

Motivation & Educational Performance

Defining Motivation

- Motivation is generally viewed as a *need*, force or influence that cause(s) someone to do something.
 - Schunk (2008) defines it as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained”
 - Influences our thoughts and actions
 - For educational applications:
 - Researchers focus on why students learn & why some have a greater desire to learn than others
 - Motivation has been seen to be the primary factor influencing test performance and overall school success
 - Motivated students also have better attendance, positive outlooks in school, are more persistent on difficult tasks, and show less behavioral issues

Motivation

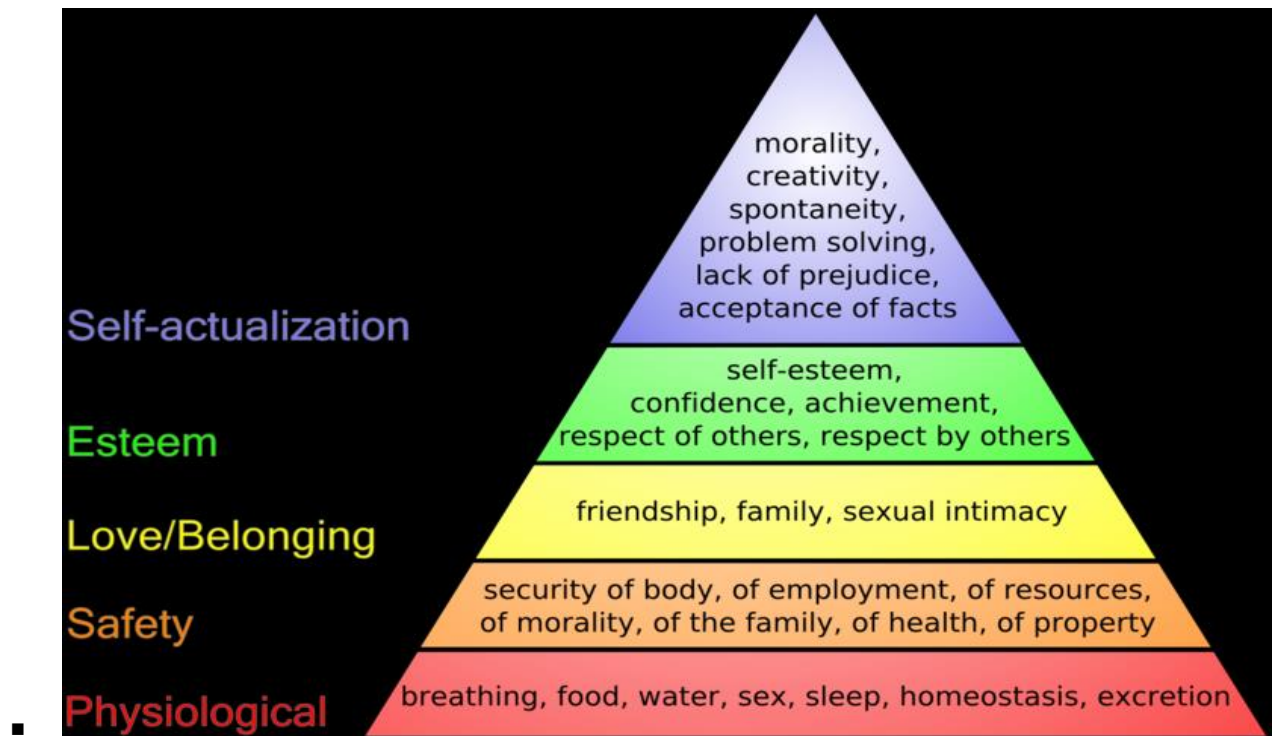
- **At First...**
- Infants and young children appear to be propelled by curiosity, driven by an intense need to explore, interact with, and make sense of their environment.
- **"Rarely does one hear parents complain that their pre-schooler is unmotivated."**
- - Raffini, 1993
- **Over time...**

- Unfortunately, their passion for learning frequently seems to shrink. A large number of students--more than one in four--leave school before graduating. Many more are physically present in the classroom but largely mentally absent; they fail to invest themselves fully in the experience of learning

Factors Influencing Motivation

- Children's home environment shapes the initial constellation of attitudes they develop toward learning. Children raised in a home that nurtures a sense of self-worth, competence, autonomy, and self-efficacy, they will be more apt to accept the risks inherent in learning.
- Children that do not view themselves as basically competent and able, their freedom to engage in academically challenging pursuits and capacity to tolerate and cope with failure are greatly diminished.
- Once children start school, they begin forming beliefs about their school-related successes and failures.
- The sources to which children attribute their successes (commonly effort, ability, luck, or level of task difficulty) and failures (often lack of ability or lack of effort) have important implications for how they approach and cope with learning situations.
- The beliefs teachers themselves have about teaching and learning and the nature of the expectations they hold for students also exert a powerful influence. - Raffini
- "To a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn." - Stipeck, 1988

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Achievement Motivation

- **Achievement Motivation:**

"the generalized tendency to strive for success and choose goal oriented, success/failure activities," and it is developed early in life. - Slavin, 2006

- **New Ideas:**

- *Psychological* needs as well as *physiological* needs impact motivation.
- Individual differences are seen in a person's psychological make up as compared to one's physiological make up. Thus individual needs must be met.

- Individuals specific needs are acquired over time and can be shaped.
- Murray focused on an individual's *psychological* needs as they relate to motivation. His research focused on **3 important needs**:
 - **Dominance**: the need to be in control of the situation and others
 - **Affiliation**: the need to form friendships
 - **Achievement**: the need to meet or exceed standards
- Students must engage in work that is meaningful, but is compatible with their developmental level so as to reduce the fear of failure.
- The task must not be too easy because this reduces the satisfaction or value of the task.
- Repeated success builds the perception of competence.
- Self efficacy increases the likelihood of a student choosing to move on to more difficult tasks.

Modify the environment - it must be positive with regard to education and point to the value of each educational domain

What shapes our expectancy of success and our valuing of a task?

- **Task specific self concepts**: an individual's perception of their ability in a specific domain
 - "I'm just no good at math"
- **Task difficulty**: the individual's **perception** of the difficulty.
- Tasks have **value** to an individual because of
 - The importance of doing well on the task
 - The task is of interest to the individual

- The tasks have value relative to future goals
- ***Eccles, Wigfield & Tonk believe these perceptions are shaped by the environment***
- Children's expectancies for success and valuing of achievement are influenced by their previous performance.
 - set reasonable goals that ensure likely success
- Variations in classroom environments influence children's expectancies and values in positive and negative ways.
 - strive to reflect positively on the study of all domains.
 - challenge the student to evaluate their progress in terms of previous performance.
 - avoid putting students into situations (usually competitive) in which the student judges his ability in terms of how it compares to others
- There are gender differences in children's beliefs and values about different activities that tend to conform to gender stereotypes.
 - classrooms should be free of stereotypes
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Types of Motivation

■ Intrinsic Motivation

- Internal drive to partake in an activity as the task itself is rewarding
- In school, one's thoughts & actions are based on an internal desire to learn about topics

■ Extrinsic Motivation-

- External drive to partake in an activity as the task is a means to an end (complete a task as it is required)
- In school, one's thoughts & actions are based on requirements to completing assignments, study for tests, and so on which are external pressures to do well

Theoretical Basis for Motivation: **Behavioral- Skinner (1952)**

- Foundation of operant conditioning
 - Reinforcement increases motivation in students
 - Avoiding punishment should also increase motivation
 - Whereas being punished should decrease motivation in students
- *Support of behaviorist outlook:* Research has shown that rewards in school (test grade, sticker, line leader) sustain /increase motivation

- Schunk et al (2008) noted that praise, comments on homework, and good grades function as motivators in the classroom
- Covington (2000) noted that rewards that recognize increasing achievement/understanding increase intrinsic motivation
- *Critiques of behavioristic outlook:*
 - Rewarding students for learning sends the wrong message about education (Kohn, 1996)
 - Such as \$ for grades turns learning from intrinsic to extrinsic, posing a problem for when the rewards are stopped
 - Notion that behaviorism cannot adequately explain motivation
 - Such as if a student believes s/he cannot be successful or is able to complete a difficult task, despite potential rewards, the explanation is than a cognitive one (not behaviorist)

Theoretical Basis for Motivation: Cognitive- McClelland (1953)

- Cognitive theories are concerned with the way we think about our behavior and the strategies that we use in order to achieve our goals
 - ▣ Based on the idea that we have a goal in mind and thus we are motivated to work towards this goal
 - ▣ Influenced by prior knowledge and experiences
 - ▣ McClelland (1953) *The Achievement Motive*
 - ▣ *Need for Achievement* and *Need to Avoid Failure* conflict
 - Students will undertake activities as they want to be successful

- Various external factors play a role as well (wanted praise from teacher & peers, to please parent/guardian, top of the class, etc.)
- Influenced by ideas of cognitive dissonance & disequilibrium

Theoretical Basis for Motivation:

Cognitive Kagan & Lang (1978)

- Kagan & Lang (1978)- note that we are capable of forming cognitive representations (thoughts, wishes, desires), helping to motivate us
 - We can ‘see’ what we want to happen and then direct our behavior towards achieving that goal
 - In the classroom, teachers can build upon the needs of their students and plan accordingly to motivate them

Theoretical Basis for Motivation:

Humanistic- Maslow (1970)

- Based on Maslow’s hierarchy
 - Review from the Perspectives on Learning Unit
- Maslow says that motivation is categorized into 2 sets of needs that are arranged in a hierarchy
 - Deficiency- physiological, safety, belongingness/love, & esteem
 - Growth- (cognitive, aesthetic), self-actualization
 - In order for a person to ‘climb’ the hierarchy, the level below must be satisfied before being able to go to the next higher one

- At the apex of self-actualization, one realizes and reaches one's full potential (only for a brief period though)
- The humanist teacher focuses on student motivation by:
 - Acting as a facilitator of knowledge (rather than dispenser)
 - Promote students to be autonomous
 - Focusing on building student's self-esteem
- Holdbacks of Maslow's Theory
 - Methodology- Purely subjective by Maslow in deeming that people have self-actualized
 - Increased probability of experimenter bias and invalid data
 - Concept of self-actualization cannot be scientifically measured
 - His ideas of what consisted of self-actualization may be ethnocentrically biased
 - Criticism over Maslow's assumption that the lower needs must be satisfied before a person can achieve their potential and self-actualize

Improving Motivation:

Behavioral- Brophy (1981)

- Brophy (1981) focuses on classroom variables and effective praise for motivation in school settings
 - Based upon positive reinforcement concept
 - Noted that often the “good job” praise is not enough
 - Noted that many times teachers fail to implement minor changes that can increase student motivation and consequently facilitate learning

- Said that only about 6% of class time is devoted to praise (not enough)
- **Components of Effective Praise**
 - Praise should be delivered in response to a specific behavior
 - Praise should be sincere, credible, and spontaneous
 - Praise should reward the attainment of clearly defined and understood performance criteria
 - Praise should provide information about the student's competencies
 - Praise should be given in recognition of noteworthy effort or success at a difficult task for that particular student
 - Praise should attribute success to effort and ability (implies similar success in the future)
- **Components of ineffective praise**
 - Is delivered randomly or unsystematically
 - Is restricted to global positive reactions delivered in a bland fashion with minimal attention to the student or behavior
 - Compares the student's performance to other students
 - Is given without regard to the effort needed to complete the task
 - Attributes success to ability alone or to external factors such as luck or the ease of the task
 - Is given by the teacher who acts as a power figure and external authority in a manipulative manner
- Brophy focused on aspects of the class that teachers could utilize to increase student motivation (aside from praise):
 - **Student interest** -relate subject of study to what students like

- Student needs- motivated when activities meet some basic needs- like group work in HS to social needs
- Novelty & variety- mix up activities, shorter lectures, etc
- Success- make goals/objectives clear, teach in small steps, check for understanding
- Student attribution for success & failure -failure should be seen as lack of effort, not of ability
- Tension- by walking around, quizzing, and the like, teachers remind students of work that needs to be accomplished
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 - Feeling tone- class climate
- **Evaluating praise as a motivational strategy**
 - *Strengths*
 - Research has shown that praise can be very effective, especially for lower achieving students, those from lower

SES backgrounds, for boys, and for students with an 'external locus of control'

- It is a very simple and time-efficient strategy that requires no additional planning or monitoring
- As it is used in schools and businesses globally, the theory has useful and important applications to the real world

– *Weaknesses*

- It may not be effective for many students
- It is only effective if used properly
 - If not, praise can have a reverse effect and can decrease motivation
- It is deterministic as it promotes no self-choice for students to change their behavior or their own motivation
- May raise ethical issues of consent as teacher can 'manipulate' students' motivation without their consent

Improving Motivation:

Cognitive- McClelland (1953)

- Need to determine if the student fits into the Need for Achievement (nAch) or Need to Avoid Failure (nAF) category
- Motivating those who focus on Need to Avoid Failure (nAF)
 - Since these students have a low nAch, they will instead seek out easy tasks so they can avoid failing at the more challenging ones

- Provide opportunities that are easy enough for them to be successful on
- Avoid promoting competition among peers
- Try changing the notion of ability being a factor of failing

Improving Motivation:

Cognitive-Behavioral- Bandura (1977)

- Self-efficacy and increasing student motivation
 - *Define:* A measure of the belief about our own ability to complete tasks successfully and achieve goals
 - while self-efficacy indicates how strongly a student believes s/he has the skills to do well, s/he may believe other factors will keep him/her from succeeding
 - Research shows a positive, significant relationship b/w students' self-efficacy & their academic performance as it influences:
 - Which activities that they partake in
 - How much effort they put into the task
 - How persistent they are when faced with adversity

Improving Motivation:

Cognitive-Behavioral- Bandura (1977)

- Students with high self-efficacy:
 - View challenging problems as tasks to be mastered
 - Develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate
 - Form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities
 - Recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments

Success increases your confidence and then increases your motivation. The process has a spiraling effect: your performance improves, so your confidence increases, so you set higher goals, and become more motivated.



Improving Motivation: Cognitive-Behavioral- Bandura (1977)

- Students with low self-efficacy:
 - Avoid challenging tasks
 - Believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities
 - Focus on personal failings and negative outcomes
 - Quickly lose confidence in personal abilities

Lack of success will decrease your confidence and then decrease your motivation. The process has a spiraling effect: your performance suffers, so your confidence decreases, so you set lower goals, and become less motivated.



Improving Motivation: Cognitive-Behavioral- Bandura (1977)

- Increasing one's motivation is based on 4 categories:

- Personal accomplishments
 - Previous success increases our self-efficacy (failure lowers it)
- Vicarious experience
 - Seeing someone else like you being successful provides you confidence to be successful as well
- Verbal persuasion
 - Verbal praise from parents, (most) teachers, & peers can instill confidence
- Emotional arousal
 - Moderate amount of anxiety/stress is optimal for self-efficacy to work well

Motivation Issues:

Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1984)

- Weiner (1984) suggests that attributions can be classified by three categories:
 - Locus of control- the cause of success or failure originates within us or in the environment (internal vs. external)
 - Stability- factors (like luck or skills) that affect our behavior over time (stable vs. unstable)
 - Controllability- cause of success/failure something that we have or do not have control over (controllable vs uncontrollable)
- We also make different attributions depending on whether the outcome of the behavior has positive or negative consequences for us (example in chart)

Motivation Issues:

Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1984)

- We tend to view the results in such a way to maintain a positive self-image
 - Our successes are because of our abilities/efforts
 - Our failures are because of external variables (bad teaching/luck)
- Attribution theory & motivation in education (4 factors)
 - Ability- a relatively internal and stable factor over which the learner does not exercise much control
 - Effort- internal & unstable factor over which the learner can exercise a great deal of control
 - Luck- external & unstable factor over which the learner exercises very little control
 - Task difficulty- an external & stable factor that is largely beyond the learner's control

Motivation Issues:

Learned Helplessness (Background)

- Seligman (1967)- showed that once dogs were placed in an inescapable traumatic situation, they gave up trying to escape even when possible
- In the same sense, students who often fail, are told that they are nothing, or the like feel as though whatever they do, they will not be successful in school
 - If a student fails a test and attributes it to lack of effort, they believe that they can be successful when they study the next time,
 - BUT...
 - If a student fails a test and attributes it to their lack of ability and believe that whatever they do will not work, they will most likely give up trying and accept the idea that they will fail

Motivation Issues:

Changing Attributions (Self-Determination Theory-SDT)

- According to self-determination theory, people need to feel the following in order to achieve such psychological growth:
 - Competence: we need to gain mastery of tasks, learn new skills, and see an increase over time
 - Autonomy: we want to feel in control of our behaviors, goals, and environment
 - Relatedness: we need to experience a sense of belongingness with others (like Maslow)
 - (remember, we all need a CAR)
- Theory suggests that when people experience these 3 things, they become self-determined and are able to be intrinsically motivated to pursue the things that interest them

Motivation Issues:

Changing Attributions (Self-Determination Theory)

- Ways to help support students' self-determinism
 - Deci notes that offering unexpected positive encouragement & feedback on a person's performance on a task can increase intrinsic motivation
 - This feedback helps add to the 'competence' category
 - Utilize lessons that incorporate students' interests
 - Encourage students to set goals
 - Provide examples of how academic work relates to personal life & goals

Motivation Issues:

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