

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Adolescent Language Learner: Setting the Scene

### Introduction

In this book you will read inspiring examples of theory translated into practice by foreign language teachers. You will see examples of teachers reflecting on language learning and teaching, interpreting the benefits of their practices for their adolescent students. What works? What doesn't work? In this chapter, we look 'behind the scenes' as a starting point for effective learning and teaching. No matter how good the theory and methods or how well organised and carefully selected the lesson plan and materials, it may all come to little effect without a supportive learning environment. What makes for a positive learning environment in the foreign language classroom? What roles do teachers and students play in creating that environment? Why does this make a difference for language learning? We reflect on and explore some of the questions based on current research in classrooms. In this first chapter, we highlight key aspects of the classroom environment, based on educational research conducted in schools. Before we do this however, we need to consider the learners in our classrooms. What do we know about adolescents and their needs? How might they be different to other learners we might teach or have taught?

### What Do We Know about Adolescents?

Adolescence is a time of enormous physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change. This period of transition starts, according to child psychologists (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016), at approximately 12 years of age. It finishes when the dependent child has become an independent or autonomous adult (Damon, 2004 as cited in Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Interestingly, adolescence is largely a phenomenon of western or industrialised countries; many cultures don't have the concept of adolescence but rather consider that adulthood starts with puberty.

Adolescence is a time of *physical development*; girls will tend to have a growth spurt until approximately the age of 16/17, boys until 19/20. The

physical changes that accompany puberty may cause insecurity and a lack of confidence, or even feelings of shame (Robins et al., 2002). Adolescents undergo changes that affect their sleeping patterns: the hormone melatonin that regulates the wake–sleep cycle causes them to feel tired around two or three hours later than adults (Randler & Wicke, 2014), meaning that they sleep less even though they need the same amount of sleep as younger children because of the enormous physical changes they are experiencing. For the teacher, there can be significant consequences: students may be tired, pay less attention, achieve less, and even be in a bad mood! The later that the school day starts during adolescence, the better.

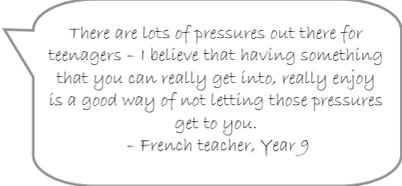
Adolescence is a time of *cognitive change and development*. The brain is still malleable, but it is a time where synaptic connections are strengthened and unused synaptic connections are eliminated. Because cognitive functions may be lost or diminished if not used, the cognitive stimulation of the adolescent is important. The pre-frontal cortex is a part of the brain that undergoes significant development during this period. It is responsible for functions like attention, setting priorities, repressing impulses, and making plans, and its development is not complete until around adulthood. Because of this, teenagers can have difficulty with goal-oriented acting and thinking (Crone, 2011). Duchesne and McMaugh (2016) hypothesise that the slow development of this cortex makes the adolescent prone to risky or impulsive behaviour. Another part of the brain that grows dramatically during adolescence is the amygdala, a region that is responsible for regulating anger and fear. Because development in this cortex is not complete, the adolescent is less able to process and control emotion.

Developmental psychologists (Elkind, 1967) identify, as typical of the period of adolescence, the ‘imaginary audience phenomenon’. Young people can assume that their behaviour and appearance is the focus of those around them, with the result that they feel like they are living life on a stage. Of course, this means that the adolescent can feel acute embarrassment when they make mistakes. This may account for the fact that adolescents often experience anxiety speaking in front of others. Their desire to avoid speaking increases with age, peaking at around 15–17, and with the formality of the situation, for example, in front of the whole class (Sumter, Bokhorst, & Westenberg, 2009).

Despite the many changes that the adolescent is experiencing, adolescence is an ideal period for language learning. As we have already seen, the adolescent brain is particularly plastic or malleable. Adolescents

develop the ability to think abstractly and have increased metalinguistic awareness. This means that they can reflect on and talk about language. They can go beyond literal understandings of language and both use and understand figurative speech, sarcasm, and multiple meanings (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2013). They are better able to make comparisons between their first language and their second or additional languages. Another reason why adolescents make good language learners is that their memory skills improve (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016). They are also better able to multi-task, shifting attention from one task to another.

Adolescence is a time of *social development and change*. Teenagers are both the children they were and the adults they will become (Lemke, 2003) and it is during adolescence that they experiment with and establish their identity. Adolescents are often exploring and asserting new expressions of self, in terms of, for example, their music preferences or commitment to sport and other social activities (Legutke, 2012). At the same time, they are likely to reject rules and values that they may perceive others have determined for them. This is associated with detachment from family and the increasing importance of friendship and peers. Peers become more significant than parents (Cook, Deng, & Morgano, 2007; Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004) as adolescents look for emotional stability outside of the family. Belonging to a peer group gives the adolescent more confidence and a greater sense of security. This may account for the fact that they are more willing to take risks, a fact we have mentioned earlier (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005).



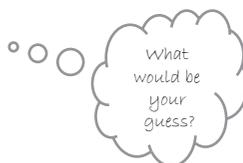
There are lots of pressures out there for teenagers - I believe that having something that you can really get into, really enjoy is a good way of not letting those pressures get to you.  
- French teacher, Year 9

Legutke (2012) claims that the emotional turmoil of the teen years is played out in secondary school. What do we know then about *adolescents in the classroom*? Firstly, and not surprisingly, teachers lose the dominance they once had and are no longer central figures in the life of a teenager. Adolescents expect teachers to be respectful and friendly, but do not necessarily seek more from this relationship. Teachers need to have the professional knowledge that accompanies the subject that they teach, and they need to establish a good learning environment. Adolescents expect teachers to integrate their needs and interests into classroom activities and tasks (Kurth-Buchholz, 2011). We will discuss this further in Chapter 2. There is

a distinct preference for co-operative learning and the ‘teacher-up-the-front’ style can be considered boring.

## What Makes the Biggest Difference to Success in Classrooms?

John Hattie and his team of researchers combined the results of literally thousands of studies from a wide variety of classrooms and subject areas. He did this to provide sufficient statistical power to identify which factors of the many actually make the biggest difference for learning. Hattie’s (2009, 2012) findings were based on 800 ‘meta-analyses’, using information from 50,000 research papers. His team of researchers explored what most contributes to success for students in primary, secondary, and tertiary contexts through meta-analyses on five topics: school, home, curricula, teaching, and students.



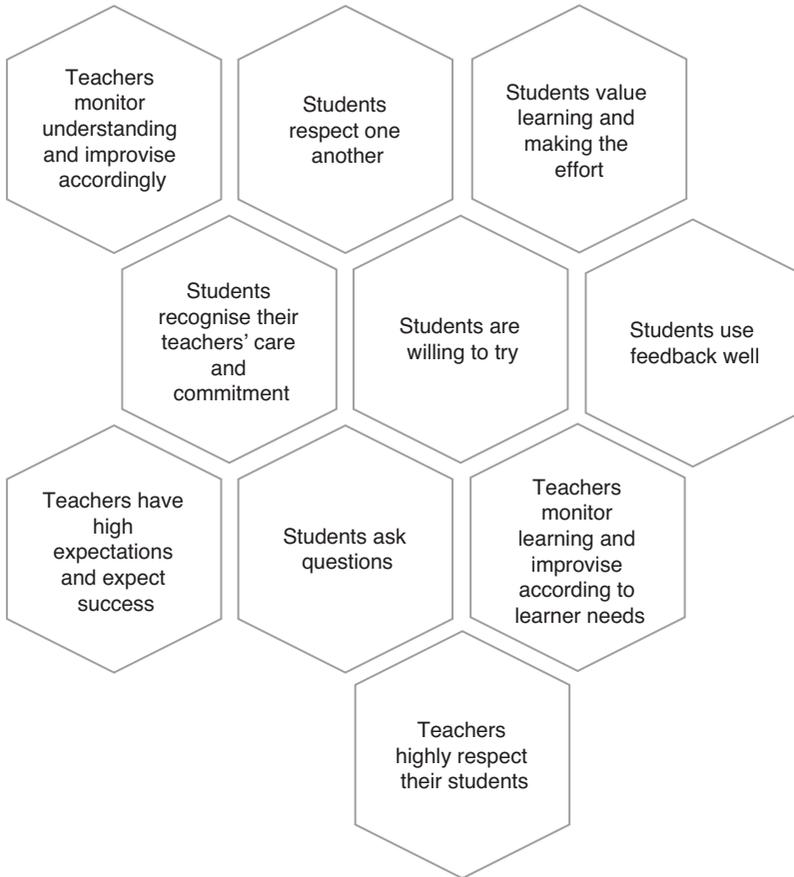
One of the findings was that the classroom environment itself makes a difference to success. However, it was not the physical aspects of the environment that made this difference. Class size, furniture layout, or the latest technology were not the factors that surfaced as important, but the relational factors. The combined studies found that it is the people inside the class and the kind of relationships they build with one another that are most vital to a positive learning environment.

What do these classes look like? Based on Hattie (2012), Figure 1.1 identifies ten of the key features of successful classrooms.

Of these ten, which elements do you recognise in your own experience in classrooms (as a student, teacher, or observer)? Why would these make such a difference?

## What Makes for a Positive Language Learning Environment?

As seen in Figure 1.1, researchers have identified many variables that contribute to effective learning. We focus here on four that are commonly discussed in research conducted in high school classrooms (see Figure 1.2). Each is characteristic of successful learning environments. You will notice that these four variables are all people-oriented and

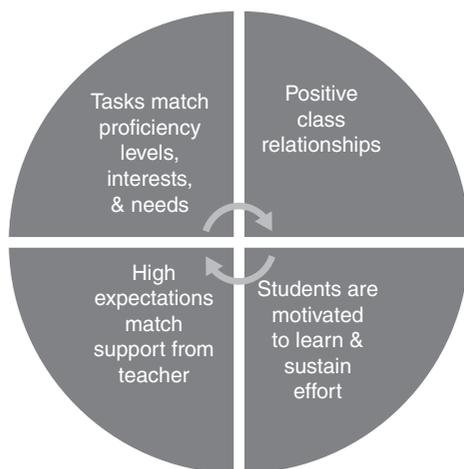


**Figure 1.1** Ten indicators of a positive learning environment (based on Hattie, 2012)

predominantly to do with classroom relations: teacher–student relations and peer relations, supportive collaboration, peer feedback, and willingness to take risks (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Hattie, 2012; Philp, 2016; Sato & Ballinger, 2012).

### Positive Class Relationships

Underlying the potential benefits of all that teachers do in language classrooms is the social environment of the class itself. How do relationships between class participants – teachers, assistants, and students – actually relate to learning? Research suggests that teacher–student



**Figure 1.2** Characteristics of a successful learning environment (based on Philp and Kos, 2017; commissioned by Cambridge University Press)

relations (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Hattie, 2012; Philp, 2016), and peer relations in class (Sato & Ballinger, 2012; Philp, 2016) both play a crucial role in the effectiveness of learning activities, just as teacher–whole class interaction and peer interaction support learning in complementary ways (Batstone & Philp, 2013).

When students recognise that their teacher knows them, respects them, and cares about them, positive relations between teacher and students are more likely, and a benefit is that students are likely to reciprocate in kind, leading to a positive environment (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Hattie, 2012). When the teacher encourages an environment of inclusiveness and respect, students are more willing to take risks and to work with one another in ways that foster collaborative learning (Philp, 2016). Relations between class members play a crucial role in the effectiveness of learning activities. Teachers can explicitly train students how to work together in ways that encourage peer support, feedback, and collaboration (see Dawes, 2004; Philp, 2016; Sato & Ballinger, 2012).

[there needs to be] time for people to build their social relationships, have every class be 'get-to-know somebody', 'get to know something', be able to share with them. People [need to] get to know each other, trust each other, or manage relationships in the second language. - Paul, researcher and Spanish teacher trainer

Paul, a Spanish teacher-trainer and researcher, highlights the importance of paying attention to ‘the social stuff’. When Paul shares his teaching strategies for group work, he emphasises taking time to build classroom relations and trust between class members. Paul also emphasises the importance of monitoring group work (see also Philp, Adams, & Iwashita, 2013; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997).

*When you put them in groups ... be active be listening in those activities. See how it's going ... sometimes monitoring. - Paul*

## High Teacher Expectations and Support

Teachers’ expectations can foster or inhibit students’ goals and willingness to succeed (Rubie-Davies, 2007, 2014). In research in schools in New Zealand and in England, Rubie-Davies and colleagues compared teachers’ expectations and student outcomes in a wide range of classrooms.

They found that high teacher expectations can motivate students to try harder or to take on a challenging task a little beyond their comfort zone, buoyed up by their trust in the teacher who believes them capable. You will see examples of this in later chapters.

Conversely, low teacher expectations are more likely to be associated with low performance goals and a lack of motivation to reach higher goals. The researchers found that teachers with high expectations of their class gave students greater autonomy: learners were

### What Do High Expectations Look Like?

- Students are given autonomy
- Challenging work links to student interests
- Teacher support matches the needs of students to achieve their goals
- Students engage in tasks requiring higher order thinking

(Rubie-Davies 2007, 2014)

given choices in how they learnt. This included challenging work that took account of their own interests. Student autonomy didn’t mean they were just left to their own devices, however. Teachers provided support contingent with the needs of the students, enabling them to reach their goals. This is quite different to the practices and beliefs of teachers with low expectations. In

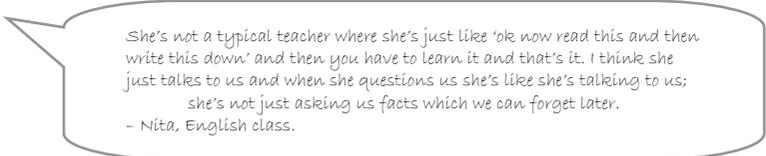
these classes, although the students were similar in ability level to their peers in the ‘high expectation teacher’ classes, their teachers

did not feel the class capable of higher-order thinking skills such as creative or critical thinking, evaluating or synthesising ideas. They saw their students as low in ability and motivation. Perhaps not surprisingly, in classrooms in which teachers had low expectations of their students, gains were less, both academically and in terms of social and emotional development (Rubie-Davies, 2015).

### Motivation to Learn and Sustain Effort in a Task

We noted above the importance of teacher expectations in a class. Related to this is the affective quality of the relationship between teacher and students. Researchers in educational psychology identify the quality of the relationship between student and teacher, teacher and class, as very important: it may contribute to or impede students' willingness to engage in class, and it may help sustain their efforts when work becomes challenging (Ushioda, 2009; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997).

In a high school English class, students were enthusiastically positive about their English teacher. Students appreciated the way the teacher treated them, feeling that they were considered as individuals with interests and opinions of their own.



*She's not a typical teacher where she's just like 'ok now read this and then write this down' and then you have to learn it and that's it. I think she just talks to us and when she questions us she's like she's talking to us; she's not just asking us facts which we can forget later.*  
- Nita, English class.

Motivation has often been seen as something that 'causes' language learning. However, research investigating motivation in language learning has stressed the importance of the learning experience being appropriately challenging and interesting. That is, it is engaging. This allows learners to experience success and encourages them to keep going. In other words, there is a cyclical effect. Positive language learning experiences can themselves be motivating. In this way, teachers can promote intrinsic motivation in their students (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). That is, rather than completing a task because they have to, ideally, students with intrinsic motivation engage in an activity 'because it is enjoyable and satisfying' to do so (Noels et al., 2000, p. 61). We will discuss motivation in greater detail in Chapter 2; however, in the next section we look at two factors: the importance of (1) formulating clear goals

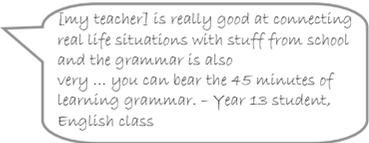
that match students' ability level and provide appropriate challenge, and (2) having the curriculum and materials match the interests of students (Dörnyei, 2001; Tomlinson, 2014).

### Learning Activities that Match Students' Interests and Needs

As with other subjects, it is typical in language classrooms to see a wide range of ability levels, varying needs, and proficiency levels. Adolescents can differ greatly in their experience of languages. Teachers can cater to different levels by varying groupings according to proficiency. For example, where the goal is the same, the material provided to each group can be differentiated in ways that supply more or less information and/or provide the information in different modes: written, oral, aural, visual, or multi-modal. (We discuss the use of digital media in the classroom in Chapter 7.) Alternatively, mixed ability groupings may be based on shared interests; for example, each group can be given the autonomy to choose their own topic (Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Tomlinson et al., 2003).

It is also important that students have the opportunity to work at tasks or activities that are aligned with their own interests. As discussed in the previous section, it is believed that the effort that students are prepared to put in to learning a language is related to the enjoyment that they experience in doing so. We will return again to this issue in Chapter 2 and discuss it in greater detail, along with the notion of learner engagement.

In a senior high school 'English as a foreign language class', the students spoke proudly of their ability to use 'only English', and gave high praise of their teacher, Anna, for making lessons interesting (and grammar classes more bearable). Indeed, in this class, activities varied from candid conversations about love at first sight (prior to reading *Romeo and Juliet*), to team relays around the room to collect facts on Shakespeare, to a TV-style quiz on grammar.



[my teacher] is really good at connecting real life situations with stuff from school and the grammar is also very ... you can bear the 45 minutes of learning grammar. - Year 13 student, English class

### A Social Environment: Teacher–Student and Peer Relations

We have considered four key characteristics of a successful learning environment. In this next section, we are going to focus in greater detail on one of these: classroom relationships, and on the role that they play in enabling a social environment that is conducive to learning.

We will examine, in particular, what research has to say about the following:

- the role of the teacher,
- the importance of peers,
- why for adolescents class relationships are so important, and
- group dynamics.

...I think the most important thing for teenagers is that they feel really valued in the classroom and that they are important, they are good, that the teacher and classmates value them.  
-Jessica, French teacher, Year 9

## Classroom Roles and Positioning

Teacher–student relations play a different role to peer relations (Batstone & Philp, 2013; Philp, 2016), one that is often complementary in nature. This is because of the relative difference between adults and adolescents, more pronounced still for younger learners (Hartup, 1989). In contrast to their peers, who are relatively equal in footing, a teacher’s positioning and authority in class typically reflects their greater maturity, superior knowledge, and valued experience (including expertise in the target language) (Laurson & Hartup, 2002). For this reason, the context of teacher–whole class interaction plays a different role to pair and group work among peers (Philp et al., 2013). Teachers provide a context in which students can benefit from their greater expertise. They can scaffold language comprehension and production in ways that fit the specific learning needs of each student (Gibbons, 2007; van de Pol, Volman, & Beishuizen, 2010). As we will see in later chapters, feedback tailored to students’ needs (for example, modelling language use, giving explicit explanation, or identifying key features), enables students to gradually become more independent in their language use (see Chapters 4 and 5). Underlying this provision and use of contingent support are three essential related ‘ingredients’:

- (a) mutual respect between teacher and student;
- (b) the teacher’s knowledge of the student – their interests, their strengths, learning preferences, and academic needs;
- (c) the student’s recognition and trust of the teacher’s expertise.

Of course, the relative positioning of teachers versus students is often more complex. In some foreign language contexts, ‘heritage’ learners, that is, students who have connections to the target language through family members or early experience in the home, are more advanced in some skills than the teacher. For example, they may have native-like pronunciation, higher receptive aural ability than their teacher, but be less knowledgeable in literacy, for example. Nevertheless, the teacher, as an adult, holds a different position to the student.

Classroom relations reflect participants' (teachers or students) perceptions of one another. The term 'comity' describes the ways in which people establish and maintain friendly relations (Aston, 1993). How classmates treat each other in their interactions, whether they provide support (e.g. sympathy or concern), or feel solidarity with their classmates, all contribute comity. Through shared experiences, good or bad, whether caught out as trouble-makers, excelling at a particular sport, enjoying the same computer games, or struggling in class, adolescents in particular seek comity with those they identify with. In a study of a North American high school programme, Martin-Beltrán et al. (2016) looked at how learners of English and Spanish developed comity through peer interaction.

### The Importance of Social Discourse through Peer Interaction

In this study in the USA, twenty-four high school students learnt English or Spanish from each other (rather than in separate classrooms).

#### How?

Students worked together over fifteen weekly lunch break sessions and four monthly two-hour sessions. Each group had an English speaker, a Spanish speaker, a bilingual expert, and a teacher facilitator as they worked on

- 1 a collaborative community building activity;
- 2 a literacy activity; and finally
- 3 a bilingual multimodal activity.

The students provided peer support, showing sympathy and appreciation. They also encouraged each other to talk and participate, and acknowledged one another's expertise. Comments could be positive: '*Good try!*'; appreciative: '*Thanks for your help!*'; or involve sharing struggles: '*my English was so bad!*'. The researchers found that students who were involved in positive social talk were more likely to try out new language or make mistakes, providing further opportunities for learning.

While this programme in the USA involved students who were each learning a second language that was spoken in the community (rather than a foreign language not commonly used in the community), it was new to them both. This example serves to highlight the ways in which students with low proficiency in the target language were able to use it with their peers to talk together socially. The relationships they developed through working together supported their willingness to try to communicate regardless of errors, because of the trust and solidarity gained by their common experience in language learning.

(Martin-Beltrán et al., 2016)

The relationships they developed and the trust and support they experienced from working together led to opportunities for language learning.

### Why Are Classroom Relations So Important?

Work by educational psychologists such as O'Donnell (2006) and Hartup (2009) concerning peer interaction among younger students highlights the ways in which classroom relations can impact students' sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and their willingness to participate in class. This is, as we have seen, particularly true for middle- and high-school students as adolescence is typically the maturational period during which students tend to spend more time with their peers and less time with adults within the family. It is also the time when peers may have the most influence (Laursen, 2010). Specific to language learning, researchers in second language acquisition have increasingly recognised the importance of social factors in classrooms that may support or inhibit successful learning (e.g. Breen, 2001; Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007; van Lier, 2000).

Creating relationships with my kids is ... the top priority ... so that we can learn together and that they will trust me and that they will give their best and that they will be motivated through that and motivated through success and the encouragement I give them.  
- Annabel, Mandarin teacher, Year 10

For example, research in adult foreign language classrooms highlights the role peer relations play in fostering useful interaction. Trust in one's peers may affect how willing a student is to listen, offer help, use unfamiliar language, try out new ideas, or take account of a peer's suggestions (e.g. Batstone & Philp, 2013; Martín-Beltrán et al., 2016; Storch, 2002). As we mentioned earlier, research in educational psychology suggests the importance of peer relations is likely to be even more pronounced for adolescents: typically, goals of affiliation (friendship connections)

#### Peer Relations in Pair and Group Work

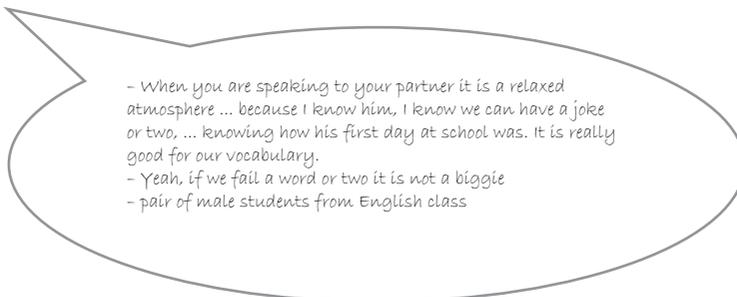
Neomy Storch (2002), drawing from work in education (Damon & Phelps, 1989, as cited in Storch 2002), found that two dimensions characterised how well students in language classrooms benefited from working together: (1) **Equality**, the degree to which students take direction from each other and no one dominates; and (2) **Mutuality**, the degree to which peers respect one another's contributions, engage with each other's ideas. This may depend on the level of respect and trust they have for each other.

Much of this is fostered through a positive learning environment.

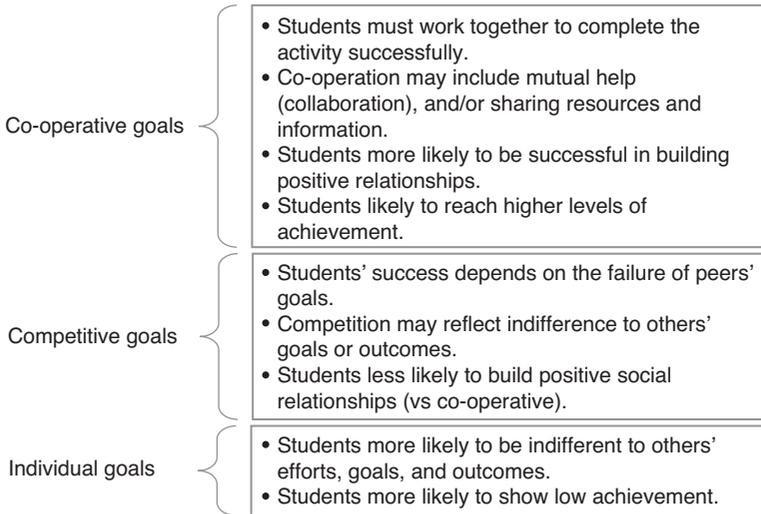
and reciprocity motivate their interactions (Laursen & Hartup, 2002). Classrooms can sometimes reflect a dysfunctional setting, characterised by unwillingness to interact with peers, domination by some members, negativity or isolation, and an individualistic mindset.

It is very important that adolescents see each other's contribution as important and worthwhile, and feel that their own participation is valued. Sato and Ballinger (2012) describe this as having a 'collaborative mindset', and argue that it is vital for productive peer interaction, including cooperative and collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and other forms of help from peers, whether in a face-to-face or virtual setting.

An example comes from a high school English class where students had been reading a book about a student's first day at school. The teacher gave them a task where they had to work in pairs and compare their own experiences of their first day at school. What stood out was the mutuality of the way they worked together. They listened to each other, demonstrating respect for each other's contributions, and they took turns providing ideas. This class reflected a positive mindset in that students were able to work collaboratively and support one another.



Roseth, Johnson, and Johnson (2008) combined results of 148 studies (published 1960s–2000) of interaction between adolescent learners ( $n = 17,000$ ) aged 12–15 across a variety of topic areas. Through meta-analysis, they compared the effects of three different goal structures or approaches to work: 'cooperative, competitive and individual' on peer relations and achievement in school. What they found from this mixture of experimental and classroom-based studies was that those with cooperative goals were more likely to have



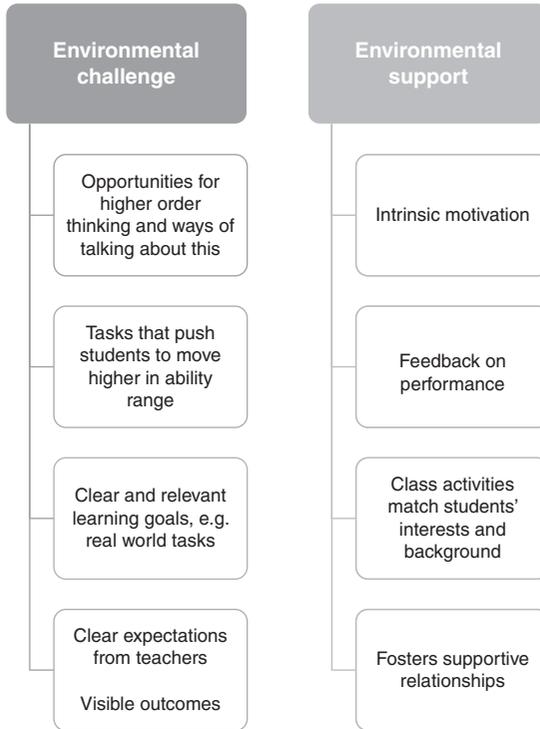
**Figure 1.3** Effects of goal structures on peer relationships among early adolescents (Roseth, Johnson, & Johnson, 2008)

positive peer relationships, showing ‘belongingness, social responsibility, caring’ (p. 224). The researchers concluded: ‘the more successful students are in building positive peer relationships, the more likely these students are to achieve’ (p. 239). This is illustrated in Figure 1.3.

This is another argument for taking the time to build positive relationships between students. This is often seen as something that happens in the playground and outside of school, but the study by Roseth and colleagues recognises that classroom tasks are also a context for developing social goals (Philp et al., 2013; Martin-Beltran et al., 2016). Given the potential benefits of cooperative goals, this suggests the need for explicitly training adolescents in how to work cooperatively with one another, as a life skill that may not be modelled in the home.

### The Complexity of the Classroom: Challenge and Support

Researchers in Educational Psychology describe the successful ‘classroom learning environment’ as complex (Shernoff, Ruzek, & Sinha,



**Figure 1.4** Summary of features of environmental complexity (adapted from Shernoff et al., 2017)

2017). It surely is! Shernoff et al. (2017) explored the influence of the classroom environment on learning. To do this, they conducted interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations in six subjects (including Spanish, Grades 9–12), with 254 upper high school students in the USA.

How do they describe a positive learning environment? It needs to include both ‘environmental challenge and environmental support’ (p. 52), as shown in Figure 1.4. Environmental challenges guide behaviour and thinking. They are ‘the challenges, tasks, activities, goals, and expectations’ planned and enacted in class. They determine what students need to do and think about (p. 203). Complementing this is ‘environmental support’. This support influences learners’ engagement and motivation, and enables them to successfully complete classroom activities and tasks (p. 210).

A crucial aspect of environmental support is the role played by supportive relationships, between teacher and students, and between the

students themselves. Such relationships provide the social and emotional resources that help learners meet the challenges set. Over the following chapters, we explore examples of teaching practices from varied high school classrooms and include the voices of teachers and students to illustrate what environmental challenge and support might look like in practice in the language classroom.

## Summary of This Chapter

In this chapter we set the scene for the book as a whole by exploring the nature of the classroom environment, optimal characteristics, and the potential contributions of teachers and students in providing and making the most of learning opportunities.

## Key Points

- Adolescence is a time of tremendous change: in physical growth, emotional intensity, identity, and social and cognitive ability. These all have implications for teaching and learning.
- It is a time of transition towards greater independence.
- Research in educational psychology highlights the important and complementary roles that teachers and students as peers play.
- A successful learning environment for language learning is characterised by positive relationships – both between the teacher and students and between the students themselves.
- Students need to develop ways to work together to maximise opportunities for learning.
- The teacher needs to have high expectations of students and, at the same time, provide them with activities and tasks that match their interests and motivate them to engage in the learning process.
- Appropriate support from a teacher and/or peers can enable students to meet the challenges established for them.
- A successful classroom is described as one that is environmentally complex, that is, it provides both ‘environmental challenge’ and ‘environmental support’.

## Reflection and Discussion

- 1 Think of an example of a class of adolescent students you really enjoyed teaching (or observing). What was it about that class that made it such a pleasure? (or the opposite!)

- 2 To what extent do the characteristics of the adolescent learner outlined in this chapter describe adolescent learners with whom you are familiar? If there are differences, what might account for these?
- 3 What aspects of the classroom environment discussed in this chapter do you recognise in your classroom, or in a classroom you have observed?
- 4 Can you think of examples where high teacher expectations/low teacher expectations impacted on learner success?
- 5 This chapter describes a change in role for the teacher of adolescents. In your experience, in what way(s) is the role of the teacher different? What are the challenges for the teacher?
- 6 This chapter places a lot of emphasis on the importance of peer relationships in the adolescent classroom. To what extent is this true of your experience of these learners? What changes in classroom practice might be needed/advised to get the best outcomes for the adolescent learner?
- 7 Look at Figure 1.3. What effects of goal structures are reflected in peer work that you have observed or created for your own class? (cooperative, competitive, or individual) To what extent was/is it possible to have a cooperative goal structure? How could this be facilitated?
- 8 Describe some environmental challenges in classrooms you are/have been familiar with. What support is/was available to help students meet these challenges?

## Further Reading

Dewaele, J., Witney, J., Saito, K., and Dewaele, L. (2018). Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety: The effect of teacher and learner variables. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(6), 676–697.

This research, carried out among British secondary school learners, explores learners' foreign language learning class enjoyment (FLCE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), finding that 'effective teachers fuel learners' enthusiasm and enjoyment and do not spend too much time worrying about their FLCA' (p. 694). Those teachers who made more use of the foreign language in class also tended to have students who enjoyed their classes.

## For Reflection and Discussion

- (a) Discuss together/reflect on what this study found with respect to learner-internal factors (these included age, gender, attitude towards the foreign language, etc.).
- (b) What factors seemed to make a difference to the learners' performance?

- (c) Were there any findings that surprised you? What were these and why did they surprise you?
- (d) To what extent might findings from this study be relevant to your classroom or classes you have observed?