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Motivational Strategies

Tutoring
Services

FALL 2022 STAFF
MEETING

How can we help our students increase
their desire to do well in school?

Why?

It's that time

Students are starting to feel the challenges of the new year, some of that initial confidence might be wearing off.

Motivation is hard to pin down

Sometimes "you can do it" doesn't cut it, and it is hard to come up with other things.

Motivation affects everything

A lack of motivation can affect an entire tutoring session and make students less open to learning.

Expectancy

Student's expectation that they can succeed

"Can I do this task?"

Value

Student's ability to perceive importance of task

"Do I want to do the task?"

Cost

The barriers (internal or external) that might impede a student's ability to succeed

"What am I willing to put in to succeed at this task?"

"Are there barriers that prevent me from succeeding?"

Expectancy- Value-Cost



Expectancy

"Can I do the task?"

What are some factors that play into expectancy?

- skill level/perception of skill (intelligence overall)
- previous efforts (past success increases exp.)
- effort (too high = impossible)
- others' expectations (teachers, peers, parents)
- appropriate challenge (is it too easy?)
- level of support (am I doing this alone?)

How can you, as tutors, help increase student's expectancy?

Value

Do I want to do the task?

What are some factors that play into value?

- internal benefits (enjoyment)
- external benefits (rewards, grades)
- relevance (to career, degree, etc.)
- variability (the more varied, the more valuable)
- teacher enthusiasm (profs cares, so I should too)
- control (more control more value)

How can you, as tutors, help increase value for a student?

Cost

What barriers exist that prevent me from accomplishing the task?

How does the cost or barrier to completing an action affect your motivation?

- effort to outcome (will effort be rewarded?)
- time (amount of time vs percent of grade)
- time management (competing activities)
- context reactions (uncomfortable with content)
- factors outside of the classroom (home life, financial insecurity, mental health, etc.)

How can you, as tutors, help mitigate the cost for a student?

"If I could do it, so can you."

-Tutors are often perceived as having greater intrinsic skill, so this comparison isn't helpful to a struggling student.

"If you just do X, it'll be easy"

-You have to be careful with phrases like "just." Ensure that the task at hand really is easy for the student.

-Your personal judgments of easy or hard aren't universal.

"You'll pass/get an A if you do X."

-While it might help in the moment, you don't want to promise things that you can't guarantee.

-It could negatively impact motivation going forward.

Phrases to Avoid

Brainstorm what to say instead

DIY Motivational Phrases

- 1) Which category(s) does it fall in?
- 2) What could you say?

I can't do this; it's just so confusing.

I didn't get any sleep last night, sorry
I can't focus on this.

This memorization is so pointless.

The professor for this class is just
really shitty.

This is just my English class. It
doesn't matter that much.

I have a D, there's no way I can pass
this class.

Motivational Strategies

Sometimes words aren't enough

Attention:

- pose an "either...or" question
- vary the format (questions, teaching, testing)
- vary the medium (whiteboard, paper, visualization)
- humor! (where appropriate)

Confidence:

- move from easier to harder activities
- help student set realistic goals
- help them see what they already know
- perfectionism is a dangerous goal (who defines perfect?)
- avoid talking about your own experience

Relevance:

- ask them what their goals are (for the class or their degree)
- ask the student what their outside interests are, can this relate?
- help them see the course trajectory (is this a prereq for something else?)

Scenario:

You have a student who has been required to come to tutoring from their coach. They tell you that they are not a great student and they don't really go to class all that often. But they are now at risk of failing and they have to keep a certain GPA in order to keep playing basketball. So they signed up for tutoring.

They have an assignment to work on, and you have asked about their goals for the assignment, but the student is pretty vague.