

The Teacher and Motivation

“I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back”
(Philippians 3:12-14, *MSG*).

Objectives

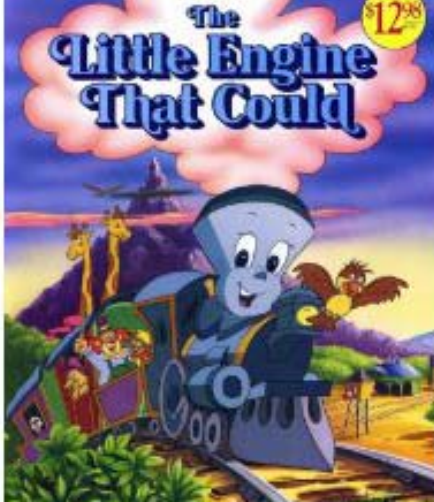
At the conclusion of this lesson the participant will be able to accomplish the following:

1. Develop and utilize motivational strategies in the learning environment that are suitable for his/her cultural context.
2. Identify and contrast the differences in various types of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, and transcendent).
3. Explain what is meant by motivation within the learning environment.
4. Incorporate enthusiasm, encouragement, and empathy within one's teaching practice.
5. Determine and explain seven components in instructor-induced motivation.
6. Analyze how one can develop expertise in a subject area.
7. Integrate real world learning and relevant assignments into lesson planning.
8. List and explain five components of learner-induced motivation.
9. Assess four components of God-induced motivation.

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10. Determine four areas where a student needs to have a positive attitude in order to maximize motivation.

Introduction



The story of the “little engine that could” has been told numerous times for more than a century. It dates back to a Sunday school publication in 1906 and was titled, “Thinking One Can.” A stranded train is unable to locate an engine that is willing to take it over tricky terrain to its destination. The little blue engine is willing to try. In the face of a seemingly impossible task he constantly repeats, “I think I can. I think I can.”

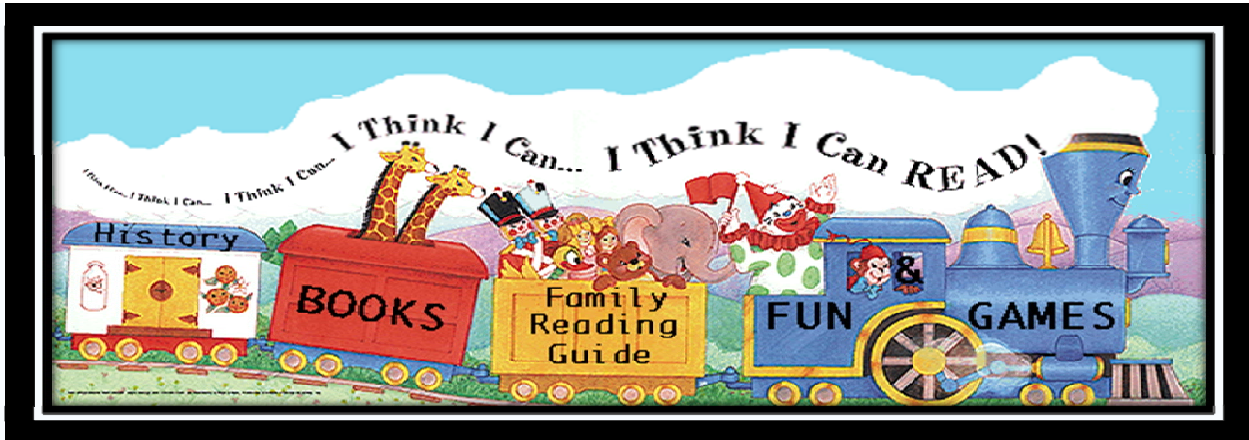
An early version of the story goes as follows;

A little railroad engine...was employed about a station yard for such work as it was built for, pulling a few cars on and off the switches. One morning it was waiting for the next call when a long train of freight-cars asked a large engine in the roundhouse to take it over the hill ‘I can’t; that is too much a pull for me,’ said the great engine built for hard work. Then the train asked another engine, and another, only to hear excuses and be refused. In desperation, the train asked the little switch engine, to draw it up the grade and down on the other side. ‘I think I can,’ puffed the little locomotive, and put itself in front of the great heavy train. As it went on the little engine kept bravely puffing faster and faster, ‘I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.’

As it neared the top of the grade, which had so discouraged the larger engines, it went more slowly. However, it still kept saying, ‘I--think--I--can, I--think--I--can.’ It reached the top by drawing out bravery and then went on down the grade, congratulating itself by saying, ‘I thought I could, I thought I could.’ (Wikipedia)

Equally tricky is the terrain of taking a student from “I think I can” to “I knew I could!”

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Motivation in and out of the Classroom

Motivation thrives on the desire or ambition to achieve a goal, combined with the energy and enthusiasm to work toward it. It is needed to accomplish anything in life. Without it, one droops and drops out at the first hint of difficulty. Occasionally you hear someone complain, “I lost my motivation.” Good news! If motivation can be lost, it can also be found. In the educational environment, motivation can be stimulated, positively or negatively, by the instructor and/or the learner(s). In theological education we also identify transcendent motivation. God has a purpose and plan for His people to reach their potential. Motivation can be induced or inspired from within, without, and/or above.

Instructor-induced Motivation: Brought forth from without. “It is difficult for adults to dislike a subject in which they are successful. Conversely, it is rare to find adults who really like a subject in which they are unsuccessful” (Galbraith 2004, 157). The key is to find tangible ways that assist learners in achieving success. Collaboration of the minds is crucial. This is usually achieved through teacher-student discourse, discussion, or dialogue. The instructor can’t control a student’s motivation but can certainly help, hinder, or hijack it.

“The teacher is primarily a stimulator and motivator...not the player, but the coach who excites and directs the players. The learner is primarily an investigator, discoverer, and a doer” (Hendricks 1987, 37). Some of the components that assist an instructor in becoming a better motivator follow:

<p>Expertise</p>	<p>Develop excellence in subject material. Students are motivated to learning from someone who actually knows what he is talking about. Read. Study. Attend a seminar. Take a distance education course. Specialize. One option is to</p>
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	<p>teach according to blocks. For example, in the theological education setting, the same instructor could be responsible for courses in evangelism, missions, and church planting. They are all similar and would allow the instructor to master the general content, in line with his own ministerial gifting.</p>
<p>Enthusiasm</p>	<p>Make the course come alive. Bring energy into the classroom. It is contagious or infectious. Pass it on. It causes a ripple effect. If the subject is boring to the teacher, it will be boring to the student. Send a message that the curriculum is great. Be excited. Place something in each lecture one is personally excited about. Employ intonation, eye contact, or simply move around the classroom. Incorporate humor, surprise, challenge, and suspense. Generate the atmosphere for learning. Avoid teaching subjects outside the sphere of one's interests. One possibility is to provide teaching staff with a list of available subjects and have them assess them on a scale of one to five, of how they like the course.</p> <p>"Some of the most memorable learning experiences the writer has had involved outstanding lecturers who generated a passion and contagious enthusiasm for the subject matter. These lectures had the personality, heart and soul of the lecturers, themselves" (Galbraith 2004, 233).</p>
<p>Encourage</p>	<p>Praise provides effective reinforcement. Should be perceived as credible, believable and sincere (Yount 1996, 281-283). Stimulate interest. Capitalize on student's innate inclination to learn. Students want to grow. Approval is a strong motivator.</p>
<p>Engage</p>	<p>Draw the student into the learning environment. Provide choices and reasons for engaging in activities. Use discussion, debate, questions;</p>

	whatever will hook the student into course content. Use learner concerns to develop teaching.
Empathy	Students are attracted to instructors and learning environments where they feel cared for. The old saying goes, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” The Hawthorne Effect concerned a study where management made improvements to the work environment. Workers felt they were receiving special attention and were valued. This boosted their output (Marshall).
Evaluate	Learners must feel they are making progress. There are few things more quickly motivating than, “This is going to be on the test.” Mention that and notebooks fly open and pens spring into action. When testing, give feedback as quickly as possible.
Effort	Prepare. Be relevant. Plan in advance. Organize; motivation will be enhanced. Incorporate motivation planning into course development. If the course means something to the instructor, it will mean something to the student. Project what motivates the instructor to study the course. Some things are caught more than taught.
Experience	Taking courses from someone with noteworthy experience in the subject matter could be motivational. Beyond that, bring the life experiences of students into the classroom environment. Make sure teaching involves “real-world learning” that is relevant, enabling the student to make the connection to the real world, knowing that students typically only learn what they can use (Cromley 2000, 172-178). Endeavor to select topics students are interested in. Teaching should be valid, valuable, and value added. Integrate activities that coincide with student and school values.
Express/Explain	Give the rationale for assignments. Provide understanding that the learning activity is something that is meaningful rather than merely

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	busy work. Express the value of the course. Keep teaching simple and clear. Avoid information overload since it hinders motivation. Interaction is pivotal to motivating learning. Working with other students, not only is collaborative or cooperative in nature, but also increases learning.
Enhance	Use learner’s preferred learning style to increase learning. This is not to the detriment or omission of the best teaching styles for the subject matter.

John Blaydes once said, “The rewards of teaching come from the teachers’ innate belief that every day they have the opportunity to enrich the lives of their students by igniting the human spirit, dignifying the human experience, and inspiring human excellence” (Cardelle-Elawar 2007). This, coupled with the Holy Spirit’s empowerment produces a dynamic force in the classroom.

Learner-induced Motivation: Called forth from within. It is the first day of class. Students file into the classroom. They toss their books on well-worn tables. The teacher clears his throat while distributing his three-page syllabus, and announces, “Welcome, to Hermeneutics 101.” Eyes turn and minds wonder, “Herman who?” Will the desk-occupants be eager learners? Will they succeed? The teacher may have prepared his finest. However, success or failure is largely up to the student. This depends on:

Diagnosis	Has the student determined a need for learning the subject?
Energy	Does the student possess energy, intensity, and vitality to learn?
Desire	Does the student have a desire to learn in this particular field? Without it, all other motivational strategies will be futile and fruitless. The aspiration to grow, learn, and master the subject is pivotal.
Course significance	Is this subject relevant? Continued motivation throughout the course is in direct correlation to the response.
Goal-setting	Does this course assist in achieving one’s personal goals? Such goals provide direction and are indicators of attention.
Values	Is the subject aligned with the student’s values? According to the Expectancy-Value Theory a student will direct attention towards activities he

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	values.
Course worth	Is the content worth the investment of time and energy? Is it usable in one’s future?
Potential success or failure	According to the Attribution Theory, a student will affix an explanation for unexpected outcomes, probable causes, and how it affects one’s success or failure. This is not necessarily an indicator of reality, but perception. Regardless, a student that says, “I will never understand this!” will be difficult to encourage.
Willingness and readiness	Is the student willing to learn? Is he ready to learn? Is he able to learn? Motivation is about effort and willingness. Learning is most effective when the student is ready to learn; when he wants to know something (Weller 2005).
Positive attitude	Does the learner have a positive attitude toward the subject matter, the instructor, themselves, and the learning environment? A negative feeling toward any of these could deter motivation and hinder learning (Issler and Habermas 1994, 105).
Culture	Individual motivation is inseparable from culture (Galbraith, 142). In order to motivate students within a given culture one must first understand the cultural influences on behavior. This requires “cultural sensitivity” (Harris and Moran 1996, 9). Motivational strategies effective in one culture are not necessarily equally applicable to another. An instructor must quickly determine if the culture is self-focused or group-focused (Earley and Erez 1997, 68). Everyone is motivated by a sense of self-worth. Identify cultural motives and values that shape self-worth and well-being.

Generally speaking, motivation from within is longer lasting than external motivation.

God-induced Motivation: Sent forth from above. This author’s missionary-kid-daughter was raised in West Africa from the time she was seven-weeks-old until she was nineteen. Leaving the memorable shelter and support system of a loving family and field, to step into the unfamiliar of North American life and schooling, she reflects:

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I arrived at Indiana Bible College today....I don't like it all that much, but I don't hate it either, I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing. And I'm doing it by choice. (This, by the way, is a good feeling.) God has so completely constructed my way to this school, the road signs are unmistakable, and the effects of His hand are visible in my life....I am absolutely, positively where I'm supposed to be. I'm in a campus full of teachers dedicated to helping students do nothing more than know and understand God better and students who are dedicated to doing just that. (Poitras 2008)

Eric Lidell, gold medal sprinter in the 1924 Olympics once said, "I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast. And when I run I feel His pleasure." He was speaking out of a clear direction of God's purpose in his life. The table that follows highlights six components of God-induced motivation:

Pleasing God	Ecclesiastes 12:13; Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4.
Hearing His Voice	John 10:3-5.
Obedying His Word	Psalms 119:99; 2 Timothy 2:15.
Doing His Will	Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 1:9-10; John 4:34-35; John 9:4.
Pursuing His Commission	Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15, 20; Luke 24:47-49; 2 Timothy 2:2.
Following His Plan	Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalms 37:23; Psalms 119:105; Jeremiah 29:11.

Conclusion

Stepping into a class on the first day we want our students to look over the syllabus or listen to the introductory lecture and say, "I think I can. I know I can!" That innate inclination coupled with the instructor's motivational skills and God's direction will result in the student finally and triumphantly reporting, "I thought I could. I knew I could!"

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GRAPHICS

The first picture is from Amazon.com. The second engine design is from Platt & Munk Publishers, a member of Penguin Books for Young Readers.

Lesson in Review

1. What is motivation? _____

2. Within the theological school, how can motivation best be stimulated? _____

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3. Explain the difference between the three types of motivation mentioned in this lesson? _____

4. According to Howard Hendricks, what is the role of the teacher? _____

5. List two ways an instructor can develop expertise in his subject matter. _____

6. How can a teacher project enthusiasm in the classroom? _____

7. According to Galbraith, what are some of the most memorable learning experiences? _____

8. How should praise be perceived by the learner? _____

9. Why is it important for the instructor to be enthusiastic? _____

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10. Why is caring or showing empathy important in the learning environment? _____

11. Explain briefly what is meant by the Hawthorne Effect. _____

12. What is the ripple effect as it is applicable to this lesson? _____

13. What is “real-world” learning? _____

14. What are three ways teachers enrich the lives of their students (according to John Blaydes)?

15. Why is the learner’s desire so important in motivation? _____

16. Why are goals so important in motivation? _____

17. List and briefly explain five components of learner-induced motivation. _____

18. Briefly comment on the Attribution Theory. _____

19. What is the Expectancy-Value Theory? _____

20. Express one way we can tell that a student is ready to learn. _____

21. A student should have a positive attitude in what four areas (when it comes to motivation)?

22. What is needed in order for an instructor to motivate students in a cultural sense? _____

23. List four components of God-induced motivation. _____
