

# Choice theory essay

Education



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Reflection Article #3: " Giving Students What They Want" Psychology of Learning The article entitled " Giving students what they need" explored internal and external motivation approaches in the classroom.

Student motivation is one of the key components to success. Educators want their students to be motivated because motivated students do better. " "

Unmotivated students will probably do poor work or no work, learn little, and often exhibit irresponsible or disruptive behaviors" (Erwin, 2003, p. 19).

There are two types of motivation-external and internal. External motivation, the proverbial carrot and stick approach, predominates not only in most classrooms but also in the world" (Erwin, 2003, P.

20). However, this approach is not as effective as internal motivation because it causes students to rely on rewards. The rewards often have to increase in value each time the desired behavior is achieved. It doesn't teach students to do well for the right reasons. Internal motivation is a wiser choice for educators to use with students because it helps to fulfill some of the students' basic needs. Choice theory by William Glasser explores internal motivation and its impact on relationships. " According to Choice Theory, five basic needs constitute the source of internal motivation and guide all behavior" (Erwin, 2003, p. 21).

The five basic needs are survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Survival is one of the basic needs that our students need to have met. The importance of having the survival need fulfilled is that it allows individuals to feel a sense of order and security. Educators can help fulfill this need in the classroom by developing structured and consistent classroom

procedures, allowing students to have snacks and drinks, and creating rules that allow a safe and respected environment (Erwin, 2003, p. 21).

Love and belonging is another essential need that students need fulfilled. Humans need to feel connected to other human beings. “ Research shows that there is a lifelong connection between the quality of our relationships and our physical and mental well being” (Erwin, 2003, p 21). Educators can help to meet this need for students by greeting their students each morning and giving their students the chance to know them personally.

Educators also need to give students opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a team. They should also be given the chance to voice their concerns and problem solve as a class (Erwin, 2003, p. 21). Power is a crucial need that we all need to have met. This need is not what one typically thinks of such as the need to control. Instead, “ power means personal growth” (Erwin, 2003, p. 22). It means that one has increased their knowledge in a particular area.

When individuals have their power need met they have increased self esteem as well. Educators can help this need be met by utilizing differentiated instruction, making real life connections to curriculum, and giving students a voice in the classroom (Erwin, 2003, p. 22).

Another basic need that we all have is that of freedom. The freedom to make choices is what makes our country such a wonderful place. Teachers can help fulfill this need by allowing their students to choose their seating, assessments, and assignments.

Teachers should also provide freedom from monotony by balancing routine with novelty” (Erwin, 2003, p. 23). This can be achieved by utilizing different instruction strategies, changing teams, or beginning the lesson with an icebreaker. The last need that students need met is that of fun. “ Fun is a by product of having friends (love and belonging), being successful (power), having autonomy (freedom), and feeling safe and secure (survival)” (Erwin, 2003, p.

22). Educators can meet this need by playing games and engaging students in brain teasers. I found this article to be extremely beneficial to classroom teachers. I have always seen the danger in extrinsic motivation but intrinsic motivation seemed so hard to achieve. I had the mindset that if students weren't intrinsically motivated now, they never would be. However, through this article I have found that in fact it can be achieved.

It makes perfect sense that if students had all of their basic needs met they would be motivated to learn and succeed. I plan on utilizing choice theory in my own classroom to help my students get intrinsically motivated. I will be consistent and structured in my classroom so that my students feel safe and no what to expect. This is so important especially for students who are coming from chaotic households. I will also make a personal connection to each student. I plan on doing this by greeting my students each morning but also by getting to know them on a deeper level. I will have lunches with small groups of students so that I get to know their interests and struggles better.

This will also allow the students to see me in a different light. I plan on giving my students an assessment early in the year so that I have a better understanding of where they are academically. This will help me to differentiate my instruction to meet their learning needs. It will also help them to increase their knowledge which will in turn meet their need for power.

I will make my students feel as if they have freedom by giving them a choice of where they sit. If the seating arrangement is not working out then I will give them another choice. I will try to give them a voice in what type of assignments we do such as an essay or an oral assessment. All in all, I found this article to be very useful to educators. Motivation is key in helping our students to be successful. They need to have their basic needs met in order to achieve any type of motivation. Appealing to students' needs for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun will not only help us build and maintain these essential relationships, but will dramatically increase the likelihood that students will behave responsibly and want to learn what we teach" (Erwin, 2003, p. 23).

References Erwin, J. , & Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, A. (2004). The classroom of choice: giving students what they need and getting what you want.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development WJL. <http://search.ebscohost.com>

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