more general. You may be generally self-confident in most settings, but you may or may not have a sense of self-efficacy as a language learner, on the playing field, or at cocktail parties, just to take a few examples. Self-efficacy is a close partner with motivation: if you think you can accomplish something, you are likely to want to try it. If you think you are likely to fail or not be very good at something, your motivation may suffer. Needless to say, lack of self-efficacy is likely to involve some anxiety, so the two concepts are related, and so are the ways to cope.

A sense of self-efficacy is normally the result of previous successful experience. If you have succeeded at the same or a similar task, you will enter the new project confident that you can do this one too. This is one of the reasons for practicing small tasks, like getting the verb at the end of the sentence in Turkish, and large ones, such as making contact with a customer or client. Once you have practiced it, you know that you have what it takes to do it when you need it.

For you and for teachers, building in success is extremely important. Experiences of success breed success, and too much failure can lead to discouragement and demotivation. If you are finding something difficult, break it down into parts, and tackle only one part at a time. You do not have to learn all the Arabic plural forms, for example. Instead, set your priorities, and select one or two of the most common categories to learn, listen for, and practice.

Factors that affect self-efficacy

Not only does self-efficacy vary by domain of activity (such as sports, political debate, or language learning), it also is influenced by what you are like (your personality and learning style), and by other people. Some important factors include:

- personality
- learning style
- relationships

Personality

Some personality characteristics increase or decrease feelings of self-efficacy, depending on the specific situation. One example is extraversion (tendency to seek stimulation from outside yourself, especially with other people), which is likely to promote a sense of self-efficacy in situations where you need to talk to a lot of people in the foreign language. (This is not to say that introverts, who tend to try to control external stimulation, lack self-efficacy in talking to people, but their strengths are likely to be in deeper discussions with one or two other people, rather than in crowds.) An introvert, on the other hand, might approach a writing task with more confidence than an extravert. (There will be

a lot more about personality later in this chapter; we suggest that as you read it, you consider how it may affect your sense of language-learning self-efficacy.)

Learning style

Your learning style is likely to play a major role in your sense of self-efficacy in specific situations. Those learners who like dealing with the unpredictable, for example, may enter an unstructured learning situation like an immersion learning program with confidence or even pleasurable anticipation. Learners who prefer overt structure might feel at a loss without it.

Relationships

If being liked is important to you, your self-efficacy will probably be increased if you feel that the people you are talking with are “on your side” and are laughing *with* you when you make errors rather than *at* you. Good relationships can help. One of the authors has found that even when she is at the early language-learning stages, one way to build successful relationships is to let native speakers become her teachers. Most of them enjoy the role, especially because she is adept at letting the “teachers” know she is enjoying being taught. This technique works for her at all levels of proficiency.

Building and maintaining self-efficacy

When you enter a language-learning experience, you may be certain if the teaching style or situation will fit you. You may have learned foreign languages as a child just by growing up in a country where more than one language was spoken, so trying to learn a language in a classroom may be new for you. Or the opposite may be true: you may have had years of classroom Japanese, but this is the first time for you to try to speak Japanese in Japan. What can you do to help yourself build more confidence in your ability to learn Japanese? There are a number of strategies. Here a few of them; you can probably think of even more yourself:

- being self-aware;
- imaging;
- making friends;
- being realistic;
- checking your progress;
- improving your weak areas gradually;
- using positive self-talk; and
- chunking.

Self-awareness

The first step toward building self-confidence is self-awareness. If you know what your learning style and personality preferences are, you will have a

better idea of the situations that enhance your self-efficacy and those which will detract from it. There is a great deal about learning style in chapter 3, and you will read about personality later in this chapter. If, for example, you learn that the class requires a lot of oral work – which you are not good at – but that there is also a textbook, which is more in keeping with your preferences for visual learning, you can plan on being able to manage the learning situation by reading the chapters before going to class rather than waiting for them to be assigned following oral work.

Imaging

Imaging, or imagining yourself in a situation, is not only a good technique for managing anxiety and enhancing motivation, it can help you with self-efficacy as well. For example, imagine yourself succeeding at speaking Indonesian in Jakarta and making friends with Indonesians or managing the Finnish cases so well that you are understood by Finns. If you are a visual learner, you might close your eyes and visualize future scenes where you are joking with a group of Indonesian friends or making a short presentation to a group of Finns. That feeling of success can carry over to your classroom and, later, even to the actual situation.

Making friends

Making friends who encourage you and help you see your uppermost potential and who “hold your hand” when you are feeling down can boost your feelings of self-efficacy. These friends can be speakers of your own language, but it is even better if they can come from the culture and country whose language you are learning. It may take some time to develop such friendships, but they can be worth a huge amount if you are patient. Language exchange (your language for theirs) is a good way to start.

Realism

Be realistic, neither too optimistic nor too pessimistic. Everyone has limitations. However, instead of focusing on the limitations, spend your efforts focusing on how you can overcome (and are overcoming) those limitations every day.

Checking your progress

If you are feeling some discouragement, take a look at material you learned earlier in your course and see how far you’ve come. There will always be a gap between what you are learning now and what you feel you have mastered, so it is a good idea to look at your increasingly solid base from time to time.

Look for what you’re good at and emphasize it. For example, if you do well with making yourself understood despite your limitations, find opportunities to do that, and let yourself feel good about your successes at it.

CASE STUDY

Problem

Beth enjoys her class in Indonesian, but she is afraid she will not be able to talk to Indonesians in a way that will help her get her needs met and her work done. She is both anticipating and dreading her immersion study there – anticipating because she loves the language and culture, but dreading because she lacks confidence in her ability to manage Indonesian in an unstructured situation.

Possible solutions

- (1) Beth could imagine herself in successful interactions in a variety of situations in Indonesia.
- (2) She could pick some topics she likes to talk about and prepare herself to make conversation about them.
- (3) She could make some Indonesian friends – maybe Beth's teacher can help her find some people to talk with outside of class. She can use the topics she has prepared.

Figure 4.5

Improving your weak areas gradually

While emphasizing your strengths, do not neglect the things you do not like as well or are not very good at doing. Get into these things gradually, and try to be sure that you do them in small enough steps that you build in more success than failure. Here's an example: instead of trying to learn all of the irregular verbs in French at once, learn the regular present first, then the future, then the compound past, etc.

Using positive self-talk

Give yourself a pep talk from time to time, saying such things as "I am a good learner. Sometimes I run into things that are hard, and then I find strategies to help myself. I'm smart about learning strategically." If you catch yourself saying things like "I'm no good at language learning," stop yourself as fast as you can. It may be a natural defense against the feeling of failure, but it is also likely to engender more failure that you can avoid. If necessary, start doing something other than language-learning tasks to distract yourself.

Chunking

Good teachers know that building in success is a key feature for lesson planning. When they have students who are having particular difficulty, they also design activities or lesson materials for those learners that move more slowly but ensure success at each step. If you are a learner, you can do some of the same thing for yourself in your learning plans. The kind of chunking where you break a large task into smaller ones is a good example of this.

Personality

Personality is closely intertwined with everything we have discussed already: memory, learning styles, learning strategies, learning aptitude, anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy. What we pay attention to and remember, how we prefer to learn, what makes us anxious, what motivates us, and what we are confident at, all are linked to our personality preferences. It also makes a big difference in how we conduct our interpersonal relations, which are addressed in the next chapter.

Since personality is such a complex area, the maxim “The map is not the territory” is especially apt. Philosophers and psychologists have been trying to understand human personality since at least the time of the ancient Greeks, and there are a great many maps to explore. No one map completely covers the territory, and it is entirely possible that even if the maps were combined, there would still be unknown territory.

We will focus here on a few of the more widely used models of personality that have proved useful in language learning and teaching. They are

- the Jungian Myers–Briggs type indicator (MBTI),
- other Jungian personality models, and
- other personality models.

The Myers–Briggs type indicator

Personality typing, especially through the Myers–Briggs type indicator (MBTI) (Myers, McCaulley, et al., 1998), has become widespread. It is used in companies, schools, by counselors, and in research. While it is not the only personality typology in existence, it is the one that has been the most researched, especially for educational settings.

The MBTI is based on and adapted from the work of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1971). Jung described three aspects of psychological activity. These aspects are

- extraversion and introversion (direction of energy flow),
- sensing and intuition (mental function for taking in data), and
- thinking and feeling (mental function for coming to conclusions and making decisions).

One from each of these pairs is preferred and used most of the time in your conscious activity. The other member of each pair stays with you too, but it affects your unconscious functioning more (Jung, 1971).

Myers and Briggs (Myers with Myers, 1980; Myers, McCaulley, et al., 1998) added a fourth dimension, which we include here, as well:

- judging-perceiving (how you prefer to deal with the world outside of you, especially how much structure you want from it).

Extraversion (E) vs. introversion (I)

You are probably familiar with these terms; they are widely used. Most people think of extraverts as outgoing and talkative, and introverts as reserved and quiet. These stereotypes are partially true, but not always. Introverts can be very outgoing and assertive (for example, one of the authors describes herself as a “noisy introvert” when in learning situations); extraverts also need “down time” and quiet to restore their balance. What Jung meant by extraversion is not the same as what is usually meant by the popular term: instead, he meant that the external world is attractive to the extravert and at the same time energizes him or her. Some of the traits like gregariousness and so on are often characteristic of extraverts, but they are not extraversion. The same is true of introverts: the internal world is attractive and energizing; introverts may be quiet and reserved, but those traits are not introversion.

Recent research suggests that extraversion-introversion is probably related to level of neural arousal (Revelle, Anderson, and Humphreys, 1987; Eysenck, 1991). Introversion appears to relate to a higher level of internal neural arousal and activity. As a result, it is easy for an introvert to get too much stimulation from the outside world and thus need to withdraw from stimulation to restore balance. On the other hand, extraverts appear to bring less neural arousal to their interactions with the outside world and thus may seek external stimulation. As a result, extraverts and introverts tend to behave differently. One good example is that extraverts tend to be impulsive and jump right into situations, whereas introverts need more time to process before acting. “Let me think about it” is a key phrase for introverts. If you are an extravert, you are more likely to talk a lot in the classroom and seek new acquaintance in non-classroom language-learning settings. If you are an introvert, you will also want to talk (some more than others – remember the “noisy introvert”) in class but will probably want to think about it first, even if briefly. Outside the classroom, you, too, will make friends, but you will probably do it one person at a time and take more time to get to know native speakers.

Sensing (S) vs. intuition (I)

Sensing and intuition have to do with how you take in information and whether you focus more on the present or the future. If you prefer sensing, you probably like factual information more than speculation and more interested in the present than the future. You would rather focus on “what is” than on “what might be.” On the other hand, if you prefer intuition, you are likely more interested in what the facts mean than in the facts themselves and are future-oriented, interested in possibilities. Sensing and intuition play a major role in interests and choices of subjects for study. Sensing types are likely to choose to concentrate in areas like accounting, surgery, and business, for example, whereas

intuitives are more likely to be interested in areas like literature, psychology, and philosophy.

Not only does this dimension strongly influence your interests, it also affects how you go about learning: sensing types are more likely to prefer ecenic learning, and intuitives tend to prefer synoptic approaches (see chapter 3). In other words, in foreign-language classes, if you are a sensing type, you may want to have an explanation of rules before you are expected to apply them. If you are in a language class that does not approach language learning in this way, you can buy yourself a grammar reference book or a textbook with rules and read through the explanations as you come to the various grammar features in the classroom. Conversely, if you are an intuitive type in a classroom where you basically learn grammar rules and then practice applying them, you might do a lot of supplemental reading of literature of all sorts from the target culture.

Thinking (T) vs. feeling (F)

Once you have information from sensing or intuition, you are likely to want to do something with it, such as make decisions and choices. The thinking–feeling scale describes different ways to do this. Thinking individuals seek to deal with the world through logic and cause-effect; feeling individuals look more at right–wrong, good–bad, that is, values. All of us use thinking, and all of us use feeling, the issue is more which one you prefer to use and which tends to be more automatic for you. Your preference for thinking or feeling will also influence how much priority you give to task achievement (thinking) over interpersonal harmony (feeling), and vice versa. (Of course most of us want some of both, but sometimes when we must give priority, our thinking or feeling preference tips the balance.) In the classroom, thinking types tend to be more comfortable with competition and argument than feeling types; a class that consists largely of feeling types will generally feel more harmonious. In terms of learning strategies, thinking types tend to like analyzing language; feeling types tend to reject it.

If you are a thinking type who finds yourself in a classroom with many feeling types, or in which the norms seem to be more feeling than thinking, you need to try to be aware when you may be coming across as argumentative, even when you think you are engaging in simple debate. What seems like debate to you may feel like friction to feeling types. On the other hand, your bent for analyzing may be helpful to your feeling classmates, who find it much less congenial. Offer to help them. Building relationships through studying together is sometimes easier for thinking types than trying to establish interpersonal relations in other kinds of ways.

If you are a feeling type who finds yourself in what may feel like a competitive classroom, you can try to keep it in perspective. For most thinking types, argument and debate are not personal. If you find yourself taking things too personally, step back, think about it, and maybe even ask one or more classmates if they meant what they said personally if it really stings you. If you find yourself in a teaching

program that focuses attention on analyzing grammar, you can of course use it as a chance to learn new skills. If it is really hard for you, see if you can get some help from the teacher or a classmate who seems to be good at helping others to learn how to do analysis better. And don't forget that you have other things to offer.

Judging (J) vs. perceiving (P)

In personality type theory, everyone has both inner worlds (most important to introverts) and outer worlds (primary for extraverts), but all of us have to deal with the outer world, whether or not it is preferred. Judging–perceiving indicates how you like to relate to your outer world, and how much structuring you want from it. Judgers generally like a planned and relatively predictable life; they want things decided so they can get on with the task (whatever the task may be). Perceivers prefer to keep their options open and maintain flexibility, and they often prefer to delay decisions so they can get more information. If you are a judger (structure and closure), you are likely to be good at getting things done on time and manage your time well. You turn in your homework in an orderly way. If you prefer perceiving, on the other hand, your time management may be less regular, with a lot of last-minute scrambles, but you are likely to be relatively tolerant of the ambiguity you encounter in language learning and relatively flexible in dealing with the inevitable surprises.

If you are a perceiver in classes with judging norms – which in fact is the case in most classes – you will probably find that you need to learn to adapt to those norms, because you will find them in most organizations after you leave your schooling, as well. (This paragraph is written by a perceiver, so it's not coming from judger bias.) That doesn't mean you can't continue to find ways to express your spontaneity and enjoyment of the unexpected, but you do need to learn to manage your time. One last minute paper is fine, but what if you end up with three things that all have to be done at the same time?

If you are a judger, you will probably find that most situations are relatively comfortable for you, because of the judging norms found in most institutions and organizations, as well as most Western cultures in general. However, you can still learn to enjoy the perceiver gift for spontaneity and even play in learning situations. Bear with the perceivers: their need for more data is likely to provide something you never thought of and may not even have known you needed to know.

The sixteen types

If you have one preference from each of these dimensions, you then have four characteristics, which are abbreviated by the first letter of the preference E for extraversion, I for introversion, and so forth (the exception is intuition, for which the abbreviation is N, since I is used for introversion). There are sixteen possible combinations of the four preferences; these combinations are called personality types. They are

ISTJ	INTJ
ESTJ	ENTJ
ISFJ	INFJ
ESFJ	ENFJ
ISTP	INTP
ESTP	ENTP
ISFP	INFP
ESFP	ENFP

None of these sixteen possible outcomes (types) is considered better than any of the others although there are likely to be environments that provide a better fit for some types than for others. For example, an extraverted teacher might expect more frequent and rapid class participation than some introverts find easy to achieve. Certainly, there will be good and bad matches between you and your instructors and with fellow students. Understanding such mismatches is the first step in preventing them from causing problems.

As an example of how the personality scales combine into personality types, let's look at the first type on the list, ISTJ (introverted–sensing–thinking–judging). This is one of the more common American personality types (Keirsey and Bates, 1988). A person of this personality type usually likes very clear-cut settings with few surprises and tends to be highly reliable, meticulous, and thorough when working. If you belong to the ISTJ personality group, you are apt to seek stability and maintain an orderly, structured life. Your interests may be quite down-to-earth and non-fanciful. As a student, you will usually want a so-called “structured” curriculum and program with objectives, lesson material that is minimally ambiguous, and frequent quizzes and tests on covered material covered, to ensure mastery. You are likely to need to develop skills at dealing with language as it is spoken naturally, with all its ambiguities, fluctuations, and volatility. ISTJs are likely to complain most about unpredictable, apparently disorganized programs and teachers.

Now, let's look at the last type on the list, ENFP (extraverted–intuiting–feeling–perceiving). This is the polar opposite of the ISTJ. ENFPs are outgoing people pleasers. They feel a strong need for freedom of choice in activity and time. For that reason, deadlines sometimes amuse, sometimes irritate them, and sometimes frighten them. Often, they simply ignore them, or will say (typically honestly) that they forgot that something was due. They tend to be happy people who gather friends around them. In the classroom, they love group work, and they are great team players – as long as they are not threatened with a restrictive curriculum, quizzes, and tight deadlines.

Each of the sixteen types can be described similarly, though there is insufficient space here for it. There are many books and websites available with descriptions of the sixteen types; we suggest that you use terms like *personality type*, *psychological type*, *MBTI*, or *Myers–Briggs* to find them through a search engine on the Internet.

The importance of understanding personality types for you is the recognition that most of the sixteen types will appear in your classroom. For example, sometimes classrooms are heavily balanced toward extraverts, which can make the class seem very noisy and overactive to you if you are an introvert. Sometimes they will be balanced toward introverts, which may make the classroom seem uncomfortably quiet if you are an extravert. If your teacher is a thinker, and you are a feeler, there is a strong chance that you will find difficulty from your side in establishing rapport with him or her because a T teacher simply does not, by nature, give the amounts and kinds of warm, personal support for feedback. Rather, the T teacher works on developing the intellectual capacity of students – and that is a sign that the teacher really cares. The problem is that if you are an F, you may not be looking for signs of your teacher's concern in the right places. In reverse, the F teacher may seem too friendly to you if you are a T student, and you might wish that the teacher spent more time dealing with your ideas than with your feelings. Classrooms work or do not work, to some extent, by how well the personality types in them mix. Any mixture is immediately improved when the students and teacher understand personality theory and make concessions and adaptations for the overall representation of personality types within their groups.

Other Jungian personality models

The Myers–Briggs model is widely used in the US, Britain, and Australia. However, it is not the only model that is based on Jung. Other derivatives from Jung's work include

- socionics,
- Jungian functions, and
- Jungian temperaments.

Socionics

Like the MBTI, socionics is a sixteen-type derivative of Jung's work. Unlike the MBTI, the socionics model, which is in wide use in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as throughout Eurasia, Central Asia, and the Baltic nations, strives to stay very close to the original descriptions and type labels suggested by Jung.

Jungian functions

The types can be subgrouped by combinations of the four component preferences. These frequently are important in learning situations. One common way of looking at subtypes is to pull out the two functions (the two middle letters in the type label). These are referred to as *function pairs* (Silver and Hanson, 1996). The function pairs are

- ST (sensing–thinking),
- NT (intuitive–thinking),
- SF (sensing–feeling), and
- NF (intuitive–feeling).

Sensing–thinking (ST). If you prefer the sensing and thinking combination, you probably are oriented toward facts and experience and want practical solutions to tangible, current problems. As a student, you are likely to want a stable, firm base of knowledge before moving on and usually appreciate information that is presented sequentially for you to process one step at a time. You may not respond well to approaches that seem overly theoretical, unrelated to the problem now, or ingenious at the expense of practicality. It is likely that you do not want to be involved in the design of your program – that is the teacher’s job, and you want to learn in a logical sequence, not through the random access that some other students prefer. You may tend to reject appeals to your feelings.

If you find yourself in a non-ST classroom, there are ways you can help yourself. For example if you find yourself in situations where you are missing a logical sequence, you might ask for a backtrack, either in the class (there may be others who want it too) or, if you think that would be intrusive, privately with the teacher or other student. You can take the material you are getting and outline it later, to bring it into better order. If there seems to be little or no lesson plan, see if you can negotiate some time for more structured learning, and treat the rest of the time as practice for when you are in real language use situations, where you can expect a lot of unpredictability.

Intuition–thinking (NT). If you lean toward intuition and thinking, you are probably relatively oriented toward possibilities, future potential, strategy, theory, and systems thinking. If you are an NT, then, like the ST, you will probably be put off by things you consider to be “touchy-feely.” You may get interested in the system or set of constructs underlying what you are learning, such as how the verbal system works, at the expense of using it (i.e. including a range of verbs in your speech), because you enjoy the intellectual challenge. NT learners want to feel that their program is designed by and in the hands of competent staff; if you are an NT, you may become cynical if you don’t trust the competence of your teachers. If you prefer NT, you probably want more learning autonomy than many of your classmates and may like random-access, non-linear learning strategies.

If you find yourself in a non-NT classroom, keep in mind that there are a lot of ways to learn. Two of the authors are NT, and we both find learning through experiences like role plays and immersions to be extremely useful. Keep in mind that you can probably do the analyses and cognitive organization for yourself or with a reference of some sort. The experiential learning you get is something that you may not be able to manage on your own. If there seems to be too much mechanical drilling, bear with it, and see if you get anything out of it. If it really seems less than useful, you might negotiate with your teacher to do something else that is not disruptive to the rest of the class, such as self-study, working on reading, or the like.

Sensing–feeling (SF). If you like sensing and feeling (SF) best, you probably are fact-oriented, care about the everyday concerns of people (yourself and others), and gravitate toward providing practical help to others (teaching, health care,

etc.). As a student, you are likely to prefer to learn carefully, systematically, and methodically, but you also enjoy the occasional people-related surprise, such as birthday parties and other social events. You probably enjoy field trips and other practical learning activities that involve other people. SFs frequently bring a kind of *joie de vivre* to their classrooms and learning. You may tolerate ambiguity somewhat more than your ST classmates, possibly because your orientation to people and people's needs leads to more flexibility in general.

Some ways that SFs can get into trouble in language classes are through lack of interest in abstractions that seem unrelated to people, boredom with what seems like dry information, or difficulties with setting priorities. If you find any of these to be the case for you, find some way to relate what you are learning to people (make up a story and keep adding to it as you get new language, for example, or find a pen-pal or friend on the Internet to get to know as an example of a speaker of the language who is real to you). As for priorities, there are good suggestions in chapters 2 and 3 of this book; see how they work for you if you apply them systematically.

Intuition–feeling (NF). The key for intuition and feeling is usually personal authenticity, expressing who you really are. If you are one of the NF types, you are likely to want to understand and communicate with others, so language is a natural medium for you and for your self-expression. Like the intuitive thinking types (NT), you are probably oriented toward possibilities. As students, you especially enjoy creativity both in how you are taught and in your learning activities. A real advantage for you as an NF language learner can be your natural interest in communication and your relative flexibility in learning activities. When you get into trouble, though, it is often because you may take in so much that you get inundated, and you may not make important distinctions (that is, you may level too much and not do necessary sharpening). If this happens, you might get your teacher or someone else to help you develop some sharpening exercises, starting gradually with relatively easy distinctions and working your way into harder or more complex ones. You can do some of this for yourself by finding a text passage with some synonyms in it. Try to see if you can make the distinctions in meaning. (You can do this in your native language or the foreign one.) Similarly, do the same thing with deciding what is most important for you. If you have been exposed to fifty words, choose the most important ten for right now, and don't worry about the ones that might be useful later.

Jungian temperaments

Another common way to subdivide the types is known as *temperament*, which differentiates among the SJs, SPs, NFs, and NTs (Keirsey and Bates, 1988; Keirsey, 1998). Since the NF and NT groups are the same as those for the function pairs described above, we only describe sensing–judging and sensing–perceiving here. One of the important aspects of temperaments is that it can serve as the basis of rapport (or lack of it) between a teacher and a student (Leaver, 2000). Keirsey and Bates give names to these. It is not important that

you remember the names, but we give them below because some people find it easier to remember the temperaments that way.

Sensing–judging (SJ)

SJ learners have many of the same qualities as the ISTJ described above. If you prefer sensing and judging, you probably tend to be factual, practical, and interested in “reality.” SJ personality types are also called *guardians* because they tend to be conservative and to pass down cultural values from one generation to the next. Responsible membership in a community and service to it is a deep motivator for you. As students, you will probably like rules, things (including language features) in their places, and you will want more predictability in activities and subject content than many other learners. This means that you are likely to appreciate program structure because you know that you can count on the structure to help you avoid being overwhelmed with information and choices.

If you find yourself in an unstructured program (though this is rather rare), you may need to build in some structure for yourself. Much of what was said above for STs will also apply to you, especially if you are an STJ. You may find it helpful to outline material, find organized references, and negotiate with the teacher for some more sequentially organized activities. Similarly, if you are an SFJ, much of what was written above about SFs will also apply to you, though you may be less bothered by the lack of formal structure than your STJ classmates. You will need to find ways to make the learning personal and people-related.

Sensing–perceiving (SP)

If you prefer sensing and perceiving, you probably like freedom of action – not that you need to be taking action all the time, but you want to be able to act immediately when it is needed. You may find outdoor or outdoor-related activities and occupations appealing. You also may find arts and crafts a mechanism for learning. For this reason, sensing–perceiving types are also called *artisans*. As a student, the chances are that you enjoy activities like hands-on experiments, creating various products (drawings, projects, musical pieces), and field trips, where you can move relatively freely and take action more readily as you see the need for it. Although you are usually comfortable with a moderately structured syllabus, you probably also enjoy surprises and diversions more than your SJ classmates.

If you find yourself in a highly structured or a highly intellectual classroom, you may feel dissatisfied. In this case, you can seek ways to bring in both some surprises and some concrete learning experience. Field trips and immersion are often a good way to do this (you would need to talk to your teacher about these). You can also suggest language learning games and try to find fun ways to use the language, like informal competitions, or go ahead and do some creative extra-credit work, such as making a craft item from the culture you are studying. The main thing for you is to avoid too much routine.

Other personality models: the Greek temperaments

There are many other models of personality type. They come and go with the fancy of the reading/using public. Among the more stable ones are the old Greek temperaments that have endured for centuries.

The four-temperament model of personality type proposed by Hippocrates and Galen (Itsines, 1996) in the days of Old Greece is still followed in many countries today. The model is not all that unlike contemporary theories of personality type. It describes four personality types: phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric, and melancholy.

The phlegmatic personality is that of a person who is slow to emotional arousal and, therefore, rarely moody. Impressions made upon him or her are not strong, and he or she is slow to take action or to react to situations that are positively or negatively exciting. The phlegmatic personality often prefers play to work. When he or she does work intensively, it is in a slow but sure way. To some extent, those who have a phlegmatic personality are unflappable. They are not often particularly ambitious. Individuals who test phlegmatic usually also test as introverts on questionnaires based on Jungian personality types. If you are a phlegmatic learner, you may find it helpful to have things repeated to you more often than your teacher is wont to do. In that case, you can repeat for yourself. Make a tape or buy one, and listen to it over and over. If you are more of a visual learner than an auditory one, read your textbook again and again, or even better, buy a novel and read that. (Most authors tend to use the same images over and over and even their word choices tend to repeat.)

Those with a sanguine personality are easily but not strongly excited. Their interests, like their tempers, are generally short-lived. They are quick to move from one interest to another, and their moods can change equally quickly. They are also more likely to be attracted to the external world – communicating with others, communing with nature – than the internal one – introspection. The processing strategies of the sanguine tend to be surface ones. Those who test as sanguine often exhibit sharpening skills, extraversion, and a preference for sensing (rather than intuition). Sanguine individuals are typically highly optimistic and outgoing. They tend to be of good humor. If you are a sanguine type of personality, you might want to spend some time in developing deep processing strategies, which may not come easily to you. You might also want to seek out foreign-language teachers who make extensive use of small-group instruction and cooperative learning.

Choleric individuals tend to be impetuous. They are quickly and strongly emotionally aroused by events and ideas that surround them. They want to excel and work hard to do so. They prefer to lead rather than follow, and are by nature extraverts and thinkers in the Jungian model of personality types. They are also often ambitious and perfectionists. Their impulsivity, however, often works against them since they miss important details in their haste. If you are a choleric personality and working in a cooperative classroom, you may find that your natural proclivities for leadership often cast you in the role of group leader, mentor, guide. On the other hand, you may find yourself annoyed with the plodding pace

CASE STUDY

Problem

Edgar is an intuitive-feeling (NF) type. He likes to have good, personal relations with his teachers and classmates, and he sees learning Swedish as a route to personal growth. His teacher, however, is an ISTJ, a well meaning man for whom overt demonstration of affection is highly uncomfortable, and who believes that lesson time is for lessons, not for relationships. Edgar has no problem with the content or structure of the lessons, but he feels alienated somewhat, because there is no attention to individuals at all. He is wondering how to make this class more satisfying, in light of the clash in psychological types between him and his teacher.

Possible solutions

- (1) Edgar could build relationships with classmates by understanding their needs, as well as his own, and making compromises.
- (2) He might suggest extracurricular activities using the language that both he and his classmates would find interesting.
- (3) Edgar could use lesson materials in ways that support his personal interests.
- (4) Edgar could start building relationships with Swedish speakers with whom he finds greater compatibility than he can with the individuals within his class.

Figure 4.6

of the group and need to restrain your tendency to show that annoyance. Like levelers on the E and L scale, choleric may need to develop some sharpening skills in order to succeed in foreign-language classrooms.

The fourth temperament, melancholic, refers to individuals who are inclined to reflection. Generally introverted, individuals with a melancholic personality like silence and independent work. A classroom with whispering students can distract them, and cooperative-learning situations can sometimes overwhelm them until they acquire some skills for interacting in small or large groups – often through predicting activities ahead of time and rehearsing a role for themselves in them. If you are melancholic, you may find that you are sometimes confused when called upon by a teacher or slow in your response when compared to classmates who are not melancholic. For dealing with this characteristic, too, as well as with the melancholic's tendency to feel self-conscious, prediction and rehearsal can be of great advantage. Melancholics are rarely sharpeners, and learning to notice details can also be very important to their success in foreign-language learning.

Ego boundaries

Another important personality variable is that of ego boundaries (Hartmann, 1991). People vary with respect to their fluidity of mental categories,

especially those that relate to one's identity and one's relation to other people and other ways of perceiving the world. There are two directions a personality can take, toward

- thin ego boundaries or
- thick ego boundaries.

Thin boundaries

Thin (relatively permeable) ego boundaries are associated with tolerance of ambiguity, flexible categories, and learning by osmosis (without being aware of the learning). What this means is that if you are a thin-boundary person, you will probably be able to accept the fact that in immersion and communicative classrooms there will be many words and much grammar that you do not understand, especially in the beginning, and that sometimes a word will have multiple meanings in a foreign language, some of which do not equate to the same range of meanings in English. You are relatively likely to "go with the flow" and try to figure out what you can as you go along. Sometimes, you may learn new things and not know for sure where they came from. So, if you have relatively thin boundaries, you have a good start for language learning, as long as you do not let yourself "drown" in all the input. Moreover, the flexibility of thin ego boundaries probably promotes empathy, which also helps with accepting and absorbing another language and culture.

Nonetheless, there are probably instances in which you run into difficulty in language learning precisely because of your thin boundaries. You may need to set up new categories to make sense of what you are taking in (Ehrman 1993, 1996, 1999; Ehrman and Oxford, 1995); otherwise, you may find yourself awash in data and not know what to do about it. For example, in watching a foreign-language film, you may encounter fifty new vocabulary items that you understand on the spot but cannot recall without some system for filing them in your memory. Field-independent learners tend to do this naturally. If you are not field independent, there are some things you can do to develop the techniques used instinctively by your field-independent peers. While you may experience some frustration with the task, you might spend time doing such things as crossword puzzles, word games (e.g. find a word in the middle of a bunch of letters), and the like. If you do these in the foreign language, so much the better. If you still find yourself at a loss, you might ask your teacher for some help in setting up a personalized dictionary that is divided into categories for keeping lists of new words that are important to you. Likewise, you might categorize lexical items by content topics. The idea is simply to get used to using the strategy of categorization in order to sort incoming information and to be able to locate it in your head later when you need it.

Thick boundaries

Thick (relatively impermeable) ego boundaries relate to a desire for clear categories, compartmentalization of information and lifestyle, and relative

intolerance of ambiguity. What this means is that if you are a thick-boundary person, you may be irritated and confused when you cannot figure out clear rules for the grammar you encounter in class or clear meanings for the words you hear. Sometimes, thick-boundary students will try to translate words literally from their native language into the foreign language. It is understandable why they do this: they want everything to have a clear, predictable place in their mental organization. Generally, few teachers would recommend this as a helpful strategy; however, for some students, it does help them understand grammar better. For example, translating a Russian sentence with a participial structure that does not exist in English into literal English (e.g. *the walking-down-the-street man saw the just-opened-by-his-neighbor store*) can make the structure very clear to a thick-boundary learner in need of clarity.

The advantage to having thick boundaries is the ability to compartmentalize. After all, we all need some mental compartmentalization to keep from being overwhelmed by too much input. Learners with thick ego boundaries can learn languages well, especially in instructed settings. Once experienced at language learning, they do well in setting up their own kinds of instruction that take into account their own learning styles. Some thick-boundary learners are very good at independent study and at using native speakers for obtaining the language information they need and/or want. (If you are a thick-boundary learner, you might consider taking some courses in linguistics, especially field methods. Not only might courses in linguistics help you with your language learning endeavors, but also you may be fascinated by the ways in which they categorize languages, language features, and language change.) As a learner with thick ego boundaries, a major strength for you is your ability to ensure that you do not get lost in data, something that can be a problem for thin-boundary learners.

Nonetheless, there are some disadvantages to having thick boundaries. Effective communicative language learning can benefit from some lessening of the need to be always in control. If you cannot tolerate less-than-neat surroundings, you might also find frustration in languages, which are by nature not very neat. After you have found a number of the “systems” and “categories” in the language you are studying, try dealing with the exceptions by seeing in what ways they differ from “the system.” When presented with confusing language elements, try to associate them with things you already know in the language, in another language, or, if you have studied linguistics, in linguistic theory.

There is another disadvantage to having thick boundaries; empathy may not be as well developed in thick-boundary people as in those at the other end of the scale. Try putting yourself in the place of a person from the culture you are studying. Before you can do that well, though, you may need to learn something about the cultural values and typical reactions to various situations. You may also want to watch some native speakers in action (in real life or in films) and discuss with your teachers the reactions that you noticed (and did not notice). After you have built up some of these insights (which may not come as intuitively to you as they do to thin-boundary individuals), you should be able to hold your own

CASE STUDY

Problem

Marsha has always believed that there is a place for everything and everything has its place. She has firm ideas about how organizational roles should be played out, believing that authorities should be respected because of their position. She wants a clear sequence and schedule in everything she does. In her communicative language class, she is frequently irritated when the teacher departs from the syllabus and responds to unexpected student questions by bringing in material that does not fit in with what Marsha has previously prepared for class. She has begun complaining to her classmates and is feeling an overall sense of anxiety.

Possible solutions

- (1) Marsha can start practicing to be more tolerant of ambiguity, beginning with easy exercises like taking a short passage in which she knows most of the content and language and making guesses about unfamiliar material. As she develops her skill, she can increase the challenge for herself.
- (2) She can work on seeing relationships and similarities among even very diverse things. Perhaps she can make this a game or a challenge for herself.

Figure 4.7

with your thin-boundary peers when it comes to understanding native speakers and being able to put yourself in their place.

Defense mechanisms

Emotional equilibrium and self-esteem are vital to all of us, and we employ a number of ways to protect them in ourselves. A term that is frequently used by psychologists for these activities is defense mechanisms (Vaillant, 1993). Everyone uses defense mechanisms, every day; they are part of normal life. Ehrman (1996, p. 151) writes:

Defense mechanisms are essential for softening failures, protecting us from otherwise overwhelming anxiety, and maintaining our sense of personal worth . . . *every normal person uses all of them* – immature or mature – in greater or lesser degree all the time. Much of the time, we use defense mechanisms appropriately, but . . . [if] inappropriately used, they do not produce realistic adaptation, and sometimes they involve others in inappropriate ways.

What does this mean? It means that all students have ways of “defending” themselves against psychological discomfort. What these are will vary from student to student. One student may withdraw emotional energy; another might deflect attention onto socializing with students whose company enhances his sense of his worth. Yet another might refuse to invest emotional energy in language learning

without intrinsic motivation (i.e. personal interest). Some students may avoid becoming involved with a new culture in order to avoid being disappointed. And so on.

There are a number of ways of categorizing all these kinds of behaviors. We suggest four principal categories, although other authors may suggest others. These are:

- flight or withdrawal behaviors;
- aggressive or “fight” behaviors;
- group manipulation behaviors; and
- compromise behaviors.

Flight/withdrawal behaviors

You have probably engaged in some of these behaviors at one time or another; nearly everyone does. These are the things that you do to avoid uncomfortable situations.

One example of these kinds of defense mechanisms is test preparation. Let us say that you have a test tomorrow, which will cover verbal forms, which you do not understand well. Instead of working at understanding these forms, you might spend more time with the meaning of the verbs and the various parts of the verbs (stems, suffixes, etc.) even though you already understand these things. In some cases, you might decide to put off studying and eat supper first. You might, in this way, add other activities and fritter away much of your study time.

Another example is “flight/withdrawal” reaction to a test score. Instead of trying to figure out what you did wrong, you may ignore a bad grade on a test. You might even blame the teacher for the grade if you think he or she does not like you or underrates your skills. Rather than learning why you made the grammar mistakes that you did, you might excuse the grade by saying that it is meaningless to you because the test was on grammar and what is most important to you is developing a large vocabulary.

The common element in these examples is that you are in all these instances walking about from the real issue – and in the long run, that is not helpful. (In the short run, it will make you feel better, which is why we call these behaviors defense mechanisms: they defend against our feeling bad about ourselves.)

Aggressive/fight behaviors

Aggressive/fight behaviors are just the opposite of flight/withdrawal behaviors. They meet the problem head-on, but not in a particularly rational way. You may have experienced some of these kinds of behaviors from your classmates. (Perhaps you have even engaged in them yourself.) Perhaps a classmate laughed at your pronunciation or complained that you hogged the speaking time. This is one example of aggressive/fight behaviors.

Perhaps a classmate tried to compete with the teacher for control of the class, whispering, making negative comments about the teacher, and the like. This is another example of this kind of defense mechanism.

CASE STUDY

Problem

Susan says: I need to try to say things more simply, and I just can't do it. Is the problem my attitude or the situation? I feel devalued when there is a change in teacher or I get feedback after a test. Sometimes I feel written off. When I'm doing drills, I don't learn much new, but in free conversation, I make mistakes and keep getting corrected. It leads to a lot of frustration. There isn't enough speaking or drilling time, and that's what I need. I hate drills – they're boring and mechanical, but I know I need them. When other students take a confrontation approach in debates, it gets in my learning space, and I don't function well (from Ehrman, 1996, p. 155).

Possible solutions

- (1) These comments represent a number of ways of externalizing, because the student perceives her difficulties as coming from outside herself.
- (2) Susan will be much better off if she can come to see how many of her difficulties come from choices she makes but attributes to others.
- (3) Classmates and teachers need to immunize themselves so that they do not fall into the role of accepting the blame or arguing with Susan.

Figure 4.8

Here is a third example: perhaps a classmate has said bad things about the course, its structure, the teaching method, or even about his or her peers. Sometimes someone who feels defensive will argue with the teacher ("The textbook says A, so why are you telling us B?" or "I know a native speaker who uses a different word for that, so you must be wrong!") or barrage the teacher with questions to delay going over the homework, which he or she has not understood (or done).

Class clowns are often exhibiting defense mechanisms, but in good spirit, rather than a negative one. The common element is that these behaviors attack the symptom while ignoring the real problem.

Group manipulation behaviors

These behaviors are very typical in elementary and high school programs, in which students try to establish some kind of pecking order. Cliques form, and there are some students who are "in" and others who are "out." This same kind of behavior can continue into college although it is usually less overt at this level. Sometimes, though, when some students are not succeeding well at learning a foreign language, they will start to form subgroups within the class. They may pick on a particularly gifted or untalented learner, drawing attention away from their own lack of success. Or, they may become a support group for each other, but not in a positive sense; rather, they protect each other's right to

Table 4.1

Category	About me	Unproductive aspects	What to do
anxiety			
motivation			
self-efficacy			
personality type			
etc.			

do poorly and not feel badly about it. These kinds of defense mechanisms are not helpful.

Compromise behaviors

Compromise behaviors are a mature form of defense mechanisms. Some are anticipating difficulties and preparing for them. If you think you did poorly on the test, be prepared for a low grade and make plans to learn from the experience – and to learn whatever language points you missed. If you make a funny mistake and people instinctively laugh, laugh along with them; they cannot laugh *at* you if you are laughing along *with* them. Rather than picking on a slower learner in the class, you and your classmates could tutor the learner. Thinking of the class as a whole needing to perform well can contribute to your own better performance.

Practice what you have learned!

1. Review the various categories discussed in this chapter and apply them to yourself. For example, do you get anxious when you have to speak in class? Do you think you are more like a thick-boundary learner or a thin-boundary one? You can make a table like the example above and start by filling in the first two columns (Category and About me).
2. Evaluate whether the behavior and feelings you have noted in column 2 (About me) are helpful or not. If they are not helpful, or not helpful enough, make a note in column 3 (What to change). For example, if you are anxious about speaking in class, and it's inhibiting you, make a note that you need to find a way to control or prevent the anxiety.
3. Now go through and think of some steps you can take to increase your success. For example, one person might meditate before class, whereas another might practice a few key phrases to try to use in class, so the focus is on the phrases and not on the anxiety.
4. Examine your strategies. Did they work? Take the satisfying step of crossing off the section where you have reduced your difficulties substantially.

Review

In this chapter, you considered a number of themes. The content of these themes can be summarized as follows:

- Foreign-language anxiety is often caused by the amount of material to be learned, the difficulties of communicating at lower levels of proficiency, self-consciousness about errors, and the foreignness of the language. Foreign-language anxiety can be coped with successfully through simplification, using islands, focusing on the known, reframing, accepting the fact that anxiety is normal, goal-setting, and game playing.
- Performance anxiety is related to foreign-language anxiety and is felt when you are anxious about answering questions, reciting, making presentations, or doing role-plays in front of your peers. You can manage performance anxiety by preparing in advance.
- Test anxiety comes from previous conditioning, self-image, consequences, fear and frustration from limited language skills, and “facing the music.” It can be managed by asking for a retest, resolving to do better the next time, putting the consequences out of mind as much as possible and focusing on something more helpful, managing your image of yourself, preparing well in advance, managing your time actively and effectively during the test, and maintaining a good relationship with those who test you.
- Motivation comes in various types: extrinsic (e.g. rewards), intrinsic (e.g. interest in languages), instrumental (e.g. learning the language for a job), and integrative (e.g. learning the language in order to become better friends with native speakers of the language).
- Self-efficacy can be promoted through success (success breeds success). Personality, learning styles, and relationships all affect self-efficacy positively or negatively.
- Personality types abound (in the Jungian model, there are sixteen of them); understanding the various personality types can improve teacher–student and student–student relationships and explain why one classroom and its activities are more comfortable for you than another. In addition, some people have thick ego boundaries (and others thin ego boundaries); these, too, affect the way they go about relating to native speakers and to cross-cultural experiences.
- Defense mechanisms are part of everyday life; everyone uses them even though they can sometimes get in the way of effective learning; some defenses are more mature responses than others.

If you want to learn more about the topics in this chapter, check out the following references: Bandura (1993); Dörnyei (2001); Ehrman (1996); Ehrman (1999); Horwitz and Young (1991); Keirse (1998); Myers with Myers (1980); Vaillant (1993).