

Motivating Students to Learn

Question.....

Key Points:

- One of most important ingredients of instruction and learning
- Extremely difficult to measure
- ALL students are motivated
- Made up of a combination of many factors
- “Motivation” is a construct - not directly observable - it must be inferred.
- Constructs are created by scientists.

Factors Affecting Motivation

- Student personality
- Student ability
- Characteristics of learning task
- Incentives (internal/external)
- Instructional setting
- Teacher behaviors



Definition of Motivation

- "The internal process that activates, guides, and maintains behavior over time that has both INTENSITY and DIRECTION"



Theories of Motivation:



- Behavioral
- Human Needs
- Cognitive Dissonance
- Attribution
- Expectancy

Motivation and Behavioral Learning Theory

- Motivation is the product of reinforcement
- Behaviors that have been reinforced in the past are more likely to be repeated
- An inadequate explanation of human motivation due to complexity of humans and context of situation.
- How does one determine incentive value of an event or consequence ahead of time???

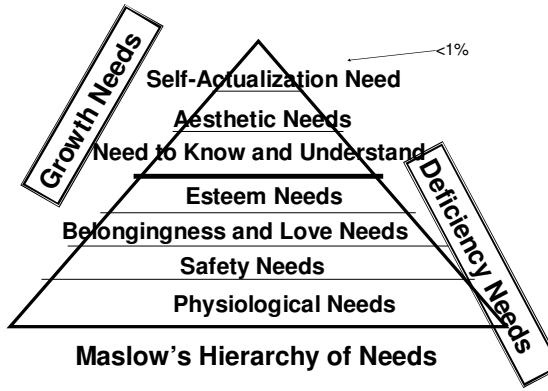


Motivation and Human Needs

- Premise: the driving force behind behavior is the satisfaction of needs
- Needs vary in importance and order of consideration
- Maslow's hierarchy - deficiency versus growth needs



Motivation and Human Needs



Motivation and Cognitive Dissonance

- Motivated by need to maintain positive self-image.
- **Cognitive Dissonance Theory:** people will experience tension or discomfort when a deeply held value or belief is challenged by an inconsistent belief, behavior, or outcome (Festinger, 1957).



Motivation and Cognitive Dissonance

- To resolve this discomfort or inconsistency, people may:
 1. Change their behavior (in the future)
 2. Change their beliefs (not usually likely)
 3. Or develop justifications or excuses that resolve the inconsistency and discomfort.

Attribution Theory and Motivation

- Why did something happen??
- To what can we attribute the event??
- Explanation of motivation that focuses on how people explain the causes of their own successes and failures.
- **Characteristics** of most explanations:
 1. internal - external
 2. stable - unstable
 3. controllable - uncontrollable



Attribution Theory (continued)

- **Central assumption:** people will attempt to maintain their self-image.
- **Most people tend to attribute their own success to personal factors (i.e., their own efforts or skill or ability); but attribute their own failure to external, uncontrollable factors (i.e., bad luck).**
- **Locus of Control: Internal (self-efficacy) versus external.**

Attributions for Success and Failure:

Attribution	Stability	
	Stable	Unstable
Internal Success: Failure:	<i>Ability</i> "I'm smart." "I'm stupid."	<i>Effort</i> "I tried hard." "I didn't really try."
External Success: Failure:	<i>Task Difficulty</i> "It was easy." "It was too hard."	<i>Luck</i> "I lucked out." "I had bad luck."

Implications of Attribution Theory to the Classroom:

- If one believes that past failure was due to lack of ability, one is likely to expect to fail in similar situations and unlikely to exert effort. (Example: kids with failure histories in school/academic setting.)
- If students believe they will fail, poorly motivated to do academics, which increases likelihood of academic failure.



- If one believes failure was due to lack of ability, expect failure in similar situations; exert LESS effort
- Less effort leads to more failure and more negative, internal, stable attributions
- Need to emphasize EFFORT attributions in academic work

Motivation and Expectancy Theory

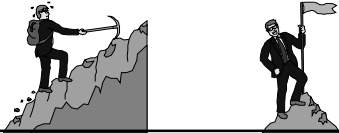
- Premise: motivation is based on the **EXPECTATION** of reward.
- $M = P_s \times I_s$
- Motivation (**M**) = Perceived Probability of Success (**Ps**) x the incentive value of success (**Is**)

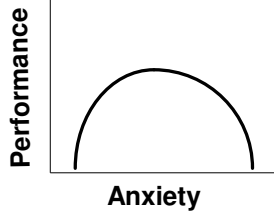
Motivation and Expectancy Theory

- Motivation highest at moderate probability for success
- Success on very easy tasks are less valued
- **Implication**: Tasks for students should be neither too easy nor too difficult.

Anxiety, Motivation, and Performance

- Numerous sources of anxiety for students: teachers, exams, peers, social relations, achievement settings, distance from home (for younger children).
- Performance and motivation suffer in face of overwhelming anxiety.





- What will help? Accepting, comfortable classroom climate, opportunities to correct work before handing it in, clear instructions, avoid time pressure, begin tests with easy items, train in test-taking skills.

Principles for Providing Incentives to Learn

- Clear expectations
- Clear feedback
- Immediate feedback
- Frequent feedback
- Social response to appropriate behavior
- Praise should be contingent, specific, credible
- Increase value, availability of extrinsic motivators



