

## Improving Teaching and Learning: Becoming a Strategic Instructor and Learner

College of the Canyons

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## My Concerns About The Learning Behavior and Motivation Of My Students.....

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## Fact or Fiction?

- A student needs to feel some pressure to be motivated to learn.
- Competition is a great motivator.
- College students have a natural desire to learn.
- Human intelligence is fixed by the time a student begins school.
- Failure is helpful in motivating students.
- Identifying students' learning styles is an important diagnosis that can lead to improved academic performance.
- The use of appropriate technology generally leads to greater achievement gains than traditional instruction.

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## Beliefs of Instructors

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|--|---|
| <p>Instructor A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The role of the instructor is to present the content of the course in the most concise and clear manner.</li></ul> | <p>Instructor B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ In addition to teaching content knowledge, the instructor has a responsibility to teach students <i>how to learn</i> the content and, whenever possible, assist students in overcoming obstacles in learning.</li></ul> |
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## Beliefs of Instructors

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|--|---|
| <p>Instructor A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ It is important from the first day of class to communicate to students what they need to do and the consequences of not following directions and completing assignments. Students need to understand that success in my course involves hard work.</li></ul> | <p>Instructor B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ It is important from the first day of class to communicate my expectations. However, I also want to communicate that my job is helping students become successful in my course. This is a belief that I try to reinforce throughout the course.</li></ul> |
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## What is academic self-regulation?

The ability of learners to control the factors or conditions affecting their learning.

“Learning is not something that happens *to* students, it is something that happens *by* students.” - Zimmerman

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## Academic Toolbox



“It is not that students don’t have the ability to succeed. The problem is that they have not acquired all the tools necessary to learn.”

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## Self-Regulatory Processes of Underachievers and Achievers

Processes	Underachievers	Achievers
Time use	Are more impulsive	Manage study time well
Goals	Set lower academic goals	Set higher specific and proximal goals
Self-monitor	Monitor less accurately	Monitor more frequently and accurately
Self-reactions	Are more self-critical	Set a higher standard for satisfaction
Self-efficacy	Are less self-efficacious	Are more self-efficacious
Motivation	Give up more readily	Persist despite obstacles

From Zimmerman and Risemberg (1997)

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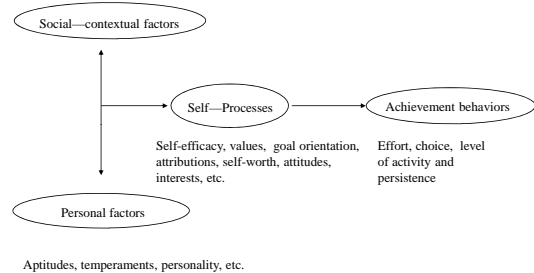
## What are the major components of academic self-regulation?

- Motivation (Why?)
- Methods of learning (How?)
- Use of time (When?)
- Control of one’s physical environment (Where?)
- Control of one’s social environment (With whom?)
- Control of one’s performance (What?)

From Dembo, M., & Seli, H. (2008). *Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum

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Educational experiences, social contexts, gender role socialization, institutional policy and procedures, etc.



Aptitudes, temperaments, personality, etc.

**A social cognitive model of achievement motivation** (Dai et al!9 1998)

## Different Types of Motivational Problems

- **Defensive Dimitri** – more motivated to avoid failure than to succeed.
- **Safe Susan** – underachiever, plays it safe
- **Hopeless Henry** – learned helplessness
- **Satisfied Sheila** – does not seek high grades
- **Anxious Alberto** – high anxiety, low self-confidence

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## Covington's Self-Worth Theory (1992)

Self-worth = ability  $\neq$  performance

- Self-worth is based on ability, BUT if one can demonstrate that his or her performance does not reflect on ability, then self-worth is maintained. This is why students often use failure-avoidance strategies.

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## Why don't students respond to my efforts to help them?

- Help seeking can imply inadequacy and threaten self-worth
- Help seeking can expose learners to public scrutiny
- Students often fail to adequately judge their skills level so they believe that they can succeed without assistance
- Students incorrectly contribute their poor performance to a lack of ability rather than effort

Remember that help seeking is a self-regulatory skill!



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## Students Beliefs Regarding the Use of Support Services and Possible Solutions

### Possible Causes Based on Research

- Students feel embarrassed and/or don't want to feel incompetent. Thus, help seeking can threaten self-worth.
- Students fail to adequately judge their skill level so they believe that they succeed without assistance.

### Possible Solutions

- Take class to visit appropriate tutoring center
- Train tutors to understand and deal with students' beliefs about tutoring
- Allow students to talk about strengths during first session with tutors
- Consider having students visit tutoring center in pairs or small groups
- Have instructors discuss how errors help us learn and conduct error analysis lectures in class <sup>14</sup>

## Helping Students Prepare for an Office Meeting

- Ask them to:
  1. Determine what they do not understand about the material
  2. Review content and make a list of specific questions, or
  3. Identify a topic that interests them the most.
  4. Make summary notes soon after they leave the meeting.

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## The Psychology of the First Day of Class

- What are students thinking about when they first enter your class?
- What information are they looking for?
- What are your purposes and goals for the first day?
- What do you do to attain these purposes and goals?
- What do you think students say to each other when they leave your class the first day.

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"A **learning-centered syllabus** requires that you shift from what you, the instructor are going to cover in your course to a concern for what information, tools, assignments, and activities you can provide to promote your students' learning and intellectual development" (p. xiv)

From O'Brien, J. et al. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach*. San Francisco: Wiley.

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## Developing a Learning-Centered Syllabus

- A commitment how each aspect of your course will support student learning.
- "Teach the students you have, not the students you wish you had" (Kuh et al. 2005, p. 78).
- In addition to providing information about the content and requirements of the course, the learning-centered syllabus, it can help you:
  1. Convey to your students what matters to you about learning.
  2. Set a **tone** for learning and how to learn that students will accept.
  3. Send a message about what students can expect from you and the campus community to support their learning during the term.

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### Checklist for Developing a Syllabus

- Instructor information
- Student information form
- *Statement of teaching philosophy*
- *Purpose of the course*
- Course description
- Course objectives
- Readings
- *Resources*
- Course calendar
- Course requirements
- Policy and expectations: Attendance, late papers, missed tests, and class behaviors
- Policies and expectations: Academic honesty, disability access, and safety
- Evaluation
- Grading procedure
- *How to succeed in this course: Tools for study and learning*

From O'Brien, J. et al. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach*. San Francisco: Wiley.

### Goal Orientation

	Mastery Orientation	Performance Orientation
Success defined as...	Improvement, progress, mastery, innovation	High grades, high performance compared with others
Error viewed as...	Part of the learning process, informational	Failure, evidence of lack of ability
Ability viewed as...	Developing through effort	Fixed

### Mastery Goal Orientation

- Our instructor thinks mistakes are okay as long as we are learning.
- Our instructor wants us to understand our work, not just memorize it.
- Our instructor really wants us to enjoy learning new things.
- Our instructor recognizes us for trying hard.
- Our instructor gives us time to really explore and understand new ideas.

### Performance Goal Orientation

- Our instructor tells us how we compare to other students.
- Our instructor makes it obvious when students are not doing well on their work.
- Only a few students do really well.
- Our instructor points out those students who get good grades as an example to all of us.
- Our instructor lets us know which students get the highest scores on tests.
- Our instructor calls on smart students more than other students.

### Summary

- Successful learners use specific beliefs and processes to motivate and control their own behavior.
- Students can learn to self-regulate six key components of academic learning that can influence their achievement level.
- An important part of becoming a more successful student is developing the ability to monitor knowledge, recognize when something is not understood, and do something about it.
- Instructors should be guided by research findings in making instructional decisions.
- Instructors play a key role in influencing students' motivation and learning behavior.