UPDATES ON FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE HIGH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The youth of today live in a world wherein numerous stimuli exist. These stimuli may either supplement or hinder their intellectual growth. The youth are surrounded by all these stimuli and divide their attention from their studies, resulting to low academic performance in school, an outcome undesired by their parents. An ideal student should be productive in all school activities, contributing to social development problems and primarily attaining high academic performance represented by high grades. The education of the youth is an important mission that should be continuously updated with supplementary programs that could improve and develop intellectual growth.[i]

To succeed in the 21st Century, students need a multitude of abilities that go beyond internal character and reading, math, and science skills. Today's young adults must be able to adapt to change, problem-solve, innovate, and manage large quantities of knowledge. To do so, they must learn to think critically about complex issues. How do we test critical thinking in schools? We don't. In fact, most schools don't even teach critical thinking skills, the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a goal of improving it.[ii]

Most researchers, policymakers, and educators believe that children do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. However, there is no gold standard for how to engage parents. Consequently, schools often employ a broad range of "parent involvement" efforts, with little clear evidence about what works best and for whom. This issue brief uses data from Chapin Hall's evaluation of the Elev8 full-service schools initiative as an illustrative case study to reflect on the efficacy of different parent engagement approaches during the middle school years. The findings suggest that a small group of parents benefited from school-based parent involvement activities. However, many parents struggled to be present at their children's schools and wrestled with the question of how to motivate their children. The success of parent engagement activities depended heavily on school staff building strong relationships with parents. Based on these findings, the authors present recommendations on how middle schools can effectively involve parents in their children's educations. These strategies include providing parents with information on how to motivate and communicate expectations about learning to their children, fostering individual connections between the school staff and parents, and offering a limited number of easily-accessible programs for parents and families at the school.[iii]

Although many scholars and practitioners are interested in understanding how to motivate individuals to be more creative, whether and how rewards affect creativity remain unclear. We argue that the conflicting evidence may be due to differences between studies in terms of reward conditions and the context in which rewards are offered. Specifically, we examine 5 potential moderators of the rewards-creative performance relationship: (a) the reward contingency, (b) the extent to which participants are provided information about their past or current creative performance, (c) the extent to which the reward and context offer choice or impose control, (d) the extent to which the context serves to enhance task engagement, and (e) the extent to which the performance tasks are complex. Using random-effects models, we meta-analyzed 60 experimental and nonexperimental studies (including 69 independent samples) that examined the rewards-creativity relationship with children or adults. Our results suggest that creativity-contingent rewards tend to increase creative

performance--and are more positively related to creative performance when individuals are given more positive, contingent, and task-focused performance feedback and are provided more choice (and are less controlled). In contrast, performance-contingent or completion-contingent rewards tend to have a slight negative effect on creative performance.[iv]

The Effective Schools (Edmonds, 1979) a research model for urban schools is the primary framework for this study. The Effective Schools Model supports the belief that school culture or climate of high expectations can influence student achievement. The Effective Schools model served to encourage underachieving schools through empowerment by: adapting their climate to meet effective schools guidelines; promoting a belief in high expectations; and in particular encourage teacher's sense of efficacy toward promoting student achievement. The high expectations of the teachers implementing the academic program have an impact on student achievement according to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2004). The secondary framework looked at the attributes of teachers to develop an in-depth understanding of their thinking process, perceptions and beliefs. Teacher's efficacy is an important tool in creating effective schools where all children are challenged and learn. The Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Survey (TSES) (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001) and the Quality School Review (Closure School, 2009) were completed by thirty-three elementary school teaching staff in a low socio-economic school in an urban center on the east coast of the United States. The extant documents provided an in-depth look at the characteristics of this school in restructuring through analysis of: school achievement data; the school's improvement status according to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Annual Yearly Progress; and the reform initiatives for the school. The case study methodology was used by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data to support interpretation and analysis through triangulation. The significant findings of the study concluded staff is committed and willing to implement new strategies. The parents and community stand behind the school with confidence. The compilation of documents served as an anecdote about the school: what works; what needs to be improved; lessons learned; suggestions to surge forward; and more importantly what teachers say about themselves and their beliefs as they are at the helm leading change for improvement in student achievement. The extant documents provided a focus for a descriptive analysis through triangulation of the primary survey, Quality School Review (QSR) and the Comprehensive and Restructuring School plans which suggest teachers have a high sense of efficacy and are confident about their ability to motivate and encourage students. The triangulation of the three documents proved to promote the platform which empowers teachers to create environments that promote student achievement. Implications from the survey and extant documents offer specific responses to questions asked. Through the Comprehensive and Restructuring Plans guidance is developed in improving the

structure and academics of the school. However, there were no indicators as to why students were not successful on assessments. Further research can conclude how to establish a cause for low achievement and lack of consistency in school assessment data when the staff and community feel confident in their efficacy and beliefs that they can improve student achievement. An in-depth study of the climate for high expectations and the effect of school and community culture may pinpoint crucial attributes of effective teachers that successfully promote student achievement.[v]

Increasing numbers of students are participating in study abroad programs. Outcomes associated with these programs have been studied extensively, but relatively little is known about what motivates and influences students to participate. This study investigated factors that motivate and influence students to study on exchange and explored how these factors vary by social identity. The findings support the development of programs, services, and marketing that meet students' needs.[vi]

Virtual K-12 schools are growing rapidly in the U.S., providing students the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Lack of motivation has been cited as a major cause of failure to succeed by distance education students (Kim & Keller, 2008; Moore & Kearsley, 1996). To address this issue, distance educators need to identify what specific factors motivate learners in a virtual environment to perform. Because instructors are crucial to the success of virtual students, distance educators also need to identify characteristics of virtual instructors which effectively motivate students. There are two main purposes of this study. The first is to identify whether or not there are significant differences in John Keller's ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction) motivational constructs in virtual ninth grade English I students based on instructor experience. The second is to investigate the perceived instructional practices that contribute to motivation. Virtual ninth grade students who had completed 65-99% of the English I course were surveyed using Keller's Course Interest Survey to measure which ARCS constructs motivated them to perform. The response rate was 18% (n=78). English I instructors were also surveyed to obtain ARCS perceptions. Quantitative statistical procedures were utilized to analyze data. Qualitative data was also gathered and organized in themes. Outcomes indicated that both novice and experienced teachers were effective in motivating students. While there were no differences in Attention and Relevance scores based on instructor experience, students who had experienced instructors had statistically higher Confidence and Satisfaction scores than students with novice instructors. It was posited that Attention and Relevance may be driven by course design, while Confidence and Satisfaction may be instructor driven. Students perceived the most motivating factors were instructional practices including

timely, constructive feedback, flexibility, and frequent instructor-student communication. Distance educators can use the knowledge, skills, and abilities of experienced educators to design effective facilitator training focused on strategies for building student confidence and satisfaction. The skill of feedback should be modeled and practiced. Educators may increase motivation by considering Keller's ARCS constructs when designing and facilitating virtual curriculum.[vii]

Acknowledging the importance of creativity and innovation in terms of discovering more methods or strategies on improving intellectual growth of an individual, the researcher focuses on the Social Learning Behavior of high school students. About 15 years ago, a professor of psychology stirred up the music world with the idea that listening to Mozart could make you smarter. Before the decade was out, the work of Dr. Frances H. Rauscher, professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, had brought forth a veritable flood of pop-psych books, tapes, and CDs promising in newspaper inserts and on television infomercials to boost your brain. One enterprising author even went so far as to trademark the phrase "The Mozart Effect." Albert Bandura believed in "reciprocal determinism," that is, the world and a person's behavior cause each other, while behaviorism essentially states that one's environment causes one's behavior. Bandura, who was studying adolescent aggression, found this too simplistic, and so, in addition, he suggested that behavior causes environment as well. Based on the results of the study, it is appropriate to infer that because Mozart's music created an environment conducive for learning in the academic setting and therefore it may lead to high academic performance of students. Since continuous exposure to Mozart's music in the academic setting conditioned students to elicit high percentages in behavior leading to learning, eventually Mozart's music may lead to high academic performance of students. The following are appended: (1) The Effect of Mozart's Music on the Social Learning Behavior of High School Students, Research Data Form; and (2) Systems Plus College Foundation, Office of the High School Counselor, Student Achievement Data Form.[viii]

Based on the case studies these are the salient themes identified:

a. Parents as motivators of students to achieve high academic performance

One big reason why wanted to get a high grades is that my parents will be at least proud of me because of these grades. Also, I wanted to stand out with others in a positive and good way...

Simply because I want to get a high grades and I don't want my parents to be disappointed on what expect from me...

I don't want to frustrate my mom and I can't take it to see a line of seven or failing grade on my card. I also want to use what God has given to me through this I could thank him for what he had given...

It's not actually 'what' but 'who' my mom, always motivates me to study hard. In the other hand I also want to prove to her that I could be better than my younger brother. She motivates me because she has tough she has her thought and sincerity...

My family and my dreams, because after all I want to payback to my parents for their sacrifices for me and also...

Family, is the main motivation why I study hard, because in future when I am a successful professional I will be able to help them, because today I witness their hardships for me to go to school...

To make my parents proud of me...

My family because they inspired me to do my best so that I can have a good future...

It's because I want to help my parents someday...

My family because I want to pay all of my parents hard works for us...

I want my parents to become proud of me...

My family motivates me to study hard because I want to help them someday. Another one is my beloved teachers sometimes to motivate their student they are not only focused on the lessons but also with their students. They are making some jokes to make their class not so boring that makes the students focused on their lessons...

As my parents told me " We don't have a lot of wealth to give, but we give you the privilege to be educated or to have the education that best for you" that why I study hard...

Whenever I see my family working just to make sue that our educationis good it motivates me to study hard. I don't want to waste time because every single minute or even second is important...

The reasons why I want to achieve my high academic performance are; to have high grades, to make my parents proud and make them realize that all of all hard works are all worth it...

b.   Dreams/goals/aspirations in life as a motivator to achieve high academic performance

...my greatest motivation are my dreams. They are the one who pushes me to the journey of my life. That's why I work hard to achieve them.

My family, friends and goals in life....

As a student I should have a goal in life. Especially in college money matters...

Poverty, because now a days increasing case of poverty is continuous i don't want that for all the rest of our life, we are still in the world of poverty so that I have to study hard, and if I finish my study I am going to establish my own business so that I can give my family a better and comfortable and sustainable way of living.

First of all is myself because I have many dreams, wishes and goals that I want to achieve in my life and I believe that studying harder and harder is the key for me to have a better future...

I want to achieve high academic performance to prove to my parents that I can excel as well. I want to have a good future with a good job.

I want to achieve high academic performance because I have many goals in life, I want that my parents and other people become proud and inspired of me, and I have to maintain my scholarship because we don't have so much money to support my study...

...I need to study hard to got that also or I must, and when I realized that I said to my sister that I need to study hard so that I can achieve my dreams, and of course to have a good future.

To finish my studies because I want to achieve my dream someday...

My goal i want to pursue my goal. I don't want to experience in the future what we're experiencing right now and also because of my parents and to want to take away my family from poverty...

To get my dreams or to reach my goals...

c. Personal satisfaction as a motivator to achieve high academic performance

I want to achieve high academic performance because I want to prove something.

Because in my case we are not that financially stable that's why I promise to myself to work hard in high school to get high grades for scholarship purposes.

The main reason why I want to achieve high academic performance so that me myself can support my studies by being a scholar.

I just want it so bad.

Status In life.

....because I have many my dreams and of course I want to earn money.

To prove that knowledge is important, compare to the other aspects or skills. I also want to let other people think of me that, even though I'm not good as a talented woman or doesn't have any presentable endowment at least I have the knowledge of my own...

To have good record having good grade means boosting up my self-esteem free on expressing my self....

I want to standout....

...to fulfill or satisfy myself as a student also to refrain teasing by other classmates.

...I study hard not just for my family but also to myself.

That is because I'm a achiever. Getting high academic performance make me confident you would be recognize by your school because all the teacher there are amazed that is why they appreciated you...

Actually they do not motivate me I'm simply inspired...

...to achieve my goal in studying which is to be always in the top of our class.

Furthermore, studies have shown these factors to motivate students:

There are two important concepts that are central to understanding motivation: (1) the subjective value of a goal and (2) the expectancies, or expectations of successful attainment of that goal. Goals provide the context in which values and expectancies derive meaning and influence motivation." p. 70 Goals "act as the compass that guides and directs a broad range of purposeful actions. Moreover, a number of goals are often in operation simultaneously. Problems can occur when our goals and our students' goals are mismatched. This "often occurs when we want our students to pursue learning for its own sake but they are motivated primarily by performance goals" which involve protecting a desired self-image and projecting a positive reputation and public persona. When guided by performance goals, students are concerned with normative standards and they to do what is necessary to demonstrate competence in order to appear intelligent, gain, status, and acquire recognition and praise. Goals focused on performance may take two forms: performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals. Students with performance-approach goals focus on attaining competence by meeting normative standards. Students with performance-avoidance goals, on the other hand, focus on avoiding incompetence by meeting standards. Students who hold learning goals, as compared to those who hold performance goals (particularly performance-avoidance goals), are more likely to use study strategies that result in deeper understanding, to seek help when needed, to persist when faced with difficulty, and to seek and feel comfortable with challenging tasks.

A goal's importance, often referred to as its subjective value, is one of the key features influencing the motivation to pursue it. A second source of value is intrinsic value, which represents the satisfaction that one gains simply from doing the task rather

than from a particular outcome of the task. A final source of value, instrumental value, represents the degree to which an activity or goal helps one accomplish other important goals, such as gaining what are traditionally referred to as extrinsic rewards. Praise, public recognition, money, material goods, and interesting career, a high-status job, or a good salary are all longer-term goals that may provide instrumental value to shorter-term goals. To be motivated to pursue specific goals, students must hold positive outcome expectancies. Outcome expectancies reflect the belief that specific actions will bring about a desired outcome. Whereas positive outcome expectancies are necessary for motivated behavior, they are insufficient on their own. Efficacy expectancies are also essential. Efficacy expectancies represent the belief that one is capable of identifying, organizing, initiating, and executing a course of action that will bring about the desired outcome. What determines a student's expectation for success? One important influence is prior experience. If a student has experienced success in a particular activity in the past, she is more likely to expect success in a similar activity in the future, and visa-versa. Moreover, "when students successfully achieve a goal and attribute their success to internal causes (for example, their own talents or abilities) or to controllable causes (for example their own efforts or persistence), they are more likely to expect future success. If however, they attribute their success to external causes (for example, easy assignments) or uncontrollable causes (for example, luck), they are less likely to expect success in the future."

Without question, the complex dynamic s of the classroom, its tone, the interpersonal forces at play, and the nature and structure of the communication patterns all combine to either support or inhibit the students' motivation to pursue a goal. If a goal is valued and expectations for success are positive and the environment is perceived to be supportive, motivation will be highest. So what does this mean for our classrooms and how students behave? We have three important levers (value, efficacy expectancies, and the supportive nature of the environment) with which we can influence motivation. Moreover, if we neglect any one of the three, motivation, may suffer substantially. Indeed, when the environment is perceived as unsupportive, the best we can hope for is a defiant parent of motivation.[ix]

Search Institute (2016) aims in equipping adults with practical ways to address five factors that studies have shown influence young people's will to succeed, which we are calling the REACH Framework:

Relationships: Connecting young people to caring adults and to other young people who push them, support them, empower them, and expand their views of what is possible in life.

Effort: Helping students understand that with hard work and the use of good learning strategies they can succeed in school, regardless of how smart they think they are or how smart others think they are.

Aspirations: Grounding young people in the reality that the actions they take—or do not take—each day will influence their ability to realize their dreams for the future.

Cognition: Teaching students practical ways to think about their own thinking, control impulses, and stay on track to complete tasks and achieve goals.

Heart: Giving students the opportunity to discover and develop what they love to do—what we call their sparks—and articulate a set of core values that they want to guide their lives.

Research indicates that many young people today—from both affluent and impoverished backgrounds and from all cultural groups—have gaps in the factors encompassed in the REACH Framework. Fortunately, in schools and families, it is possible to close those gaps when teachers, parents, and others are intentional about building young people's character strengths through developmental relationships.[x]

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