

MOTIVATING THE UNMOTIVATED



From *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*

(Ambrose, Bridge, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010)

Impact of Value & Expectancy on Learning and Performance



Value

A goal's importance is one of the key features influencing the motivation to pursue it. People are motivated to engage in behaviors to attain goals that have a high relative value. Thus, when confronted with multiple goals, a student will be more motivated to pursue the goal that has the highest value to them.

To Establish Value:

- Connect the material to students' interests.
- Provide authentic, real-world tasks.
- Show relevance to students' current academic lives.
- Demonstrate the relevance of higher-level skills to students' future professional lives.
- Identify and reward what you value.
- Show your own passion and enthusiasm for the discipline.



Environment

Perceptions of the environment affect the interaction of value and expectancies. From a student's point of view, the classroom environment can be perceived along a continuum from supportive to unsupportive. If students perceive the environment as supportive, motivation is likely to be enhanced, whereas if students perceive the environment as unsupportive, it can threaten expectations for success and erode motivation.

		Environment is NOT SUPPORTIVE		Environment is SUPPORTIVE	
		DON'T SEE Value	SEE Value	DON'T SEE Value	SEE Value
Student's efficacy is...	LOW	Rejecting	Hopeless	Rejecting	Fragile
	HIGH	Evading	Defiant	Evading	Motivated

Figure 3.2. Interactive Effects of Environment, Efficacy, and Value on Motivation (Ambrose et al, 2010)

Goals



Goals serve as the basic organizing feature of motivated behavior. To say that someone is motivated tells us little unless we say what the person is motivated to do., and vice versa, what the student is avoiding or unmotivated to do.

Expectancies



Although one must value a desired outcome in order to be motivated to pursue it, value alone is insufficient to motivate behavior. People are also motivated to pursue goals and outcomes that they believe they can successfully achieve. Conversely, if they do not expect to successfully achieve a desired goal or outcome, they will not be motivated to engage in the behaviors necessary to achieve it.

To Help Students Build Positive Expectancies:

- Ensure alignment of objectives, assessments, and instructional strategies.
- Identify and create assignments at the appropriate level of challenge.
- Provide early success opportunities.
- Articulate your expectations.
- Provide targeted feedback.
- Be fair.
- Educate students about the ways we explain success and failure.
- Describe effective study strategies.

Additional Strategies



To Address Value and Expectancies:

- **Provide flexibility and control** - When possible, allow students to choose among options and make choices that are consistent with their goals and the activities they value.
- **Give students an opportunity to reflect**- To bolster expectations for future success, give students an opportunity to reflect on assignments by asking questions such as "How would you prepare differently or approach the assignment differently if you were doing it in the future?"

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