CREATING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS TO SUPPORT STUDENT MOTIVATION POST-PANDEMIC

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CHALLENGES DURING THE PANDEMIC

• Mental and Physical Health
• Social Connection and Community
• Missing Important Events / Routines
• Socioeconomic Issues
• COVID Rules/Contraction
• Technology
• Future Plans
• Academics

Scott et al. (2021). *Journal of Adolescent Health*
CHALLENGES DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Adolescents reported challenges around issues of ...“trying to stay motivated with school.” (p. 264)
WHY MOTIVATION?

• “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained”

• Powerful determinant for achievement

Schunk et al. (2014). Motivation in education: Theory, research, and application
MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Meta-analyzing over 150 studies on learning/study strategies
- Motivation strategies had the highest correlations with GPA/grades and persistence

Fong et al. (2021). Educational Research Review
WHY MOTIVATION?

• “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained”

• Powerful determinant for achievement

• Not a unitary construct

Schunk et al. (2014). Motivation in education: Theory, research, and application
OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATION THEORIES

SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY
ATTRIBUTION THEORY
SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY
SITUATED EXPECTANCY-VALUE THEORY
GOAL ORIENTATION THEORY
SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

Satisfying or thwarting 3 basic needs

- Competence
- Autonomy
- Relatedness

Deci & Ryan (2000)
ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Identifying causes of success/failure

- Internal vs. external
- Controllable vs. uncontrollable
- Stable vs. unstable

Weiner (1985)
SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORY

Triadic reciprocity among 3 factors
- Environment
- Perceptions -> SELF-EFFICACY
- Behavior

Sources of Self-Efficacy
- Mastery Experiences
- Vicarious Experiences
- Social Persuasions
- Affective Experiences
Achievement choices informed by

- Expectancies
- Task Value: Intrinsic, Attainment, Utility
- Costs

SITUATED EXPECTANCY-VALUE THEORY

Eccles & Wigfield (2020)
GOAL ORIENTATION THEORY

Meaning derived from attaining

- Mastery goals
- Performance goals

See Urdan & Kaplan (2020)
OVERVIEW OF MOTIVATION THEORIES

- SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY
- ATTRIBUTION THEORY
- SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY
- SITUATED EXPECTANCY-VALUE THEORY
- GOAL ORIENTATION THEORY
COVID-19 Shifts in Students' Worlds

- Instructional
- Social
- Future-Oriented
- Racial/Sociocultural
INSTRUCTIONAL SHIFTS

• Remote instruction
  • New forms of technology
  • Different modalities of learning
  • Modified forms of assessment
  • Suspension of “hands-on learning”
INSTRUCTIONAL

EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Lowered Academic Self-Efficacy
  • Fewer Mastery Experiences Online
  • Limited Vicarious Experiences and Verbal Encouragements
  • Increased Anxiety
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

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Hilpert et al. (2021)
226 undergraduates in 4 biology sections
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Mixed Findings on Student Autonomy
  • Autonomy Thwarted when Forced Online
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Mixed Findings on Student Autonomy
  • Autonomy Thwarted when Forced Online

“I have zero motivation for online classes, that’s why I don’t sign up for them. I don’t have the self-accountability to do my coursework.”

“the whole reason I went to college in person was to be motivated. Virtual learning is not beneficial to me.”

Hensley et al. (2021)
328 undergraduates
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Mixed Findings on Student Autonomy
  • Autonomy Thwarted when Forced Online
  • Instructors More Controlling when Experiencing Burnout

• Potential Opportunities for Students to make Instructional Choices
SOCIAL SHIFTS

- Loss of in-person relatedness
- Reduced influence of socializing agents (instructors, peers)
- Declines in mental health
Decreased belonging associated with lower academic motivation (controlling for positive beliefs for online learning).

*Marler et al. (2021)*

*238 undergraduates*
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Mixed Findings
  • Lower Autonomous Motivation
  • Declines in Mental Health linked with Lower Motivation

• Relatedness-Supportive Virtual Interactions associated with Pleasant Emotions
FUTURE-ORIENTED SHIFTS

• Bleak economic outlook
• Heroism in healthcare/medical fields
• Academic boredom and disengagement
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Decline in Task Values (Utility Value) and Mastery Goals
• Increased Perceptions of Cost

Hilpert et al. (2021)
226 undergraduates in 4 biology sections
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

- Decline in Task Values (Utility Value) and Mastery Goals
- Increased Perceptions of Cost
- Renewed Interest in STEM-Medicine

“I think [COVID] has positively impacted my decision to continue with my STEM degree so that one day I can become a medical professional. It has motivated me and pushed me into being a stronger person”

Lawson & Fong (2022)
152 Latina/o/x undergraduates
RACIAL/SOCIOCULTURAL SHIFTS

• Growing racial disparities in healthcare
• Highly visible tragedies linked with police brutality and racial violence
• Heightened prejudice/violence against APIDA individuals
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

• Increased Prosocial Motivation Aligned with Community-Oriented Values

“The fact that I get to achieve my dreams of becoming a doctor and helping to end disparities within the health care system is what motivates me every day to try my hardest in this course.”

*Cromley & Kunze (2021)*

182 undergraduates
EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION

- Increased Prosocial Motivation Aligned with Community-Oriented Values
- Experiencing Oppression / Structural Disadvantaging Decreases Motivation
- Opportunities for Motivational Resilience
WHAT NOW?
Autonomy/Agency
Asset-Based Competences
Personal/Collective Task Values
Sense of Belonging

Present: Changing Context(s)

Instructional
Future-Oriented

CHOICES
RATIONALES

FEEDBACK

Social
Socio-cultural/Racial
Providing choices improved individuals’ performance ($d = .36$), effort ($d = .28$), and intrinsic motivation ($d = .36$).

*Patall et al. (2008)*  
*Meta-Analysis of 41 Experiments*

**Meaningful Choices**

**Granting students’ autonomy**

- Provide meaningful educational choices for students
- Promote student ownership and agency to engage actively in the learning process
- Encourage self-directed exploration
Positive feedback was more effective for increasing motivation and competence than negative feedback, but instructional negative feedback can buffer against harmful effects of criticism.

Fong et al. (2019)  
*Meta-Analysis of 78 Experiments*

**Constructive Feedback**

*Highlighting strengths and directions to improve*

- Provide informational praise
- Give concrete and specific directions to improve
- Emphasize high standards and belief that students are capable to meet those standards
Rationales improved individuals’ performance ($d = .16$), engagement ($d = .20$), and task value ($d = .33$).

Steingut et al. (2017)
Meta-Analysis of 23 Experiments

**Giving compelling reasons for learning**

- Explain why material is useful for students’ future goals
- Discuss the value of engaging in a task
- Integrate prosocial/communal goals
Teaching students that challenges are common and improvable led to a 47% reduction in the achievement gap between socially/economically advantaged and disadvantaged students.

*Yeager et al. (2016)*

1,592 students at selective institution

**SOCIAL BELONGING**

*Mitigating feelings of belonging uncertainty*

- Emphasize that challenges are common and improvable
- Discuss how struggles do not portend a lack of belonging
- Share how belonging is hard but improves over time
HELP-SEEKING

- Environments characterized by belonging and motivational support foster help-seeking
- All help-seeking is not created equal
- Meta-analysis of over 100 studies on collegiate academic help-seeking distinguishes among 3 types:
  - Avoidant ($r = -.18$)
  - Expedient ($r = -.10$)
  - Instrumental ($r = .11$)

Fong et al. (2022). *Journal of Educational Psychology*
CULTURAL VALIDATION

• Looking to Minority-Serving Institutions as exemplars

• A study on 1,393 self-identifying Indigenous students across 22 Tribal community college students

• The institutional role of Indigenous cultural development

Fong et al. (2022). Journal of Diversity in Higher Education
QUESTIONS & CONTACT ME

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