

ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN CLASS ROOM LEARNING AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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I. MOTIVATION DEFINED:

The term 'motivation' has two connotations from a teacher's point of view: first, 'the *disposition* or *desire* of the learner to learn';¹ second, the *action* which arouses the *will* of the learner to learn'.²

i) Motivation as 'a *disposition* or *desire* to learn' stems from the source called 'motives'. The literal or dictionary meaning of the term 'motive' is "some inner drive, urge, impulse, push, intention, etc. that causes a person to do something or in a certain way . . . any impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to action".³

Motivations are positive as well as negative. Fear of disapproval or punishment, greed, and anger are the ones which come under the category of negative motives and on the positive side are the motives such as curiosity, sense of accomplishment, pride in one's work, desire to please and be pleased, personal enjoyment.

Some pupils take pre-medical or pre-engineering group of subjects at the behest of their parents and any way they do so to please their parents and in the process they become good masters of these subjects. According to the principle of 'individual differences' not even two pupils are alike. Thus, the springs of motivation would differ for each individual pupil. A pupil may seek higher grade because he wants to experience a sense of accomplishment or because he dreads taking home the news of his poor performance.

The most effective form of motivation, perhaps the only form of motivation in its true sense, is the desire *within* the learner which moves him or her to action. According to Oliva (1972), "The ultimate goal of the learning process is the arousal of the desire within the learner to modify his behaviour through learning".⁴

ii) *Motivation as a 'process'* which springs one to action: In common parlance, motivation is characterized by those actions which the teacher undertakes to mobilise the individual learner to action. It is a common sight to hear a teacher saying, "I wish I could motivate him!" In this usage the term *motivation* signifies the stimuli which originate from without the learner, that it is extrinsic to him, but it seeks to encourage him to desire to learn. Parents serve as one of the important sources of motivation to their children when they push them to study and nod their heads in approval of their accomplishments; and also when they express feelings of disapproval over their poor performance. Siblings also serve as a motivating force positively as well as negatively. One pupil desires to emulate his elder brother and sister he admires. Another pupil becomes discouraged in attempting to live up to an enviable record of performance set by his elder brother and sister. Nothing is more damaging to a pupil than to hear a remark from his teacher: "Oh I am disappointed with your performance. Your brother was such a good pupil of mine a few years back". Such a remark intended to stimulate the pupil, more often serves to retard his motivation.

The success of a teacher, as an organizer of his pupil's learning, to an important extent, is dependent upon his ability to motivate his pupils effectively. When a teacher seeks to motivate his pupils, he plans and carries out learning experiences, which he hopefully believes, will arouse the will of the learner to learn. The teacher as

a shrewd strategist, must encourage his pupils to seek and maintain effective pupils of their learning goals. It is highly probable that if a teacher does not know the basic elements involved in the process of motivation, the likely pursuit of learning goals cannot be carried on with vigour, as it must be for motivation, which is the energizing force.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTIVATED LEARNERS:

It is very easy to sense motivation in a classroom. In some classrooms, you will find pupils looking alert, responding quickly, and showing enthusiasm for what they are doing. While in some others, you will find them sitting indifferently and handling magazines awkwardly, possibly looking at pictures and engaging in aimless gossips with the like-minded pupils. Some may be eyeing the clock, impatient for the end of the day, when they will be released from the place called classroom.

The highly motivated learners depict certain traits and tendencies which are listed below:

i) **Display of Interest:** The degree of interest shown by the learners varies 'from intensity to complete apathy'.⁵ The interested pupils actively participate in academic as well as non-academic activities. In class, such pupils involve themselves in the solution of their problems with enthusiasm. They are persistent in their efforts. They visualize purpose in what they are doing. They feel adequate to undertake and accomplish tasks with zeal and zest.

ii) **High Level of Aspiration:** The highly motivated learner's level of aspiration⁶ is the result of experience from which he develops a concept of what he will be able to do. Success tends to raise the level of aspiration and failure tends to depress it. Those learners whose level of aspiration is higher require less direction from their

teachers. They just listen to their teachers intently and try their best to perform par excellent. Such pupils never injure their sense of pride. They enjoy school and learning whole-heartedly. If a teacher has a room full of highly-motivated pupils in his class in every period of the day, he experiences the satisfaction of the accomplishment of his mission of the day.

iii) Highly Intelligent but less Motivated: All the intelligent pupils are not equally motivated to learn. It is a tragedy in schools today that many of the abler pupils show less inclination to carry out their tasks effectively. They slope through their work and do the minimum to get by. They see little purpose in what they do. They may be so bright that the school curriculum may seem not offer them any challenge. The academic or scholastic activities become a boring business for them. The creative minds are often suppressed with school formalism and surely it is one of the reasons that they demonstrate no tangible interest in their own learning.

iv) Highly Motivated Slow Learners: At the other end of the spectrum, in every school, the teachers come across the slow learners who struggle to learn and give to their studies what they possibly can. Almost nothing is so heart-warming to the dedicated teacher as observing achievement from highly motivated slow learners.

III. THE CONDITIONS OF MOTIVATION:

The learners can be motivated if the following conditions are met. These conditions are nothing but the essential factors involved in the process of learning:

i) Capability: The capability of the pupils ought to be recognized as they can do better if they view "themselves as capable individuals".⁷ Therefore the subject - matter to be taught to the pupils ought to be in consonance with their level of capability. It is common

knowledge that they cannot learn beyond their capacity. Some times the teachers take "to extremes at any level of education by providing experiences so trivial and so easy as to insult the intelligence of the learners or so difficult as to frustrate them".⁸

ii) Security: The pupils need physical and social security in the classroom environment. In a secure and facilitating environment pupils can respond to the teacher with self-assurance and total confidence. It is only true that the psychological needs can better be served in "a secure environment".⁹

iii) Meaningfulness of Subject-Matter: Making the subject-matter meaningful to the pupils is the very crux of the problem and it contributes to motivation to a very great extent. In the teaching-learning process it is in the meaning that matters.¹⁰ They must also be aware of the importance of the subject-matter and its application to day-to day life situations.

iv) Presentation of Subject-Matter: The pupils' involvement in learning hinges on the way a subject is presented in the classroom. A good presentation of a dull subject can evoke interest among the pupils, but a spurious presentation of an interesting material will fail to generate worthwhile motivation.

v) Sharing in the Decision-Making: The pupils are in need of opportunity for making their own decisions as well as sharing decision-making with their teachers and class fellows. Participation in and responsibility for academic and non-academic activities positively appeals to the intrinsic motives of the learners.

vi) Taste of Success: "Success often serves as an effective motivator"¹¹ for the pupils. They need a taste of

success in their learning endeavours in the class and out of it. They need to feel success more often than failure. If the pupils begin to believe that they are incapable of success, they can give up very easily. No interest can be sustained in a task that fails the learner time and again. *Avoid failure and ensure success.*

IV. AUGMENTING CLASSROOM MOTIVATION

According to D.P.Ausubel (1968) the following are practical implications for increasing motivation and every classroom teacher must be aware of them:

"First, motivation is as much an effect as a cause of learning . . . Second, always make the objective in a given learning task as explicit as possible. Third, make a full use of, but not be limited by, existing interests and motivations. Fourth maximize cognitive drive by arousing intellectual curiosity, by using attention-attracting materials, and by arranging (and reorganizing) lessons so as to ensure ultimate success in learning. Fifth, set tasks that are appropriate to each learner's ability level. Nothing dampens motivation as much as an unrelieved diet of failure and frustration. Sixth, help pupils set realistic goals and to evaluate their progress towards these goals by providing tasks that test the limits of their ability and providing generously informative feedback about degree of goal attainment. Seventh, take account of developmental changes and individual difference in motivational patterns. Lastly, make judicious use of extrinsic and aversive motivation, excessively high levels of each".¹²

V. PRINCIPLES, PROCEDURES, & TECHNIQUES OF MOTIVATION

It would be fortunate if teachers could carry a magic-bag of tricks and strategies which could be used as a sure means of generating motivating force. But impelling motives are not uniform, they differ from person to

person. Consequently, the principles, procedures, and techniques that work well with an individual or one group may not click with others. The teacher should neither be startled nor discouraged if they fail in arousing interest in all the pupils all the time. The best a teacher can do and hope for reaching most of his pupils most of his time.

Though the teachers may not be adequately successful in motivating all the pupils all the time, yet there are ample chances of success if they master and practice some proved principles, procedure, and techniques developed and perfected by some of the experienced teachers over a period of time. Some very tangible ones are enumerated for the benefit of the novices to the profession as well as for the experienced ones who may need to refresh their minds.

(i) P.F.Oliva (1972),¹³ has suggested the below-listed multivariate techniques of motivation to improve and augment pupil learning:

1. Motivation is enhanced when the content is adjusted to the learner, rather than vice versa.
2. The contents of instruction should be as close to student interests as possible to make it.
3. Motivation is increased through the use of audio-visual aids.
4. Variety is a key to motivation.
5. Resumes and reviews sessions can help pupils to gain a better knowledge of their subject and therefore wish to continue their studies.
6. A summarization or other evaluative techniques at the end of the class period will help students to achieve better results.
7. The alert teacher looks for timely events which affect the lives of members of his class.
8. The kinds of assignments a teacher gives have a bearing on the motivational level of learning.
9. The teacher may resort to extrinsic forms of motivation of a positive nature.
10. The creative, imaginative teacher will experience greater success in stimulating pupils to learn than will the pedestrian, unimaginative teacher.

ii) Some Principles Related to Motivation:

To promote pupil learning through the *proper use of motivation* calls for adequate knowledge of psychological principles such as readiness, individual differences, socialization, sequence, evaluation etc. as well as effective acquaintance with other related areas. Hence principles related to motivation can be numerous,¹⁴ but only those that have direct bearing on pupil learning and provide adequate help to the classroom teacher are touched here:

1. All behaviour manifested by the pupil, a living person, is motivated, (except that which depends on the automatic nervous system).
2. Motivation is not an end in itself, it is a means to achieve desired goals of pupil learning.
3. Each individual views environmental factors in terms of their assumed effect on his personal welfare.¹⁵
4. When a learner recognizes a goal to be of personal importance to him he is motivated.¹⁶
5. Learning that brings reward and satisfaction to the pupil acts as a motivator for further learning.
6. The mind of the pupil may be stimulated by an extrinsic force, but it is the pupil's reaction to the stimulus that results in learning.

VI SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS TO MOTIVATE THE PUPILS:

The teachers both the beginners and experienced are in need of some specific guidelines for making their motivational procedures more effective:

1. Identify the incentives (both intrinsic and extrinsic) that motivate the broad spectrum of pupils in your class. Use direct contact with natural phenomena as a means of motivation.¹⁷ Employ teaching procedures that are interesting to the pupils.
2. Help pupils identify the personal value that specific academic goals will have for them and also help them establish realistic and educational goals for themselves. ¹⁸
3. Inform your pupils about their academic progress as a basis for motivation.¹⁹
4. Organize and arrange successful experiences that will raise their self-expectations.

5. Take interest in the content you teach very intensively and be well prepared to teach it. This interest, in turn will be communicated to your pupils.²⁰
6. Learn to identify the deficiencies of the pupils in terms of their needs - physiological, social and emotional - and their attempts to meet these problems may explain certain kinds of pupil behaviour and motives behind them.
7. Strike a desirable balance or equilibrium between approval and disapproval while helping the pupils bring about optimum motivation. Constructive criticism does more good than the negative criticism which is better than no criticism at all.

VII. CONCLUSION:

To sum up it is sufficient to say that pupil learning in the classroom in particular and a person's life activities in general depends greatly on motivational factors. The teachers must exploit the pupils' motives of their benefit. He should master the science and art of motivation and use it effectively to augment and enhance pupil learning.

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