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Role of Motivation and Self Efficacy in Student Learning

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Abstract
Important motivational factors that influence learning are goals, outcome expectations, values and self-efficacy. Goals enhance learning through their effects on perceived progress, self efficacy and self evaluation. As we keep progressing, it raises our perception of self efficacy and sustains motivation. Goals that have specificity, proximity and difficulty level, enhance self-perception and motivation, as do the self set goals for which people feel committed. Outcome expectations affect learning and motivation because people work hard to achieve desired outcomes and avoid any effort for undesirable ones. People also act in consonance with their values, and prefer to work for those outcomes that can bring satisfaction to them. This paper looks into the motivational processes that influence student learning.

Keywords: Goals, Outcome expectations, Values, Self-efficacy.

Introduction
Motivation has a positive correlation with learning. It affects an individual's energy levels, determines the amount of persistence in striving for achieving the goals and affects the sense of self-efficacy in personal competence. Self-efficacy stresses that our actions and expectation of success depend on how deep the interactions between personal thoughts and a given task are. Key motivational factors that influence learning are goals, values and expectations. People set goals for learning and assessing their progress against the pre-set goals. Values reflect what people find self-satisfying for reaching their goals. Highly motivated students pay greater attention to their learning processes, displaying faster progress as compared to their unmotivated peers. They also put higher amount of effort to learn with persistence. This leads them to a higher level of satisfaction and positive effects on future endeavours. Clearly, motivational processes play an important role in sustaining students' efforts for self regulating learning.

Discussion
People persist for longer durations while doing goal setting and self valuation of the progress. A goal reflects one's purpose in life (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goal setting involves establishing a clear objective and the process of achieving it (Locke et al., 1981). The goals can be set up by people themselves or they can be established by others, such as parents, teachers, supervisors etc (Schunk, 2001). Tolman's (1951, 1951) theory of *purposive behaviourism* contends that learning is more than strengthening of responses to stimuli, since all behaviour is goal directed. It is either getting-on to a goal or getting-from a specific goal object (Tolman, 1932). Students do not study because they have been reinforced for studying in the past for getting good grades. Instead, studying is a means to reach the intermediate goals, which, in turn, enhances the likelihood of going to the university. Initially, people have to be committed to attain their goals. Then they need positive self-evaluation of progress by raising their own self-efficacy which could sustain motivation. Goals motivate people to make extra effort necessary to meet the demands of the task and to persist with it over time (Locke & Latham, 2002). Goals direct people towards task features, behaviours to be performed and potential outcomes. They give a 'tunnel vision' for focus which helps the effectiveness of their approach that could raise performance.

Goals by themselves, are not enough to enhance learning and motivation. Rather, the attributes of specificity, proximity and difficulty determine self-efficacy, motivation and learning. Students find daily goals easier to attain as compared with the weekly goals. For young children, distant goals do not lead to any motivation, they prefer to see them on immediate basis. Gradually, teachers can set weekly goals after the students have learnt how to achieve the daily goals. Challenging but attainable goals raise motivation and self-efficacy better than easy or hard goals. Specific goals (eg, learn ten new words today for English dictation) are better than general goals (eg, do your best) for the students for incorporating specific standards of performance (Locke & Latham, 1990). Specific goals help in establishing the quantum of effort that would be needed to achieve the goals and make it easier to promote self-efficacy (Bandura, 1988). Goals can be futuristic (Schunk, 2001) or proximal. Short-term goals are achieved quickly leading to further motivation, as compared to the temporarily distant long-term goals (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Children have short-term frames of reference and are not fully capable of representing distant outcomes in their thought process. In schools, teachers plan lessons for the year, keeping in mind the goals that will be attained at the session end but daily lesson plans have short term goals.

Goal difficulty which affects the task proficiency has an impact on motivation. The effort people will expend to attain the goal depends on the proficiency level they have. Individuals expend greater effort for achieving a difficult goal as compared with an easy one (Locke & Latham, 2002). However, if the skills needed for reaching the goal are missing, then difficulty level of goal will have no effect. People will neither commit to attempting the goal nor work whole-heartedly (Schunk, 2001). Such students need a lot of encouragement from the teachers and regular feedback from them. Allowing students to set their goals themselves enhances self-efficacy because there will be a higher level of commitment (Schunk, 1985). If a class is asked how many puzzles they will solve in a given period, the self-set goals will be more visible as compared with teachers setting the number of puzzles to be solved by the whole class. Regular feedback on goal progress is especially valuable for building self-efficacy (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). When students are informed that they are competent and must work diligently, it would lead to higher levels of self-efficacy. This will further lead to higher motivation (Schunk, 1990).

Before performing any action, the personal beliefs called *outcome expectations* about the anticipated consequences play an important role (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006). Tolman (1949) also discussed *field expectancies* which involve relations between stimuli and response. They help people to make their personal cognitive maps, determining which actions are required to attain their goals (Schunk, 2001). With the help of these cognitive maps, people decide the best possible way to achieve their goals. Here, people's personal experiences and observations impact the outcome expectations (Bandura, 1981). Individuals act in ways they believe will be successful and attend to models who teach them valuable skills. Over long periods, those behaviours get sustained where people believe that their actions will lead them to the desired outcomes. For example the external outcomes for students can be to get a good grade in exams, getting recognition by teachers and parents, their names appearing in newspapers and acceptance by universities. However, the internal outcomes might be to feel good about themselves, feel proud of their work and raise their own feeling of self esteem. Internal satisfaction occurs when leaners act in sync with their personal ethical beliefs. Those students who believe that they are making little progress in learning get demoralised and lackadaisical. The teachers role in such a case is to make students notice everyday progress, however little it may be. That will sustain the effort and students will start building their sense of self-efficacy (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

Learners also have the perceived importance of learning which acts as a *value* accorded to the effort. Students prefer to expend effort towards outcomes that will benefit them and avoid making any effort for those outcomes that they do not value. Values can be developed both ways - enactively as well as vicariously. When people learn by doing, they learn from their experiences and are mindful of the results of those actions. But many values are learnt by observing others. Children acquire values from their parents, teachers and peers. When they observe peers getting rewarded, they imitate the actions. For getting teacher approval, they write neatly for their assignments. Thus, teachers have the responsibility of promoting achievement values in all students by teaching them how to set goals and assess the goal progress. In due course of time, teachers can build learner's efficacy expectations. Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about his own capabilities to learn (Bandura, 1993). It is different from knowing what to do. It is more about one's perception of ability. It's a key to develop a sense of agency in people that they can influence their lives and build it as they want (Bandura, 2001).

Self-efficacy is about the perceptions of one's capabilities that will produce the desired results. Students may believe that a positive outcome will result from certain actions but also believe that they lack the competence to produce those actions (Schunk, 2001). For example, if a student believes that he will get the teacher's praise by answering the questions correctly (positive outcome expectations) he will feel a higher sense of agency. But if he doubts his capabilities to answer the questions correctly, he may not do that (low self-efficacy). Students who perform well, mostly have greater self-efficacy. However, there is no necessary relation between self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Even students who have a higher self efficacy, may expect a low grade if they think that the teacher doesn't like them. Self-efficacy also transfers to new situations. Those students who feel confident about language skills, may also feel more motivated in science class and vice versa. Generally, high ability students feel more amenable to learning compared with the low ability students. That doesn't however mean that self efficacy is just another name for ability. Collins (1977) identified high, average and low ability students in mathematics. She gave them questions, telling them that they could rework those they missed. Regardless of the ability level, students with higher sense of self efficacy were able to solve more problems correctly and also chose to work again on problems they missed out, as compared with the students of low self-efficacy. Thus, self-efficacy not only influences the effort students make to participate eagerly but also

affect persistence and learning. Students with higher self-efficacy expend higher amount of effort and persist much longer on problems than those students who cast aspersions on their capabilities, especially when faced with difficulties (Schunk, 2008). Success raises the level of self-efficacy. However, failures lower it, particularly repeated failures. When students observe the similar others succeeding, they feel motivated to try the task, however difficult it might be. Conversely, when students observe their peers failing, they also might get dissuaded from attempting the task.

Self-efficacy has effects on choice, effort, persistence, achievement and career choices (Pajares, 1997; Schunk & Pajares, 2005). Students with higher self-efficacy will be more cognitively engaged in learning when the task was perceived as difficult but less likely to be effortful. Conversely, when the task was deemed easy, there was lower cognitive engagement (Soloman, 1984). Clearly, self efficacy is a significant predictor of learning and achievement (Schunk, 1981). When the situation is specific, dynamic and fluctuating, there will be a higher possibility of self efficacy present there as compared with the environment that is more stable and static, where the concept of self-concept is more dominating. The quantum of self-efficacy also might fluctuate within a day due to the amount of preparation, physical condition such as sickness, and mood fluctuation. Learning also gets affected by the nature of task. Greater length of the task reduces the effort expounded. The general classroom conditions also affect the self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). However, learners are able to alter and adjust their social environments for enhancing their learning and achievement (Schunk, 1999).

Parents, teachers and coaches are important role models in children's social environments. Bandura et al. (1996) found that parents' aspirations for higher academic achievement for their children affected not only the their academic achievement but also their self efficacy. Those children who are exposed to adult models learn to be more self-efficacious. Zimmerman and Ringle (1981) made children observe models successfully/unsuccessfully while attempting to solve a puzzle who were also verbalising their optimism or pessimism. When the children observed the confident models, they could achieve the same task more effortlessly as compared with those who were exposed to the models who were pessimistic. Similarly, observing peer models performing a task can affect self-efficacy. Brown and Inouye (1978) investigated the effects of models' competence as perceived by the observers. Telling students that they were more competent than the models led to higher self efficacy. Peers who readily master skills may help teach skills to the students who are observing them but may not have any impact on the self-efficacy for those who are experiencing learning difficulties. During small group work, peers can enhance self-efficacy. When each member has some responsibility and members share rewards based on their collective performance, it helps the low-ability students to do better. Teachers need to select tasks carefully because unsuccessful groups do not raise self-efficiency. Also, teachers need to assess the abilities and skills of the students, such as, writing, analysing, interpreting, researching and organising, before forming the groups since students come with different strengths.

One way to raise self-efficacy is to use *coping models* who initially demonstrate skill deficiencies and later go on improving their performance. Determined efforts and positive self thoughts overcome difficulties (Thelen et al., 1979). In contrast, *mastery models* demonstrate impeccable performance with high confidence from the beginning itself. Coping models may lead to better learning by students as compared with mastery models since students may find the performance of coping models more similar to their own performance. They may not relate easily to the effortless and rapid learning of master models. Yet another variable for the teachers to be cognisant about is the *number of models*. As compared with the observation of a single model, the observers find multiple models more effective since they might just find similarity to at least one model (Thelen et al., 1979). The belief that one is more talented than an unsuccessful model can raise the level of self-efficacy and achievement equally well.

Self-efficacy predicts the acquisition and performance of motor skills. Poag-DuCharme & Brawley (1993) assessed the self-efficacy level for performing in-class activities and overcoming barriers to daily exercising habit of students. Self-efficacy related positively to the habit of regular exercise routine. For example, Lirgg and Feltz (1991) exposed students to both skilled as well as unskilled teacher or peer, demonstrating a ladder climbing task. Then sixth grade girls were asked to do the ladder climbing exercise. Those who had observed the models doing the task, had a better performance as compared with those who didn't see any. Also, those who saw the skilled models perform the task had a greater self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is as relevant to the teachers' instruction as it is to the students (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). Teachers' self-beliefs about their own capabilities to help students learn is referred to as *instructional self-efficacy*. How much would they persist with their effort towards students is affected by personal beliefs of self-efficacy. Teachers with low self efficacy may even avoid planning for activities that they feel exceed their capabilities. They wouldn't persist with students with learning difficulties, nor would they expend more effort to make better learning material and not re-teach content in the ways students learn better. Conversely, teachers who have higher self efficacy will design challenging activities to help students succeed. They would also persevere with such students till they learn. Thus, teachers' motivation and commitment towards students get affected by the sense of self-efficacy (Chan et al. 2008). They also create a positive classroom climate, support students' ideas and address their needs (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Feltz et al., (1999) also showed the same predications for the efficacy of coaches.

Ashton and Webb (1986) distinguished between *teaching efficacy*, which is more about outcomes of teaching in general and personal efficacy, which is defined as *self-efficacy* to perform particular behaviours for certain outcomes. It's possible for a teacher to have a higher self-efficacy and lower teaching efficacy, if the teacher believes that the learning outcomes depend on the student's home environment, which remains out of control of the teacher. Goddard et al. (2000) gave the concept of *collective teacher efficacy*. It depends on teachers getting solid support from the school administrators and an environment which values professional learning and development. In schools, where teachers work in collaboration to achieve the school goals are apt to feel higher collective self-efficacy. In loosely knit

or very tightly administered schools, it is mostly missing. Also, in some schools, it might be present at the departmental level but not at the whole school level. The sources of collective self-efficacy are the same: vicarious experiences, social persuasion, performance attainments and physiological indicators. When teachers work collaboratively on projects, learn from each other, receive encouragement for professional development and work together to cope up with difficulties, the collective self-efficacy rises (Goddard et al., 2004). It also leads to greater job satisfaction and teacher retention. Capara et al. (2003) found positive relationship between job satisfaction and collective self-efficacy. Even a higher measure of self-efficacy at individual teacher level will not translate into collective self efficacy when the environment is not conducive and responsive to change.

Conclusion

Self-regulated learning offers an important perspective on academic learning. Students' beliefs of self-efficacy and goal orientation lead to motivation and personal accomplishment. Unless people are convinced that their actions will produce the desired outcomes, they will not have any incentive for achieving their goals. Motivation depends on self efficacy beliefs. With a higher sense of efficacy, people approach the most difficult and challenging tasks successfully. They have greater intrinsic motivation and deeper engagement with their learning. They have strong commitment towards their goals as they raise their self-concept. Students who doubt their learning capabilities, do not persist for long to achieve their goals. However, those who feel efficacious for learning, work harder, persist longer and achieve higher. The self-efficacy beliefs of students make all the difference to the approach they will have towards learning. The resilience required to struggle with obstacles in learning depends on the motivation and self efficacy of learners. With higher self-efficacy, learners emerge from any setbacks or failures and continue to achieve their goals.

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