

## GEF 2012-2013 Educational Theme: Motivation in the Classroom

### Overview

Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior (Maehr & Meyer, 1997). Motivation is essentially the force that drives one to act. This force can come from within or from an outside source. Regardless of its origin, motivation plays a key role in our deciding if and why we do things. Motivation comes from one of two places: within our ourselves (intrinsic) or from an outside source (extrinsic).

Motivation is of particular interest in the field of education because of its strong impact on student learning. Motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and their behavior towards subject matter (Ormrod, 2003).

- Motivation provides direction and increases energy and overall effort
- Motivation enhances cognitive processing abilities
- Motivation highlights reinforcing consequences
- Motivation directs behavior toward particular goals.
- Motivation leads to increased effort and energy.
- Motivation increases the amount of effort and energy that learners expend in activities directly related to their needs
- Motivation determines whether they pursue a task enthusiastically and wholeheartedly or apathetically
- Motivation increases initiation of and persistence in activities.
- Motivation affects what learners pay attention to and how effectively they process it
- Motivation determines which consequences are reinforcing and punishing.
- Motivation often enhances performance. Because of the other effects just identified—goal-directed behavior, effort and energy, initiation and persistence, cognitive processing, and the impact of consequences—motivation often leads to improved performance.

Motivation is a necessity so that learning becomes a continuing, improving, interesting and hopefully enjoyable process. Student motivation has to do with students' desire participate in the learning process. But it also concerns the reasons or goals that underlie their involvement in academic activities. Although students may be equally motivated to perform a task, the source of their motivation may differ. According to educators, motivation to learn is a competence acquired "through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by parents and teachers. Motivation is something that energizes, directs, and sustains behavior; it gets students moving, points them in a particular direction, and keeps them going. We often see students' motivation reflected in personal investment and in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in school activities. If you do not understand how something relates to your goals, you will not care about that thing. Because we do not want our children to be motivated solely by a desire to please the teacher, what we need to address is how to make the content of the curriculum fit into the concerns of the child. Rarely does one hear parents complain that their pre-school child is 'unmotivated', unfortunately, as children grow, their passion for learning frequently seems to shrink. Learning often becomes associated with drudgery instead of delight. According to Pintrich & Schunk, "intrinsic motivation refers to motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake. People who are intrinsically motivated work on tasks because they find them enjoyable." Intrinsic motivation can be influenced by the level of difficulty, curiosity of the learner, or a need for control. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, comes from an outside source such as money, grades, praise, etc. When extrinsically motivated one will complete a task in order to receive the reward regardless of personal interest. A large number of students—more than one in four—leave schools 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. Motivation can be induced artificially, but its effects then are temporary. There is no substitute for the real thing. There are ways to design curricula so that the learners intrinsic motivation makes them want to learn.

There are many ways for you to develop student motivation: Here are a few examples:

1. As mentioned above encourage them to set to set goals.
2. Give students more control - a chance to create their own personal choices. Establishing their own rights, is a very resourceful motivational technique. Allowing students to choose their own ways (with the teacher's agreement of course) of completing assignments, learning new or complex tasks, etc.
3. As much as possible relate assignments and class projects to real life situations.
4. Practice the assertive discipline (positive discipline) techniques
5. Of course most teachers will come across students who will be very difficult to motivate and who will not care about what happens in school, so teacher's need to create incentives. There are ways to motivate students such as these.
6. Doing unique activities, creating situations where they can work in small groups, creating a reward system are just a few ideas.