

How Do I Motivate My Students?

Prepared by Adam Smith
For the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center
Texas Tech University

When you ask people what they know or believe about motivation, a few basic topics may rise to the surface. Many people debate the ideas of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, whether we need rewards or punishments to change behavior. Some people may remember B.F. Skinner and his rats: operant conditioning and the theory of behaviorism were prevalent throughout scientific discourse for much of the 20th century. Those with some background in educational theory or psychology may bring up Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: a model that acknowledges both biological and psychological needs. It would seem as simple as applying theory to practice, but affecting student motivation in our day-to-day lives as teachers often proves more difficult than we might hope.

If you ask an instructor about his or her goals in the classroom, they may say that they want to help students develop a love of learning, become critical thinkers, problem solvers, engaged students of the world. These are lofty goals, and there can be a disjunction between these ideals and the realities of the classroom at times: we may have trouble getting students to attend class and complete readings or homework, and we might wonder why students aren't more excited to be discussing particle physics, the late piano sonatas of Beethoven, or the novels of Proust. We may wonder who *doesn't* find this subject interesting. To wit, we wish that our students were more motivated. We want them to comply with course requirements, yes, but we also want them to be excited, and we want this excitement to extend beyond the semester and beyond the walls of our classrooms.

Theories of motivation give us a framework through which to understand our students. One such framework is expectancy-value theory (see Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which asks two questions: What is the value of the activity? Am I likely to succeed at this activity? As we will uncover over the course of this paper, the answers to these questions touch on myriad different factors. Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) include another element, the learning environment (and student perceptions of that environment). Yet, even with this theoretical framework in place, there is a growing body of research that adds even more nuance to our discussion of motivation. Throughout the paper, you will see sidebars that will expand on theories and ideas mentioned in the paper. Each sidebar will provide a brief explanation of the theory and provide some resources for further reading. Put together, we have a more complete picture of motivation.

While motivation can seem unwieldy, theoretical, or, in worst case scenarios, simplified pop-psychology, there is a growing body of research that offers us small, doable steps towards a more motivational classroom. This paper, therefore, will address actionable steps instructors can take in response to the following three questions:

- **How do I address student self-efficacy and expectancy for success in my classroom?**
- **How do I create value and intrinsic motivation in my classroom?**
- **How do I structure the learning environment to promote the growth of motivation in my classroom?**

The questions are similar and somewhat overlapping. They are interrelated, so the answer to any one is sure to touch on aspects of another. Yet, at the same time, this can be a hopeful thing because taking any one of the steps outlined here may have ripple effects throughout your classroom.

Growth versus Fixed Mindsets

Carol Dweck and her colleagues have spent years conducting research on what she calls mindsets. Based on her research, she has settled on two primary mindsets: fixed and growth (Dweck, 2006). In the fixed mindset, our abilities and traits are predetermined. So, someone is thin, talented, shy, etc. On the other hand, people with a growth mindset believe that their abilities and traits are changeable through effort: I can become more skilled at something with practice. Her research suggests that instructors can affect student learning simply by teaching about the growth mindset.

While people with a growth mindset are more likely to persist in the face of challenges and initial missteps, Dweck is quick to point out that it's not just about effort. Student effort without learning is still problematic. We also need to guide students towards different, potentially more fruitful strategies for learning. In her words, "The point isn't to get it all right away. The point is to grow your understanding step by step. What can you try next?" (Dweck, 2015).

Further Reading:

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.

Dweck, C. (2015, September 22). Carol Dweck Revisits the 'Growth Mindset' Retrieved December 10, 2015, from

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/23/carol-dweck-revisits-the-growth-mindset.html>

I. How do I address student self-efficacy and expectancy for success in my classroom?

Self-efficacy is related to, but distinct from, the more familiar concept of self-esteem, which refers to one's opinion of oneself. In the words of Albert Bandura, "Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capability, whereas self-esteem is concerned with judgments of self-worth" (Bandura, 1994, p. 11). Many people are familiar with public discourse about self-esteem, worrying that students with low self-esteem might perform poorly in school. We believe praise will boost self-esteem, but the reality can be much trickier, as research indicates a weak link between self-esteem and academic performance (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Self-efficacy has to do with student beliefs that they can succeed in our course. This efficacy can be misaligned due to a number of factors, one of which is a potential gap between their skillsets and the expectations of our course. Moreover, students don't come in as blank slates, they have preexisting ideas and beliefs about our subject matter, and we would do well to take this into account. Finally, students will have more confidence if there is a clear path from point A to point B: we can provide directions, advice, and guidance. If students don't believe that they will be successful or that their efforts will be assessed fairly, they have less incentive to engage in whatever assignment or activity you have planned for them. Students need to know that they can try and have a likelihood of success, and they need to know that you are fair.

Acknowledge Previous Knowledge - While we may approach each semester as a fresh start, our students are not coming into our classes with blank slates. They may have previous knowledge from other classes. They may have more or less informed beliefs from exposure to media or other sources. Finally, they may have beliefs about our abilities as instructors (either through word of mouth or by looking at popular websites like RateMyProfessor.com). Research supports the role of previous knowledge in student learning (see Ambrose et al., 2010 for a review), and we can choose to assess this information in order to use it for many purposes: addressing common false beliefs and locating a more accurate starting point based on previous knowledge. Finally, students bring self-beliefs that may be limiting, thinking that they are just not good at math, reading, etc. (See sidebar on Mindsets).

Assess Previous Knowledge - Given that students enter our classroom with previous knowledge, we can use a few simple strategies to assess for it. A simple way to assess this is simple to ask your students what they know already or believe about a particular topic. These **knowledge probes** can achieve assessment goals, but they can also create opportunities for more universal participation. Having students write or discuss in pairs (also known as a **Think-pair-share**) can get students engaged. Another way to create a spark of engagement is to ask for **predictions**: based on what you know/believe about this topic, what do you think might happen in these conditions? In the research on learning and memory, this predictive step can cue students in to assess their prediction and can have a positive impact on future recall, even if their initial prediction is incorrect (see Lang, 2016). While we may not be able to adapt our lesson plans entirely, with this knowledge we will have a more precise idea of our collective starting point.

Clear the path to success for your students - One part of the efficacy equation is that our students believe they can succeed in our course and see a clear path to that success. With our syllabi, we can provide helpful hints and other tips for success in our courses. In one example, a professor even asked former students who did well in the course to offer up their own recipes for success (Lang, 2016). Stephen Brookfield (2015) suggests having a panel of former students on the first day in order to answer any questions current students might have. This combination of advice from both teacher and students is a great way to start. Still, along with helpful hints, students still need clarity and structure. Consider how you might put students' minds at ease: a clear schedule, clearly articulated policies in your syllabus, and criteria for assessment, possibly even including rubrics. **Ideally, that path to success would be as simple as following the obvious guideposts along the way: attending class, completing assignments, etc. (see Lang, 2013).**

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

"STUDENTS DO NOT COME INTO OUR COURSES AS BLANK SLATES, BUT RATHER WITH KNOWLEDGE GAINED IN OTHER COURSES AND THROUGH DAILY LIFE... AS STUDENTS BRING THIS KNOWLEDGE TO BEAR IN OUR CLASSROOMS, IT INFLUENCES HOW THEY FILTER AND INTERPRET INCOMING INFORMATION."

AMBROSE ET AL., 2010, P. 13

Assess and Address Potential Gaps in Student Skillsets –

Students have previous knowledge and beliefs about your subject matter, but they also have academic skills that may or may not be adequate for the challenges of your classroom. Success in your course may require writing and studying abilities that extend beyond their current levels of ability. By addressing the skills needed to succeed in your course, you help clarify the path even more. You may even need to help establish a clearer relationship between their academic skills and their academic outcomes. One way to do this involves what researchers call metacognition: thinking about thinking. Ask students how they prepared for an exam or assignment: reading over their notes, quizzing themselves, etc. You can follow-up by showing students the correlation between certain study habits and grades received (Lang, 2016).

Demonstration and practice also applies to skills that are relevant in our particular discipline. In a literature course, students will be analyzing texts and most likely writing papers. By taking the time to discuss, demonstrate, and practice these particular skills, students may go into the larger assignments with more confidence. In addition, clarifying how these assignments are assessed (even providing rubrics for them to work with) can only help. Transparency in our grading can reinforce the idea that grades are earned. This may be more work for the instructor, but students will feel better knowing they're on the right track.

II. How do I create value and intrinsic motivation in my classroom?

Believing that you can do something does guarantee the desire or the interest to engage in that task. This section will address a number of things that we can do help our students find more interest and engagement in our courses, ranging from finding real-world applications to choosing appropriate tasks that challenge our students while still allowing for success with a reasonable application of effort. While students may not arrive with intrinsic motivation (see sidebar), we can help them develop more motivation by emphasizing the three components Daniel Pink (2011) recommends as a foundation for developing intrinsic motivation: **autonomy, mastery, and purpose.**

Intrinsic Motivation – Reconsidered

When we talk about motivation in binary terms, there is some tendency to simplify: intrinsic motivation is good, and extrinsic motivation is risky, at best. At the same time, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci believe that extrinsic motivation is more nuanced: “Students can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively, with an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 55).” Ryan and Deci (2000) encourage instructors to help students see the value in the tasks they are assigned. In order to adopt a shift in orientation (from more extrinsic to more intrinsic), students must feel competent, have a real sense of autonomy, and have a clear purpose for the activity/task in question.

Further Reading:

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary educational psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.

Autonomy – Self-Directed Learning, Step-by-Step

Just as autonomy affects workplace happiness (Pink, 2011), it can play a role in our classrooms. The freedom we have in choosing how we teach is something that some of us may take for granted. We may forget that, for students, many aspects of school are spelled out for them. In response, many well-intentioned instructors want to give their students choices in the classroom. We offer topic choices on papers/projects, we allow them to pick their partners for group work. While these are positive initial steps, research suggests that we keep the following ideas in mind:

Not all autonomy is created equal. In other words, some kinds of autonomy are more meaningful than others. Cognitive autonomy (Katz & Assor, 2007) is the process of demonstrating, suggesting, and soliciting multiple solutions and/or approaches to a given problem. For example, in an effort to increase autonomy, we may ask our students to generate multiple solutions to a math problem from the get go. Yet, we may have only covered one possible solution in class. Without alternative examples, students may simply try to apply the one procedure to problems where it doesn't apply. With practice, students may be able to generate more ideas independently. **Be willing to demonstrate first!**

There is such a thing as too much choice, depending on the levels/abilities of your students. Even if we ask students to generate their own ideas, without practice and previous experience, the freedom might be overwhelming. For example, giving students free rein on a long-term project might result a lack of motivation from the get go and massive procrastination later: students may be unsure of how to start. The idea of too much choice is that what we perceive as freedom our students may perceive as a lack of structure or guidance. **Start with structure, and scaffold autonomy.**

Mastery – It feels good to get it right

Mastery, comprehensive knowledge/skill, often comes with the positive feeling of achievement. Yet, research (and human nature) shows us that this feeling of accomplishment follows the law of diminishing returns. Our initial successful attempts may be quite rewarding, yet, as we perform the same task, the reward may be less and less. Yet, at the same time, effort without any success is surely demotivating (Willingham, 2009). Somewhere in the middle lies a sweet spot, a place where the challenges of the task are approximately matched with student abilities. Essentially, it's the Goldilocks problem: the task needs neither to be too cold (easy/boring) nor too hot (difficult/anxiety-provoking) but just right (see sidebar). It's in this zone of proximal development that we can guide our students to ever-increasing levels of academic achievement and mastery.

Choose Appropriate Tasks - The previous knowledge, beliefs, and skills that we may have assessed for offer us a chance to select more appropriate tasks for our students. We want to challenge our students, but we also want them to feel the satisfaction that comes with finally figuring out an equation or theorem, remember that “the pleasure is in the solving of the problem” (Willingham 2009, p. 6). In fact, it is this very idea that underscores the distinction between mastery and performance orientations in the classroom (see sidebar on p. 8). While achieving a desired grade is one kind of achievement, the more intrinsic achievement of mastering new material provides an emotional basis to pursue future challenges.

Focus on the Process - In a study of exercise frequency, Michelle Segar and her colleagues (2011) found that a more immediate focus on the experience resulted in higher rates of exercise than focusing on well-intentioned benefits such as losing weight and lowering blood pressure. In the classroom, we might bring students' attention to the process of solving a problem or writing paper. We might ask them to articulate what they enjoyed most about completing an assignment, focusing their attention (and ours) on the experience as well as the final product turned in for a grade. In addition to choosing more appropriate tasks (based on skill levels), we can help guide our students to enjoy learning more for its own sake.

Flow Theory

The state of flow is one of absorbed engagement. One way to conceive of it is as the state that makes an intrinsically motivated activity worth doing for its own sake. In studying flow, Csikszentmihalyi pioneered the use of experience sampling, or interrupting people at random intervals throughout the day (using pagers) and asking them what they were doing and how they felt about it. He and his colleagues found that people were happiest when engaged in an activity that challenged them, sometimes entering a state of flow. Ironically, people reported higher degrees of satisfaction and flow at work than they did on vacation.

The flow theory he put forth posits that, while there is no surefire recipe to make flow happen, it is most likely to occur when the challenges of the situation are approximately equal (or just beyond) the participant's abilities. If the challenges are too far beyond their grasp, they may be frustrated, anxious, and ultimately, demotivated. If the task is too easy, people may become bored, disengaged, and, again, demotivated. Choosing tasks that are at the threshold of students' abilities is key.

Further reading:

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. Basic Books.

RELATED IDEAS: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Purpose – Clarifying the why

Finally, we turn to what seem like the most obvious way to increase intrinsic motivation in our classes. By communicating the value of our subject matter and the skills they learn through our class, we hope that students will be convinced of that value and proceed with no further questions. While the concept of transparency applies to other areas, it most definitely applies when it comes to purpose. One instructor even follows the “Who gives a damn?” principle by being willing to stop, at any point, and explain how the specific point under discussion fits into the larger picture (Bain, 2011). This is a useful exercise for any instructor, as are the following suggestions:

Articulate the Value of a Task – While it may seem obvious to tell our students the value of our subject and how it may help them later in life, research suggests that it can also be helpful to allow our students to reflect and articulate the value of what they’re learning to their own lives. In at least one study, this exercise actually resulted in improved academic outcomes (Hulleman & Harackiewicz, 2009). Hulleman and Harackiewicz found this approach especially helpful for underperforming students, who may worry if we paint a skill as essential. Their self-perceived lack of skill might seem like a liability to them. In asking students to find value for themselves, the reasons for learning are more personal.

Offer Real-World Application - As instructors, we decide what to present, what to discuss, and what assignments students are required to complete to achieve their desired grade. Given that our ultimate goal is the educate students for the world outside of our classrooms, it behooves us to consider how we can give them authentic, real-world tasks as opportunities to engage in the kinds of thinking that they will need in their professional lives. To the extent that it’s possible, try case studies that use real-world information, find ways to simulate real-world activities, and see how these affect your students’ motivations to engage with course material.

Develop Authentic Questions – Daniel Willingham (2009) points out that classes can often seem like a stream of facts and procedures to memorize and apply on tests, quizzes, papers, etc. Without questions guiding these tasks, students may wonder what the point is. By orienting our courses around fundamental, authentic, deep, and challenging questions, we give an emotional framework for what might otherwise come across as a long list of facts and procedures. These questions are not as simple as yes/no, and they will not necessarily be answerable by semester’s end: what should happen is that we begin to understand the complexity of the questions and the many factors involved. Bain (2011) cites the example of a history professor who uses the founding of the United Nations as a springboard to consider if certain actions might have helped avoid a second world war, but the instructor moves a step further in challenging their students to consider whether we can change our fate as individuals and as a society. We can reflect and consider how we might frame our course around more fundamental ideas that provide an emotional framework for the material.

Utilize Pre-Existing Questions – While instructors have ideas of what’s important for students to learn in their courses, the students themselves often bring their own questions into the semester (Lang, 2016). Asking them why they signed up for your course, what they hope to learn in the course, etc. can bring these pre-existing questions to the fore. Utilizing this curiosity can help you approach lesson planning, even providing an authentic question or two to consider through the semester.

III. How do I structure the learning environment to promote the growth of motivation in my classroom?

Introduction - There are a number of things that we can do to create a learning environment that is welcoming to students. In addition to giving helpful feedback, we can focus on elements of class that we control, such as grades or classroom policies.

Any discussion about classroom policies and motivation can start with grades. Grades are a salient part of nearly anyone's memories of school. In the context of motivation, some people may even question if grades simply act as rewards for academic performance. As a result, some schools have taken the radical step of removing grades all together, with prominent examples like Yale Law School offering an alternative structure that still evaluates performance, just without the traditional lettering system. In this environment, students are free to make mistakes, get feedback, and adjust to life and school in a new field without incurring academic demerits that might limit their future professional and academic options. For the rest of us, grades are part and parcel of academic life: we teach in universities where grades are currency for students and data for assessment.

Help Students Develop a Healthier Attitude Toward Grades— We may not be able to get rid of grades, but we can still cultivate a healthier attitude towards them. While students may see grades as a measure of their intelligence or academic ability, it is important to communicate that grades are a measurement of their performance relative to a predetermined standard. Understood this way, grades are markers of relative performance, at one point in time. In addition, we need to communicate to our students that, as Linda Nilson (2010) puts it, grades are earned rather than given. Showing students a path to success can help them to feel empowered, reinforcing this connection. Connecting their preparation to their performance is a lesson worth learning.

Emphasize Standards, Not Comparisons - A healthy attitude towards grades rests on a key assumption: that everyone has equal opportunity to achieve their desired grade. Grading schemes that turn high marks into scarce resources are a risky recipe for student motivation. Competitive grading like curves can create a winner-takes-all environment where academic dishonesty is more likely to flourish (Svinicki, 2005). With a constant emphasis on comparison, curved grading can dishonor individual student progress (See sidebar at right).

Goal Orientation – Performance or Mastery Focused

Grades can be seen as either goals of mastery or goals of performance, and this distinction parallels the ideas of orientation theory. Students who seek out grades as markers of positive performance differ from those whose grades are simply seen as a reflection of their learning and mastery. Moreover, performance goals are a double-edged sword. While some students will be very motivated to achieve a certain grade, especially in relation to their peers, others will have a more avoidant approach.

Grades as competition doesn't work for everyone, and we want everyone to have an equal opportunity to do well in our course. Thus, by choosing grading schemes that do not promote competition and by reinforcing grades as a measure of performance relative to a standard, we may help students see the bigger picture: "Is it possible that by providing them ... recognition for their own progress... we may end up weaning them away from comparison with others as their benchmark of achievement?" (Svinicki, p. 3)

Further Reading:

Svinicki, M. (2005) Student goal orientation, motivation, and learning. *IDEA Paper*, 41.

Use Grading to Honor Student Progress, Fairly - In addition to equitable grading, we need to remember that grades indicate our performance at one point in time. How do we account for relative student progress over the course of the semester? Short of grading on a sliding scale, one possible solution is a progressive grading scheme. For example, if you have a number of like assignments (multiple papers, exams, problem sets), you might consider weighting these progressively more over the course of the semester (Lang, 2013). This can achieve a couple of goals: it doesn't penalize those who have an initial misstep, as they can recover in subsequent assignments. Progressive grading does not penalize students who do well consistently either. Every class has a learning curve, and while we may strive to help our students develop the necessary academic skills to succeed in our course, some people will progress more quickly than others. Honoring development this way sends a message that everyone can succeed with continued effort and growth, which seems like the very definition of promoting a growth mindset.

Distribute Grades Throughout the Semester - Just as competitive grading results in high stakes that can exacerbate academic dishonesty, high stakes grading where one exam or assignment is worth a significant portion of a student's grade is another potential red flag. With fewer assignments worth more points each, the pressure may lead to anxiety. With more frequent assignments, we achieve many ends. Our students may be less anxious. With less incentive/reward, students may have less reason to engage in academically dishonest behavior. Finally, frequent assessment takes advantage of an idea known as the testing effect: where a frequent practice of recall strengthens memory in the long run (Lang, 2013).

Divide Larger Assignments into Sub-Tasks - This distribution and growth process can even be included in individual assignments. If you have a large paper, consider dividing into smaller sub-assignments. Multiple deadlines will keep your students accountable throughout the semester, and spaced practice of writing, math, or other skills will only reinforce their growth.

Lower the Cost of Failure – Many of the previous suggestions attempt to achieve a common goal of reducing the penalty for a natural part of the learning process: making mistakes. In doing so, we create a more welcoming environment for students to learn. To this end, Linda Nilson (2010) even recommends allowing students to explain their reasoning for multiple-choice and true-false questions on quizzes or exams. In addition to lowering the cost of a wrong answer, any explanations gives us insight into how our students understand the material from class.

Give Second Chances (When you can, and within reason) - Beyond providing an explanation, another way to lower the cost of failure is to give students a second chance. In one study (Schroeter, Green, & Bess, 2010), allowing students to correct exam questions resulted in higher self-reports of learning while not having an effect on students' motivation on their initial attempts. They also reported that the opportunity to resubmit did not diminish the time spent on the initial submission. Ken Bain is a staunch supporter of this idea as a mechanism for deeper learning. Bain (2011) compares our ideal work environment, where we can scribble, draft, receive casual feedback, and rewrite, to that of our students. Short of giving yourself a second round of papers or assignments to grade, some instructors have tried pre-submission policies where students can turn in an assignment early (48-72) hours early and receive some guiding feedback before their final submission (Lang, 2013/2016). Still, if this idea induces panic of grading overload, keep this mind in mind: **Allowing students to redo or resubmit work carries a whole host of logistics with it. Thus, instructors can integrate academic second chances as it seems feasible.**

IV. Feedback

Grades can be seen as the quantitative data for student performance, whereas feedback is our qualitative assessment. It's our chance to guide students towards better performance in the future, and it's our chance to note when students have done well. For all of its possible functions, one role of feedback may simply be to communicate that there is indeed someone on the other end of their homework. Feedback may be more effective when it is:

Specific - If feedback is to be helpful, clarity is a virtue. With or without a rubric, specificity is a chance to justify your grading choices with reference to specific errors or bright spots. Specific feedback allows students to know exactly what you saw that caused you to react.

Actionable - Along with being specific, another purpose of feedback is to guide students in future performance. Feedback that gives no clear indication as to how the student could proceed may be disregarded by students.

Appropriate – When giving feedback, student experience can come into play. While more experienced students may seek out constructive criticism, beginning students may need more positive feedback to build confidence (Finkelstein & Fishbach, 2012).

Timely - Finally, if feedback is not timely, it may lose its impact. In addition, delayed feedback prevents students from correcting your suggestions on future assignments in your course.

V. Conclusion

By encouraging a positive orientation towards grades, clarifying the value of tasks, and engaging students in reflection on their learning process, we may begin to build conditions that allow motivation to flourish. Rather than thinking of motivation as something we have to do to our students, we ask a different question: ***What can I do to create conditions for motivation to flourish?*** In answering this question, we may well weed out more coercive forms of motivation (rewards, curved grades, and other purely extrinsic motivators). Favorable conditions for motivation tend to place more emphasis on the process of learning. Giving students practice, meaningful feedback, and encouraging a growth mindset communicates that learning is a process. When students believe they can be successful, they are more likely to engage in this process.

Praise and Student Motivation

When we want to provide praise, often we want to honor student contributions either in the classroom or on specific student work. As with feedback more generally, praise specifically benefits from a few ground rules, suggested here by Daniel Willingham (2005). Praise benefits from being:

Authentic - As well-intentioned as it might seem to boost someone's spirits with praise, without a clear behavior that deserves praise, you may actually have the opposite effect on the student(s). If they were capable, why would you need to baby them with praise?

Spontaneous - On some level, the golden rule of praise is not to plan it so much. Be honest, but, if we try hard to give out praise systematically it may lose its value and its authenticity.

Specific - Just as feedback needs to be specific, praise needs to focus on particular behaviors. Carol Dweck's famous work on mindsets demonstrates repeatedly that praising people for their abilities backfires, even when you are telling people they are smart! Focusing on people's efforts or on their trying new learning strategies, we put the focus on their behavior.

Unconditional - If praise is seen as an attempt to manipulate behavior, it immediately loses its motivating power.

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Dweck, C.S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. *Kaleidoscope, Contemporary and Classic Readings in Education*, 12.

Review/Summary

- **How do I address student self-efficacy and expectancy for success in my classroom?**

Assess and address necessary skills for your classroom, and help students assess their own study strategies as well as their attitudes and mindsets. You want to boost their efficacy with skills as well as self-belief. The path to success in your course should be as clear as fulfilling the course requirements.

- **How do I create value and intrinsic motivation in my classroom?**

In short, help set your students up for autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Help them develop their own strategies (autonomy), give them chances to struggle and succeed (mastery) and help them reflect on the value of their learning (purpose). Together, these will create conditions for motivation to flourish.

- **How do I structure the learning environment to promote the growth of motivation in my classroom?**

We want to lower the cost of failure, both through policy (grades) and feedback. Put together, we can create a safe learning environment where students feel free to try without penalties for initial mistakes. Learning is treated as a process, and specific, timely feedback guides students forward.

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