Intrinsic Motivation: Mastery and Meaning in Education

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Thesis: While external rewards linked to extrinsic motivation provide task-oriented activity, intrinsic motivation leads to autonomous work and fulfillment, enlightenment through gained knowledge, and the desire to change the world, behavioral and financial incentives are more likely to encourage extrinsic motivation and task-oriented engagement. We as primary educators need to encourage these fundamental principles and intrinsic motivations inside our students in order to lay the foundation to future assist intrinsically driven individuals in the workplace who strive to find purpose in their profession and contribute to a better world.

**Intrinsic Motivation: Mastery and Meaning from Education to Professionalism**

**Introduction**

The nature of humans is that individuals want to be involved at work and to make a difference. Feeling passionate about our work and appreciating what we do and how we do it is one's intrinsic motivation to find purpose and meaning. The factors that contribute to that enthusiasm have expanded as well as deepened. Leaders risk having painfully empty hybrid offices filled with quietly departing employees and short-timers when individuals lack purpose and meaning as the motivation to work.

While external rewards linked to extrinsic motivation provide task-oriented activity, intrinsic motivation leads to autonomous work and fulfillment, enlightenment through gained knowledge, and the desire to change the world, behavioral and financial incentives are more likely to encourage extrinsic motivation and task-oriented engagement. We as primary educators need to encourage these fundamental principles and intrinsic motivations inside our students in order to lay the foundation to future assist intrinsically driven individuals in the workplace who strive to find purpose in their profession and contribute to a better world.

Motivation determines a person’s perseverance in a task to fulfill a goal. As intrinsic motivation produces greater persistence, greater use of coping skills, academic enjoyment, and internal satisfaction-more autonomous work, deeper thinking, and reflective research goals all become more evident. It also promotes adaptive behaviors that improve students’ academic lives and academic successes. These strengths strongly affect students’ motivational development through their learning processes, perseverance and the igniting of creativity become particularly relevant in the desire to do better and know more.

**What is Intrinsic Motivation?**

Motivation comes from God and is God led. Knowing God deeper and experiencing Him fully gives us strength and motivation to persevere. Blackaby references this as he discusses how every assignment took him beyond what he felt comfortable or skilled to do, stating that each time God proved to be more than just his Savior and creator but also his sustainer, comforter, teacher and counselor (Blackaby, 2021,p.ix).

Intrinsic Motivation determines a person’s autonomy and perseverance in a task to fulfill a goal.“The child who concentrates is immensely happy” (Montessori, 1949). According to Maria Montessori “The child who has never learned to work by himself, to set goals for his acts, or to be the master of his force of will is recognizable in the adult who lets others guide his will and feels a constant need for the approval of others” (1949). The success of students in a Montessori classroom depends on their innate motivation, their ability to gain skills, as well as their sense of self-actualization and self-worth, which might be negatively impacted by a motivation that is not innate. Intrinsically motivated children move smoothly from one assignment to the next throughout the school day because they are autonomous, they have order, and they are interested in a task, rather than action based on external motivations (Kelly, 2022). According to the Montessori Method of learning, a child acquires independence through continuous activity. Freedom is established by strength and intrinsic motivation (Montessori, 2011, pp.78-79).

**Extrinsic Motivators Can Increase Motivation in Task-oriented Work**

Working for extrinsic motivators motivates task-oriented work. In a latent growth model, the primary and multiplicative impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motives were employed to forecast academic growth. The main driving force behind learning for Chinese students is not just interest. When students are not engaged in the subject, extrinsic factors may help them learn. Only extremely intrinsically motivated students suffer from extrinsic motivation (Kunanitthaworn, et al., 2018). Additionally, this is seen in the workplace as financial rewards can affect motivation. In this study, the agents' loss function takes into account three parts of the reward: the total reward, the extrinsic reward, and the intrinsic reward. The total reward is used to calculate the policy loss, the extrinsic reward is used to calculate the loss from the extrinsic value function, and the intrinsic reward is used to calculate the loss from the intrinsic value function. According to (Liu et al., 2018), it is thought that evolution can be used to make intrinsic motivation happen on its own, just like it is used in other ways in deep learning (2018).

Personality also reflects extrinsic motivation or intrinsic motivation. When we assume that people are intrinsically motivated toward growth and development, we can also assume they make efforts to include their experiences coherently. The need or inner desire of deduction, or explanation for why a conflict persists in correspondence to a goal, determines the intrinsically motivated intention. Students may fail to reach their full potential if they do not possess the inner motivation necessary for the desired outcome. This is evident within a Montessori classroom as students work. The Montessori approach to building intrinsic motivation involves promoting action within an individual without external stimulus. Children are supported in their efforts and provided challenges throughout the day, with three types of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Autonomy encourages engagement with chosen activities, mastery motivates improvement in matters of importance, and purpose motivates actions for a larger purpose.

**Personality Is Reflected In Persistence to Reach One’s Full Potential**

Leaders can lead positively or negatively and sometimes just follow a rule book in conformity. Some students are easily compliant. Teachers and leaders need to be aware that not everyone learns, grows or thrives the same. It could be due to their personality because they like to please, or they dislike confrontation. True leaders find out their truth for themselves and sometimes that means challenging or questioning to understand the reason. Leaders teach other leaders, and by doing this, we have to help them see why they believe what they believe to strengthen their leadership (Anderson, 2021, p.80).  An example, some students suffer from the need to please or have test anxiety. Test anxiety can cause despair, hopelessness, and failure. This can lead to avoidance of exam situations and rumination about future exams. Students struggling with test anxiety may feel helpless and less significant, avoiding educational attempts.

Personality reflects one’s self-determined motivation and supports the concept of intrinsic motivation. Two main types of research look at the types, functions, and effectiveness of mindsets in personal development: those that focus on how children grow and develop, and those that help adults improve their management or leadership skills. The first is called the "pedagogical mentality" and is about the difference between two ideas of intelligence and personality found in the literature on student education. One theory says that what "fixes" or limits a person has a lot to do with their skills and because of this, the person's development is stunted. The second is that the "growth" mindset sees intelligence as a muscle that can be strengthened and developed (Jeanes, E. 2021). The importance of motivation in the learning process cannot be overstated. The human personality is fundamentally incomplete without the component of motivation, which expresses itself through behavior. The individual's motivations, which are an outgrowth of their personality, serve as the compass by which they navigate their daily lives (Skollingsberg, 2003).

The inner desire for deduction explains persistence in goals. A person is rewarded by his or her desires as well as by the social effects of having a cause-and-effect relationship with another agent. In particular, it changes the immediate benefit of an operative into a reward from the environment that comes from somewhere other than the operative. This is also called the causal impact reward. But it might not be realistic to think that one can understand the other and act in ways that are best for both of them. In light of this, new research is looking at how to teach people to work together based only on the rewards they have received in the past (Jaques, et al., 2019, May pp.3040-3049). Failure to reach full potential is due to a lack of intrinsic motivation.

Guinness references Magellan in his book *The Call*. Magellan was not popular, tall, or handsome but he was a dreamer filled with inner vision and strong faith. Magellan doesn’t reflect on his actual motives or his great finds he simply found profit in his discovery (Guinness, 1998, pp. 162-164).

**Academic Success and Performance is Based on Motivation**

Not everyone benefits from the same learning style.Using a self-determination theory to investigate students' perceptions of psychological need satisfaction and its relationship to intrinsic motivation revealed that implementing personalized learning activities based on personalized learning principles was more effective than using a traditional one-size-fits-all model (Alameri, et al.,2020). The attempt to motivate our students should instead be designed with educational experiences that encourage students to be self-motivated. Intrinsic motivation is reduced by incentive systems. Incentives promote conformity but do not foster interests or assist self-management (Anderson, 2021).  Not all students can lead their learning. Without help and a solid foundation, students must navigate a big transformation in their education. This shift threatens intrinsic motivation and learning. Mindsets shift and classroom participation drops. Students need to grasp or reject feedback. There is a need to aim to interrupt this pattern and establish a healthy learning environment for upper elementary students (Prahl, 2021).

Various psychological issues might affect students' academic lives and learning in school. The relationship between school motivation, goal orientation, and academic achievement have substantial relationships between intrinsic school incentives, task-oriented goal orientations, and adaptive academic performance, to those as extrinsic motivations and ego-oriented goal orientations. Intrinsic motivations, task-oriented goals, and low influence academic achievement (Usán, et al., 2019).

**Motivation Can Be Fostered**

Individual interest is typically grounded on prior information or experiences and can be fostered by allowing curiosity to guide individual interest. By supplying new information, you can boost their chances of success. If someone is engaged in a subject, they will want to explore and learn more (Black & Allen, 2017). Unmotivated students may not work hard enough to realize their full potential. Educating elementary and middle school students takes a long time. Students may lack motivation because either the rewards for doing well are unclear, they give up easily, or they do not know what to expect from the school. So, providing students incentives based on school performance could be a time-effective strategy to make studying more meaningful. Another view is that extrinsic incentives may not work as intended because they may make it harder for people to be motivated by their interests (List, et al., 2018).

After figuring out what the goals are, it is possible to learn new skills through intrinsic motivation by giving each goal its internal reward signal when it is reached. It uses incremental unsupervised learning on the individual's most recent experiences. This strategy is often called a "model-free approach." When used to teach intrinsic motivation, this technique teaches goals and skills simultaneously based on what the person sees and does in the environment (Rafati & Noelle, 2019, July). An increase in adaptive behavior improves academic success. In self-determination theory, autonomy is defined as a degree of choice and sentiments of ownership. Changing the environment to integrate the benefits of autonomous learning improves engagement, intrinsic motivation, and achievement. Feedback can aid in the development of intrinsic motivation.

Praise is a popular type of feedback. Only when praise is appropriately used can it be motivating. Inappropriate praise may demotivate people, as an example: children tend to have a more cautious attitude when they are praised for their accomplishments. They navigate around the challenges in order to ensure a praiseworthy outcome. In addition, children may get the impression that natural qualities such as intellect or skill determine one's level of success. When they make mistakes, this may leave children feeling powerless. There is a difference between praise and supportive feedback. Feedback can be as easy as confirming a correct response and informing the user of the outcome. Praise is an expression of merit or status often spoken with surprise, joy, or passion. Correctly delivered praise has the potential to elicit desired behavior. To serve as reinforcement for desired behaviors such as high-quality academic work or cooperative social contact, however, the praise must be conditional on the performance of the conduct to be rewarded, define the attributes of the activity, and be trustworthy **(**Black & Allen, 2017, pp.91-105).

**From Education to Profession**

The truth might be discovered by evaluating the influence on motivation. Beliefs without desires are ineffective motivators. The ability to stimulate truth and value facts are required to intrinsically motivate others who become familiar with it (Seigel, 2009, pp. 265-268). Charismatic leadership boosts intrinsic motivation but not tacit information sharing. This study demonstrated charismatic leadership indirectly affects tacit knowledge sharing through intrinsic motivation. From an intrinsic motivation perspective, employees need to feel competent and self-determined in their workplace. Extrinsic motivation involves doing tasks for rewards or benefits. Intrinsic motivation is more effective and lasting in producing individual commitment to tasks, leading to higher performance and results (Novitasari, et al., 2021).

According to Patrick, et al. (2000), there are probable causes for, and limitations to, the benefits of motivation by teacher enthusiasm. There are studies provided that look at the effects of instructor enthusiasm on students' intrinsic motivation to study as well as their psychological vigor. Students who were given an enthusiastically presented lecture reported better internal motivation for the course subject and higher vitality levels (2000). The awareness of how teachers' beliefs affect how students see their skills is becoming more evident. The things a teacher and a student think about are linked. An evaluation showed that people's knowledge and confidence had grown. Key themes showed that the training affected how teachers thought and did their jobs (Seaton, 2018).

**Values and Beliefs Support Motivation**

Environments, culture, rearing, and core values encompass our beliefs. A non-negotiable belief is a belief that cannot abandon. Values may lead a person act in a certain way, connect a person to his or her social surroundings, change a person's behavior based on morals and other factors, or be the result of many different things that have happened to that person. People decide what's good or bad, right or wrong, and worth doing or not doing based on how it could affect their most important beliefs. But this is usually only clear when the most popular point of view goes against what the person values (Glaserová, 2019). Intrinsic motivation encourages identity and in-depth involvement, and high goals may indicate self-identity and dedication to principles. Academic motivation and professional identity about external influences are understudied. Studies on academic motivation, professional identity, and their correlation. (Malinauskas & Pozeriene, 2020).

**Conclusion**

A lack of internal satisfaction and autonomy in meaningful work causes less desire for increased knowledge and purpose. An intrinsically motivated person is motivated by the need for understanding and satisfaction to improve and gain knowledge. Complacency sets in when there is no intrinsic motivation to support autonomous research, a desire for understanding, or a driving force to guide in promoting adaptive behaviors. These motivators are what improve a student’s academic life. A focus on autonomous motivation will more adequately support long-term academic and professional success leading to deeper more meaningful learning experiences and supporting critical thinking processes necessary for developing lifelong learners and world-changers. Intrinsic motivation originates from God and is guided by God. Understanding and experiencing God intimately brings inspiration and strength to endure. Extrinsic motivation drives task-oriented activities, but intrinsic motivation drives autonomous work, fulfillment, knowledge, and a desire to make a difference in the world.

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