

# Factors affecting acquisition of a new language

# **The strength of oracy and literacy in first language/s**

- The ease with which a student learns a new language depends on how strong the student is orally in the first language and the extent and depth of literacy development of the student's first language.

# Previous education

- If the learner has had consistent formal educational provisions and chances, especially of high quality, this stands him in strong stead when learning in and through English within the new formal educational settings.

# The similarities and differences of the first language/s or strongest language to English

- sounds
- structure and directionality of words, sentences
- script
- cultural/conceptual framework

# **Extent of parent education**

Parental input into literacy and into general and specialist knowledge, especially in formal educational areas, offers significant support to the student and is an important factor of influence.

# Emotional factors

- confidence - takes risks or not
- intensity - relaxed or serious
- self-esteem / self-perception within one's own world and outside
- personality - open or closed off.....out-going or shy?
- motivation to learn and acquire ([Intrinsic vs Extrinsic](#))

# Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic motivation

- Why does Betty want the job? How about Amanda?
- Why is Betty selected for the job?
- How are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation different?

# The age and experience of the learner

- The younger learner often has an openness and flexibility, time is certainly on his / his side.
- The older learner brings explicit academic / cognitive / linguistic knowledge and experience to the language learning situation - this can be both an immense advantage and at time it can interfere.
- The more languages one knows, the easier it is to learn a new language.....the more oracy and literacy strength in known languages, the easier it is to develop oracy and literacy in a new language.

# Exposure to English – learned or acquired

- Where there has already been exposure to English.....even if largely receptive and unutilised, the building has already started...thus the learner is on the way, even if this knowledge / familiarity is largely sub-conscious.

# **Opportunities to interact with native speakers of English**

Where there is the opportunity and purpose for the use of the new language, and there is intrinsic motivation, given a supportive environment, communication will occur.

Need and opportunity drive learning.

# Linguistic Intelligence

- Only a small percentage of unsuccessful new language learners are so because they are intrinsically limited in general cognitive ability.

# Preferred learning style

- visual learners
- auditory learners
- reading/writing-preference learners
- kinesthetic learners or tactile learners

(Flemming's VARK model)

[Activity: Decide your learning styles](#)