

Motivational Experiences in Teaching and Learning

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TEACHERS see motivation, or the lack of it, as the key to pupil success or failure in school. With all the talk about motivation, there are presently some serious developmental efforts under way to translate talk into program.

Some Important Factors

Before looking at specific efforts, let us look at some important factors influencing pupils' motivation to learn.

Teacher Behavior

Many factors influence pupils' motivation toward school (for example, home conditions, academic abilities, self-concept, and aspiration level). Teachers can exercise relatively little influence over some of these factors (for example, home environment), but there are several over which the school has some control. Here are the factors which lie within a teacher's realm—those dealing with his own behavior. Very significant is the effort an individual teacher makes to maintain a classroom atmosphere charged with stimulating ideas, warmth, friendliness, and acceptance.

The personality of the teacher is one of the most critical determinants in fostering motivation to learn in pupils. In school,

teachers too often stand aloof from children; they are not warm, personal, accepting, and interested. The words that a teacher uses, the way he looks at children, become important. A word, a look, ridicule can be very humiliating, a crushing experience for a child.

Another important consideration when discussing teacher behavior and pupil motivation is teacher expectancy effects. Many investigators (Pressman, 1969; Riessman, 1962; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) have concluded that the main reason children fail is that teachers have such low expectations of them. Baker and Crist (1971) reviewed the studies pertinent to investigation of teacher expectancy and asserted that teacher expectancy probably affects observable teacher and pupil behavior.

The teacher behavior most likely to be affected involves eliciting and reinforcing of pupils' responses, the kind of attention given to pupils, the amount of teaching actually attempted, subjective scoring or grading of pupil work, and judgments or ratings of pupil ability and probable success. The pupil behavior most likely to be affected involves the kind of response given to the teacher, the

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pupil's initiation of activity, his class-appropriate behavior, and his feelings about school, self, and teacher. The nature of this differential teacher behavior is such as to affect pupil achievement and motivation.

Relevant Curriculum

In addition to the personality and behavior of the teacher, another factor to be considered in fostering motivation to learn in the pupil is relevance in the curriculum. When relevance is absent from the curriculum, children do not gain the motivation to learn. We must attempt to relate every subject taught to something that children do in their own lives outside of school.

Another aspect of relevance has to do with providing pupils with learning tasks at appropriate difficulty levels. We cannot expect pupils to gain motivation to learn unless they are given suitable learning tasks.

Creativity

Children discover that in school they must oftentimes use their brains for committing facts to memory rather than expressing

their interests or ideas, thinking, or creatively solving problems. Subjects requiring creativity, however, often lead to the motivation, involvement, and relevance so important to the success of children. If teachers keep alive the creative processes of their pupils and sensitively guide them, there will be motivation and achievement.

Thus, involvement with a warm, personal teacher, relevance in the curriculum, and the opportunity to think and solve problems creatively foster in pupils a motivation to learn.

To Improve Motivation

What, then, are some specific methods or procedures that the teacher can employ for improving the pupil's motivation? Three research and developmental efforts in the area of classroom motivation have been selected for discussion: the work of Torrance (1965), Frymier (1965), and Klausmeier (in preparation).

Creative Ways of Learning and Motivation

Torrance (1965) showed that children with school learning problems can be motivated by:

- Giving them a chance to use what they learn as tools in their thinking and problem solving
- Giving them a chance to communicate what they learn
- Showing an interest in what they have learned rather than in their grades
- Giving them learning tasks of appropriate difficulty
- Giving them a chance to use their best abilities
- Giving them a chance to use their preferred way
- Recognizing and acknowledging many different kinds of excellence
- Giving genuine purpose and meaning to learning experiences.

Torrance and Myers (1970), going a step further, identified some of the most essential characteristics of educational meth-



Teacher-pupil conferences give direction to independent reading.



Using older students as tutors motivates learning.

ods possessing built-in motivation. Perhaps, they concluded, the most essential characteristic of self-motivating learning experience is incompleteness or openness. A pupil may encounter incompleteness outside of school which may motivate achievement, or he may encounter it in the classroom. The incompleteness may be met in pictures, stories, objects of instruction, or in structured sequences of learning activities.

A second strategy of Torrance and Myers for building in motivation in a learning activity is to have the learner produce something—a drawing, a story—and then do something with what he has produced. Apparently producing something creates involvement, and out of this involvement come motivation and learning.

Having pupils ask questions is yet another strategy. Fundamental to the development by better questioning skills is the teacher's ability to be respectful of the questions children ask and to help them achieve the skills for finding the answers. This can be an exciting process, filled with built-in motivations.

In summary, Torrance and Myers sug-

gest that motivation is something built in the pupil and that this built-in motivation may be fostered through openness, involvement, and creativity.

Structure and Motivation

Frymier (1965) has done some very interesting work in the area of motivation and offers very helpful suggestions for relating classroom structure to motivation. "Structure," according to Frymier, "is that aspect of educational method which includes the various activities and relationships which develop in a classroom." The extent to which a teacher predetermines the various activities in learning determines the amount of structure which is involved.

According to Frymier, "the amount of structure in a classroom should vary directly with the degree of student motivation. The greater the motivation, the more the structure. The less the motivation, the less the structure." When a young person really wants to learn, he will meet almost any requirements and heed almost any limits. More structure appeals to him because he is highly

Motivational Principle	Teacher Behavior
1. Attending to a learning task is essential for initiating a learning sequence.	1. Focus student attention on desired objectives.
2. Setting and attaining goals require learning tasks at an appropriate difficulty level; feelings of success on current learning tasks heighten motivation for subsequent tasks; feelings of failure lower motivation for subsequent tasks.	2. Help each student set and attain goals related to the school's educational program.
3. Acquiring information concerning correct or appropriate behaviors and correcting errors are associated with better performance on and more favorable attitudes toward the learning tasks.	3. Provide feedback and correct errors.
4. Verbalizing pro-social values and behaviors and reasoning about them provide a conceptual basis for the development of the behaviors.	4. Provide real-life and symbolic models.
5. Observing and imitating a model facilitate the initial acquisition of many behaviors, including pro-social behaviors such as self-control, self-reliance, and persistence.	5. Provide for verbalization and discussion of pro-social values.
6. Expecting to receive a reward for specified behavior or achievement directs and sustains attention and effort toward manifesting the behaviors or achievement. Nonreinforcement after a response tends to extinguish the response. Expecting to receive punishment for manifesting undesired behavior may lead to suppression of the behavior, to avoidance or dislike of the situation, or to avoidance and dislike of the punisher.	6. Reinforce desired behavior.

Figure 1. Motivational Principles and Corollary Teacher Behaviors¹

motivated. This pupil wants great demands to be made on him.

For the low motivated pupil the teacher could make fewer requests and demands. He could be more tolerant of late papers or minor oversights. He might also work to find out what his pupils' interests are, and he might try to encourage systematic investigation of some of these interests as legitimate classroom activities.

A fundamental notion of learning is that we must start with pupils where they are. Since many different kinds of pupil motivations are present in the classroom, each teacher should, wherever possible, provide each pupil with the experiences and opportunities to develop that will enable him to move from where he is to where he ought to be (that is, adapt the educational program to the motivations of pupils; deal with them where they are).

In summary, Frymier suggests that teachers should vary the structure which they employ according to their pupils' motivational levels. Further, each teacher should attempt to fashion his structuring procedures so that he can match his ways with his pupils' learning needs, individually or collectively.

Individually Guided Motivation

Of the multitude of special educational programs and methods which have been attempted within the United States in recent

years, only a relatively small number have clear relevance for the motivation of pupils. The Individually Guided Motivation (IGM) program developed by Herbert J. Klausmeier at the University of Wisconsin Research and Development Center is clearly an outstanding one.

The Wisconsin R & D Center and cooperating schools have demonstrated that many motivational and learning problems can be eliminated through implementing the system of Individually Guided Motivation. The IGM system was designed to help teachers treat each child as a worthwhile individual who profits greatly from individual attention and wise guidance. Teachers, teacher aides, parent volunteers, and pupil tutors are utilized so that each child receives the individual attention he needs so desperately. Proper implementation of the system enables teachers to work with children in ways that encourage the child to learn subject matter and behave in socially approved ways.

The IGM system calls for a schoolwide cooperative effort in identifying general motivational objectives for all children in the school and then planning and carrying out motivational-instructional procedures based on each child's level of motivation, achieve-

¹ Herbert J. Klausmeier, Dorothy A. Frayer, Mary R. Quilling, and Jan Jeter. *Individually Guided Motivation*. Madison: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning. (In preparation.)

ment, and self-direction. The motivational program consists of the application of motivational principles in the context of four motivational-instructional procedures: (a) adult-child conferences to encourage independent reading, (b) teacher-child conferences to set goals in subject matter areas, (c) guiding older children as tutors, and (d) small-group conferences to encourage self-directed pro-social behavior. Motivational procedures used by the teacher are usually directly related to the instructional program in the various curriculum areas. The motivational principles and corollary teacher behaviors which form the basis of the IGM system are listed in Figure 1.

Small-scale field tests conducted thus far indicate that significant increases in pupil motivation and achievement result from using the IGM procedures. In my work in schools implementing the IGM system, I have observed that teachers structuring their classroom according to their pupils' motivational needs generate entirely different attitudes among their children. Strong positive feelings about school and learning are evident. On one occasion some primary children involved in Adult-Child Conferences To Encourage Independent Reading did not want to leave the school building for a field trip because they had not had an opportunity to discuss their stories with the adult conference leader.

I have also observed that setting goals and clarifying expectations and limitations are helpful in gaining and maintaining classroom control. No child wants to live in a world without limits, and the teachers know that if children help establish these limits and expectations, discipline becomes a way of achieving mutually acceptable goals by involvement and choice.

That a motivational program can be arranged to meet the needs of the individual child by effective use of the IGM procedures is clear. Significant increases in pupil motivation and achievement become evident.

Motivational principles and procedures as they relate to the educational scene constitute an example of the application of theory and research to practical problems.



Small-group conferences can encourage self-directed pro-social behavior.

It is enlightening to observe that constructive development and testing of motivational procedures in school settings are now being undertaken and reported in such a way that teachers can easily apply these important principles in their classrooms.

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