



**MOTIVATIONAL CURRENTS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING  
FRAMEWORKS FOR FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS BY ZOLTÁN  
DÖRNYEI, ALASTAIR HENRY AND CHRISTINE MUIR -  
BOOK REVIEW**

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In this study, I would like to write the review of the book, entitled '**Motivational Currents in Language Learning- Frameworks for Focused Interventions**'. It was written by Zoltán Dörnyei, Alastair Henry and Henry Muir. **Zoltán Dörnyei** is a professor of Psycholinguistics at the School of English at the University of Nottingham in the UK. **Alastair Henry** is an associate professor in language education at University West in Sweden. **Christine Muir** is a postgraduate teaching fellow at the School of English at the University of Nottingham in the UK. This book was first published in 2016 by Routledge. The right of Zoltán Dörnyei, Alastair Henry and Christine Henry to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

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This book has 203 pages. Preface of this book starts after the content list of the book. The sub-titles of the preface in this book are as follows:

- What Are Directed Motivational Currents?
- How are DMCs Related to Language Learning Motivation?
- Are DMC's Useful for Classroom Purposes?
- Who is This Book for?
- On A Personal Note.

In the preface of this book, Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: xii-xiii) state that;

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*“A recurring theme in accounts of DMC experiences from all walks of life is the heightened levels of effectiveness and productivity that people experience while caught up in the current. This suggests that the phenomenon is not so much about having a great time or experiencing a thrill, as about delivering an outcome. The potential usefulness of DMCs lies in this productive capacity. If we can harness this capacity to good effect—that is, if we can set the direction of a DMC toward beneficial learning outcome targets within classroom settings— we may be able to facilitate a smooth and far-reaching learning pathway. Exploring this practical potential was one of the main driving forces behind writing this book, and it explains the subtitle: “Frameworks for focused interventions.” Our main contention—which we discuss fully in the final two chapters—is that although fully-fledged DMCs might not be a frequent phenomenon, it is highly important to understand the causes and nature of the construct as, quite simply, the same principles are at work in all long-term motivational sequences. Thus, we see DMCs as the optimal form of project engagement, which, to a certain extent, are approximated in long-term motivated behaviors in general. Accordingly, if we are able to isolate the main conditions and features that constitute a DMC, we may then be in a position to use them as components of a framework for effective classroom motivational interventions to promote long-term learning. In this way, our knowledge about DMCs can be transformed into a basis for powerful motivational scaffolds.”*

Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: xiii) also denote that;

*“In the chapters that follow, we hope to present a convincing argument that DMCs offer new insights of value both to motivation researchers and classroom practitioners. Applied linguistics and language pedagogy have, by tradition, always walked a fine line between theory and practice, and it is in this spirit that we have gone about writing this book: We have tried to satisfy—rather than alienate—both audiences.”*

The titles of the topics in this book are listed in the contents part of this book by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016:vii). They are as follows:

1. *Introduction: Three Stories*
2. *DMCs Versus Long-Term Motivation*
3. *Vision: The ‘Directed’ Aspect of DMCs*
4. *The Launch of a DMC: Shifting Into ‘Hyperdrive’*
5. *The Unique Structure of a DMC: Utilizing ‘Renewable Energy’*
6. *Positive Emotional Loading: Eudaimonic Well-Being and Authenticity*

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7. *When the Current Begins to Wane: The Nature of Effort and the Longer-Term Sustainability of DMCs*
  8. *Introducing 'Group-DMCs'*
  9. *Generating DMCs in the Language Classroom*

## Index

Chapter 1 starts on the page 1 and ends on page 19. In this chapter, there is an introduction part. In the introduction part of this book, there are three stories with contributions by Zana Ibrahim. As it is stated by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 1):

*"This book is about the intriguing motivational phenomenon of long-term motivational surges. Not only can these surges or currents be observed in all forms of human activity, but, when they do occur, they have a powerful impact. The phenomenon depicts a highly salient state: People who experience such motivational surges understand unequivocally that they are 'in the zone', and others around them also recognize the fact they are caught up in something special, prompting comments to the effect of "You can't talk to Humphrey nowadays, he's so deeply engrossed in his work/studies/music/etc. that he has eyes/ears for nothing else..."*

It has also been mentioned by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 2) that;

*"Although their specific content will naturally vary from domain to domain, DMCs share a common pattern; a person or a group suddenly embarks on a project, invests a great deal of time and energy and, as a result, achieves something quite remarkable. A fully-fledged DMC can become an all-consuming preoccupation around which all other activities in an individual's life are somehow accommodated. We might see DMCs arising in situations which are typically characterized by low or stagnated levels of motivation, and the initiation of a concrete pathway of motivated action creates a new lease on life. For example, the prospect of a job opportunity in another country might suddenly spark a period of intensive language learning, or an opportunity to raise Money for a worthy cause trigger a fiery fund-raising campaign. The outcome of a DMC often surprises even the people who are caught up in the current; it is uniformly the case that individuals would have never thought that they could get so far or achieve so much!"*

Chapter 2 starts on the page 20 and ends on page 39. It is stated by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 20) that;

*“This chapter will:*

- *describe how the notion of DMCs emerged in second language acquisition research and the ways in which they build on existing theories of L2 motivation;*
- *examine why DMCs have not been identified previously within mainstream motivation research ;*
- *discuss how DMCs can contribute to our understanding of sustained motivation in general;*
- *argue that by understanding DMCs we will gain invaluable insights into how to promote ongoing motivation in L2 learners.”*

In the same chapter, Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 33) denote that;

*“The main reason for reviewing DMCs as a key motivational construct is our belief that the motivational basis of a DMC is made up of the same building blocks as the motivational basis which energizes long-term behaviors in general, the primary difference being that in a fully fledged DMC the various motivational factors and conditions reach an optimal level of cooperation, thereby facilitating the powerful current. Accordingly, we see DMCs as representing the optimal form of engagement with an extended Project, and we believe that the same kind of engagement, although at a lesser level, characterizes many similar scenarios in which someone pursues a distant goal with vigor and persistence. In other words, a DMC can be understood as the sum of parts which form a powerful ‘whole’, and even when the very same parts do not fully come together in an entirely complementary manner, they are nevertheless capable of doing an admirable job of fuelling long-term action.”*

At the end of the second chapter of this book, the following key points have been listed as the first crucial points by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 36):

- *DMCs emerged in SLA research as part of the search for factors which could explain the sustained motivation required for the long-term process of mastering an L2.*
- *The Notion of DMCs entered the scene of L2 motivation research as an extension of the concept of vision; DMCs represent a perfect match between a vision and an accompanying action plan which amplifies rather than absorbs energy.*
- *DMCs have been overlooked by motivation theories in psychology for two primary reasons: the traditional separation of motivation from subsequent behavior and a general reluctance in theorizing to discuss temporal aspects of motivation and, consequently, motivational processes.*

Chapter 3 starts on the page 40 and finishes on page 57. In chapter 3, topics were listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 40) as:

*“This chapter will*

- *examine what it means that a DMCs is ‘directed’ and how it is that a motivational current becomes aimed at a specific target;*
- *discuss the importance of goals in guiding action;*
- *introduce two key goal-related constructs: self-concordant goals and vision;*
- *explain why ‘proximal subgoals’ are a key component within the pathway of directed motivational currents.”*

In the same chapter, the main findings of several decades of research are summarized by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 41) as:

1. *The more difficult the goal, the greater the achievement.*
2. *The more specific or explicit the goal, the more precisely it can regulate performance.*
3. *Goals that are both specific and difficult lead to the highest performance.*
4. *Commitment to goals is most critical when goals are specific and difficult (i.e., when goals are easy or vague it is easy to inspire commitment; it does not require much dedication to reach easy goals, and vague goals can be easily redefined to accommodate low performance).*
5. *High commitment to goals is attained when (a) the individual is convinced that the goal is important; and (b) the individual is convinced that the goal is attainable (or that, at least, sufficient progress can be made toward it).*

Chapter 4 starts on the page 58 and finishes on page 80. The title of this chapter is ‘The Launch of DMC: Shifting Into ‘Hyperdrive’’. Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 58) state that;

*“This chapter will:*

- *Start at the very beginning and discuss the launch of a DMC;*
- *Examine the necessary conditions required for a successful launch;*
- *Review some typical triggers which can initiate the launch;*
- *Consider what it means for a DMC to shift into ‘hyperdrive’.*

Chapter 5 starts on page 80 and finishes on page 98. As it has been stated by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 80) state that;

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*“This chapter will;*

- *Discuss how the unique structure of a DMC sustains motivation over time;*
- *Explain the way in which learning routines in a DMC become automatized;*
- *Describe the role of subgoals and regular progress checks;*
- *Analyze the role of feedback throughout the process.”*

In the fifth chapter of this book, the following key points have been listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 95-96) as;

- *The structure of a DMC takes an active and procedural role in keeping the current flowing and thus forms an integral part of the motivational core of the concept.*
- *A key feature of DMC is the existence of motivated behavioral routines which do not need ongoing motivational processing or volitional control; they become part of a kind of ‘motivational autopilot’ and are executed simply because they form part of the structure.*
- *A basic premise of nonconscious self-regulation is the understanding that human behavior is influenced by processes that are not fully under conscious volitional control. This may be due to the development of perceptual biases or the automatic triggering of certain behaviors in certain situations linked to goal pursuit.*
- *In a DMC there are such high levels of commitment to a certain goal/vision that it causes a kind of visionary single-mindedness, which in turn forms a protective shield around goal pursuit.*
- *Subgoals are vital to the DMC process because they create an elaborate structure through which motivational energy can be channeled. Subgoals do not only function as outcomes to aim for, but also as standards from which performance can be evaluated.*
- *Because in language learning ultimate goals usually lie far away on the horizon, short- and mid-range subgoals have an even more important role to play in mapping out a clear pathway toward ultimate goal attainment.*
- *The successful completion of the ‘digestible chunks’ created by the series of subgoals in a DMC generates high levels of satisfaction, which in turn fuels further action.*
- *Progress checks depict clearly the level of investment which has already been made and the momentum already achieved, which in turn strengthens ongoing commitment.*
- *Positive progress feedback-or affirmative feedback-is the dominant feedback type found within DMCs; this forms a powerful type of progress check which makes progress toward the target feel real and achievable and which thus fuels subsequent efforts.*

One of the crucial issues in the fifth chapter of this book are some lessons for promoting long-term motivation in the classroom. The lessons which are suggested for promoting long-term motivation by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 96) are as follows;

- *Encourage students to create useful study habits within their learning , both in their personal study at home and also within the classroom , inspire them to stick to these at all costs.*
- *Emphasize the usefulness of setting short-term goals; set aside a short period of time at the start of every month to allow students to think of and record personal targets; set up explicit progress checkpoints; create opportunities for students to monitor their progress and wherever applicable, celebrate their success.*
- *Provide detailed affirmative feedback on students' progress; create opportunities where they can receive affirmative appraisals from varied sources, such as peers or outside L2 experts.*

At the end of this chapter, some websites are shared as notes by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 96). These websites are listed as:

- <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php2012/11/20/daily-routines-writers/>.
- <http://www.weightwatchers.co.uk>.
- <http://www.weightwatchers.co.uk/plan/index.aspx>.

Chapter 6 starts on page 99 and finishes on page 118. The title of the sixth chapter of this book is Positive Emotional Loading: Eudaimonic Well-Being and Authenticity. As it has been stated by by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 99):

*“This chapter will:*

- *Examine the overall positive emotional loading which is characteristic of all DMCs;*
- *Describe the processes which generate the unique sense of joy, satisfaction, and well-being as experienced while operating within a DMC;*
- *Discuss the principles of eudaimonia and authenticity and their role in creating the positive emotional characteristics of a DMC pathway.”*

As it has been mentioned by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 102):

*“When operating in the current, a person experiences a sense of enjoyment from the perception of progressing ever closer to his/her ultimate goal. This is rather like a mountain- climber setting off to conquer K2 (the world’s second highest peak). The*

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*mountain is located in the remote and inaccessible northwest corner of Pakistan, meaning that all of the gear needed to make the ascent has to be carried all the way up to the base camp. Because the weather conditions in this region are notoriously harsh and unpredictable, it is an endeavor that can take weeks. Nevertheless, each step the climber takes, lugging a laden pack along rocky tracks remains a thrilling experience-not because the trek itself is challenging, or because of the unending vistas of stunning scenery it may pass through, but rather because as it brings the climber closer to his/her ultimate goal of conquering the one of the world's highest peaks, it generates a deep and pervading sense of well-being and satisfaction."*

In the sixth chapter of this book, suggested lessons for promoting long-term motivation in the classroom have been listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 116) as:

- *Wherever possible, enjoy resources, communicative situations, and topics that will engage with the real interests and passions of learners.*
- *The inclusion of transportable identities is crucial for the development of any type of L2 learning current; wherever possible adapt textbooks and other resources to allow students to act as themselves in this way.*
- *Students are only able to draw on their images of their ideal L2 selves-and so experience the kinds of eudaimonic well-being and feelings of authenticity we have discussed in this chapter- if they actually have one; at the end of Chapter 3 we outlined the steps for a vision inspired motivational teaching practice, which would be invaluable in helping students create, strengthen and elaborate their ideal L2 selves.*

Chapter 7 starts on page 119 and finishes on page 139. The title of the seventh chapter of this book is When the Current Begins to Wane: The Nature of Effort and the Longer-Term Sustainability of DMCs. Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 119) state that;

*"This chapter will*

- *Focus on the point in time when the current of motivational energy begins to ebb away;*
- *Describe how previously effortless behavior becomes effortful;*
- *Provide examples of the emotional reactions of individuals transitioning out of a DMC;*
- *Offer advice to teachers for supporting learners during this transitional phase."*

In the seventh chapter of this book, the following key points have been listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 137-138):



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- *Although different DMCs may end in different ways (i.e., some may finish relatively abruptly while others may take more time to wind down), the impact of this change on both an individual's routines and emotional state is usually considerable.*
  - *It is especially important to understand the closing stages of DMCs within L2 contexts because it is highly unlikely that the end of an L2 DMC will coincide with the end of an individual's language learning journey. Understanding this transition will enable us to better equip learners to address this situation in an optimally productive manner.*
  - *A key indicator that a DMC is drawing to a close is the appearance of cracks in an individual's protective shield of visionary single-mindedness.*
  - *When a DMC ends, the control mechanisms of the current's salient structure no longer function effectively to protect or amplify the flow of energy. Instead of the effortless ride on the wave of a focused current of energy, action once again requires concentration and effort.*
  - *Fatigue does not develop from the undertaking of demanding cognitive endeavors, but rather from a commitment to tasks which are not highly desired and which, consequently, demand high levels of effort to complete.*
  - *The positive emotions experienced at the end of a DMC can be linked to the satisfaction of goal achievement and the relief and excitement of being able to let go of what are becoming increasingly more demanding routines in order to be able to enjoy the pursuit of other avenues of interest.*
  - *The end point of DMCs can also inspire many negative emotions. These can be linked both to the acknowledgement of sacrifices that have been made and to a profound sense of loss.*
  - *The importance of the end point of DMCs is particularly apparent within the context of L2 learning currents. If learners are not able to navigate the transition out of a DMC in an effective manner, or do not receive the necessary guidance, the loss of motivational energy may have a lasting negative impact on their overall learning trajectory.*
  - *When a DMC is coming to an end, many students would benefit from finding ways to channel their individual original desires into more formalized learning structures.*
  - *A key role for teachers during the cessation of a DMC is to encourage students to consider which of the routines instigated during their DMC experience might be productively continued; such encouragement will push learners to maintain an enduring 'positive legacy' from their DMC experience.*

In the seventh chapter of the book, the lessons for promoting long-term motivation in the classroom have been listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 139-140) as:

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- *Depending on the individual experience of the learner throughout the DMC pathway, different learners may have marked so different needs; Learners experiencing predominantly positive emotions as this stage might be pushed to take advantage of this-temporary-joy from their achievement and look at which elements of their newly formed habits or routines they might continue on with and weave into their 'normal' routines, thereby preserving some of their DMC success.*
  - *Learners with heavily negative feelings at this stage might benefit particularly from lots of affirmative feedback, that is, feedback focusing heavily on all that they have achieved through their DMC and how far they have come from where they started.*
  - *The setting of future goals may be helpful to combat the sense of the loss of directionality, and helping to transfer the motivational current into a more conventional, institutionalized channel (such as an appropriate instructional program or course of action) can replace the previous trajectory of the DMC.*

Chapter 8 starts on page 140 and finishes on page 166. The title of this chapter is Introducing 'Group-DMCs'. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: **1-** Introducing the Notion of Group-DMCs', **2-** Group-DMCs in Classroom Learning, **3-** How Does a Group Project Differ from an Individual DMC? **4-** Comparing the Functioning of the Structure within Group Projects and Individual DMCs.

In this chapter, the following key points have been listed by Dörnyei, Henry and Muir (2016: 162-163):

- *Both anecdotal and initial research evidence points to fact that the individual DMC framework can be meaningfully expanded to apply to group-level DMCs, comparable in both their strength and intensity to their individual-level counterparts.*
- *Within the context of classroom learning, we can understand group-DMCs as manifesting themselves as intensive group projects.*
- *An effective approach to designing project goals that are capable of generating similar levels of commitment to those seen with individual DMCs is to center them around topical issues such as real problems, challenges, and opportunities.*
- *For goals to be effective at motivating group projects, they need to be highly relevant to students' lives and need to have clearly defined and inherently tangible outcomes.*
- *Contrary to individual DMCs-in which the goal and trigger are separate entities-in group-level DMCs these two elements are merged together, so interest and involvement in a Project are triggered by the goal itself. This means that the Project goal needs to be sufficiently creative and engaging to capture students' imagination and to inspire the learning current.*

- *Group Project goals will not be successful in inspiring action if the appropriate base condition within the classroom are not sufficiently established and the group is not mature enough to engage with the challenge.*
- *A project' structure is key to its successful execution; a strong project structure will include a robust mix of subgoals and other targets-both L2 and project-specific-forming multiple opportunities for progress checks and for regular feedback throughout the process.*
- *For the structure of a group Project to be effective in generating DMC-like experiences, the outline of the Project must be defined and the various supporting materials prepared at the outset.*
- *The positive emotionality within group-level DMCs stems not from a personally concordant goal, but rather from the 'social well-being' experienced as a result of successful group cooperation.*
- *The final days of a group project are critical for helping students to understand all they have achieved, for encouraging them to consider how they might utilize their new skills and habits in going forward, and for ensuring that they leave the Project with a positive frame of mind.*

Chapter 9 starts on page 167 and finishes on page 197. The title of the ninth chapter is Generating DMCs in the Language Classroom. The subtitles of this chapter are as follows: **1-** Developing a Project-Based Mindset **2-** Preparing the Groundwork for Successful Group Projects **3-** Facilitating DMCs in the L2 Classroom: Frameworks for Focused Interventions

As a conclusion, we should remember that motivation plays a great role in all parts of education. It has also great effects in foreign language education. This book offers new suggestions and views on motivation for researchers and teachers who work on language learning. This book can be used by the foreign language teachers, teacher trainers, professors and researchers who work in TESOL and applied linguistics. It encourages teachers to apply the motivational methods in their classrooms. As it also suggests some lessons for promoting long-term motivation in the classrooms at the end of some chapters of this book, teachers or teacher trainers can get benefits of using different methods in their classes. This book has brought a great contribution to the motivation studies in second language education or in foreign language education. Readers of this book learn theoretical explanations on motivation and the classroom practices with practical solutions on motivation at the same time. Researchers, teachers, teacher trainers and professors who teach a language as a second or a foreign language and the educators who teach subjects on motivation can definitely learn many different

views and approaches from this book. The authors of this book also consider why social and emotional learning is important in learning a foreign language. They suggest that the communicative situations and topics will increase the interests and the passions of the learners, but they also remind that the group projects do not always help learners increase their skills.

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