

Self-Determination

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Definition of Self-Determination

The following definition of self-determination was offered by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. It defines three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness that must be met for humans to develop. Retrieved from: "<http://www.learning-theories.com/self-determination-theory-deci-and-ryan.html>."

Self-Determination

- **“Self-Determination Theory is a theory of motivation and personality that addresses three universal, innate and psychological needs: competency, autonomy and psychological relatedness.”**
- **People grow optimally when these three needs are met.**
- **The theory addresses issues of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**

The theory discusses three psychological needs that we all need to have fulfilled to be engaged learners who are intrinsically motivated to achieve. These are critical concepts in education in that they suggest that students be given choices and allowed to share in designing and pursuing

their learning goals. Feeling autonomous builds one's sense of competence and facilitates the process by which students assume ownership of their own learning. We also have a need to belong, to be in relation with others. Learning environments, therefore, should be constructed so that it provide students with opportunities to make personal decisions in the context of social interaction and feel competent in their learning processes and with their learning outcomes.

Self-Determination is Fundamental to a CBA

If counselors are able to promote students' internalization of motivation by helping them recognize the value of their school learning and helping them develop a positive future identity into which the academic learning is integrated, higher levels of self-motivated work to master the academic material and consequently higher levels of academic achievement will result. School counselors can help students self-reflect on their sense of competence, autonomy and relatedness and what they can do to improve in each of these areas. Counselors can guide students in figuring out if they feel capable of achieving and are achieving the competencies articulated in the CBA standard and competency statements. They can help students examine the types of choices they make related to their learning and how their decision making processes can be improved. And counselors can create learning opportunities that require developing relationships and belonging to a team and/or the school community.

Additional Resources Related to Self-Determination

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and

articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

Videos

Dr. Brett Jones discusses two sub-theories of self-determination theory: cognitive evaluation theory (explains how competence, autonomy, and relatedness lead to intrinsic motivation) and organismic integration theory (which describes different types of regulations and how things come to be valued). The video discusses implications for teachers in helping students experience competence, autonomy and relatedness. These ideas are highly applicable to school counselors as well.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v84XxJkqybU>.

Websites

This is a Self-Determination Theory (SDT) website that lists numerous scholarly articles related to SDT, some of them discussing its relevance to education. This is a wealth of information from leaders in the field of self-determination theory. The website also contains SDT-related questionnaires which, though copyrighted, you can use as long as you register with the website and agree to use them only for academic research. Commercial use is forbidden.

<http://selfdeterminationtheory.org/domains/education-domain/>

A brief summary of Self-Determination Theory originated by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. Defines three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness.

<http://www.learning-theories.com/self-determination-theory-deci-and-ryan.html>

Books

Why We Do What We Do: Understanding Self-Motivation (1996) by Edward L. Deci and Richard Flaste. Penguin Books.