

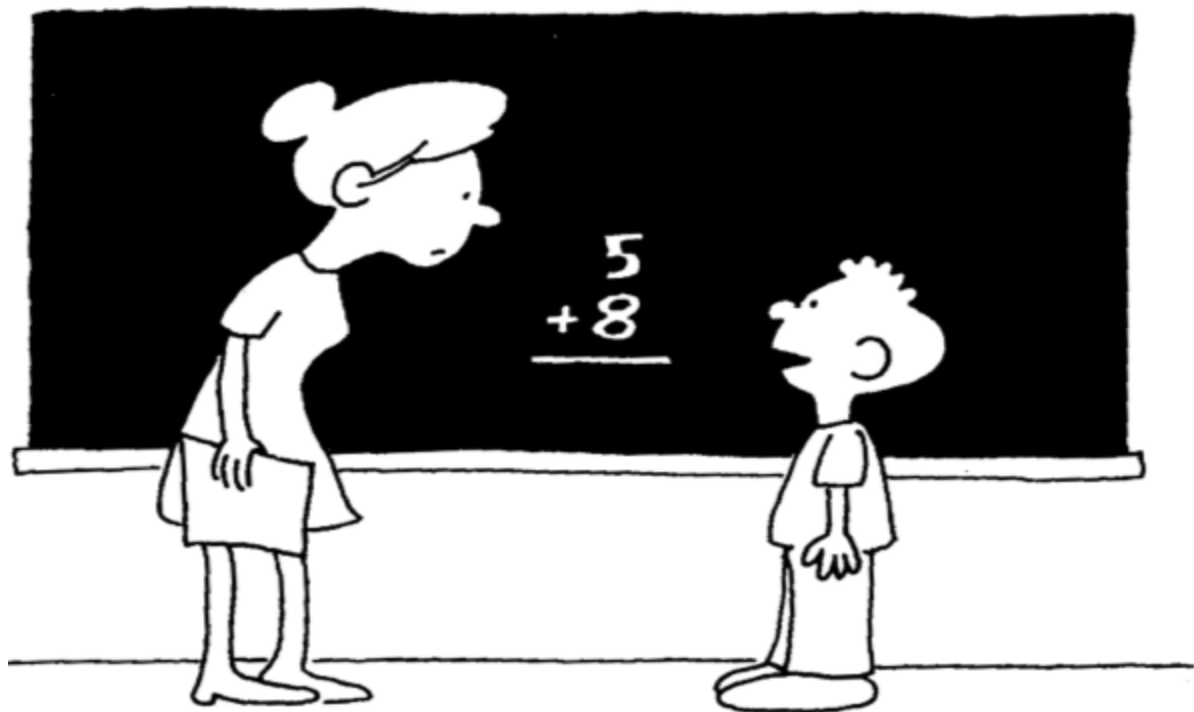
*VII. Don't Forget About
Intrinsic Motivation!*

- *Understanding Intrinsic Motivation*
- *Overreliance on Extrinsics: A Bad Match*
- *Re-engagement in School Learning*

Rethinking Motivation

Some questions to think about:

- >What motivates youngsters in general?
at school?
 - >What motivates teachers and other
school staff to do their best on the job?
 - >What motivates family members to be
involved with schooling?
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GOSH, MRS. THOMPSON, I WAS READY TO
LEARN MATH YESTERDAY. TODAY I'M READY
TO LEARN TO READ.

Understanding ***Intrinsic Motivation***
is essential to addressing the problem
of student *engagement and*
re-engagement
in classroom learning.

And, this makes it an essential ingredient
in efforts to deal with *misbehavior*.

Can you translate the following formula?

$$E \times V = M$$



If the equation stumped you, don't be surprised.

The main introduction to motivational thinking that many people have been given in the past involves some form of reinforcement theory (which essentially deals with extrinsic motivation).

Thus, all this may be new to you, even though motivational theorists have been wrestling with it for a long time, and intuitively, you probably understand much of what they are talking about.


“E” represents an individual's *expectations* about outcome (in school this often means expectations of success or failure).

“V” represents *valuing*, with valuing influenced by both what is valued intrinsically and extrinsically. Thus, in a general sense, motivation can be thought of in terms of expectancy times valuing.

Thus: ***Expectancy times value equals motivation***

Such theory recognizes that human beings are thinking and feeling organisms and that intrinsic factors can be powerful motivators.

This understanding of human motivation has major implications for learning, teaching, parenting, and mental health interventions.



What does this suggest?

$$\mathbf{E} \times \mathbf{V} =$$

$$0 \times 1.0 =$$

Within some limits
(which we need not discuss here),

low expectations (E) and high valuing (V)
produce relatively weak motivation.

I know I won't be able to do it.

And what about this?

$$\mathbf{E} \times \mathbf{V} =$$

$$1.0 \times 0 =$$

High expectations paired with low valuing also yield low approach motivation.

Thus, the oft-cited remedial strategy of guaranteeing success by designing tasks to be very easy is not as simple a recipe as it sounds.

Indeed, the approach is likely to fail if the outcome is not valued or if the tasks are experienced as too boring or if doing them is seen as too embarrassing.

In such cases, a strong negative value is attached to the activities, and this contributes to avoidance motivation.

It's not worth doing!

About Valuing

What makes something worth doing? Prizes? Money? Merit awards? Praise?

Certainly!

We all do a great many things, some of which we don't even like to do, because the activity leads to a desired reward. Similarly, we often do things to escape punishment or other negative consequences that we prefer to avoid.

Rewards and punishments may be material or social. For those with learning, behavior, and emotional problems, there has been widespread use of such "incentives" (e.g., systematically giving points or tokens that can be exchanged for candy, prizes, praise, free time, or social interactions).

Punishments have included loss of free time and other privileges, added work, fines, isolation, censure, and suspension. Grades have been used both as rewards and punishments. Because people will do things to obtain rewards or avoid punishment, rewards and punishment often are called *reinforcers*. Because they generally come from sources outside the person, they often are called *extrinsics*.

Extrinsic reinforcers are easy to use and can immediately affect behavior. Therefore, they have been widely adopted in the fields of special education and psychology. Unfortunately, the immediate effects are usually limited to very specific behaviors and often are short-term. Moreover, extensive use of extrinsics can have some undesired effects. And, sometimes the available extrinsics simply aren't powerful enough to get the desired results.

About Valuing (cont.)

It is important to remember that what makes some extrinsic factor rewarding is the fact that it is experienced by the recipient as a reward. What makes it a highly valued reward is that the recipient highly values it. If someone doesn't like candy, there is not much point in offering it as a reward.

Furthermore, because the use of extrinsics has limits, it's fortunate that people often do things even without apparent extrinsic reason. In fact, a lot of what people learn and spend time doing is done for intrinsic reasons. *Curiosity* is a good example. Curiosity seems to be an innate quality that leads us to seek stimulation, avoid boredom, and learn a great deal.

People also pursue some things because of what has been described as an innate *striving for competence*. Most of us value feeling competent. We try to conquer some challenges, and if none are around, we usually seek one out. Of course, if the challenges confronting us seem unconquerable or make us too uncomfortable (e.g., too anxious or exhausted), we try to put them aside and move on to something more promising.

Another important intrinsic motivator appears to be an internal push toward *self-determination*. People seem to value feeling and thinking that they have some degree of choice and freedom in deciding what to do.

And, human beings also seem intrinsically moved toward establishing and maintaining relationships. That is, we value the feeling of *interpersonal connection*.

About Expectations

We may value something a great deal; but if we believe we can't do it or can't obtain it without paying too great a personal price, we are likely to look for other valued activities and outcomes to pursue. Expectations about these matters are influenced by previous experiences.

Previously unsuccessful arenas usually are seen as unlikely paths to valued extrinsic rewards or intrinsic satisfactions. We may perceive past failure as the result of our lack of ability; or we may believe that more effort was required than we were willing to give. We may also feel that the help we needed to succeed was not available. If our perception is that very little has changed with regard to these factors, our expectation of succeeding now will be rather low. *In general, then, what we value interacts with our expectations, and motivation is one product of this interaction.*

There are many intervention implications to derive from understanding intrinsic motivation. For example, mobilizing and maintaining a youngster's motivation depends on how a classroom program addresses concerns about valuing and expectations. Schools and classrooms that offer a broad range of opportunities (e.g., content, outcomes, procedural options) and involve students in decision making are best equipped to meet the challenge.

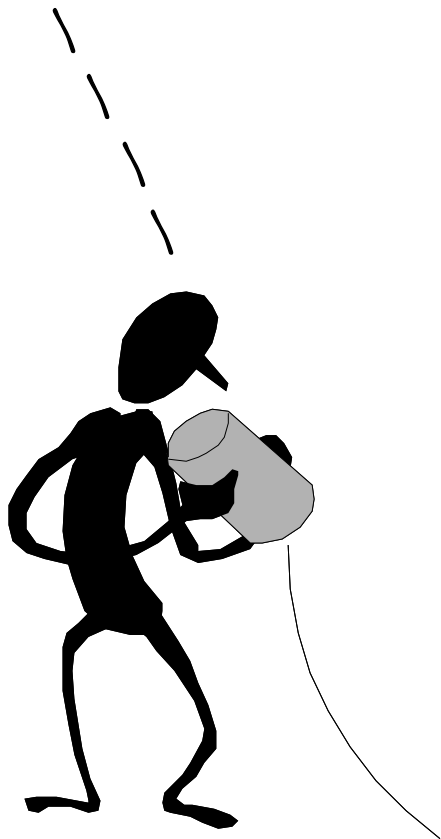
Two common reasons people give for not bothering to learn something are

"It's not worth it"

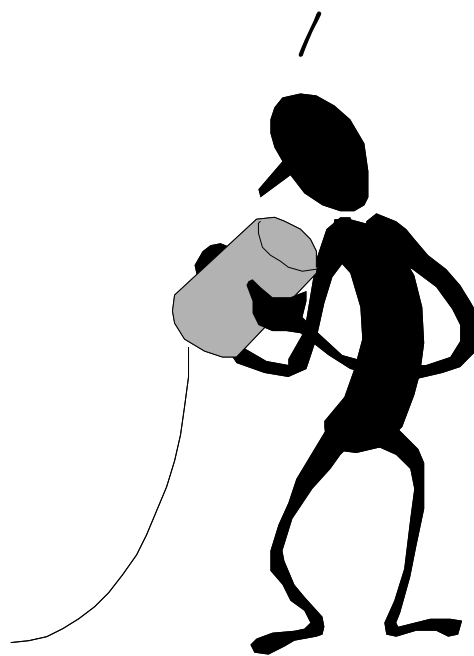
"I know I won't be able to do it."

In general, the amount of time and energy spent on an activity seems dependent on how much the activity is valued by the person and on the person's expectation that what is valued will be attained without too great a cost.

What did you learn
in school today?



Not enough I guess, they
told me I have to go
back tomorrow!



Overreliance on Extrinsic: a Bad Match

Throughout this discussion of valuing and expectations, the emphasis has been on the fact that motivation is not something that can be determined solely by forces outside the individual.

Others can plan activities and outcomes to influence motivation and learning; however, how the activities and outcomes are experienced determines whether they are pursued (or avoided) with a little or a lot of effort and ability.

Understanding that an individual's perceptions can affect motivation has led researchers to important findings about some undesired effects resulting from overreliance on extrinsics.

More About Overreliance on Extrinsic

You might want to think about how grades affected your motivation over the years. Did you feel you were working for a grade or to learn? How often did receiving a good grade increase your motivation to learn more than was required? Did receiving poor grades increase or decrease your motivation? If you ever took a course on a pass/fail basis, instead of for a grade, did it affect your motivation?

On the job, is receiving a good salary enough to ensure job satisfaction? How would offering teachers bonus pay for raising class test scores affect their motivation?

If you are reading this because you are interested in the topic, would offering you a reward for reading it increase your motivation for doing so? Maybe. But, you might perceive the proposed reward as an indication that the information probably isn't that interesting or see the reward as an effort to control your behavior. Such perceptions could lead you to think and feel negatively about the material and may even affect your interest in the topic. You may, for example, begin to think there must be something wrong with the material or experience a sense of resentment about what you see as an effort to control or bribe you to read it. Any of these thoughts and feelings may cause you to shift the intrinsic value you originally placed on learning about the topic.

The point is that extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic reasons for doing things. Although this is not always the case and may not always be a bad thing, it is an important consideration in deciding to rely on extrinsic reinforcers in creating a match for optimal learning.

About Grades

Because of the prominent role they play in school programs, grading, testing, and other performance evaluations are a special concern in any discussion of the overreliance on extrinsics as a way to reinforce positive learning. Although grades often are discussed as simply providing information about how well a student is doing, many, if not most, students perceive each grade as a reward or a punishment.

Certainly, many teachers use grades to try to control behavior – to reward those who do assignments well and to punish those who don't. Sometimes parents add to a student's perception of grades as extrinsic reinforcers by giving a reward for good report cards.

A Fable

Is It Worth It?

In a small town, there were a few youngsters who were labeled as handicapped. Over the years, a local bully had taken it upon himself to persecute them. In one recent incident, he sent a gang of young ragamuffins to harass one of his classmates who had just been diagnosed as having learning disabilities. He told the youngsters that the boy was retarded, and they could have some fun calling him a "retard."

Day after day in the schoolyard the gang sought the boy out. "Retard! Retard!" they hooted at him.

The situation became serious. The boy took the matter so much to heart that he began to brood and spent sleepless nights over it. Finally, out of desperation, he told his teacher about the problem, and together they evolved a plan.

The following day, when the little ones came to jeer at him, he confronted them saying,

"From today on I'll give any of you who calls me a 'retard' a quarter."

Then he put his hand in his pocket and, indeed, gave each boy a quarter.

Well, delighted with their booty, the youngsters, of course, sought him out the following day and began to shrill, "Retard! Retard!"

The boy looked at them -- smiling. He put his hand in his pocket and gave each of them a dime, saying, "A quarter is too much -- I can only afford a dime today."

Well, the boys went away satisfied because, after all, a dime was money too.

However, when they came the next day to hoot, the boy gave them only a penny each.

"Why do we get only a penny today?" they yelled.

"That's all I can afford."

"But two days ago you gave us a quarter, and yesterday we got a dime. It's not fair!"

"Take it or leave it. That's all you're going to get."

"Do you think we're going to call you a 'retard' for one lousy penny?"

"So don't."

And they didn't.

(Adapted from a fable presented by Ausubel, 1948)

Intrinsic Motivation – Intervention Considerations

Think in terms of

- ***Enhancing feelings*** of
 - >>Self-determination
 - >>Competency
 - >>Connectedness to others
- ***Minimizing threats to feelings*** of:
 - >>Self-determination
 - >>Competency
 - >>Connectedness to others

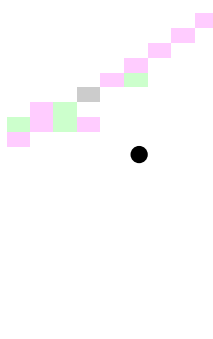
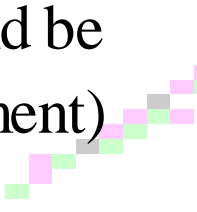
Minimize strategies designed only for social control and increase

- options
- choice
- involvement in decision making

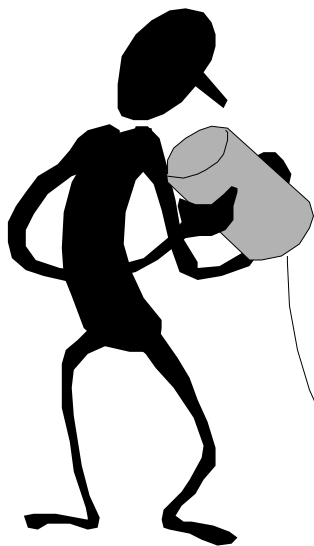


Some Guidelines for Strategies that Capture An Understanding of Intrinsic Motivation

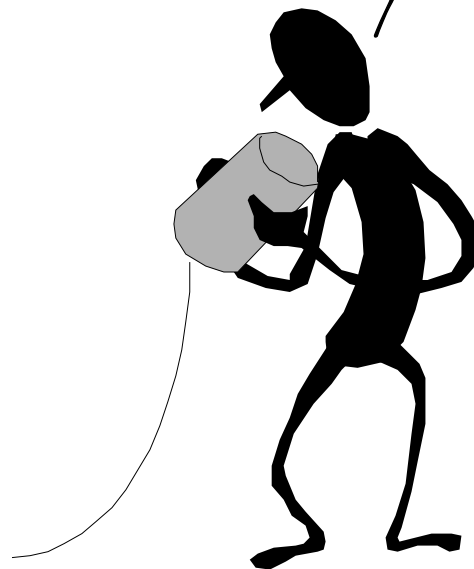


- minimize coercive interactions
 - facilitate students' desire and ability to share their perceptions readily (to enter into dialogues with the adults at school)
 - emphasize real life interests and needs
 - stress *real* options and choices and a *meaningful* role in decision making
 - provide enrichment opportunities (and be sure not to withhold them as punishment)
 - provide a *continuum* of structure
- 
- 
-

I don't want to go to school.
It's too hard and the kids
don't like me?



That's too bad,
but you have to go –
you're the Principal!



Why is it important to minimize a heavy emphasis on social control and coercive procedures?

Those in control say:


You can't do that ...

You must do this ...

Kids think and often say as they react overtly or covertly

Oh, you think so!

This is called Psychological Reactance.



>>When people perceive their freedom is threatened, they experience *psychological reactance*, which motivates them to act in ways that can restore the threatened sense of freedom.

>>With prolonged denial of freedom, reactance diminishes and people become amotivated -- feeling helpless and ineffective.

ABOUT SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

A growing research literature is addressing these matters. Below is an excerpt from a recent review which concludes: *Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes, including achievement and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure.*

Engagement is defined in three ways in the research literature:

- *Behavioral engagement* draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out.
- *Emotional engagement* encompasses positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school and is presumed to create ties to an institution and influence willingness to do the work.
- *Cognitive engagement* draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills.

A Key Outcome of Engagement is *Higher Achievement*. The evidence from a variety of studies is summarized to show that engagement positively influences achievement

A Key Outcome of Disengagement is *Dropping Out*. The evidence shows behavioral disengagement is a precursor of dropping out.

Antecedents of Engagement. Antecedents can be organized into:

- *School level factors:* voluntary choice, clear and consistent goals, small size, student participation in school policy and management, opportunities for staff and students to be involved in cooperative endeavors, and academic work that allows for the development of products
- *Classroom Context:* Teacher support, peers, classroom structure, autonomy support, task characteristics
- *Individual Needs:* Need for relatedness, need for autonomy, need for competence

Measurement of Engagement

- *Behavioral Engagement:* conduct, work involvement, participation, persistence, (e.g., completing homework, complying with school rules, absent/tardy, off-task)
- *Emotional Engagement:* self-report related to feelings of frustration, boredom, interest, anger, satisfaction; student-teacher relations; work orientation
- *Cognitive Engagement:* investment in learning, flexible problems solving, independent work styles, coping with perceived failure, preference for challenge and independent mastery, commitment to understanding the work

“School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence” (2004) by J. Fredricks, P. Blumenfeld, & A. Paris. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59-109.

Working with Disengaged Students

Four general strategies for working with disengaged students are:

(1) *Clarifying student perceptions of the problem* – Talk openly with students about why they have become disengaged so that steps can be planned for how to alter the negative perceptions of disengaged students and prevent others from developing such perceptions.

(2) *Reframing school learning* – In the case of those who have disengaged, major reframing in teaching approaches is required so that these students (a) view the teacher as supportive (rather than controlling and indifferent) and (b) perceive content, outcomes, and activity options as personally valuable and obtainable. It is important, for example, to eliminate threatening evaluative measures; reframe content and processes to clarify purpose in terms of real life needs and experiences and underscore how it all builds on previous learning; and clarify why the procedures are expected to be effective – especially those designed to help correct specific problems.

(3) *Renegotiating involvement in school learning* – New and mutual agreements must be developed and evolved over time through conferences with the student and where appropriate including parents. The intent is to affect perceptions of choice, value, and probable outcome. The focus throughout is on clarifying awareness of valued options, enhancing expectations of positive outcomes, and engaging the student in meaningful, ongoing decision making. For the process to be most effective, students should be assisted in sampling new processes and content, options should include valued enrichment opportunities, and there must be provision for reevaluating and modifying decisions as perceptions shift.

(4) Reestablishing and maintaining an appropriate working relationship (e.g., through creating a sense of trust, open communication, providing support and direction as needed).

To maintain re-engagement and prevent disengagement, the above strategies must be pursued using processes and content that:

- minimize threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to valued others
 - maximize such feelings (included here is an emphasis on a school taking steps to enhance public perception that it is a welcoming, caring, safe, and just institution)
 - guide motivated practice (e.g., providing opportunities for meaningful applications and clarifying ways to organize practice)
 - provide continuous information on learning and performance in ways that highlight accomplishments
 - provide opportunities for continued application and generalization (e.g., ways in which students can pursue additional, self-directed learning or can arrange for additional support and direction).
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Prereferral Intervention and Re-engaging Students in Learning

A Prereferral intervention process delineates steps and strategies to guide teachers seeking information about what may be causing a youngster's problems.

Some Steps in Prereferral Intervention are:

1. *Understanding the Problem.*
 - Get the youngster's view of what's wrong.
 - Build a positive working relationship with the youngster and family.
 - Ask about what the youngster doesn't like at school
 - Explore the reasons for dislikes
 - Explore possible causal factors
 - Explore what the youngster and those in the home think can be done to make things better.
 - Discuss some new things the youngster and those in the home would be willing to try.
 2. *Try new strategies in the classroom*
 - Make changes to improve the match between the student's problem and his/her interests and capabilities
 3. If the new strategies don't work, *talk to others* at the school
 4. If necessary, use the *school's referral processes*
 - If necessary include other staff in a special discussion with the youngster exploring reasons for the problem and ways to enhance positive involvement at school and in class.
-

*I suspect that many children
would learn arithmetic,
and learn it better,
if it were illegal.*

John Holt (1989)

Talking with Kids

How to engage youngsters in productive dialogues

1. Create the context for dialogue
 - >Create a private space and a climate where the youngster can feel it is safe to talk
 - >Clarify the value of keeping things confidential
 - >Pursue dialogues when the time, location, and conditions are right.
2. Establish credibility as someone to whom it is worth talking
 - >Respond with empathy, warmth, and nurturance
 - >Show genuine regard and respect
 - >Use active and undistracted listening
3. Facilitate talk: be an active listener
 - >Avoid interruptions
 - >Start slowly, avoid asking questions, and minimize pressure to talk
 - >Encourage the youngster to take the lead

Remember: short periods of silence are part of the process and should be accommodated.

Creating a Caring Context in the Classroom

- *A Learning Community.* Learning is neither limited to what is formally taught nor to time spent in classrooms. It occurs whenever and wherever the learner interacts with the surrounding environment. All facets of the community (including the school) provide learning opportunities.

It is important that teachers establish a classroom atmosphere that encourages mutual support and caring and that creates a sense of community.

Caring has Moral, Social, and Personal Facets

On an ongoing basis, caring is best maintained through use of personalized instruction, regular student conferences, activity fostering social-emotional development, and opportunities for students to attain positive status. A myriad of strategies can contribute to students feeling positively connected to the classroom and school.

Just as with students and their families, school staff need to feel truly welcome and socially supported.

Learner Options to Enhance Motivation and Learning

Learner Options include:

- Content-* Students should be able to explore content that has personal value.
- Expanding options to include a wide sampling of topics that are currently popular with the majority of students (e.g., animals, sports, music)
 - Ask students to identify additional topics they would like included
 - Options the teacher identifies as important and worthwhile.
- Process -* Students should be helped to pursue outcomes and levels of competence that reflect their continuing interest and effort.
- Process outcomes can be expanded by adding procedures that are widely popular (e.g., video or audiovisual materials)
 - by adding those of special interest to specific students, or
 - by adding those newly identified by the teacher.
- Structure-* It is expected that those with the lowest motivation are likely to need the most support and guidance. At the same time, they are likely not to seek help readily. Moreover, those with avoidance motivation tend to react negatively to structure they perceive as used to control them.

Decision Making to Enhance Motivation and Learning

Are students competent to make good decisions?

*Learning to make decisions should be
a basic focus of instruction.*

- **Decisions about participation are the primary foundation upon which all other decisions rest.**

- **Helping students make decisions**
 3. The student must understand the value of making his or her own decisions.
 4. The process must include ways for students to actively sample and select from available options and to propose other when feasible.
 5. Working out problem details should be done as soon as choices are made.
 6. From the moment the student begins an activity, it is important to monitor motivation.

TEACHER: *Yes, Chris, what is it?*

CHRIS: *I don't want to scare you,
but my Dad says if I don't
get better grades someone
is in for a spanking.*

Activity

(1) What is happening in classrooms and around the school that results in students feeling good about:

	themselves	peers	teachers and other staff
<i>Classrooms</i>			
<i>Around the School</i>			

(2) What is happening in classrooms and around the school that results in students feeling negatively about:

	themselves	peers	teachers and other staff
<i>Classrooms</i>			
<i>Around the School</i>			

Intrinsic Motivation – A Few References

From the Center:

- >>Revisiting Learning & Behavior Problems: Moving Schools Forward (book-length)
- >>Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling (a guidebook)
- >>Accompanying Readings & Tools for Enhancing Classroom Approaches for Addressing Barriers to Learning: Classroom-Focused Enabling
- >>Classroom Changes to Enhance and Re-engage Students in Learning (a training tutorial)
- >>Re-engaging Students in Learning (a very brief Quick Training Aid)

A few other general resources:

- *Why we do what we do*. By E.L. Deci with R. Flaste (1995). New York: Penguin Books.
- Also, a second edition of Jere Brophy's book *Motivating Students to Learn* came out this year and might be of interest (published by Erlbaum).
- *Engaging schools: Fostering high school students' motivation to learn* by the National Research Council (2004). D.C.: National Academies Press.
- *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice* (3rd ed.) By D.J. Stipek (1998). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- For both a theoretical foundation and applications to education, psychotherapy, and the workplace, see Ed Deci & Richard Ryan (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.