Motivating Classrooms

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• Overview: Concerned that your course content may not be the most interesting to students? Want to keep your students not only awake but interested, engaged, and enthusiastic? In this session I will present a motivational profile of students, suggest ways to enhance student motivation, and highlight common motivational pitfalls.

• Session Objective: At the end of this session participants will be able to (a) identify sources of motivation and (b) describe effective motivational strategies.
Outline

• Profile of students
• Types of motivation
• Application activity
• Motivating strategies
• Attribution theory and AR
• Motivation Pitfalls
Student Profile

N ≈ 204
Student Profile

N ≈ 6841
Types of Motivation

- Mastery
- Approach
- Autonomous
- Intrinsic

- Performance
- Avoidance
- Controlled
- Extrinsic
Achievement Outcomes

Daniels et al., 2008
Cognitive Outcomes

Daniels et al., 2008
Emotion Outcomes

Enjoyment  Boredom  Anxiety

Daniels et al., 2008
Concordance

Responsibility

Motivation

Strategy

Concordant

Contradictory

Outcome

Success

Difficulty

Daniels, Radil, Wagner, 2016
Instead of asking, ‘How can I motivate people?’ we should be asking, ‘How can I create the conditions within which people will motivate themselves.’” Edward L. Deci
Syllabus

• Examine the syllabus for components that may be motivating or unmotivating for students
• Pair up and compare the two syllabi
Concordant Strategies

Mastery
Autonomous
Intrinsic
Motivation

Choice
High expectations
Be caring
Time
Explanatory Rationale
Utility value
Focus on effort
Perception of control
High expectations
Be caring
Time
Explanatory Rationale
Utility value
Focus on effort

Mastery
Autonomous
Intrinsic
Motivation
Attribution Theory

• the ways in which people explain (or attribute) their behavior or that of others
• Attributions: perceived causes of outcomes
• Start at the end, with an outcome

Weiner, 1985
Attributional Process

Outcome

“Why?”

Explanation

Underlying causal dimensions

Locus  Control  Stability

Why is this important for students?

Behaviour

Emotions

Cognitions
What does AR look like?

Focus on internal, controllable, unstable causes

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Did not do as well on a test as you wanted?
Feeling frustrated, depressed, angry?

Here are some suggestions as to how you can change the way you think about negative experiences in your life.

Rather than thinking ...

- I am stupid.
- The test was too difficult.
- My professor is lousy.
- I had a bad day.
- I panicked.

Instead ...

- Everybody can succeed – you just have to work at it. Here are some examples as to how you can study more effectively:
  - Read chapters several times.
  - Review notes several times.
  - Use your study guide.
  - Study with someone.
  Note: Counseling Services offers various study skills courses
- Tests can appear difficult when you are not well enough prepared. Study more for the next text.
- If you are having problems with a professor, talk to him or her about your difficulties. If that does not help, you may have to work extra hard to do well in the course.
- We all have bad days once in a while, but make sure that you study enough for the next text to improve your grade.
- If you have a problem with test anxiety, try to relax under stress (see your psychology text for relaxation methods or check the Counseling Services for courses on stress management).

The next time do not do as well on a text or assignment as you wanted, remember that most reasons for doing poorly are under your control and can be changed.
AR and Motivation

Pre-test
Mastery Goals
Performance Goals

AR

No AR

Post-test
Mastery Goals
Performance Goals

Haynes, Daniels, et al. 2008
Attributional Process

Outcome

“Why?”

Explanation

Underlying causal dimensions

Locus  Control  Stability

Why is this important for instructors?

Emotions

Cognitions

Behaviour
Help giving

Controllable: High
  - Low

Responsibility: High
  - Low

Anger: High
  - Low

Sympathy: Low
  - High

Help: Low
  - High

- High

- Low
Motivation Pitfalls

• Focus on ability
• Provide tasks that are too easy/too hard
• Non-contingency
• Too much choice/too little direction
• Making value judgements “this part’s easy”
• Lacking enthusiasm
Thank you

Questions and comments can be forwarded to:
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If you’re interested in motivation research visit: ACME
https://sites.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/acme/home