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Engaging and Motivating College Students

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Questions we will explore ...

- How can we actively engage students in learning?
- How can we create positive classroom dynamics?



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*Definition of “Learner-Centered”:
(American Psychological Association)*

The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners with a focus on learning — how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners.



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*Definitions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
(Deci/ Csikszentmihalyi/ Lepper)*

- Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in activities for its own sake, such as out of curiosity or interest.
- Extrinsic motivation refers to engaging in activities to acquire some type of reward, such as good grades or a positive evaluation.



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Sources of intrinsic motivation

(Lepper & Hodell)

- Challenge
- Curiosity
- Autonomy
- Fantasy



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Achievement goal theory (Dweck/Ames)

Learning/mastery goals = primary focus is on learning or mastering the material

Performance goals = primary focus is on the *outcome* of learning (demonstrate high ability or avoid demonstrating low ability)



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Revised goal theory (Elliot/Pintrich)

- Mastery approach
- Mastery avoidance (less research has been done on this goal)
- Performance approach
- Performance avoidance



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Mastery approach goals

- I want to learn as much as possible from this class.
- It is important for me to understand the content of this course as thoroughly as possible.



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Mastery avoidance goals

- Sometimes I am afraid that I may not understand the content of this class as thoroughly as I'd like.
- I worry that I may not learn all that I possibly could in this class.



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Mastery avoidance goals: Counterintuitive?

Yes and no. The definition of mastery implies an approach tendency. Yet, there are people who want to avoid doing something wrong—not because they are worried about how they will compare to their peers—but because they have high standards for themselves and worry that they may not be able to live up to these standards.



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Performance approach goals

- My goal in this class is to get a better grade than most of the other students.
- It is important for me to do well compared to others in this class.



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Performance avoidance goals

- I just want to avoid doing poorly in this class.
- My fear of performing poorly in this class is often what motivates me.



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TARGET framework (Ames)

Task

Authority

Recognition

Grouping

Evaluation

Time



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Using the TARGET framework, work with your colleagues to generate a list of strategies that would help increase students' motivation to learn.



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Books to explore

- Brophy, *Motivating Students to Learn*
- Pintrich & Schunk, *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications*
- Stipek, *Motivation to learn: From theory to practice*
- Svinicki, *Learning and motivation in the postsecondary classroom*