
MOTIVATION: A CATALYST FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING IN THE CLASS ROOM (PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES)

BY

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That, pupils' performance in the classroom is not quizzical, the fact is that pupils are not adequately motivated by their teachers. Effective learning among primary school pupils is dependent on teacher motivational techniques. To this end the purpose of the study is to provide classroom teachers with some motivational perspectives adequate enough to improve their pupils' interest during learning. To do this relevant literature on the topic was sought for, compiled and presented with the view to add to teachers existing skills and professional competences while interacting with students in the classroom. It was found out that effective motivation does the magic in bringing out the best from the pupils. Therefore, the study recommended among others that teachers should strive to avail themselves with modern teaching techniques in order to sufficiently motivate learners during teaching/learning session.

INTRODUCTION

Human behavior is hardly possible without some measure of motivation which is a most important factor in learning among students in the classroom. It is a precondition of all good learning. It is an urge from within and a clear picture of the goal out side. Motivation in Education means inculcating and stimulating interest in studies and other such activities in pupils. It involves the understanding and use of natural urges of the child and also assisting him in acquiring new desirable motives.

Motives can be described as urges, drive, will determination incentives, encouragement and the like (McCombs, 2001) There is an urge from within the thirsty man to take water. This is the sort of subjective or internalized/natural motive. Such motives are mostly biophysical, based on the urges for self preservation and growth. Every child is born with certain needs and wants, mostly for its growth and preservation. These needs undergo constant

modification because of the impact of social conditions and natural environment.

What is Motivation?

Tracy (2002) defined motivation as all those inner striving conditions described as wishes, desires and urges to stimulate interest of a person in an activity capable of making even a mule dance. Cole (2000) also described motivation as those processes, both initiative and rational by which people seek to satisfy the basic drives, perceived needs and personal goals, which trigger off human behavior. Motivation is the willingness to exert high levels effort towards organizational goals, conditioned by the efforts ability to satisfy some individuals needs (Robins, 2008) . In other words motivation is a management function that stimulates individual to accomplish laid down institutional goals. It is purposive, designated and goal oriented behaviors that involve certain forces acting on or within the individual in order to initiate, sustain and direct behavior (Olochukwu, 2000).

Motivation could therefore be viewed as any force that would reduce tension, stress, worries, and frustration arising from a problematic situation in a person's life. From the point of view of education, teachers have to provide for and inculcate such motives, as would channelize the pupils' activities in the desirable lines. A boy who burns in the midnight oil, refuses food and sleep just before his examination is extremely motivated by the desire to pass examination. Teachers who direct their pupils to cram their lessons are also motivated by the desire to see their pupils pass the examination. A pupil, who passes, feels satisfied gets pleasure and is socially accepted. He may be rewarded by his family and school, or even get job and so on. Similarly a teacher, who shows a high pass percentage may get some rewards and be counted as a good and successful teacher. On the other hand, failure will bring disappointment and frustration in its wake. A desire to achieve is such a dominating motive that other important but less dominating urges like those of rest and recreation are inhibited (Angelo, 2010).

Type of Motives

There are some motives which are universal among human beings. Every day of our lives we experience one form of motive or the other. Some of these motives are natural mostly of simple, elementary drives which are based on more complexes and educationally important.

The natural motive may be divided into three categories according to (Blumfeld, 2000).

i. Elementary Needs

These are basic needs such as blood circulation, heart beat, respiration, metabolism, catabolism, elimination of waste, appetites, reflexes of various types and the like.

ii. Social and Emotional Needs.

The child sentiments, abilities and such other personal needs also want satisfaction. Your child in the class desires affection, happiness, prestige and

comforts (Forsyth, 2000) Forsyth further explained that these motives are important as they can modify behavior and hence of considerable relevant in education.

iii. Whitehead (2001) stated that human organism generally tends to avoid unpleasant sensory experiences such as body pains, fatigue, exhaustion etc. These are also important in behavior modification processes.

The second most important motive is called ***acquired motive***. This motive is usually acquired by the quality of new motives which gives luster to his action. Individuals can behave the same but their motives are different.

How are motives acquired?

Forsyth (2000) noted that motives are acquired in the same way as new reflexes are acquired; the interaction of an individual with his environment provides a constant source of modification of the old motives and the acquisition of new ones. The family, the school, the street, the media continually works on the child, who acquires new knowledge, fresh ideas, new attitude, new interest which in turn become new spring of his actions.

Given the complex interaction between rationality and emotion in sustaining our efforts toward long range goals, the tasks of motivating students is far from simple. Tracy (2000) observed that it is the unfortunate dilemma that initiative and training are both necessary and that training is apt to kill initiatives, but what is also clear is that training and initiative are not necessarily at odds if we can discover teaching strategies that sustain motivation, while communicating the necessary fundamental knowledge of a discipline.

Whitehead (2001) observed the balance as one between the rhythmic claims of freedom and discipline or between the needs for exploration, creativity, interest and joy in learning, with the need to acquire a mastery of technique and definite truths.

Whitehead further explained that, research findings have shown that for students to be optimally motivated to learn, they must among other things:

1. See schooling and education as personally relevant to their interests and goals.
2. Believe that they possess the skills and competence to successfully accomplish these learning goals.
3. See themselves as responsible agents in the definition and accomplishment of your personal goals.
4. Understand the higher level thinking and self regulation skills that lead to goal attainment.
5. Call into play processes for effectively and efficiently encoding, processing and recalling information.
6. Control emotions and moods that can facilitate or interfere with learning and motivation
7. Produce the performance outcomes that signal successful goal attainment.

Translating these seven aspects of personal motivation into components of teaching takes some careful consideration, not just thinking about specific teaching techniques but also in designing a course and conceiving of the structure by which students will be led to achieve course goals. McCombs further suggested that the most important thing to put in mind is that students bring with them a variety of motivation and tapping into them will promote better learning. Motivating according to (Brophy, 2004) is largely dependent on helping to bring out and develop students natural motivation and tendencies to learn rather than fixing them or giving something they lacked.

Motivation and Learning

The truth is that learning is motivating the child to do, by providing suitable and adequate

environmental conditions both at home and in the school so that the child can be motivated enough to do his best. Angelo (2010) conducted a research on how to incorporate methods of motivation into course and connecting with students' already existing natural desire to succeed and she, came out with the following:

That it is quite pertinent for teachers to define course goals and help students think about personal learning goals. Teachers who have taught according to Angello, in their discipline for many years sometimes assume that the importance of a course and the rationale for the structure of knowledge in that discipline are transparent to their students and therefore the preliminary rigors of getting the necessary basics control will also naturally appear to have meaning.

Educational psychologists (Boner, 2005; Canon 2000; Gates 2006; and John 2010) observed that pupils from the lowest to the highest stage are hardly motivated for real learning, as wastages and failures at all stages are alarming and those who manage to pass examination are also motivated not to learn but to pass the examinations. Examinations are expected to energize pupils but they misdirect their energies (Olochukwu, 2000), who further stressed that some examinations put breaks on the proper development of talents and hamper desirable modification of behavior which inevitably reduces learning.

Ames (2009) noted that provision of motive in schools would depend on a number of factors notably, conditions which exist in society outside the schools. He further stressed that there are certain educational measures and techniques which may prove very useful in creating motivation and conditions for good learning, which include the maturational level of the children, the effective repetition, and application of rewards and punishment, engaging the students in co-curricular activities, teachers' ability to provide feedback of their students'

performance and lastly the relationship between the teacher and the students. This according to him will go along way to motivate learning in the classroom.

Maturation of children

Ames (2001) observed that it is not wise to stimulate a child for activities before he/she is physically socially and mentally matured. The normal child according to him is capable of taking care of himself in many respects. Teachers should avoid providing challenges beyond the child maturation as this may bring frustration and feelings of inadequacies and failure which in turn inhibit his mental growth and reduce his rate of learning. On the contrary a properly planned curriculum and teaching in accordance with age and level of mental development would make it more meaningful for children. Pupils get interest and therefore begin to see some purpose and goal in their work and strive to achieve them (Svinicki, 2005). Properly understood goals increase motivation.

Effective Repetition

Whitehead (2001) recast that since time immemorial teachers have been using repetition as a method of teaching. Today research has unveiled that mechanical repetition does not lead to good learning or modification of behavior along desired lines. He further stated that, voluntary repetition of action is possible only when pupils get satisfaction from such actions. The law of effect therefore comes into operation, that certain connection in the brain gets strengthened because of frequent repetition of the corresponding actions, this in turn leads to effective learning. The pupils tend to repeat their lessons and willingly work further, when there are prospects of satisfaction. The future satisfaction and pleasure are therefore motivational (Pellecier, 2002).

Punishment

The method of repetition to secure memorization was based on punishment and fear.

Teachers use punishment to impose their will and authority on pupils, ranging from humiliation to caning. Ames (2007) noted that punishment is a negative motive and is based on fear of failure, fear of physical pain e.tc. The development of personality that is built on fear and punishment is inimical in today's democracy. He observed that extreme punishment and insulting experiences kill initiative, resourcefulness, leadership and the spirit of free thinking and adventurous living. Pupils that are subjected to punishment work mechanically thereby cramming certain facts without appreciable mental development. Blumfeld (2002) cautioned that such negative motives lead to variety of negative social activities such as copying, stealing, quarrelling, and even giving bribery. But punishments, such as a failure or a reprimand no doubt negative in character have certain advantages, as these motivates children to work on desired lines.

Reward

Rewards are positive motives in as much as they release talents and qualities for future development. Rewards energize the pupils to strive towards effortful ventures. The prospects of getting reward such as prizes, degrees, honors and praise serve as definite motives for work (Brophy, 2004).

Co- Curricular Activities

Activities in the school such as sports and clubs play an important role in motivating pupils to work. The tendency is to provide many activities in schools so that pupils may choose some activities of interest and participate actively; such activities according to Brophy develop pupils' interest and stimulate their latent talents. These in turn, he continued supplement learning of school subjects. They lead to voluntary activities on the part of the pupils and motivate them to learn and work on their own. Pupils who are interested in history for instance, may be brought together in a history club.

Active Participation

Pupils tend to do a very good work when they are in groups. Williams (2010) observed that school program which do not encourage active participation of pupils become a one way affair. The feeling of active association makes the activity more purposeful and hence motivating as they attend more vigorously and put in more focused efforts, especially in physical as well as intellectual activities.

Evaluation of Feed Back

A proper evaluation of school work can become an effective motivation for better learning. A system of assessment based on basic objectives of education and teaching that was built on sound principles, leads pupils to work on desired lines thereby promoting learning. However (Ames 2009) lamented that public examinations do not give any chance to pupils to know their weak areas. The results are not fed back to pupils and therefore their motivating values are lost. Sound internal assessment motivates school learning. McCombs (2001) agreed with (Ames 2009) and opined that awareness of one's progress of both success and failure, leads pupils to work.

Teacher- Pupil Relationship

A good intimate emotional and social relationship between teachers and pupils motivate pupils to work and learn (Ames 2009) A good individual contact would depend upon the teacher pupil ratio in the class. But it also depends upon the individual teacher's attitude towards work and pupils how and what type of atmosphere he creates and maintained in his class, the degree of acceptance he has for his pupils and vice versa. As better acceptance leads to better understanding and therefore better motivation.

Students Motivation

According to (Brophy, 2004) students motivation to learn is an acquired competence developed through general experience but stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by others.

Before exploring some practical applications for motivating students, let us listen to (Brophy's, 2004) views on the issues from a theoretical perspective. He suggested that one thing to consider is the expectancy value theory. According to this theory, the degree to which a student is motivated to engage in an academic task is jointly determined by his/her expectancy for success and by the value that the individuals have attached to specific tasks. Therefore this theory suggests that students can be successful if they apply reasonable effort and appreciate the value of the learning activities.

Strategies for Increasing Students Motivation

Given the insight gleaned from motivation theories such as the expectancy- value theory discussed above, (Brophy, 2004) examined steps teachers can take to maximize students engagement and success in the classroom, he went on to suggest that teachers can create optimal classroom environment that is conducive to learning.

Course Design Strategy

As succinctly observed in her book titled tools for teaching, (Svinicki, 2005) opined that students respond positively to a well organized course. Therefore, it is important to be mindful of the fact that how teachers structured the course and the teaching methodologies used can greatly affect students' motivation to learn. By providing basic framework of expectations and guidelines, students often remark that they feel empowered and are better able to shape their term. To this end (Svinicki, 2005) suggested the following strategies to consider when planning course and creating lesson.

- ***Set the tone early in the term***

That syllabus should clearly state the leaning objectives, course goals, and pupils expectation for the course, explicitly communicate to your pupils what they need to do to be successful in the class and achieve their personal goals. You should also by way of stimulating learning curiosity in students, introduce the course with all your enthusiasms. This, he however cautioned that can only be done by conducting class surveys or administering diagnostic tests to get a sense of what the pupils already know or the value about the course. (Cole 2000)

- ***Vary Your Teaching Methods.***

Svinicki (2005) also suggested that instead of the traditional teaching method the teacher can incorporate academic activities that get pupils to actively participate in the class and allow for more immediate feed back. He explained that by incorporating problem-based learning, collaborative learning, experiments and the use of technology allows for greater pupils interaction and the opportunity for pupils to practice newly acquired skills and knowledge.

- ***Give students options in the classroom***

Angelo and Cross (2010) advised that teachers should empower students by giving them a sense of autonomy and helping them to develop skills for self- directed learning, students motivation is increased if they feel that they have control of their leaning out comes.

- ***Create assignments that are appropriately challenges***

Angelo et al (2010) emphasized that the importance of learners' interest, background knowledge and abilities helped the teacher to design course work, by providing students with the opportunities for early success and gradual increase of the degree of difficult with the assignments and exams as the term

progresses. The key is to strike a balance so that every student feels that he/she, with reasonable effort, has the capability to succeed while still being challenged to stretch his/her limits.

- ***Make your lesson relevant***

Research (Brophy 2004) suggests that students display greater enthusiasm and interest for course if they can relate the content and course activities to their daily lives. According to him connecting the material to real world experience or their educational goals, either through examples or in class activities the teacher deepens their understanding of the material and allows them to see the value of what they are learning.

- ***Teacher Behavior***

The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning and it is often a formidable and time consuming task to find ways to motivate students to achieve their academic goals. Of all the variables in the motivation equation, teacher behavior is the one for which he has greatest control, takes the least amount of time, and can have an immediate and visible impact on student motivation. To optimally enhance students learning and motivation to learn (Brophy, 2004) suggested the following actions for teachers in the classroom.

1. ***Show enthusiasm***

Teachers are the major source of stimulation for the course content and the overall tone of the classroom. Therefore (Brophy 2004) observed that it is important for the teacher to model the behavior he wants his student to display. If the teacher appears bored and un- interested in the course, the students will most likely respond to that negative energy and apathetic attitude by duplicating it. But being excited about the content, presenting the information and activities in an organized and interesting ways and by

showing a genuine interest in teaching will go along way in maintaining students' attention.

2. Avoid excessive competition

While students need opportunities to interact with their peers and many students claim to be inspired by competition, do not create an environment that is conducive to comparison, divisions or derisive dialogue among students. These intense and extremely, competitive types of classroom settings can induce performance anxiety which can interfere with student learning, thereby counteracting teacher's goal of motivation. (Tracy 2000).

3. Communicate an expectation of success

Students usually rise up to the teacher's expectations which are communicated by the level of engagement and interaction between teacher and students. This can according to (Angelo 2010) be something as informal as using student's names in a class to a formal evaluation of their work. Subtle forms of behavior, even if unintentional can be a powerful influence on students' performance.

4. Provide constructive, timely feedback

Students want to be recognized for the hard work effort put into their classes, as many viewed grades as a primary incentive for their scholastic efforts. Forsyth (2000) observed that by returning assignment quickly and by constructively communicating positive and negative feedback, the teacher can acknowledge the students hardwork while still encouraging them to strive for more. If students don't receive feedback on their work, it is often difficult for them to know whether or not they are fully meeting your expectations and at some time learning the material. That is to say that if the teacher neglects to explain why something was wrong or point the student to the right direction by further articulating his expectations, the student may not make any additional effort to

succeed as he/she doesn't know what direction to take.

SUMMARY

The study discussed among others the importance of motivation in learning. That motivation helps learners to be focused and pay attention during learning activities. To this end, different types of motives were presented and discussed, so that, the teacher can chooses the type that is peculiar to the learner. Also discussed was the relationship between motivation and learning. Teachers are expected to define their course goals so that they can help students think about personal learning goals. Other factors that are useful increasing motivation and conditions for good learning have also been presented.

CONCLUSION

Human behavior is motivational and therefore for any meaningful learning to take place, such an activity lies within the confine of motivational context. Both teachers and learners must avail themselves with modern techniques on how to inspire, develop interest in what they do and therefore should not relent on what it takes to achieve the set goals in education.

RECOMMENDATION

The study therefore recommended that:

1. Teachers should try and assign work to pupils in order to engage them in some activities, so that they can remain focus, quiet and calm.
2. That teaching methods should vary according to the pupils classroom group, so that interest, abilities, age etc, can be considered while presenting concepts and ideas in the classroom.
3. It is pertinent to, as a matter of professional commitment to set the tone early during the term. That is to say that syllabus should

clearly state the learning objectives, course goals, and pupils' expectation for the course.

4. The study also recommends that teacher's lesson must be relevant by connecting the material to be taught as real as the child's experience.
5. To optimally enhance students learning and motivation, teachers must show high level of enthusiasm.

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