

Student Motivation: Identifying the Tools For Reengagement

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About Me

- The Technical Director of The LaGuardia Community College ePortfolio Initiative from 2002 to 2003
- The primary LaGuardia New Media Technology instructor from 2001 to 2011
- Appointed Program Coordinator of the New Media Technology program in 2008
- M.P.S. in Interactive Telecommunications from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts.
 - Concentrations in:
 - web design and development
 - information architecture
 - video and audio production
 - project management
 - e-commerce strategies
 - gaming theory and design
- 15 years of experience working in the fields of Digital Media and Technology. 10 years of experience working as an educator. Managed the deployment of Multimedia and Telecommunication initiatives for companies such as MetLife, Century 21, ADP, Bankers Trust, Suze Orman Inc, and the City University of New York.

What Motivates People

- According to Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT), all human motivation can be allocated to three main categories:
 - intrinsic motivation
 - extrinsic motivation
 - amotivation

Intrinsic Motivation

- Described as a process where individuals are spurred on to action without the promise of external rewards. Individuals, in this case, are motivated by the instinctive satisfaction derived from the action, as opposed to being motivated by the possibility of an external reward that may be gained by engaging in the action.

Example: Intrinsic Motivation

- A young musician that enjoys playing music because he finds it instinctively pleasing, as opposed to playing music merely for the financial or status based rewards that may be gained as a result, such as becoming wealthy and having many adoring fans.

Extrinsic Motivation

- When individuals are driven to actions solely by external factors, such as fear of punishment or expectation of a reward, rather than as a result of a natural innate sense of self-satisfaction for achieving a specific goal.

Example: Extrinsic Motivation

- Externally motivated people will only work towards achievement if a reward, or threat of a negative outcome, is deemed great enough to warrant taking action. This would include the child that works hard in school to get straight A's only because their parents promised a reward for such an outcome.

Amotivation

- Individuals that tend to avoid acting in their best interest by either not placing value on a given task, or not having the self-confidence to believe that they are capable of accomplishing the specific task.

Example: Amotivational behavior

- The student with low self esteem. He or she might feel that they do not have the “smarts” or “language skills” to succeed in a given class. They might show up for a few days and then disappear until the end of the semester.

The Impact of Race and Culture on Student Motivation

- According to statistics by the Pew Hispanic Center (Pew Research Center, 2009). Hispanics have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group in America.
 - The **Hispanic drop out rate (17%)** is nearly three times as high as that of **whites (6%)**, and nearly double the rate of **African-Americans (9%)**.
- Some of the factors for this ethnic disparity
 - Language barrier challenges for non-English speakers
 - Anti-immigrant perceptions
 - Greater financial responsibilities as a result of providing for larger immediate and extended family members,
 - The effort to balance cultural identity against the need to integrate into mainstream society (Acting white vs. being Latino).

The Impact of Race and Culture on Student Motivation

- Historically, African Americans have long been shut out of higher education. These barriers begin with slavery and arguably continued up until the nadir of civil rights movement when the Supreme Court case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education* challenged the concept of racial segregation through the guise of “separate but equal” education.
- Some of the factors impacting African American Motivation
 - The “soft bigotry of low expectations” and systematic racism at many levels of society.
 - Fear of not being good enough, or “believing the hype”.
 - The effort to balance cultural identity against the need to integrate into mainstream society (Acting white vs. being Black).

Countering Low Motivation: Mapping the Plan of Reengagement

- Identify what each student values on a personal, cultural, inspirational level.
- Find a way to bring those elements into the classroom.
- The ultimate goal of the reengagement plan is to help move students up the SDT scale from amotivated to intrinsic.

Countering Low Motivation: Pushing them up the SDT scale

- Step One:
 - Create a curriculum within the confines of a supportive and nurturing environment. This needed to offset the lack of confidence that is inherent within amotivational students. In short, these students need to regain confidence in their ability to succeed

Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT)



Countering Low Motivation: Pushing them up the SDT scale

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- Step Two:
 - Make students understand the rewards, whether monetary or status based, that are possible as a result from the successful completion of the coursework. The positive benefits should be demonstrated in a culturally viable way that enforces the critical core competencies required for success in the 21st century marketplace.

Countering Low Motivation: Pushing them up the SDT scale

- Step Three:
 - However, there will always be students that don't respond to the first two approaches. In these situations, the student must be made to understand the possible negative outcomes, once again whether monetary or status based, if they do not strive to master the competencies defined in the curriculum. Essentially it is necessary for the amotivated student to understand how failure to perform well will directly impact upon them, and things of importance within their cultural value system, if the shift towards extrinsic motivation is not achieved.

Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (SDT)



Countering Low Motivation: Pushing them up the SDT scale

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- Step Four:
 - The final phase of the reengagement process involves encouraging the underperforming students to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments that doesn't stem from anticipation of a reward, or fear of a negative outcome.

In conclusion

- As we begin designing new curricula, educators need to be mindful of cultural and societal impacts on our students and how new mediums like technology can be leveraged to reengage unmotivated and underperforming students.



Questions and answers

Thanks for listening

Feel free to contact me at:
<http://www.jamesrichardson.net>

My article on successful student reengagement can be found at:
<http://jamesrichardson.net/jtalk/scholarship/>

For information on LaGuardia's New Media Technology Program:
<http://laguardia.edu/mediatech>