

Positive Psychology and Mastery of the L2 Academic Self

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In order to determine how best to prepare students for university and to participate meaningfully in the activities of their intended academic discourse community (ADC), the influential model proposed by Anne Beaufort in 2007 suggests that this can only occur once a learner has mastered the domains of knowledge pertaining to the target ADC, including those of subject matter, genre, rhetorical techniques and the writing process. However, this article will argue that mastery of a domain and entry into an ADC involves more than this; both of these things can occur only once a student has been able to 'master' him/herself. In order to address the question of the nature of 'self-mastery' and how to guide students towards achieving it, this article draws upon theories from the emerging field of positive psychology, showing how notions such as self-efficacy, mindfulness and flow can be interwoven with concepts more commonly associated with English for Academic Purposes or 'EAP' (e.g. learner autonomy, motivation and noticing) to provide insights into how mastery of the second/additional language learning (L2) academic self can be facilitated. The application of these proposed strategies in the classroom is intended to give students the tools to not only to enter their chosen ADC but also to leave their mark on it.

Keywords: EAP, Positive psychology, discourse community, self-mastery, academic identity

Introduction

Identity is what makes us similar to and different from each other and for academics it is how they both achieve credibility as insiders and reputations as individuals.
(Hyland, 2015, p. 36)

Though studying is frequently depicted as a cerebral activity of the self, conducted predominantly in isolation, all university students have some form of relationship with the community of researchers, practitioners and students associated with their discipline (Adams, 2014). In fact, their academic identity can be seen to be defined in terms of their 'proximity' or position in relation to this community (Hyland, 2015, p. 33), regardless of whether English is their first language (L1) or an additional language (L2), and of whether they are already studying on their university course or are on an EAP pathway.

However, despite the importance of such a community to a student's identity, the exact nature of this concept has been heavily disputed; some term it an 'academic discourse community' (e.g. Swales, 2016) and others a 'community of practice' (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991), with both terms carrying different nuances of meaning. The term 'academic discourse community' was coined first and, though initially criticised for its 'fuzziness' (hence the advent of the 'community of practice' concept), it has since been usefully subdivided into 'local', 'focal' and 'folocal' discourse communities (Swales, 2016, pp. 4-7). All three of these types of discourse community tend to consist of individuals who use shared language and genres to participate in discursive practices with a good degree of common purpose and focus (Swales, 2016), with members of the former being more likely to be locally situated (such as in a university department), and members of the second more likely to be removed from each other spatially, temporally and linguistically but partaking in the same largely textual discursive practices (such as writing a thesis or journal article). The term 'folocal' is a fusion of the other two terms, reflecting the activities of those who are members of both local and focal discourse communities, such as research-active

university lecturers (Swales, 2016, p. 6). In this way, the term ‘academic discourse community’ can be used to encapsulate two important (and often overlapping) dimensions of participation which can usefully be applied to university students - both the localised and the focal/textual - and it is in both of these respects that the term ‘academic discourse community’ (ADC) will be employed in this paper.

One way of characterising the relationship of a student to their intended ADC is to view it in terms of shifts in identity and perceived levels of agency, and the interrelationship between the two. Agency can be regarded as a relational property of the nature of the association between an individual and the ADC (Oxford, 2016, p. 64) at the interface of which is a ‘site of struggle’, which is where complex and shifting perceptions of our identity and level of agency in relation to others in the ADC are formed (Hemmi, 2014, pp. 77-78). As a student embarks on a process of transition into their target ADC, the power relationship between these two entities shifts – and this shift can be lengthy, complex and even painful (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Swales, 2016). This of necessity has an impact on a student’s notion of their own academic identity or position in relation to their ADC.

In terms of how notions of academic identity might be theorised, this has been done most notably through Marsh and colleagues’ model of an ‘academic self-concept’ or ‘ASC’ (Marsh et al, 2008). They use the term ASC to refer to “students’ self-perceptions of their academic accomplishments, their academic competence, their expectations of academic success or failure, and academic self-beliefs” (Marsh et al, 2008, p. 322). ASC can be general in scope, or can be domain-specific, with differences depending on an individual’s perception of their abilities in different subjects (Marsh et al, 2008, p. 322). At this domain-specific level, ASC has been closely linked to the construct of academic self-efficacy, which refers to an individual’s beliefs that they have the agency required to succeed in a specific academic task at a designated level (Schunk, 1991); indeed academic self-efficacy is commonly regarded to be the most significant component in one’s ASC (e.g. Schunk, 1991). In recognition of the important interplay between ASC and academic self-efficacy, in this article I shall refer to the student’s perceptions about their academic competence and their level of agency in specific academic tasks as their ‘academic self’.

However, it is important to note that the aforementioned shifts in positioning of the ‘academic self’ in relation to the intended ADC tend to have an even greater impact on students for whom the language and practices of their target ADC are not those with which they are most familiar (and who may therefore enter onto an EAP pathway), as learning an L2 has been found to prompt further shifts in one’s self-concept (Yeung & Wong, 2004). In the case of these L2 students, their transition involves what I term their ‘L2 academic self’, which can face greater challenges in this process than a student typically would studying in their first language (Spack, 1988). One additional challenge is that many international students, particularly those for whom English is not an L1, are frequently subject to ‘othering discourses’ (Sidhu, 2006, p. 175), which frame them in terms of their skills deficits. Indeed, there is a “great potential for L2 students to internalize reductive stigma”, which can lower their levels of self-efficacy (Gallagher, Galindo & Shin, 2016, pp. 3-4), which, in turn, can put them at higher risk of academic under-achievement (de Kleine & Lawton, 2015).

This article will proceed to explore the nature of these challenges by outlining the process by which the ‘L2 academic self’ enters an ADC. It will make a case for the centrality of psychological factors related to identity and agency in this process of academic socialization, thus opening up space for the application to EAP of theories and approaches from the emerging field of positive psychology, including Albert Bandura’s concept of ‘self-efficacy’ from his Social Cognitive Theory, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow Theory, Martin Seligman’s Theory of Learned Optimism, Ellen Langer’s Theory of Mindful Learning and Barbara Fredrickson’s Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions. It will examine what insights these theories and approaches have to offer with regard to EAP students overcoming the challenges outlined above, and will argue that there is a great deal to be gained from exploring this hitherto largely uncharted territory.

From Emerging to Established L2 Academic Self

At the outset, the power relationship between a student and their intended ADC is essentially unbalanced. This has been referred to in terms of a dichotomy between the ‘novice’ status of the student and the ‘expert’ status of the more influential members of the ADC (Swales, 1990, p. 27). Some commentators offer an interesting analogy to explain the process of transition from ‘novice’ to ‘expert’ status: ‘novice’ students must undergo something akin to tribal initiation practices (Swales, 1990, p. 4) before they can hope to be accepted by the ‘gatekeepers to

the domain' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 28) and to be successful in fully 'joining the tribe' (Alexander, Argent, & Spencer, 2008) of the target ADC. This imagery contains some conceptually potent elements through its likening of this process with that of the convergence of an individual with the norms and practices of a powerful, closed group, practices which, while being important rites of passage, are notoriously arduous and painful, often leaving enduring marks on an individual, both physical and psychological. However, in other respects, the terminology 'novice', 'expert' and 'initiation' is somewhat problematic, tending to frame an individual's relationship to an ADC in stative terms, and assigning undue import to a single transitional event (such as the conferral of a degree) between these as being conducive to changing one's status.

More helpful are analogies which frame the transition of a student into an ADC in terms of a longer-term process of 'academic socialisation' (Coffin & Donohue, 2012, p. 72) or 'cognitive apprenticeship' (Adams, 2014, p. 24). The implication here is that students are already members of their ADC and that their relationship to other members of the community can be regarded not as stative but as dynamic and developmental, and not so much in terms of status as of positioning in relation to others at a given point in time. For this reason, I intend to adopt these developmental analogies as the foundation for my discussion, and, to enable me to refer to L2 students who are positioned at different points along the developmental continuum, I propose to employ the terms 'emerging L2 academic self' and 'established L2 academic self' in this article.

The 'emerging L2 academic self' initially adopts a relatively peripheral position in relation to the rest of the ADC, gradually moving to a more central or established position in the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to Beaufort (2007), this transition can only commence once a student has begun to 'master' five specific domains of knowledge: that of the target discourse community, which requires an analysis of the characteristics and values of the intended audience; its subject matter, which involves critical and analytical engagement with the disciplinary content (Beaufort, 2012); its genre conventions, which range 'from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics' (p. 180); its rhetoric, including an ability to identify the distinct communicative purpose of a particular piece of writing and to employ rhetorical devices accordingly (Beaufort, 2012); and the writing process, for which students should take a flexible approach, drawing on a range of strategies. For L2 students, I also propose a sixth domain - that of 'academic L2 competence' - which affects their ability to master the other five domains. The notable point here is that the 'emerging L2 academic self' is required to converge with the norms and practices of the ADC, a process of 'constructing individuals as members' referred to by Hyland (2015, p. 36) as 'proximity'.

However, once an individual has moved to a more central position in their ADC through mastering the relevant knowledge domains, an important shift in power relations and identity can occur, one which identifies the individual as having fashioned an 'established L2 academic self'. Such an individual, according to the school of Systemic Functional Linguistics, will have a keen awareness of how 'powerful discourses' are constructed, which can empower them to "critique from within and renegotiate their position" (Coffin & Donohue, 2012, p. 72). This renegotiation process can feed into what Hyland (2015, p. 33) has referred to as 'positioning', in which the informed choices that individuals make about genre grant them a certain degree of individuality or, as he puts it, 'personal wriggle room'. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) echoes this sentiment, arguing that mastery of a domain is a necessary prerequisite to the ability of an individual to be creative and influence a domain from within.

Therefore, it can be seen that, while the 'emerging L2 academic self' is engaged in an unequal power relationship with the target ADC, involving the convergence of one's identity with the norms and expectations of the target group, the 'established L2 academic self' has a far more reciprocal relationship with the target ADC, allotting the individual a degree of power to actually change the group, along with its attendant knowledge domains, from within.

The Roles of Self-Efficacy, Mastery Experiences and Flow

Yet, crucially, the journey of an individual from 'emerging' to 'established L2 academic self', and the likelihood of their being able to flourish in their chosen ADC, is dependent on more than merely gaining the skills to master the required knowledge domains (including the academic L2). There is evidence to suggest that whether or not a student achieves success in this challenging endeavour hinges also on the strength of their belief that they are capable of succeeding in this feat or, put another way, their level of 'self-efficacy' (e.g. Adams, 2014, p. 17).

This concept of ‘self-efficacy’ is a major tenet of Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory of psychology (Bandura, 1989, p. 731), in which he proposes that people with high levels of self-efficacy are highly goal-focused and perseverant in the pursuit even of difficult tasks. They imagine themselves succeeding and apply themselves more fully to achieving their desired end than their low self-efficacy counterparts, which in turn renders them more likely to succeed. For example, in the field of L2 learning, Hsieh and Schallert (2008) showed that L2 learners with higher self-efficacy beliefs tended to perform better in the L2 than do L2 learners with lower self-efficacy beliefs. These trends appear to be supported by findings that, in the L2 classroom, learners with higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to be found in advanced level classes (Mills, 2014).

It can be argued, though, that it is difficult to establish a precise causal relationship here in order to determine conclusively whether it is high self-efficacy beliefs that lead to high achievement, or whether the reverse is actually more accurate. In fact, the answer to this potential criticism lies within Bandura’s theory itself; there is a symbiotic relationship between the two. Just as a degree of self-efficacy gives one the motivation to put in the required effort to succeed in a task, success in a task – referred to by Bandura (1989, p. 733) as a ‘mastery experience’ – is one of the factors which can serve to raise one’s level of self-efficacy. This may, in turn, lead to the student attempting more and more challenging tasks, thereby leading to the development of increasingly complex skills.

This premise is also a fundamental feature of Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) Theory of Flow, which complements Bandura’s theory by incorporating the concepts of motivation and enjoyment. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has proposed that one way of increasing the likelihood of success in a task is for individuals to experience the state of ‘flow’, which is an optimal mental state in which an individual is absolutely engrossed in a particular activity whilst experiencing a deep sense of enjoyment. There is evidence to suggest that students experiencing flow whilst engaged in a task have higher levels of motivation and focus, and are thus more likely to persevere to complete the task successfully (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Each success leads to the setting of increasingly complex goals, which, in turn, leads to the development of more complex skills, as Csikszentmihalyi outlines in his *Growth of Complexity Through Flow Theory* (2003).

In the EAP classroom, the teacher might make it more likely that learners will experience flow and success in challenging learning activities (thereby increasing their self-efficacy) by creating certain enabling conditions. There needs to be a fair balance between the level of challenge posed and the skills and abilities of the individual to meet that challenge, otherwise students may become demotivated and give up. For example, a tutor may choose to avoid the possibility of overwhelming and demotivating intermediate level EAP students by taking the decision to simplify or shorten an authentic academic text and/or the activities that accompany it in order to increase the likelihood of the task being completed successfully. This can be linked to the pedagogical concept of ‘scaffolding’, which involves providing a student with supportive mechanisms that are gradually removed as their skills improve. This has been found to be of great benefit in facilitating deeper engagement in EAP students (e.g. Wingate, 2019). Flow is also more likely to occur if the task is intrinsically interesting to students (e.g., if it can be linked to their future academic studies) and if they are able to enjoy a sense of control over the process through the goals of a task being clear and having the opportunity to receive immediate feedback on their progress so that, if their performance falters, they can adjust it accordingly to achieve better results (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). In terms of how flow might be facilitated in language learning tasks, Aubrey (2017) has found that information-exchange activities, which include a decision-making component and a degree of novelty and complexity, can provide students with a clear and engaging communicative purpose, while enjoying a significant degree of control over the content of their message, which was found to promote flow experiences in students. However, though certain tasks and contextual variables may promote flow, individual learner characteristics should also be borne in mind in order to increase the probability that flow will occur and that successful learning will take place.

Setbacks and Learned Optimism

Nonetheless, sooner or later, all students will experience some form of setback and, for students with low self-efficacy, should their performance falter or should they experience another form of setback, the likelihood of attempting the task again is far lower; indeed, those with lower self-efficacy levels are more likely to choose to either over-simplify the task to increase the likelihood of success or to quit (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, it can be seen that it is not enough for teachers to merely try to create the enabling conditions for flow to occur; they

also need to have strategies at hand which will encourage students to persevere when they encounter obstacles. This is where the theory of Learned Optimism comes into play.

Learned Optimism (Seligman, 1991), or 'LO', is a theory which proposes that there are two diametrically-opposed ways in which people react to experiences of personal failure; they might use a pessimistic explanatory style or an optimistic one. If they use a pessimistic style, they are likely to view the cause of the failure as being permanent, pervading all domains of their life and being due to internal factors which cannot be changed. People who explain their failures in this way are more likely to feel that they are not able to control their situation, to suffer poor health and depression, to give up and to fail in pursuit of their goal, thereby rendering their prediction that they will fail self-fulfilling (Seligman, 1991). In other words, the concept of pessimistic explanatory style is very similar to that of low-self efficacy in terms of a person's negative thought processes, feelings, behaviour and ultimately lower chances of succeeding in a given task.

On the other hand, those who use an optimistic explanatory style are more likely to see a failure as temporary and therefore rectifiable, bound to a limited domain of their life and due to external causes. They are more likely to feel in control of their situation, to enjoy higher levels of health and happiness, to be inspirational role models to others, and to persevere at a given task, giving them a better chance of succeeding in it (Seligman, 1991). There are clear parallels here to the concept of high self-efficacy, which has been linked to one's ability to control one's affective states, which can have significant repercussions on one's likelihood of succeeding (Bandura, 1997).

However, as Bandura (1989, p. 732) cautions, "gross miscalculation of one's efficacy can get one into trouble", which echoes Seligman's warning that, despite the potentially detrimental self-limiting effects of pessimism, in some situations (such as those in which the stakes are high), pessimism can be the more prudent or 'realistic' explanatory style to adopt (Seligman, 1991, p. 209). Equally, while 'optimistic self-appraisals' which are not too far removed from the realms of the possible can be beneficial in encouraging an individual to persevere, these can be risky in high-stakes situations and can sometimes lead to individuals evading responsibility for their own failures (Seligman, 1991, p. 209). Therefore, Seligman (1991, p. 291-292) proposed the use of 'flexible optimism', in which individuals become aware that they can choose the way in which they respond to failure and negative events, depending on which strategy is appropriate for use in a given situation.

In terms of how the theory of Learned Optimism can be used in the EAP classroom, students can be helped to see perceived setbacks (such as language or cohesion problems in an assignment) in an 'optimistic' way, which can enable them to see failure and mistakes as non-threatening and even constructive, thus encouraging more risk-taking and perseverance (Seligman, 1991, p. 104). This relates to Bandura's (1989, p. 733) suggested strategy of 'social persuasion' through which a teacher or respected other can bolster a student's belief that they are capable of succeeding in a given task. Another implication of LO for the classroom is that the provision of inspirational role models can put forward the idea that adversity can be overcome through perseverance, which relates to Bandura's (1997) recommended use of vicarious experiences through which seeing others succeed can increase one's belief that one can also succeed. This might come about through reading and analysing a biography of an inspirational figure such as Mahatma Gandhi in class, or even, as suggested by Murphey and Arao (2001, p. 1), through reading the reflective accounts of successful learners from previous cohorts, functioning as 'near-peer' role models. A further application of LO to the classroom is the importance of learners feeling a sense of autonomy or agency, perhaps through the conscious use of metacognitive strategies (such as the reflective cycle) when failure occurs. This would serve as an extension to existing opportunities to practice reflection which are already common on many EAP programmes, such as at the University of Nottingham in the UK (Veleanu, & Gooch, 2017). Strategies such as these are more likely to lead to success in an endeavour or, as Bandura (1989, p. 733) puts it, 'mastery experiences', which, as noted above, can increase students' skills levels and levels of self-efficacy.

I have shown how using strategies offered by LO can give students ways in which they can build resilience in the face of potential adversity and, therefore, the motivation to persevere in the development of their skills. I will now move on to explore another form of resilience which we can help students develop - that of being comfortable with uncertainty and possessing flexible skills which are transferable to new contexts. For this, I will turn to the theory of Mindful Learning.

Mindfulness, Creativity and Play

Also known as ‘Langerian Mindfulness’, the notion of Mindful Learning, proposed by Langer (1997) is best explained by contrasting it with that of ‘mindless’ learning. According to Langer (2000, p. 220), ‘mindless’ learning depends heavily on rules which are typically learnt by rote and repetition with little understanding, otherwise known as ‘over-learning’. In contrast, mindful learning occurs when a person experiences “a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context” (Langer, 2000, p. 220).

One way in which ‘mindless learning’ occurs is when information is presented prescriptively and learners make ‘premature cognitive commitments’ to that way of viewing it (Langer, 1997, p. 89). This type of learning has been found to be not easily adaptable to future contexts when new information comes to light which might challenge the original view (Langer & Piper, 1987). An example of this related to language learning might be the learning of a word through a bilingual dictionary, which tends to over-emphasise a 1:1 correspondence between equivalents (Adamska-Salaciak, 2013). However, while these words might be near-equivalents in one context, this might not be the case in another. Therefore, a student who has memorised this 1:1 correspondence ‘mindlessly’ might be more likely to misapply this word in inappropriate situations in the future, rather than noticing that this word is not usually used in those contexts.

A more ‘mindful’ approach to this might involve the use of concordance lines to encourage the students to actively notice the ways in which a word is used not only in terms of grammar and collocation but also in terms of contexts of use, as suggested by Meyer (2004, p. 11-12), an approach which readily lends itself to analysing discipline-specific usage in English for Specific Academic Purposes texts. Such descriptive rather than prescriptive approaches to presenting information have been found to help students become more receptive to alternative possibilities, leading to students being more open-minded and flexible and able to remember information better (Langer, 2000). It can also foster a less absolute and more “conditional or probabilistic view of the world” (Langer & Piper, 1987, p. 281), which has been associated with greater levels of creativity and flexible modes of thought (Langer & Piper, 1987), which lends itself well to academic contexts.

Despite the advantages of conditional modes of learning, there is some resistance to this idea. Many people are more comfortable with the idea of certainties and absolutes than with uncertainties and partial truths, a fact which is reflected in many teaching methodologies (Langer & Piper, 1987), especially for lower-level learners. However, developing a willingness to tolerate a degree of uncertainty and risk is one of the key components to becoming an autonomous learner (Alexander, Argent, & Spencer, 2008) and therefore to succeeding in one’s chosen discourse community. Whether building in uncertainties is a viable option on every occasion is debatable, and there is some suggestion that, in situations which are not changeable, ‘mindless’ responses might have the advantage of being executed more quickly (Langer & Piper, 1987, p. 285).

Another important element of mindful learning is the promotion of a sense of playfulness and curiosity in a student. Though not generally employed in discussions of EAP pedagogies, ‘play’ can perform a very important function in preparing students for adopting a more central role in their ADC. It tends to naturally encourage people to actively draw distinctions and notice interesting and relevant aspects of the activity they are engaged in (Langer, 1997, p. 56). This relates to the concept of ‘noticing’, based on Schmidt’s (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which proposes that input can only truly become intake when a language item is noticed consciously. Langer (1997) would add that the technique of noticing can be optimised when students are encouraged to vary the target of their attention; this has been found to lead them to focus better on this, to be able to remember more about it and even to like it better than before.

Furthermore, when an activity is perceived as ‘play’ rather than ‘work’, people have been found to show higher levels of mindful focus and engagement, which ultimately leads to more effective learning (Langer, 1997, p. 55). Indeed engagement, curiosity and play have all been linked to creativity (Seligman, 2011) or ‘creating’, which is the highest-order thinking skill in the revised version of Bloom’s (1956) influential Taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001), as it is often through letting one’s mind roam playfully that new ideas and new relationships between concepts are formed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). As is implicit in the concept of Bloom’s Taxonomy, though, before an individual can be truly creative, s/he needs a good foundation of knowledge and understanding of

the discipline, which renders it more likely that an individual's creativity will be recognised by and, begin to influence, the target ADC (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Indeed, Hyland (2015, p. 36) purports that we need to use "ways that are familiar to those we are trying to convince" in order to make an original contribution to our ADCs, thereby establishing our academic reputations. This echoes the idea that both creativity and the pre-requisite foundations of lower-order cognitive skills are therefore conducive to individuals being able to move into a more central and influential position in their ADC, thereby adopting a more 'established L2 academic self'.

In terms of how teachers can create the enabling conditions for creativity to flourish in the language classroom, Stevick (1980) advises that learners need to feel secure enough in the learning space to feel able to take risks, which can lead to greater progress in the L2. Indeed, fear of ridicule has been linked to higher levels of anxiety and, more specifically to the language learning context, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), which, in turn, can reduce students' willingness to communicate and be creative (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016). Therefore, a supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to take risks, help each other and view mistakes constructively is of great benefit in the L2 classroom.

Furthermore, Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich & Linkins (2009) add that creativity and analytical skills can be enhanced by positive mood. This can be explained by Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions (2001), which purports that when we experience positive emotions, this broadens the way in which we view the world, which opens us up to new experiences and learning, allowing us to take risks and build resources and resilience for the future. In contrast, experiencing negative emotions can prompt people to shut out the opportunities afforded by their situations and restrict their responses to survival behaviours, which limits opportunities for learning and risk-taking behaviours. Therefore, there is a strong case to be made for fostering a positive mindset in the EAP classroom.

Conclusion

The timeless message of research on self-efficacy is that confidence, effort and persistence are more potent than innate ability

(Maddux, 2009, p. 341)

This article has explored how this empowering principle from the field of positive psychology is relevant to the identity-transforming process of moving from an 'emerging' to 'established' position in relation to one's target ADC. This journey of the 'L2 academic self' involves the development of a proficiency in the L2 as well as a mastery of the knowledge domains of the intended ADC before an individual can move to a more central position in the ADC through exercising the agency and creativity required to influence it from within. As with any process of transformation, an element of uncertainty and risk of failure is present, which requires a healthy degree of resilience and self-efficacy in order to cope. This article has explored how these can be bolstered through a number of strategies advocated in positive psychology, including: mastery experiences, flow, a flexibly optimistic explanatory style, verbal persuasion, positive vicarious experiences, mindful learning, conditional presentation of concepts, noticing, playfulness, a supportive learning environment, positive mood and creativity. While some of these ideas, such as the concept of noticing, are not new to EAP, others which have not commonly been associated with EAP, such as creativity and playfulness, gain a new measure of prominence by analysing the journey of the 'L2 academic self' towards the centre of the intended ADC through the lens of the emerging field of positive psychology.

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