

“Motivation” Overview

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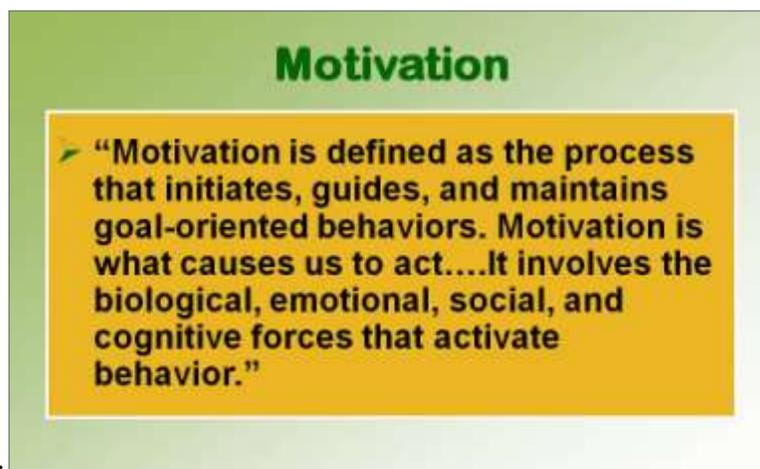
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Definition of Motivation

Motivation is essential to the learning process. Highly motivated learners have a far better chance of succeeding in school and learning at their highest potential. The following definition is offered, retrieved from: <http://psychology.about.com/od/mindex/g/motivation-definition.htm>



Motivation is one of the central constructs used to understand human behavior. Whether in education or business or politics or sports or any other realm in which humans act, at one time or another we all refer to the term motivation to describe our own or other people’s behavior. In

education we assign labels like “highly-motivated” or “unmotivated” or “self-motivated” in an attempt to describe why students behave the way they do when challenged to learn.

A CBA focuses on motivation because of its importance in understanding how students learn and develop, and our understanding of how students approach required learning tasks and successfully complete them. Because motivation is so strongly related to student achievement, self-efficacy and well-being, being knowledgeable about motivation and how it impacts students’ thinking, emotions and behavior are essential to effective school counselor practice. The ability to recognize and know how to respond to motivational issues in students is a critical function in the role of professional school counselors.

Motivation Sub-Constructs

This section will provide a general description of Motivation as it relates to student learning. The discussion will focus on five sub-constructs associated with the Motivation construct.



We will look at why each of these sub-constructs is important as a critical focus in a CBA school counseling programs and why knowledge and use of these sub-constructs should be evident in school counselor practice.

Simply Stated

As a way of getting started, let’s define each of the sub-constructs associated with motivation in simple terms.

- **Achievement Motivation:** Humans have an innate drive to achieve, to accomplish something significant in their lives. A CBA focuses on how school counselors can help students clearly articulate what they want to achieve, help them plan to achieve it, implement and monitor their progress, evaluate the results and use the results to inform their next steps.
- **Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation:** Individuals are intrinsically motivated to do things simply because we enjoy doing them, without any external factors influencing our decisions to act. Individuals are extrinsically motivated to do things because we get something from it (e.g., a reward or praise or because of the fear of consequences for failing to achieve what is

expected of us). We are often extrinsically motivated because someone else has defined it as something that is expected of us and because there are consequences to doing or not doing it. A CBA encourages students to identify their intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, recognize the impact these motivators have on their learning, and act to improve and better control these motivational influences.

- **Self-Determination:** Individuals need to understand that we have a choice to think and behave based on our own volition. The right to self-determination can be seen in a variety of contexts (e.g., individual, social, political).
- **Possible Selves:** An integral part of the learning process is envisioning who we might be and what we might be doing in the future. These possible selves help provide direction for our lives and enable us to set goals that direct our thinking, behavior and actions. A CBA provides opportunities to students to explore their possible selves, learn what is required to become them, and plan for how they will realize their possible future selves.
- **Self-Efficacy:** This involves the belief individuals have in their ability to successfully complete specific tasks. This is important in education as students achieve at higher levels the more they believe in their ability complete the tasks which allow them to achieve at the higher levels. A CBA helps students understand the importance of self-efficacy, examine how strongly they believe in their ability to accomplish particular learning tasks, and learn effective strategies for building their confidence and successfully completing what is required to succeed.

Motivation is Fundamental to a CBA

Motivation is defined as the forces that compel action and direct the behavior of individuals. A critical function of school counselors and school counseling programs is to help students understand their personal motivators and to learn how to improve their motivation in order to achieve at their highest potential in school and in life.

Helping students understand their motivation and motivational patterns, cultivate their intrinsic interests, create a vivid vision of their possible futures, see how their immediate choices and behavior relate to their long term vision, and help them understand the importance of believing in their own ability to achieve and succeed is clearly an important part of the work of school counselors. Students who are able to do these things are much more likely to achieve and succeed than those students who cannot.

Two important aspects of motivation are noted. The first is that it is a force, something that compels us to act. Motivation is like getting in a car, turning on the ignition and shifting it into gear. The car begins to move and the speed of the car can be controlled by the driver. The second aspect is that motivation provides direction. There is a sense of purpose for driving in a specific direction and reaching a pre-selected destination. Highly-motivated students are able to control and manage these processes and stay focused on reaching their destinations without getting distracted or lost.

In this sense, motivation is future-oriented (over time taking us to someplace different than where we began) and goal-oriented (we are driving toward a result or goal we want to achieve). School counselors help students become more motivated by helping them get their ignition

started, motor running, guided by a sense of direction and confident that they will reach their destination and accomplish what they set out to accomplish.

A CBA is results-based, therefore motivation is a fundamental component in helping students learn and succeed in accomplishing the results they set out of achieve. Student motivation is not a static phenomenon, but a dynamic process that increasingly engages students in setting and achieving their goals. School counselors, along with other adults in the school community, serve as guides to help students become excited about and skilled in navigating their journey along the learning pathways of school and life.

Additional Resources Related to Motivation

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

This video by Dr. Brett Jones is on “The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation” See the link to his website in the “Website” section below. Dr. Jones is a valuable and highly informative resource on motivation and other topics central to a CBA.

<https://youtu.be/DGwJ012q5M0>

Websites

“The MUSIC Model of Academic Motivation,” by Dr. Brett Jones, provides a substantive approach to looking at motivation in students and how to improve their motivational structures. It describes five instructional components that are needed to motivate students: a) eMpowerment, b) Usefulness, c) Success, d) Interest and e) Caring. This website is filled with useful information, video presentations and resources to help you figure out how to approach motivational issues with your students. The website contains a “MUSIC Theory Assessment Instrument” to use with your students along with a guide on administering the survey, interpreting the data and using the results to help your students become more motivated. As websites go, this one is excellent and highly recommended because of its clarity in presenting complex ideas and showing how they impact student learning.

<http://www.themusicmodel.com/>.

“Motivation and Classroom Learning.” This resource is a chapter which addresses topics like how to help students interpret their classroom setbacks and elicit renewed effort, teacher comments to students that lower their motivation to succeed, learning strategies to improve students’ motivation, and increasing students’ desire to learn what they are being taught. Many key terms are also defined.

<http://ows.edb.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/users/borichgd/book/chapter7.pdf>

This website is from the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University. The site contains many practical suggestions of how to address the problem of Students seeing little value in their course or its content.

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/solveproblem/strat-lackmotivation/lackmotivation-01.html>.

“Synthesis of Research on Strategies for Motivating Students to Learn.” This is an article by Jere Brophy in *Educational Leadership* that discusses how students are more likely to want to learn when they appreciate the value of their classroom experiences and believe that applying reasonable effort will result in success.

http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198710_brophy.pdf.

Book

Motivating Students by Design: Practical Strategies for Professors (2015) by Dr. Brett D. Jones. Printed by CreateSpace. This book provides practical research-based strategies for motivating students with examples. Although written for professors, it is very useful information for school counselors.

The Motivated Brain: Improving Student Attention, Engagement, and Perseverance by Gayle Gregory and Martha Kaufeldt. ASCD, 2015. Brain research is an increasingly important field

that informs our understanding the impact of the brain on student learning and development. This is a new book that can help introduce you to how our brain impacts student motivation.

Links to the Motivation Sub-Constructs

Now that you have a general sense of the importance of Motivation to student learning and why it is fundamental to a CBA, it is time to explore the five sub-constructs associated with the Motivation construct. Each sub-construct has its own webpage and can be accessed via the hyperlinks in the Sidebar to your left. Sub-construct links follow the “Motivation” Overview link in the following order:

- Achievement Motivation
- Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
- Self-Determination
- Possible Selves
- Self-Efficacy

Links to all Motivation webpages will appear in the Sidebar as long as you are within the “Develop a CBA” module. “PDF” versions of all Motivation webpages can be accessed from within the respective webpage, and in the “Free Resources” module.