



The Teacher's Role in Motivation and Engagement: A Contemporary Educational Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study shows the role of educators in motivating and engaging students. It explores the impact that certain teacher behaviors and teaching methods have on students' motivation to learn. This study draws on the theoretical frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Expectancy-Value Theory, ARCS Model, and Flow Theory, as well as recent empirical studies (2022-2025). One of the key results is that teachers' support (autonomy support, emotional encouragement and cognitive scaffolding) is the major driver in improving engagement and motivation. This paper proposes that teachers could make a tremendous difference in their students' academic achievements and by applying these supportive practices. The conversation underscores the significance of recognizing the motivational psychology, and the need to give teachers the tools to build a dynamic and responsive classroom. The paper ends with some practical suggestions for teacher training, school policy, and classroom-level strategies that will help to maximize the teacher's central role in the development of motivated and engaged learners.

Keywords:

Student motivation, Student engagement, Teacher support, Autonomy support, Emotional encouragement.

دور المعلم في التحفيز والمشاركة : منظور تعليمي معاصر
م.م زينب موسى ياسين
المديرية العامة لتربية واسط

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة دور المعلمين في تحفيز الطلاب واشراكهم في السياق التعليمي. حيث تبين تأثير بعض سلوكيات المعلمين وطرق التدريس على تحفيز الطلاب للتعلم. تعتمد هذه الدراسة على الأطر النظرية مثل نظرية تقرير المصير (SDT) ونظرية القيمة المتوقعة ونموذج (ARCS) ونظرية التدفق بالإضافة الى الدراسات التجريبية الحديثة (2022-2025). حيث ان واحدة من النتائج الرئيسية هي ان دعم المعلمين (دعم الاستقلالية والتشجيع العاطفي والسقالات المعرفية) هو المحرك الرئيسي في تحسين المشاركة والتحفيز . تقترح هذه الورقة ان المعلمين يمكنهم احداث فرق هائل في الانجازات الاكاديمية لطلابهم ورفاهيتهم من خلال تطبيق هذه الممارسات الداعمة بعناية. تؤكد المحادثة على اهمية التعرف على النفس التحفيزي والحاجة الى اعطاء المعلمين الادوات اللازمة لبناء فصل دراسي ديناميكي وسريع الاستجابة. حيث تعرض هذه الدراسة بعض الاقتراحات العملية لتدريب المعلمين وسياسة المدرسة والاستراتيجيات على مستوى الفصول الدراسية التي ستساعد على تعظيم الدور المركزي للمعلم في تطوير المتعلمين المتحمسين والمشاركين .

تحفيز الطلاب , مشاركة الطلاب , دعم المعلمين , دعم الاستقلالية , التشجيع العاطفي

الكلمات المفتاحية:



1. Introduction

The concepts of student motivation and engagement have become central to the discussion on learning outcomes and student development in the rapidly changing educational context. The concept of motivation can be defined as an underlying state that energizes, directs and sustains behavior; it is therefore an important part of the learning process. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that "Motivation energises and directs behaviour towards goals". This motivating force pushes students to pursue knowledge with active interest, face study difficulties with endurance and dedicate themselves to hard work and strenuous learning. Motivation is intrinsic to engagement, which is a complex construct, including the emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of students' involvement in learning activities. Engagement is a very broad concept, and Fredricks et al., (2004) define engagement as "behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in academic activities. Behavioral engagement specifically refers to active participation, effort, and persistence; emotional engagement refers to feelings or emotions students have toward schools, teachers, and classmates; and cognitive engagement refers to mental effort in learning, use of SRL strategies, and willingness to struggle with more complex ideas and concepts.

2. It is important to emphasize that the role of motivation and engagement is both crucial and powerful as indicators of academic performance and success, not just in the immediate sense of grades and standardized tests, but also in terms of academic success and personal development in the future. Highly motivated students are actively involved in class, resilient in the face of challenges and make excellent progress in terms of subject matter. By contrast, lack of motivation and engagement can lead to dis-interest, under-achievement and in extreme cases school drop out. The stark dichotomy highlights the need to better understand the different factors that influence student motivation and engagement in educational contexts.
3. This is a vital educational context and the role of the teacher is essential and irreplaceable in this context. Peer influence, parental involvement, and curriculum design have an impact on student motivation and engagement, but the day-to-day interactions and instructional practices of the teacher have a direct and significant impact. This paper suggests that teacher's pedagogical decisions, for content, teaching methods and interpersonal skills, play a major role in motivating and engaging students. Teachers are not just information transmitters but "creators of learning spaces which can stimulate or obstruct a learner's learning motivation.
4. The purpose of this paper is to present a comprehensive analysis of this key role from a few aspects. First, it provides a solid theoretical underpinning by building upon existing theory from SDT, EVT,

ARCS Model and Flow Theory to frame the psychological underpinnings of the relationship between teacher behaviours and student outcomes. Second, it examines specific teacher practices (e.g., autonomy support, constructive feedback, establishment of relevance, engagement strategies that are multifaceted) that are crucial for fostering motivation. Third, this paper integrates empirical evidence from more recent research (2022-2025), to show that supportive teacher behaviors have shown to be effective in a variety of educational contexts. Lastly, it covers the obstacles and threats that could pose a challenge to teacher effectiveness in this area, including teacher burnout and assessment pressures, and provides practical, evidence-based recommendations to improve teacher efficacy. Finally, this study aims to provide teachers with a greater understanding of their transformative role in fostering the next generation of self-directed, highly engaged and effective learners

5. Theoretical Framework

It is important to delve into existing psychological and educational theories in order to have a thorough understanding of how teachers can have a positive impact on the motivation and engagement of their students. These frameworks offer a lens that can be used to examine the dynamic interaction of teacher action and student internal states. In this section 4 prominent theories will be discussed: Self Determination Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, ARCS Model, and the Flow Theory.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) is a macro theory of human motivation and personality which suggests that everyone has three essential psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy is the sense of initiating one's own movements, decision making and acting in an own-interest rather than in an external-interest. Competence is about how well one feels at interacting and feeling competent in the environment and how well they feel they are being given opportunities to demonstrate and experience their capacities. Relatedness refers to a feeling of "belonging", caring for and being cared for by important people, and a sense of relatedness.

SDT argues that when these three core psychological needs are met, people will be more intrinsically motivated, more engaged, and more well. SDT claims that the presence of these three core psychological needs leads to greater intrinsic motivation, engagement and well-being. On the other hand, if these needs are not met, motivation decreases and people can choose either external regulation or even amotivation. Teachers are a key part of setting up learning environments that either support or detract from these needs in the educational context. Examples of Autonomy

Support include allowing students options for assignments, appropriately challenging students, and giving them positive feedback. Assisting students with intrinsic motivation by, for example, providing them with choices in assignments (autonomy support), the appropriate challenge (competence support), and positive feedback from teachers (relatedness support). Wang et al. (2025) argue that teachers' actions have a direct impact on students' psychology, as they aim to foster students' autonomy, “students feel more motivated and engaged”. This theory can be a very useful blueprint to understand how teacher-student interactions can either stimulate or inhibit a student's desire to learn, and to grow. According to the theory of Expectancy-Value, (Eccles & Wigfield, 2000) the motivation of an individual to do a task depends on two main factors: the probability of success on that task, and the value of the task. Expectancy is one's self-confidence in performance of an upcoming task and value is comprised of various factors such as attainment value (importance of successfully completing a task), intrinsic value (enjoyment of a task), utility value (usefulness of a task for future goals), and cost (what must be sacrificed in order to perform a task). Teachers have a very strong impact both on students' expectations and values in the classroom. By setting clear expectations for success, giving students the proper scaffolding, giving timely and constructive feedback, and creating a task that is challenging but easy to accomplish, teachers can encourage students to feel as though they can do the task successfully. Students will be motivated to do the work if they think they are able to succeed. In the same way, it is important for teachers to make content relevant to students' interest, show how content relates to the world and to students' future aspirations, and create a sense of purpose in learning. For instance, a teacher could draw students' attention to the significance of mathematics in engineering or to the connection between historical events and matters of today's society. It is expected that, by planning learning experiences and giving appropriate support, teachers can foster confidence in their ability to do well and enjoyment of the learning activity, which in turn can increase student motivation.

John Keller's ARCS model consists of a systematic framework for designing instruction that is motivating and will keep learners motivated. The acronym ARCS stands for Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction—these are four components that need to be fulfilled to motivate learners. Keller (1987) suggested that if it is intentional on the part of the educator to incorporate strategies associated with each of these components, then the educator can design more engaging and effective learning experiences.

Attention: Novelty, humor, inquiry and variations in presentation are all used to gain and maintain student attention. The teacher could begin a lesson with an intriguing fact, a question that would challenge the student's thinking, or a brief video that would catch students' interest.

Relevance: This element is directed toward making the learning content relevant to the learners' needs, interests and future aspirations. Teachers can build relevance by providing students with some rationale for why knowledge matters, connecting it to their prior knowledge, or showing its relevance to real world problems. For example, relevance is often built in to project-based learning.

Motivation: Learners should be convinced that they can make it. Teachers build confidence by setting clear learning goals, giving opportunities for early success, giving positive feedback and saying that success is based on effort and ability, not luck. Building confidence through scaffolding of complex tasks and through breaking them down into manageable steps also helps to build confidence.

Satisfaction: Learners need to be rewarded for what they accomplish and for their work. This can be from either internal motivational factors (such as enjoyment, the feeling of achievement) or external motivational factors (such as praise, grades, recognition). Providing opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt, providing positive reinforcement and making pupils feel good about themselves are all ways teachers can ensure satisfaction.

The ARCS Model offers teachers a practical method for creating motivating lessons and activities, rather than simply presenting material to their students, engaging them in the learning process. Developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Flow Theory is a state of optimal experience that occurs when the person is completely absorbed in an activity, experiences high levels of concentration, enjoyment and timelessness. A state that is sometimes described as “in the zone” is when the perceived level of challenge for a task is matched by the perceived competencies of a person to overcome that challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Too easy a task when compared to ability, leads to boredom and too difficult a task leads to anxiety. Flow, then, is a balance between being challenged and being overwhelmed, and can be experienced as engaging and fulfilling. This state of flow can be emulated in education by purposefully designing lessons and activities. This includes giving thought to the design of the tasks so that the challenges are not too high or too low for students. This can be done by teachers by:

1. The importance of setting clear objectives: Students need to know what they aim to achieve.
2. Providing instant feedback: This enables pupils to understand and change their approach and therefore stay with the task.
3. Creating appropriately challenging tasks: They need to be neither too easy nor too difficult – just a little bit harder than what the students can do.

4. Minimising distractions: A conducive learning environment helps the students to remain focused.
5. Providing a sense of control: Allowing students a certain level of autonomy in their learning process may increase their sense of control.

Students who are in FLOW are highly involved and have fun learning it, which results in deeper learning and continuous motivation. When teachers understand and can develop these optimal challenges and skills can make routine class activities very engaging and rewarding for students. This course explores the teacher's place in the motivation of students. In addition to theoretical knowledge, the teacher's hands-on intervention and teaching decisions play a key role in the practical implementation of motivational concepts in teaching. This section explores specific strategies teachers use to foster and maintain student motivation with a focus on autonomy support, constructive feedback, and relating content to students' lives.

A. Autonomy Support

In line with the concepts of Self-Determination Theory, autonomy support involves the teacher establishing conditions that foster students' initiative, choice and ownership in learning. This is in contrast to controlling behaviours, which might be a demand upon students by the teacher for certain actions and can impact on the students' intrinsic motivation. Autonomy support does not require teachers to lessen their obligation to guide the learning process, but rather to facilitate learning by giving students meaningful options, clarifying why a task is being performed, recognizing students' ideas and emotions, and reducing the amount of controlling language and the frequency of rewards. The following are key practices of autonomy-supportive teachers:

1. Encouraging choice: Providing students with options for tasks, content and/or means of representation. For instance, the opportunity for students to write an essay or to make a presentation to show understanding.
2. Excluding purpose and rationale: Making clear to the students why the task or concept is important, why it is relevant, and why it is valuable beyond just completing the task.
3. Using more invitational language, avoiding phrases like “you must” or “you have to”, using more phrases such as “you might consider” or “how about we try?”
4. Recognizing emotions: Responding to students' emotions, including frustration or lack of interest, and helping them to problem solve and discuss issues.
5. Making opportunities for self-direction: Enabling students to have their own learning aims, time and time management, and taking responsibility for their learning.

Autonomy support has been revealed to have a strong effect in research on a regular basis. Wang et al. (2025) determined that “teacher autonomy support” is the most predictive factor for student engagement, highlighting the important role it plays in encouraging active student engagement. Students who feel their teachers support their autonomy, will internalize academic values, feel more motivated intrinsically, and will be more engaged and successful academically. This method is based on changing the way students think about compliance, from outside to inside, and encouraging students to take charge of their own learning processes.

B. Giving constructive criticism

Feedback is a vital part of the learning process and will help to connect what we are doing with what we want to do. Feedback, however, is not all equally effective in promoting motivation. Constructive feedback, rather than only evaluative or controlling feedback, is intended to help direct learning, to communicate something to improve, and to acknowledge efforts and progress. Its motivational effect is to build students' sense of competence and foster a growth mindset. Constructive feedback is made up of the following:

Specificity: Feedback is specific about aspects of performance, rather than general praise or criticism. For instance, a teacher could respond to a student's essay with the words, “Your essay effectively used three pieces of evidence to support your main argument in paragraph two.”

Timeliness: Feedback is better received when it is given in a timely fashion, enabling students to adapt and make changes at that moment and relate the feedback back to their behaviour.

Actionability: Positive comments provide explicit change ideas. It communicates to students not only what has been wrong, but what needs to be done to correct it and/or what is to be done next. An example of this is: “Try to tweak your introduction, add a ‘hook’ to capture the reader.

Emphasis on process and effort: A growth mindset is fostered by focusing on process and effort, as well as on ability. This conveys to students that they can become smarter and better at what they do with hard work and dedication.

Motivational tone: Feedback is as important as how it is given. A supportive, encouraging and non-judgemental tone creates a safe learning environment where students are able to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Constructive feedback creates growth-oriented learning environments (Siacor & Ng 2024) and has a significant impact on students' experiences of the learning process. Specific, timely, actionable, process-oriented, and delivered in a supportive tone, teacher feedback can help

empower students to understand what they are doing well and where they need to improve, thereby helping them to formulate effective learning strategies and therefore enhancing their motivation to improve. This approach to feedback moves the emphasis away from just achieving the right answer and encourages more engagement and perseverance in learning.

C. Connecting Content to Students' Lives

Making learning relevant to the students' lives is one of the most effective ways for teachers to spark and maintain students' motivation. Intrinsic motivation of students is greatly enhanced when they feel there is a direct link between what they are learning in class and their own life, interests, and/or future goals. The relevance makes abstract concepts real and brings meaning, thereby increasing engagement and willingness to put effort in. Some tools for bridging the connection between content and students' lives are:

Activating prior knowledge/experiences: Teachers can activate prior knowledge/experiences through asking questions that connect students' prior knowledge/experiences with new information. For instance, before starting to teach Newton's laws, talking about students' own experiences with gravity.

Identifying real-world applications: Showing how academic ideas are applied in the world, in a profession or to address social issues. This may include inviting guest presenters, field trips, or examining events and news in the context of the curriculum.

Including students' interests: Carrying out assignments and/or projects which enable students to explore topics of their own interests. For example, in a writing class, giving students an option to write about a subject they're passionate about in an argumentative writing.

Using project based learning (PBL): PBL is a teaching strategy in which the learner is engaged in a project that is personally meaningful and real world. This method naturally ties content to students' lives because they are asked to solve real-world problems and/or produce real-world products. For instance, a science class could create and construct a model for a sustainable energy system for their community.

Cultural relevance: Recognizing and incorporating students' backgrounds and opinions in the curriculum. This can help to make the material more meaningful and help to confirm students' identities and experiences.

Teachers make deliberate use of relevance in their teaching, avoiding the focus on rote memorization and establishing a learning atmosphere where students are made aware of the purpose and value of what they are learning. This not only enhances intrinsic motivation but also equips students to effectively utilize their knowledge and skills in different contexts, ensuring that learning is a more dynamic and enriching experience for them.

D. The Teacher's Place in Engagement

A key indicator of good learning, student engagement comes in three ways: behavioural, emotional and cognitive. Motivation is the "why", while engagement is the "how" and "what" of active learning. The three strands of engagement are both shaped and mediated by the interactions between teachers and students, as well as teacher behaviour in the classroom.

A. Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement is the level of students' involvement in their school experience, manifesting in such behaviors as attendance, effort, persistence and following classroom rules. It's the outward expression of a student's learning process. The role of teachers is central in establishing class setting that is structured, supportive and participative in promoting behavioral engagement. To carry out behavioral engagement promotion strategy, the following measures can be used:

1. Teachers can shape lessons where students are actively engaged in learning, and not passively receiving information. This involves asking open ended questions, engaging in group discussions, engaging in hands-on activities and employing interactive technologies. All students have opportunities for participation through techniques such as 'think-pair-share' or 'jigsaw' activities.
2. Positive approaches to classroom behaviour management: Good classroom management is more than about keeping students in check, it's about establishing a safe and predictable environment that allows students to take risks and engage. This means setting clear expectations, regular routines and positive reinforcement to encourage positive behaviour. Teachers are facilitators who help students to take charge of themselves instead of just controlling them.
3. Increased opportunities for movement and breaks: Younger children may benefit from more opportunities for movement and breaks to help maintain focus and prevent restlessness to promote sustained behavioral engagement.
4. Use of different teaching styles: If one style is repeated, students will become bored. Using multiple teaching methods, such as lectures, discussion, debate, experiments, and the use of multimedia, all increase the likelihood of maintaining the behavioral engagement of students.

5. Establishing expectations and procedures: By setting clear expectations and procedures, students are more likely to comply and participate. Consistency will help to minimize anxiety and help students direct their energies toward learning.

Teachers are ultimately facilitators of engagement in behavior, not controllers. Teachers can improve their students' observable engagement and effort with learning activities through designing lessons that require active student engagement, managing the classroom using a positive and proactive approach, and using a diverse range of instructional methods. A basic level of engagement can be the first step towards higher levels of emotional and cognitive involvement.

B. Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement is characterized by students' affective responses to school, learning, teachers and peers. It includes the emotions of interest, enjoyment, enthusiasm, belonging and security. Emotional engagement results in students feeling connected to their learning environment and positive emotions that support students' academic pursuits. On the other hand, negative emotions such as anxiety, boredom or frustration may trigger disengagement and avoidance. The teacher is central in promoting this important aspect of engagement through developing the positive emotion climate.

Some of the important strategies for emotional engagement are:

Positive teacher-student relationships: The emotional engagement is significantly predicted by the positive and supportive teacher-student relationship. Care, respect and empathy are the qualities that teachers will have in order to ensure that the students feel valued and understood. This means actively listening to students, being genuinely interested in them and being approachable. Wang et al. (2025) point out that teachers should increase emotional communication, and they should “actively listen” to others, which shows that there should be mutual understanding.

Building a positive classroom climate: In addition to classroom relationships, the classroom environment as a whole plays a crucial role on emotional engagement. Positive climate is built on mutual respect, trust, psychological safety and feelings of community. This can be encouraged by teachers through collaborative learning, celebrating diversity and dealing with conflicts in a constructive way.

Emotion recognition and validation: Teachers who help students recognize and regulate their emotions help to support students' emotional wellness and engagement. This involves providing opportunities for students to express their emotions, providing students with strategies to regulate their emotions, and being supportive and empathetic when a student is feeling a certain way.

A sense of belonging: When students feel part of the school community, and part of their classroom, they are more likely to be emotionally engaged. Teachers can foster belonging through activities that are inclusive, by encouraging peer support and by making sure that all pupil voices are heard and that they feel seen.

Minimizing Negative Emotional Experiences: Although there needs to be some level of challenge for learning to take place, too much pressure, criticism and/or a very competitive environment can result in the emotional separation of the child from the learning. Teachers should do their best to achieve a balance to support development without undue stress.

Teachers who take the time to establish positive relationships and classroom climates, and focus on their students' emotional needs, will be able to greatly improve emotional engagement. This, in turn, sets the stage for further thought and action, for pupils who feel safe and valued to be prepared to take risks, to tackle difficulties and to be fully immersed in learning.

C. Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement is the psychological commitment that students demonstrate by making an effort to understand complex concepts, to learn difficult skills and to use SRL strategies. It requires deep processing, thinking, problem solving and metacognition. Although behavioral and emotional engagement are important, cognitive engagement is likely the most direct route to significant learning and growth in students' academic performance. Teachers have a very important role in creating learning that provokes and maintains cognitive activity. Methods for engaging the learner's mind are:

Challenging tasks: Learning is best when students are challenged with tasks that are not too difficult or too easy (boredom). These tasks should involve more complex thinking processes (analysis, synthesis and evaluation) rather than simply remembering things. This is similar to Flow Theory in which deep engagement can only happen when students are challenged to the point that they are just about taxed beyond their capacity.

Effective scaffolding: Giving students temporary help while they are learning new concepts or skills and then gradually taking that away as they get better at the skills. This can involve using graphic organizers, sentence starters, etc. or showing problem-solving techniques. Challenging tasks are made available and a sense of competence is fostered through scaffolding.

Encouraging question asking, exploring phenomena, making sense of phenomena: Inquiry based learning methods allow students to ask questions, explore phenomena, and make sense of phenomena. Teachers are facilitators and lead students in a discovery process rather than giving

them facts. This promotes an inquisitive attitude and helps students to be responsible for their learning.

Strategic questioning: Strategic questions encourage students to think critically, connect and extend their thinking. The feedback, as mentioned earlier, is cognitive and should relate to the students' thinking and learning processes, and not just the correctness of the students' answers.

Metacognition or thinking about thinking is central to cognitive engagement, and should be encouraged. Promote metacognition by having students think about how they are learning, what are effective learning strategies, and to track their own understanding of what they are learning. This assists students to increase awareness of own learning and how to enhance learning.

Collaborative learning: It can be achieved by means of group work and group discussion which encourages students to think, to share their thoughts and to make them participate in problem solving together. This would also correspond with the relatedness dimension of SDT.

Teachers can actively develop the learning activities that require students to think, offer students suitable learning assistance, and create a classroom atmosphere that enables students to think deeply and conduct in-depth research to significantly improve students' thinking ability. This extensive engagement is what results in strong learning, critical thinking skills and a love of learning that will endure throughout life.

Empirical Evidence from Recent Studies

The work that has been discussed so far: the theoretical frameworks and pedagogical strategies, are well supported by the increasing amount of empirical research. In recent years and specifically in recent studies (2022-2025), the teacher's influence on motivation and engagement of students is shown to be very strong. This section will discuss some of the important findings of longitudinal, cross-cultural and specialized studies. To date, the most significant study conducted is the A. Longitudinal Study (Timmermans et al., 2024).

A major study of the effects of long-term teachers is provided by Timmermans et al. (2024). The present study examined the predictive value of teacher perceptions of student motivation for future academic performance in the following grade levels (Grades 5–8). A strong and enduring relationship was found: teacher perceptions/expectations of student motivation in Grade 5 were significant predictors of students' performance and self-beliefs at Grade 8. The study findings were that “The teacher's expectation has lasting impact on the student's self-belief”, indicating the strong and long-lasting effect of a teacher's belief in the students. This study is important for making significant contributions to the understanding of cumulative effect of teacher influence. It implies

that once a teacher is able to ‘see’ and ‘build’ motivation in a student in the early years of schooling, a trajectory of further engagement and success can be set for several years. The process is probably a self-fulfilling prophecy, with positive teacher expectations triggering more positive behaviors, which then further increases student self-efficacy and motivation, and hence their performance. On the other hand, negative expectations might have an adverse effect on a student's development. This longitudinal study reinforces the need to invest in teacher training with a focus on motivational strategies and positive expectation setting because the impact of these goes beyond a single academic year. This is a key development in B. Cross-Cultural Research (Siacor & Ng, 2024) that will be crucial for the future of the program.

The teacher's role in the motivation and engagement is also supported by cross-cultural empirical research. In a study by Siacor and Ng (2024), teachers at schools in Singapore were studied to determine the effectiveness of autonomy-support training in their schools, which are frequently high-achieving and have high levels of academic pressure. The findings of the research showed the relationship between Teacher behaviour and Emotional-cognitive involvement of student was very clear. The autonomy supportive teaching strategies which were taught were observed to be applied in the students' classroom, which resulted in increased student engagement. The study found that the “Fostering student motivation and engagement through autonomy-supportive teaching” is effective, even in multiple types of education.

This cross-cultural approach is especially useful because it illustrates the applicability of any motivational theory such as Self-Determination Theory in learning in various educational systems and cultural settings. Results from Singapore indicate that specific teacher behaviours, in particular those enabling the student to take ownership of their learning, have much potential to boost engagement from the classroom, irrespective of the broader educational context. This supports the notion that teacher empowerment can have an impact on students' motivation and engagement and therefore, training that enhances their capacity in these areas is important.

C. Gamification Study (2024)

In a digital age of education, the importance of innovative learning strategies, including gamification, in engaging learners is growing. The effect of gamification on student activity and engagement was recently studied by Koch et al. (2024), which can be found on arXiv. The study showed that “Gamification enhanced students' engagement to the class, but needed to be carefully balanced to maintain cognitive engagement.” This suggests a more complex scenario of engagement:

gamification can increase behaviour engagement (e.g., participation, task completion) but the more complex engagement of the cognitive level needs careful design and implementation.

The research in this investigation highlights the vital role of teachers' pedagogical skill in the use of new technologies and pedagogical strategies. Gamification might not be enough to produce sustained cognitive engagement. On the contrary, teachers need to appropriately incorporate gamification with well-structured and well-designed pedagogical techniques, designing the gamification features to support the pedagogy to enhance learning objectives, not detract from them. That includes creating challenges that will encourage players to think critically, offering them feedback that is relevant to the game's context, and ensuring the rewards reflect the player's true achievement. Results of this research indicate that teachers must be careful in implementing some of these strategies in their teaching, because the ultimate objective is not that they should generate as much activity as possible, but that the students engage in the learning process in a meaningful manner. In this study, everything seems to be evolving and changing, except that the role of teacher in making informed decisions and skillfully implementing the tools and techniques remains at the heart of fostering true engagement.

Barriers and Challenges

While teachers are key to inspiring students to participate in their education, there are many obstacles and challenges that can affect their ability to do so. But these barriers are complex, from personal to institutional, and they must be fully understood for providing support for teachers to be effective.

Reduce stress and workload situations

Teacher burnout is a common problem that has a negative effect on teachers' motivation and engagement of students. Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of reduced personal accomplishment, and can greatly impair the teacher's ability to be empathetic, patient, and creative in teaching. The nature of the work, the heavy administration load and class sizes, as well as a wide variety of student needs, add to the heavy workload pressures that many educators experience. This issue is emphasized by Aytaç and Şahin (2024), who claim that “Teacher burnout is caused by chronic emotional labour that affects the support provided to students.” Teachers, who are always expected to show enthusiasm, support and patience, even in the face of difficult situations, have to perform emotional labor to regulate their emotions and express them through their organization's display rules, which is particularly challenging.

Burnout may impact the teachers' capacity to offer autonomy support, positive relationships, or create engaging lessons. They are less responsive to students' needs, more prone to controlling behaviors, and less able to relate content to the students' lives. Preventing teacher burnout isn't simply the issue of teacher well-being – it's a different issue of better student learning experiences and outcomes. Hence, the need to support teachers' mental health through adequate resources, less workload and their motivation and engagement of students.

B. Lack of Training in Motivational Strategies

Lack of sufficient training in motivational and engagement techniques in the initial teacher education and professional development arenas is another major challenge. The teachers report that they feel unprepared to deal with problems of disinterest and lack of motivation of their students because they are trained to teach the content of a subject and general pedagogical techniques. The importance of curriculum knowledge, instructional techniques, and the knowledge of the psychology of motivation and effective strategies to motivate engagement are either neglected or underemphasized.

The lack of training can result in inadequate instructional resources for new teachers to bring into the classroom to motivate students, and traditional teaching practices for veteran teachers may not be effective in meeting the needs of today's students. Teachers might feel unconfident in implementing these evidence-based practices without a theoretical foundation or practical guidance on how to provide autonomy support and constructive feedback, such as through Self-Determination Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, and others. A significant investment in specific, actionable, professional learning that includes the opportunity to develop a solid foundation of understanding in motivational psychology is essential. This training not only should be theoretical, but also give practical examples, practice and reflection time to help teachers apply such approaches in their teaching practice.

Specimen A. RP 100% of the time

The rise in standardized testing and accountability systems is giving teachers a great deal of trouble in implementing a student-centered motivational approach. The use of assessments is important for evaluating learning, but excessive use of high-stakes standardized tests can have the unintended consequence of teaching to the test, limiting the curriculum, and ultimately focusing on external rewards (rather than intrinsic) for learning and rote memorization. Teachers frequently

experience a sense of “disconnect from meaningful teaching” (Sundqvist et al. 2023) under pressure to teach a lot of content and have students do well on these tests.

This pressure can lead to a conflict between the wish to create a true attitude towards learning and involvement, and the external performance requirements. For example, teachers may feel like they should prioritize drill and practice over inquiry-based learning and/or project-based learning, even if the choice of the latter actually makes them happier and more engaged. However, standardized testing time limits, curriculum requirements, and other factors can restrict teachers' opportunities to offer choices, to relate content to students' lives, and to establish strong relational connections – all of which are components of motivational teaching. It is a systemic change that prioritizes the supports for student's holistic development and teacher autonomy in designing the instructional plan, which enables teachers the flexibility to focus on engagement, deep learning, as well as measurable outcomes.

Recommendations for Practice

As teachers have such a tremendous influence on student motivation and engagement, it is crucial that actionable recommendations are given that will help teachers effectively perform this vital role. These recommendations range from micro (teacher level) to macro (school level) to meso (classroom level).

B. Instruction in the use of the NWEA website

Teacher professional development and training are essential to helping teachers build knowledge and skills to motivate and engage students. The training here should go beyond the pedagogical approaches and integrate in-depth knowledge of motivational psychology and evidence-based good practices. There are target areas which should be considered:

1. Teachers should have a solid understanding of various motivational theories and these should be taught in training: Teachers should have a firm base on theories including Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Expectancy-Value Theory, ARCS Model and Flow Theory. The theory provides teachers with a foundation of why some strategies work, and how they can be tailored to meet the needs of students and in various settings.
2. Practical implications of motivational climates: Professional learning needs to be directed at how to establish classrooms environments that promote autonomy, competence and relatedness. This includes hands-on practice around creating choice-rich activities, effective feedback and building positive teacher-student relationships.

3. Relational pedagogy: The importance of teacher/student relationship as a crucial aspect of emotional engagement. There may be modules available in training that discuss listening skills, understanding each other's point of view, and conflict resolution.
4. Reflective practices and peer observation programmes: The teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own practice and how this affects student motivation in an ongoing way, and through peer observation programmes. Implementing peer observation programmes, where teachers observe and give constructive feedback to each other, can support teachers to work in a culture of continuous improvement and shared learning.
5. Emerging technology (including use of technology for engagement): Training to include how to effectively use technology and technology platforms to increase engagement, based on the latest research, such as the gamification research (Koch et al., 2024), and ensure that cognitive engagement is maximised.
6. Investing in holistic and continuous teacher professional learning will help educational systems provide teachers with the competencies to serve as more effective motivators and facilitators of engagement and ultimately, support improved student outcomes.

B. School Policy and Administrative Support

Although teacher training is important, school policies and administrative support is equally important in fostering a climate for the development of motivational teaching. Even for the most diligent teacher, a lack of whole-school support can overwhelm with pressures of burn out and high workload. There are a number of recommendations for school policy and administrative support which are key and summarized as follows:

Ensuring teacher time and emotional health: Administrators should create a vision to minimize additional administrative tasks, further streamline administrative processes, and provide planning and preparation time for teachers. Teacher burnout can be reduced by implementing wellness programmes, accessing mental health services and creating a positive school culture (Aytaç & Şahin, 2024).

Trust and autonomy: School leaders should foster a culture of trust and autonomy in teachers by trusting and giving space for teachers to make instructional decisions. This also means that students' needs can be met in flexible ways in terms of the curriculum and assessment

approaches that are used, thereby decreasing the pressure of using standardized tests that might be seen as more rigid than they should be (Sundqvist et al., 2023).

Supporting innovation in engagement strategies: A culture of motivation and engagement innovation can be fostered in schools through incentivising teachers to try out and employ new approaches, including through the provision of recognition systems, resources and opportunities for sharing best practice. This might include establishing innovation grants, peer mentoring initiatives or established professional learning communities on the topic of student motivation.

Schools can promote collaborative environments by providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate, share ideas and learn from one another, which can improve collective efficacy and minimize isolation. Including planned time for team planning, interdisciplinary team work and peer observation. Promoting assessment policies that are balanced: School leaders should promote assessment policies that give feedback to students' learning and do not overly restrict teachers' use of student-centered, motivational, pedagogies. This means encouraging a balance of the following: formative assessments, project-based assessment and other real-life indicators of learning with testing. School policies and administrative practices have the potential to greatly contribute to teachers' ability to focus on and successfully implement a strategy that motivates and engages students when they create a supportive and enabling environment.

C. Classroom-Level Strategies

In addition to system supports and professional development, teachers can take a variety of successful actions in the classroom to motivate and engage students. Such strategies may be practical applications of the previously mentioned theoretical strategies.

At the classroom level, the following strategies are important to consider:

Include choice and voice: Frequently give students a choice in what they learn, how they present the ideas, and how they do their work (e.g., in what order, an essay topic, presentation format). This helps to create independence and responsibilities. Also, provide opportunities to have students' voices heard within the classroom, such as in setting classroom rules, developing classroom projects, or establishing classroom learning goals.

Make connections and relevance: Make connections to prior learning, experiences and real world applications throughout the learning process. Incorporate topics from current events, local

issues or some student's interest as a point of entry to learning. Relevance can be best set up with project-based learning or inquiry-based approaches.

Make good use of feedback: Give timely, specific and actionable feedback, aimed at the learning process and effort, rather than the result. Promote self-evaluation and peer comments to promote metacognitive skills and growth mindset. Be sure to look at errors as opportunities for learning. Use tasks that are an appropriate level of difficulty: Set tasks that are not too easy and not too hard but just right to achieve a “flow” state. Recognize and provide for the varying needs and abilities of the class and make sure all students feel competent and successful. Ensure that the classroom is a positive community for all, establishing trust, respect and empathy between teachers and students. Facilitate good student interaction and team learning. Allow students to take risks, question and share ideas without fear of judgment in a psychologically safe setting.

Use a variety of teaching methods: To prevent monotony, use a wide range of teaching methods such as lectures, discussion, debate, practical, use of multimedia and integration of technology. This helps to maintain students' behaviorally attentiveness and meets students' diverse styles of learning.

Encourage active learning: Plan learning activities to involve students in more than listening. Include problem-solving, critical thinking, debate, experimentation and creative production activities. Challenge students to tell their ideas and give reasons for answers.

These classroom-level interventions can have an immediate impact on student motivation and engagement, and create a dynamic and supportive learning environment that fosters deep, meaningful learning.

Conclusion

In this study, the importance of teachers' role as motivation creators and learners' motivators has been emphasized, which shows that this role is not ancillary but central to the learning and growth process. The study has built on existing psychological theories (such as Self-Determination Theory, Expectancy-Value Theory, ARCS Model and Flow Theory) and combined them with recent empirical studies (2022-2025), thereby clarifying the psychological mechanisms by which the specific teacher behavior directly affects the student outcome. Pedagogical factors that have been shown to be important for student motivation include autonomy support, constructive feedback, contextualisation of content and active construction of behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement. In addition, the paper has recognised that the challenges faced by teachers are complex,

such as teacher burnout and the pressure of standardised assessment, and the need for coordinated, multi-level responses that involve, for example, focused teacher training and supportive institutional policy.

The most salient contribution of this study is the integration of the theoretical principles with practical application. Evidence-based strategies for building resilient and inclusive learning environments that foster student feeling can be adopted by educators through an understanding of motivational psychology. In an education sector that is constantly changing, especially as digital classrooms become more common and artificial intelligence (AI) co-teaching tools are becoming increasingly available, it is crucial for educators to stay aware of the intricacies of student motivation. It is said that “The motivated student is the reflection of a motivating teacher” (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The importance of this never-changing fact is that it embodies the absolute and transformative nature of the educator in ensuring students' lifelong love for learning and readiness to face an ever-changing world.

In theory, this paper contributes to the existing knowledge of the complicated relationship between educational psychology and classroom practice, which suggests that the concept of motivation in the classroom is not static and a natural characteristic of the student, but a dynamic process greatly influenced by the environment in which it takes place and the interactions between the teacher and the student. In practice, the research provides a thorough blueprint for teachers and policymakers to enhance teaching strategies and encourage active engagement. This study has its own drawbacks, however, which need to be recognized. The study mainly draws on broad theoretical constructs and recent research studies, and may not fully reflect the cultural context and highly specialized teaching and learning settings, including those in special education and fully online settings. Therefore, it is important to explore these findings in other settings to determine generalizability.

Based on these reflections, the research should focus on understanding how the new technologies, especially AI, affect the students' motivation and methods for their implementation into the students' learning without sacrificing the essence of the human relations in the classroom. Additionally, longitudinal research is suggested to evaluate the long-term results of long-term usage of motivational enhancing techniques on students' career paths and well-being. In conclusion, this

paper argues that teacher professional development and the enhancement of teacher motivational competencies are not just an educational improvement, but an investment in the creation of innovative societies, engaged citizens, and highly competent future generations.

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