

## Motivation and e-Learning: Myths and Practice

**Kristina Mullamaa**

Tartu University Language Centre (Estonia)

[kristina.mullamaa@ut.ee](mailto:kristina.mullamaa@ut.ee)

### Abstract

E-learning has become an acknowledged and respected medium for teaching. There are obvious advantages in the process: the practical aspects of easy access, individualisation and flexible time planning, to name a few. But what are the deeper theoretical implications behind the processes, and how does e-learning as a whole affect our ways of learning and integrating knowledge? To find an answer to this complex question we take a look at one of the essential aspects in any learning process: motivation.

In our presentation we will analyse the impact of using e-learning through the prism of student and teacher motivation. We will analyse the recent theories of motivation, and motivation in language learning. We will then move on to share and discuss some examples that have proved positive and stimulating both for students and the teacher. The analysis is based on our empirical data and experience in using different e-learning platforms for teaching general language courses at different levels and different languages (English and Swedish) in courses for both general language and language for specific purposes from 2004 till today. Examples of motivating students and engaging them in the e-learning process will serve as a starting point for giving a brief overview of aspects of motivation in the light of the experience of teaching 100% on-line language courses. Our experience has shown that the web-based environment can be successfully used for supporting student-centred learning and increasing student motivation. It is also a flexible environment for developing individualisation and enabling cooperation with the students. What works and what should be avoided?

The feedback from students questionnaires and self-analysis reports in three different cohorts from 2009-2011 will be used, as well as the results of our participant observation of the process, with the focus on examining the possibilities for enforcing student-centred learning and encouraging student responsibility for their study process. Finally, we wind up with a view into the future possibilities of developing e-courses in language learning with a special focus on student and teacher motivation.