

# Essay about student motivation

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



Student motivation is an important aspect of education, students across all subjects in secondary education lack motivation. Students are intrinsically motivated to learn at an early age but as they get older they lose their intrinsic motivation. Teachers use extrinsic rewards in the classroom not to motivate but to regulate student behavior.

Motivation is a dominant part of a students' educational experience from preschool onward but it has received limited attention amongst an education reform agenda engrossed mainly on accountability, standards, and tests, teacher excellence, and school administration. As students move through the school system from preschool to high school they become more disengaged this eventually leads to more high school dropouts.

It is very important that we know how motivation is perceived by students as well as teachers. This will give some indication as to the types of professional development that will provide teachers with strategies to help improve student motivation and engagement. This will be necessary if we want our students to be successful and become a function part of our society.

Keywords: academic achievement, intrinsic reward, extrinsic reward, strategies, professional development and student autonomy Today many of our students are slipping through the cracks because of their lack of motivation, these students come to school every day sit in our classrooms and walk out of them not learning or attempting to learn. They are not motivated or engaged in our classes even though we utilize strategies to challenge, motivate and engage.

Students' motivation can influence what and how they learn. In turn, as students learn and perceive that they are becoming more skillful they are motivated to continue to learn. (Schunk, 2016). This is not the case for most of our students in the classrooms, it is up to the teacher to engage and be cognizant of how they learn. As children advance from preschool to elementary they demonstrate a great amount enthusiasm for learning, they are engaged and are eager for knowledge. Students during this timeframe are intrinsically motivated.

However, students' interest in learning and the desire to perform fades as the years go by, their intrinsic motivation decreases. The lack of motivation is the main reason why many students drop out of high school, they feel unmotivated and unchallenged. The lack of motivation in education is a valid and persistent problem that needs to be addressed.

Recent studies look at the perception of motivation by students' and teachers' which from the students prospective indicates that their motivation stems from their interactions with their teachers and their social environment. This is a concept seen in Vygotsky's theory of learning which dealt with the impact of the social environment and its influence on cognition. Vygotsky considered the social environment critical for learning and thought that social interactions transformed learning experienced. (Schunk 2016)

Trending among these studies are student's interactions with teachers and peers, the classroom environment, building relationships with teachers, teacher feedback and student autonomy over their learning. The research

question examined in this paper is: What are students' and teacher's perceptions of motivation and engagement in grades 9-12? In exploring the perceptions of students and teachers this paper will address the effect of the social environment on student motivation and engagement in the classroom.

## **Learning Theory Association**

The social cognitive learning theory is based on the concept that students learn by observing and modeling the behaviors of others. Students observe models, explain and demonstrate skills then practice them. (Schunk, 2016) It also discussed the importance teaching students' strategies that will help them to learn how to control their behavior and direct their own learning.

Self-efficacy refers to the perception of one's capabilities to produce actions; outcome expectations involve beliefs about anticipated outcome of the actions. (Schunk, 2016) Students' self-efficacy will shape their motivation for learning and goal attainment. The social cognitive theory is also based on the concept that people learn from their environment. The environment's influence on behavior occurs when students look at a slide without much conscious deliberation (environment = behavior).

Students' behavior often alters the instructional environment, if the teacher asks questions and students give the wrong answers, the teacher may reteach the same points rather than continue the lesson (behavior = environment). (Schunk, 2016) Motivation engages students in activities that facilitate learning. (Schunk, 2016) Students may become more motivated by watching similar others succeed than by those who they believe are superior in confidence. (Schunk, 2016)

Research indicates that most of the students attributed their engagement and motivation to their teachers. They expressed that their teachers motivated them, building a social relationship with their teachers led to them being motivated. (Seigle, Rubenstein & Mitchell, 2014) The establishment of a positive social relationship fostered students' engagement and motivation. Students also pointed to the fact that they related to those teachers who were passionate about their work, knowledgeable in their field and the method of delivery was interesting and interactive. (Seigle, Rubenstein ; Mitchell, 2014)

Another negative impact on student motivation is teacher burnout. The emotional exhaustion of teachers contributed to a reduction of student motivation because it leads to low autonomy-supportive teaching, the conclusion was teacher burnout weakened student motivation because teachers influence students through instructional styles, and the emotions they show. Students' perception of how their teachers feel about teaching can affect their motivation to learn. (Shen, McCaughtry, Martin, Garn, Kulik, & Fahlman, 2015)

Although motivation is boosted when students observe teacher giving praises and high grades others forward work and good performances, motivation is sustained over time when students believe their own efforts are leading to better performances. (Schunk, 2016). A recent study indicated that students will exhibit encouraging social and academic motivation when their perception that their teachers and peers make available to them clear expectations, help and advice.

The contribution of peers and teachers have a positive effect on student motivation. Providing classroom support, help, advice and instruction and the creation of a safe environment and emotional support all contribute to student academic and social motivation. (Wentzel, Battle, Russell, & Looney, 2010) Utilizing an electronic gradebook, and a point system student were the autonomy over their learning and behavior.

This gave students the choice of how to perform this gives them the autonomy of making choices hopefully good choices that will benefit them in the end. Giving the students autonomy over their grades motivated them to want to be better students which led to student engagement. (Koth, 2016) Student autonomy over their grades would motivate them intrinsically, when students are intrinsically motivated, they engage in an activity for reasons intrinsic to the activity.

The reward comes from working on the task: the task is both the means and the end. The reward for intrinsic motivation may be feelings of competence and control, self-satisfaction, task success, or pride in one's work. (Schunk, 2016) In a perfect world all students would be intrinsically motivated but we don't live in a perfect world so we as educators must foster intrinsic motivation since research shows that as students advance in age this type of motivation deteriorates.

To intrinsically engage students, we need to encourage students to take an active role in their learning. We also need build rapport with students, teachers can get to know their students on a more personal level this will encourage engagement. When planning for your students be clear in your

expectations of them, what they should expect where content is concerned and when items will be due in advance so they know ahead of time. (Buskist, Busler & Kirby, 2018)

Some teachers use extrinsic rewards to encourage academic achievement and appropriate behaviors, teachers gave tangible rewards to help motivate students to behave in a positive manner. However, it was most often used to manage student behavior not to motivate students to be academically successful. (Hoffman, Huff & Patterson, 2009)

Research indicate that teachers' perception of student motivation research that teachers do not always know what motivates students in as much as they many claimed that students' lack of motivation was due to that fact that they did not find the subject relevant. Teachers are not using strategies that will motivate students. There is also the implication that teachers need to seek professional development to help them acquire strategies to help motivate student. Which many are not willing to do. (D'Elisa, 2015)

**Definitions of Key Terms**  
**Academic achievement:** this represents routine results that show the degree to which a person has mastered explicit goalsthat were the concentration of actions in instructional atmospheres, specifically in school, college, and university. For the purpose of this paper the end academic achievement will be graduating high school.  
**Intrinsic reward:** is an intangible award of acknowledgement, a sense of accomplishment, or a cognizant satisfaction.

The reward for intrinsic motivation may be feelings of competence and control, self-satisfaction, task success, or pride in one's work. (Schunk, 2016) Extrinsic reward: is an award that is tangible or physically given to you for achieving something. This is most often used by teachers to manage student behavior not to motivate students to be academically successful. (Hoffman, Huff & Patterson, 2009)

Strategies: A plan of action in the case of education to motivate students, a variety of ways used in the classroom to motivate and engage. Professional development: In education, the term professional development may be used in reference to a variety of focused training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness. Student autonomy: is when students take control and accountability for their learning, in terms of what they learn and how they learn it.

The initial point being the idea that students are capable of self-direction and can progress to have independent, proactive approach to their academic accomplishments.

### **Gaps in the Research**

The gaps in the research points to that fact that most of the research done were done in urban cities rather than a mixture of urban and rural areas. There are also some limitations in what can be done in the schools because of the need for all parties to work collaboratively to use the research finding to improve motivation and engagement.



Another gap in the research was that many of the studies done on student motivation were not done in the United States they were done in Asia, Canada and Australia. Students' lack of motivation leads to disengagement and dropout from school and educational pursuits, an inescapable issue, that is widespread among all our schools.

Filling in the gap requires identifying and using effective motivational strategies, tested and proven in schools for students, by teachers and administrators. For the most part teachers who can identify the reason behind students' lack of motivation will try to use strategies they feel will help those students.

For example, if teachers believe that students are unmotivated because they don't see the content as personally relevant, they tend to include examples of its relevance. Similarly, if teachers believe that school-based skills are disconnected from students' career goals and future aspirations, they tend to work at showing students how skills can fit for them.

However, when teachers are confronted with diverse and contrastive needs, such a direct correspondence of strategies is more difficult and a sense of helplessness is common (Hardré & Sullivan, 2009).

### **Biblical Worldview**

Applying a Biblical worldview to different aspects of education allows for another way to look at education as well as educators. The worldview that is most closely related to the social cognitive learning theory is that of Naturalism. In this worldview we acquire knowledge through innate and autonomous human reason, including methods of science, we can know the

universe the cosmos, including this world is understood to be in its normal state. (Sire, 2009)

Naturalism denies that there is a God the creator and like the social cognitive theory a child is born with innate faculties which merely have to develop naturally. These faculties work on their own within the framework of the languages and cultures to which they are exposed. According to the social cognitive theory student learn through observation, student observes, models, explain and demonstrate skills then practice them (Schunk, 2016).

In a Christian worldview God directs us to teach without holding back, in Romans 12: 6-7 " We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;" God has given us gifts, which we need to use to its fullest.

If god gave you the gift of teaching then you should teach to the best of your ability, to meet the needs of all your students. Conclusion Students' lack of motivation is a huge problem across the United States, if we are to combat this problem we as educators need to know what is the main reason behind this lack of motivation.

We need to focus on current research, collaborate with policymakers as well as school administrators if we want to help inspire motivation and engagement. If this means we must give up precious time to learn new strategies to promote student autonomy and self-directed learning it will be

well worth it. To be able to see students staying in school graduating high school and moving on to higher education would be an astonishing vision.

Students are most likely to display positive aspects of social and academic motivation when they perceive their teacher and peers are providing them with clear expectations for social and academic outcome. As educators we must continuously commit to equipping ourselves with the tools that will help our students to become motivated and engaged.