

The Use of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivations to Enhance Student Achievement in Educational Settings

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Abstract: In order to help students acquire more knowledge and improve their skills, it is vital to understand motivation. It is not possible to expect unmotivated students to achieve their goals. Motivation is an indispensable reason in fostering student achievement. It should be noted that motivation has the key role in establishing a platform in which learning is permanent. Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations have the potential to encourage students to strive for learning. Although the use of external rewards in the classroom has been criticized for diminishing intrinsic motivation of students, quite many studies suggest that the implementation of external rewards has no detrimental influence on students. Intrinsic motivation on the other hand enables students to work independently and enthusiastically. This paper defines extrinsic and intrinsic motivations and puts forward some strategies to enhance motivation of students in the classroom.

Keywords: Extrinsic Motivation, Intrinsic Motivation, Achievement, Learning

1. Introduction

Motivation is a force which energizes, directs and helps us to select the most appropriate behavior to achieve our goals (Don Hamachek, 1989). Brophy (2004) defines motivation as “the intention of acquiring the knowledge or skills that the activities are intended to develop” (p. 4). Motivation is an internal drive to meet desires and needs (Ugah, 2008). It has been considered as one of the most significant factors to achieve an expectation or a goal. Motivation is the willingness to build desire to learn through engaging in activities. A person who is activated to act is characterized as motivated. A motivated person is inspired to do something and the impetus he/she has enables him/her towards completing a task.

Arnold, Robertson and Cooper (1991) list the three components of motivation as; direction, effort and persistence. Direction is concerned with what a person is trying to achieve; effort refers to how hard a person is trying to achieve a result and persistence is related to how long a person keeps on trying something. Motivation has two types; extrinsic and intrinsic. While extrinsic motivation occurs in the participation of an activity because of incentives, rewards, certificates, verbal praise, punishments and criticism, intrinsic motivation occurs from the self-generated factors. In other words, extrinsic motivation comes from outside in which a person endeavors to satisfy “external values and demands” (Wang & Guthrie, 2004, 165).

2. Literature Review

That students diminish their disruptive behaviors and increase their compliant behaviors in the classroom which is provided by means of motivation allows teachers to spend more time on instruction and activities. Although the use of extrinsic motivators positively influences people and leads them to the attainment of a goal, their effects do not last long. However, it is possible to say that extrinsic motivators can provide people pleasure and satisfaction from completing a task. For example, a student who does not like working on a task tries to do well on it for the sake of a good grade. It has been argued that tangible rewards diminish intrinsic motivation of students (Meece, Anderson, & Anderson, 2006). They argue that external rewards lead students to lose motivation. However, there are some researchers who challenge this idea by claiming that intrinsic motivation in students cannot be built without extrinsic rewards (Cameron & Pierce, 2002). Zirpoli (2008) also states that external rewards have no detrimental effect on the development of intrinsic motivation of students. It should be noted that extrinsic rewards cannot be the ultimate outcome. For the students who are not excited and enthusiastic about learning, the use of extrinsic motivation is a good start. Socioeconomic standing is another factor for less motivation in students. Such problems as violence, stress and poverty can decrease motivation (Kohn, 1993). The use of external rewards might help remove these problems and stimulate students to be motivated.

Extrinsic motivation is a form of reinforcement which can improve students' performance while they strive for learning. In particular extrinsic motivation can spark enthusiasm of students whose motivation level is low. At the same time, extrinsic motivation is helpful to develop appropriate behaviors towards learning. For instance, rather than being disruptive they engage in completing tasks in the classroom.

Intrinsic motivation on the other hand enables a person to work independently and enthusiastically (Elton, 1988). Intrinsic motivation is performing a task because it is inherently interesting (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students work collaboratively in the classroom, their intrinsic motivation increases because their self-confidence enhances. They also develop positive attitudes to the learning content and they respect each other more and easily accept ideas which come from others. Creating a learning setting in which students compete with each other is another effective strategy to build intrinsic motivation. As intrinsic motivation refers to inner feelings of students they become more invested, spend more time on learning, develop motivation and struggle for learning.

It is not easy to build intrinsic motivation in students. However, enthusiasm is a key role in encouraging intrinsic motivation. Particularly, passionate teachers can ignite interest for students. Mart (2013) argues that passionate teachers are committed and dedicated to their schools and students; thus, a good education achievement is an outcome of this commitment and dedication. In other words, teachers with high level of commitment contribute students' achievement effectively (Mart, 2013). Through implementing different strategies and activities passionate teachers can help students realize that what they study is important to learn. In a study, Hansen (2001) found that students completed a writing assignment independently and easily after she taught vigorously. Another factor which increases intrinsic motivation is giving students an opportunity to choose learning activities they have in the classroom (Lowman, 1990). When students have a chance of controlling over their learning, they will link themselves to the information with ease (Kearney, 2008). The implementation of interesting activities holds an important place in generating intrinsically motivated learners. Also, asking about

opinions of students related to the activities can encourage them to engage actively and motivate them to learn.

Some important factors which increase student motivation in the classroom:

- 1) Teacher features; passionate teachers have the potential to motivate students and make difference in learning.
- 2) Learning environment; in a classroom setting in which students are stimulated to engage in learning, motivation occurs and achievement is gained easily.
- 3) Giving students a choice; students can control over their learning if they are allowed to make choices. Teachers should empower students through giving them a sense of autonomy.

Jeremy Harmer (2008) is of the opinion that creating motivation in the classroom depends on the following factors:

- 1) Activity; The implementation of activities in the classroom not only creates motivation but also increases desire of students to engage in the learning.
- 2) Agency; Some students have motivation when they do something; therefore, teachers should give opportunities to students to decide on things in the classroom.
- 3) Affect; How teachers treat his/her students is a strong power on motivating them. Students should show that their teachers care about them.
- 4) Adaptation; Teachers should be flexible and know how to respond to unexpected things in the classroom.
- 5) Attitude; Teacher's attitude holds a significant place in the classroom. That teachers behave professionally in the classroom influences deeply on students.

Callahan (2010) suggests the following strategies to motivate students in the classroom:

- 1) Set the tone early in the semester; Learning objectives, goals and expectations from students should be clearly stated in the syllabus. Also communicating with the students in the class about these requirements increases their enthusiasm as they will have an idea of what they will learn and what they need to do.
- 2) Vary your teaching methods; Staying on the same method in the class is monotonous. The use of different methods breaks the monotony and encourages students to engage in the learning in the classroom.
- 3) Give students options in the classroom; Students' motivation is enhanced if they feel that they have control of their learning outcomes.
- 4) Create assignments that are appropriately challenging; Very simple and very challenging assignments do not benefit students.
- 5) Make your lessons relevant; Teachers should relate the content and activities to the lives of students.

3. Conclusion

It is clear that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations encourage students engage in the learning process in the educational setting. While some students can build their own desire to learn because they are intrinsically motivated, some students need external rewards to be motivated because they are not enthusiastic about learning. Although its use has received criticism because it diminished intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation encourages students to develop appropriate behaviors towards learning. Motivation has paramount influence on students' achievement for that reason teachers should use them to create learning communities in which students strive for accomplishment.

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