

MOTIVATION



"Follow your
passion, it will
lead you to your
purpose"

- OPRAH WINFREY

Motivation can affect how students approach school generally, including how they relate to teachers, their peers, how they apply themselves to their learning and whether they look for support when they are finding learning difficult. If students are not motivated to learn it is difficult to engage them in improving their outcomes at school; regardless of the skill of the teacher or curriculum (CEP, 2012).

Learners with agency use their own initiative and will, and take responsibility and ownership of their learning. They direct their learning with a strong sense of identity and self-belief, and in conjunction with others, thereby building a sense of community and awareness of the opinions, values and needs of others.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, motivation manifests itself differently in different students. Students who are motivated by grades ask questions like: Will that be on the test? How many words do I have to write? Students who are motivated to learn for themselves ask questions like: Why are several different viewpoints on this subject and what does it mean? Why is this important? What can I do next? (Bjerede & Gielniak, 2017). In his book, Pink (2011) outlines how autonomy, mastery and purpose are fundamental to intrinsic motivation a foundational block of student agency. Pink states that student agency implies an intrinsically motivated volition on the part of the student, which goes beyond student engagement – where a student is engaged with the work for its own sake, not just for extrinsic motivators such as getting good grades or pleasing teachers or parents.

THE WHY SHEETS: MOTIVATION

Motivation to learn has been linked not only to better academic performance, but to greater conceptual understanding, satisfaction with school, self-esteem, social adjustment, and school completion rates (CEP, 2012). Abraham Maslow stated that humans are motivated by unsatisfied needs, so as basic needs are met they are able to grow and move towards self-actualisation, resulting in individuals who are satisfied and fulfilled (Maslow, 1970). Efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their "capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura 1997). Facilitating a classroom environment which meets Maslow's hierarchy of needs and students self-efficacy, enables students to feel a sense of belonging and self worth within their environment, therefore boosting their motivation to do well and helping them become confident learners. Broussard and Garrison (2004) observe that contemporary motivation research tends to be organized around three questions: Can I do this task? Do I want to do this task and why? and What do I have to do to succeed in this task?

Agency in the classroom focuses on utilising the second question here in order to engage student motivation. Student motivation to learn is also related strongly to passion and purpose. Lefrancois (2000) states that motivation can simply be defined as, "a need that, if high, is evident in a strong desire to achieve, to excel, to reach a high level of excellence." In other words, find your passion through agency and you will find purpose to motivate yourself towards mastery over the skills to learn.

Partnership

You may find it helpful to consider the following reflective questions:

1. Which rewards motivate me...which enables the best learning?
2. What role does my belief in my own abilities affect my motivation?
3. How can I support self-worth in my child to improve their motivation to do well?



CITATIONS:

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