Motivation to learn refers to the willingness or desire to initiate and engage in the process of learning\textsuperscript{11}.

Motivation is not something people have or do not have. Instead, motivation is a thought process that everyone can do. It involves identifying one’s goals and breaking them down into manageable chunks, allowing people to figure out where and how to direct actions or apply effort. This thought process can be influenced by external factors or extrinsic motives (such as reward and encouragement from others) and internal factors or intrinsic motives (such as personal interest)\textsuperscript{9}.

Learning can happen anytime and anywhere. In school, motivation for learning can have a profound influence on students’ effort, persistence and choices in the classroom in the short term, and can affect students’ academic achievements in the long term. Making an effort and seeing one’s positive achievements can in turn influence one’s motivation to learn generally\textsuperscript{9,10,14}.

Motivation can differ from subject to subject and from task to task, depending on students’ perceptions of the task and of their ability related to the task\textsuperscript{6,11,13}. Factors that contribute to individuals’ motivation can be represented by the acronym \textbf{AEIOU}\textsuperscript{3,14}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{A}tribution: Interpretation of causes of one's successes and failures in similar tasks.
  \item \textbf{E}fficacy: Perception of one’s capability in successfully completing a task.
  \item \textbf{I}ntrinsic Motives: Perception of how interesting and enjoyable the task is for oneself.
  \item \textbf{O}utcome Expectation: Perception of the likely outcomes (positive/negative) as a result of doing the task.
  \item \textbf{U}tility and value: Perception of how useful one believes a task is or will be for the future (short- or long-term).
\end{itemize}
Examples of some motivation thought processes linked with the AEIOU model\textsuperscript{4,5,6,11,13,14}:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is HELPUL for motivation to think:</th>
<th>It is NOT HELPUL for motivation to think:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong>: I did well because I used good strategies.</td>
<td><strong>A</strong>: I did well only because I am smart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong>: I failed because I did not understand the concepts well.</td>
<td><strong>A</strong>: I got to university because I was lucky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong>: I am not good at X, Yet!</td>
<td><strong>A</strong>: I failed because my teacher is terrible at teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong>: I can do this! What counts is the process not the outcome.</td>
<td><strong>E</strong>: There’s no way I am going to do well on this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong>: A good grade is nice, but I also want to know more about this.</td>
<td><strong>I</strong>: I am doing this for grades and so people will think highly of me (extrinsic motive).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong>: If I spend some time to study per day, I will get better at this.</td>
<td><strong>O</strong>: Even if I spend more time studying, I am probably not going to do well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U</strong>: Asking the teacher can help me figure out why I should be learning this.</td>
<td><strong>U</strong>: Learning this is useless, I am never going to need this again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TASMANIAN TEENS’ MOTIVATION TO ACHIEVE**

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) collects data from a sample of 15-year-olds in OECD countries every three years. The most recent available data (2015) included assessment of students’ motivation to achieve\textsuperscript{2}. Achievement motivation refers to students’ judgment about their desire to perform academically and to master academic tasks and skills. PISA’s assessment of motivation tended to focus more on the “performing” rather than the “mastery” of skills. Research delineates between these two goals\textsuperscript{1,8}:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance-focused goal</th>
<th>Mastery-focused goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Externally motivated to look smart and outperform peers.</td>
<td>• Intrinsically motivated to learn, understand and improve skills and competency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefer easy tasks; tend to self-denigrate &amp; show helplessness when tasks are challenging.</td>
<td>• Prefer tasks that promote learning; tend to persist when tasks are challenging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the overall scores, students in Tasmania reported significantly lower achievement motivation than all other states and territories in Australia. However, the same overall scores (based on the full scale) indicate Tasmanian students’ level of achievement motivation, on average, is higher than the OECD average.

```
| I want top grades in most or all of my courses | 82% | 89% | TAS |
| I want to be the best, whatever I do | 77% | 87% | AUS |
| I see myself as an ambitious person | 65% | 70% | OECD |
|  | 70% | 81% |
```

*Figure 1. Selected items (3 of 5) on PISA’s assessment of achievement motivation and percentage of students agreeing on each statement.*

PISA’s achievement motivation includes questions that focus on students making comparisons between themselves and their peers. Although a high level of such motivation can move students towards achieving academic goals\textsuperscript{8}, research indicates that focusing on external comparison can be detrimental to students’ motivation\textsuperscript{8}. They may develop a fear of failure or rejection, experience self-doubt, experience a disabling form of perfectionism and/or develop anxious feelings\textsuperscript{4,8,11}.
Teachers can influence students’ motivation to engage in their lessons through thoughtful instructional designs\textsuperscript{1,7,11,13}. The TARGET approach\textsuperscript{1} highlights key elements for teachers (and parents) to consider when aiming to build a more positive motivational experience during learning:

- **Task Design**: Tasks that focus on gaining and mastering skills. The tasks should present appropriate levels of challenge that are differentiated over time relative to students’ developing skills.

- **Authority or Autonomy**: Increase students’ autonomy and allow students ownership over their learning. This can be achieved by providing options (e.g. topic A or topic B) and allowing them to make decisions based on their own interests and circumstances.

- **Recognition**: Recognise students’ success and improvement. Make improvement on previous work be the primary measure of success, through a ‘personal best’ focus.

- **Grouping Arrangement**: Small group work provides opportunities to engage in deeper discussions and to gain support from peers during challenging tasks\textsuperscript{3}. Groups should be heterogenous and not reflect ability differences.

- **Evaluation Practices**: Avoid (where possible) ranking students and comparing them with their classmates. Instead, assess if students have met learning standards or acquired specific knowledge. Individual students should receive clear and positive feedback about how to improve their own learning and achieve their goals.

- **Time Allocation**: Provide flexibility for students to figure out how to pace and schedule their assignment. Acknowledge that students learn new concepts at different paces.

Overall, students tend to be more motivated (hence flourish) in classrooms and situations that satisfy their needs to feel\textsuperscript{5,10,15}:

- **Competent**: To feel effective in managing learning tasks and to experience ‘success’.

- **Autonomous**: To feel in control over the course of their learning and skills development.

- **Related**: To have close and caring relationships with others, who value them as individuals.
REFERENCES & USEFUL LINKS


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