

Motivation

Slide 1	Predicting and explaining why people engage in the learning process is a major issue in educational psychology. This presentation will provide a brief overview of some of the major issues involved in the study of motivation. My name is Bill Huitt and I am Professor Emeritus at Valdosta State University and Adjunct Professor at Capella University.
Slide 2	There are a number of different ways to define motivation, but the most common elements are that it is
Slide 3	an internal state or condition
Slide 4	that activates or energizes behavior
Slide 5	and provides a direction for that behavior
Slide 6	as well as its persistence over time. What differentiates motivation from other psychological concepts such as thinking, feeling, or intuiting is that it is goal-oriented and involves action of some sort. That action might be internal such as involved in solving a perplexing challenge or overt such as running a race. Different theorists have conflicting ideas on what counts as behavior.
Slide 7	However, one concept that is widely accepted is known as the Yerkes-Dodson law that states that there is an optimal level of motivation. Too little and behavior does not get started or too much and performance becomes impaired. This is an important issue when guiding a group of learners in that whatever you do will likely be too little stimulation for some and too much for others. An educator has to try to address the majority in the middle and then provide extra support for those who might become overwhelmed and extra motivation for those who do not have enough.
Slide 8	Motivation as it applies to the learning process is grounded in many of the learning and developmental theories we have discussed previously. They can be categorized as either external, as in the case of operant conditioning, or internal, as in the case of cognitive, affective, and conative theories, or both as in the case of social cognition.

Slide 9	Remember that operant conditioning researchers propose that all behavior is under the control of consequences. Proponents of this approach look only at external stimuli for explanations of behavior change.
Slide 10	As shown in the graphic there are a variety of internal sources of motivation.
Slide 11	Those who use biology as an explanation for motivation point to explanations such as hunger, thirst, or a focus on increasing or decreasing arousal,
Slide 12	while those who focus on cognition point to people attempting to understand the world around them, or solve challenges or problems, or perhaps, in the case of Piagetian theorists, to maintain an equilibrium between one's mental representations and the demands of the environment.
Slide 13	Those researchers who focus on affect and emotions point to the importance of increasing pleasant or positive feelings such as happiness or joy or decreasing or avoiding unpleasant feelings such as anxiety or depression or perhaps to the importance of values.
Slide 14	Those researchers who focus on human agency or conation point to the importance of a person's dreams for a better life or specific desired goals or perhaps the significance of displaying mastery in an area such as academics or sports, while
Slide 15	those researchers who focus on the spiritual domain point to the importance of living a life of meaning and purpose.
Slide 16	And, as previously mentioned, social cognitive researchers point to the interactions among these different motives as people interpret their thoughts and feelings when they observe models or are involved in social situations.
Slide 17	There are some important cognitive theories that one is likely to encounter when studying motivation.

Slide 18	<p>One is Bernard Weiner's (winner) attribution theory. This theory states that people will create explanations for performance based on two dimensions: internal - external and no control - control. Those who use an internal and no control attribution will say they were successful because they had a high level of ability or unsuccessful because they had a low level. Likewise, those who use an external and control attribution would say that the teacher gave them an easy task if they were successful or a task that was too difficult if they were unsuccessful.</p>
Slide 19	<p>Researchers have shown that the preferred option is for the learner to use effort as the explanation for success or failure because it is under that control of the learner and therefore can be changed by the learner. Parents and teachers can encourage the use of this attribution by always referring to this explanation as a reason for success or failure. This helps the learner develop what Carol Dweck discussed as a growth mindset.</p>
Slide 20	<p>A related theory is Victor Vroom's expectancy theory. Vroom proposed there are three elements involved in motivation. The first is the individual's expectation for successful completion of the specific task. The second is the connection between success on the task and the overall reward or goal to which the task is connected. This is referred to as the instrumentality of the task. The third element is the value placed on the person's goal. Vroom proposed that these elements form an equation where each is multiplied by the others. Therefore, a zero or low rating for any single element will result in no or low motivation. These two theories can be quite useful when talking with learners about their goals and expectations and connecting the learning tasks to those that are mentioned by the learner.</p>
Slide 21	<p>A third cognitive approach is provided by Jean Piaget who described the importance of the individual using or creating new mental structures to meet the demands of the environment. From this perspective the teacher can create motivation by placing learners in situations that do not match the knowledge or skills the learner has already acquired. This harbors back to the Yerkes-Dodson law discussed previously: too little or too much disequilibrium will not result in optimal motivation.</p>
Slide 22	<p>A humanistic theory one encounters when studying motivation is provided by Abraham Maslow and his theory of human needs. He proposed there is a hierarchy of needs that begin with physiological needs and then proceeds to needs for safety, belongingness, and esteem. These have been labeled deficiency needs. Maslow's original hierarchy included one growth need that he labeled self-actualization. Others noted that the lowest levels of self-actualization included the need to know and to understand and a need for aesthetics or beauty. Maslow later added the growth need of self-transcendence or a concern for the growth of others to his hierarchy. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of empirical support for its efficacy although it is very popular because of its holistic nature.</p>

Slide 23	There are a number of theories that combine elements but are not hierarchical. One of the most well-known is McClelland's theory of motivation which includes
Slide 24	a need for achievement, success, or mastery,
Slide 25	a need for affiliation or interpersonal connections, and
Slide 26	a need for power, authority, or control. This theory is used extensively in organizational psychology.
Slide 27	A similar theory is Edward Deci (desi) and Richard Ryan's self-determination theory. These researchers proposed that human beings have three inherent growth needs:
Slide 28	a need for autonomy or independence,
Slide 29	a need for competence or mastery, and
Slide 30	a need for relatedness or affiliation.
Slide 31	A theory that is used widely in educational psychology is goal theory which posits four types of goals:
Slide 32	achievement or performance goals where the objective is to look good to others or to earn an external reward such as a good grade,
Slide 33	learning or mastery goals where the objective is to demonstrate competence in acquiring knowledge or skill,
Slide 34	social goals where the focus is on belonging to, or fitting in with a group, or perhaps being seen as important by members of a group,

Slide 35	and work avoidance goals where the focus is on expending as little effort as is possible. For the most part, research has shown that learners with mastery goals will perform better in academic settings, but most people use all four types of goals in different situations.
Slide 36	A popular theory that is also used in organizational psychology is Daniel Pink's drive theory. He proposed three primary human needs:
Slide 37	a need for autonomy or independence,
Slide 38	a need for mastery or competence, and
Slide 39	a need for personal meaning and purpose in one's life.
Slide 40	A theory that is currently gaining in popularity is Martin Seligman's flourishing theory. It is comprised of five elements:
Slide 41	a need for positive emotions.
Slide 42	a need for engagement or flow,
Slide 43	a need for positive relationships or affiliations,
Slide 44	a need for meaning and purpose in one's life, and
Slide 45	a need for achievement or mastery.
Slide 46	Seligman refers to this theory as the PERMA theory of human flourishing.
Slide 47	A recent addition to a holistic view of motivation is Beatriz Valderrama's Wheel of Motives.
Slide 48	A foundational concept for her theory is that people are motivated to approach ideas, people, or objects they identify as pleasant and avoid or move away from those they identify as aversive.

Slide 49	She hypothesized ten motives: five that involve aspects people might be more likely to approach and five involve aspects that focus on avoidance.
Slide 50	The five motives she labels as approach motives are achievement, exploration, contribution, autonomy, and power. The motives of achievement, autonomy, and power were seen in many of the previously presented theories, while exploration might be considered similar to a need for arousal, and contribution might be seen as similar to Maslow's need for self-transcendence.
Slide 51	The avoidance needs are displayed as being in tension to the five approach motives. Hedonism or sensual pleasure is in tension with achievement and effort to develop mastery, while security is seen as being in tension with exploration. Conservation is seen as being in tension with contribution and affiliation is seen as being in tension with autonomy. Finally, cooperation is seen as being in tension with power or control. Valderrama built her framework as a useful aide in organizational psychology, but I believe this will be equally useful in educational psychology as it provides a way to think about developing profiles for learners and situations as educators develop activities that will motivate learners.
Slide 52	In summary,
Slide 53	motivation theorists and researchers propose that all behavior is motivated. That is, it is goal-oriented even if the individual is not aware of what exactly what that goal might be.
Slide 54	There is no single factor or variable that can be used to explain motivation
Slide 55	and there is no single theory that is useful for all people in all situations. Rather parents and educators must use multiple theories
Slide 56	to develop a profile that might predict and explain what motivates individuals and how that might change in specific situations.
Slide 57	So, what does all of this mean for classroom motivation?

Slide 58	<p>The first issue to consider is what might be done to motivate those who are externally motivated. Several suggestions include making sure that clear expectations for success have been provided and understood by the learners, that teachers provide corrective feedback as quickly as possible both during and after learners have engaged in the learning process, that teachers provide rewards that are considered valuable to the learners and these are made readily available, especially at the beginning of the learning experience, that learners are provided the opportunity to observe models demonstrating mastery performances, and teachers consistently provide scaffolding or extra assistance during the learning process.</p>
Slide 59	<p>At the same time, educators must use methods that promote intrinsic motivation and self-regulation. Some suggestions include becoming aware of and attempting to meet learners' needs, providing explanations of the relatively immediate importance of the present learning activity, allowing learners to make some selections about topics or learning activities, using demonstrations or engaging in activities that create curiosity, using elements of gaming such as the awarding of badges for demonstrating mastery or engaging in competition among teams, helping the students set personal learning goals, and helping them to develop and monitor an action plan for attaining those goals. A thorough study of the motivational theories, research, and practices can be useful for both educators and learners alike.</p>
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