

MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO ENGAGE:  
A CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

by

Yonkela C. Reinemer

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Yonkela C. Reinemer

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George Freeman, Jr. Ph. D.

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## ABSTRACT

Current research suggested that youth are less motivated in present day than in the past. Teachers play an important role in the lives of students and have the chance to impact their lives in positive ways. Teachers who impacted students in positive ways contributed to a greater nurturing community. This critique of current literature seeks to illuminate motivational challenges youth experience and provide insight as to action teachers can take to assist youth in their growth. Motivational theory was split into two main perspectives during the mid 1900's, a mechanistic view and an organismic view. Presently, blended motivational theories are widely accepted. Situational and contextual, teacher behavior, and student perception are the three areas of motivation explored in this paper. Each area impacts student motivation in different ways while all three are related through the dynamic relationship of motivation. Intrinsic motivation is discussed as being an essential element of student achievement throughout their public school experience. In addition, implications for the classroom and suggestions for future research are presented.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore students' academic motivation. It begins with a discussion of why it is important to examine student academic motivation and continues with a historical account of motivation. An analysis of current literature in three areas examine situational and contextual motivation, teacher behavior, and student perception. Each area has distinct positive and negative impacts on student academic motivation as it relates to learning. The conclusion discusses implications for the classroom and suggestions for further research to improve and advance our understanding of the most effective methods teachers can use to motivate students academically.

### Rationale

Since the advent of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002, the federal government holds public schools to strict performance standards, most often assessed by standardized test scores. When schools fail to produce continually increasing test scores they lose funding. As a result, administrators work under the constant fear of losing funding from the federal government. This fear is passed to teachers who often feel they are left with no choice but to teach to these standardized tests, forgoing such topics as art and drama as well as cutting out much needed programs such as social-emotional learning and service-learning projects. Under the guise of positive educational reform, the NCLB Act has placed an unprecedented amount of coercive stress on teachers to produce increasing scores on standardized tests. Covington (1998) argued that the standardized testing requirements cause some youth to experience a process of psychological deterioration from the moment they enter public school.

In first grade, some youngsters will get the sense that something is wrong with them; that somehow they're just not doing the right thing ... By sixth or seventh grade, many will not be proficient in basic skills... Though still in school, they will have dropped out mentally. Before high school graduation many students will drop out altogether. (p. 5)

Unfortunately, the experience of deterioration is abundant in the way school has been established and continues to operate.

Teachers in public schools have a powerful opportunity to shape the patterns of behavior as youth develop into mature adults. Teachers who are allies to students regardless of race, gender, sexual preference, or socio-economic status can create learning environments that naturally increase intrinsic motivation and participation (hooks, 2003). Taking responsibility for youth education is an important part of being a teacher and many individuals teach because they want to have a positive impact on youth and their greater community. Infusing youth with the desire to learn is part of the answer to creating critically thinking, life-long learners (Dewey, 1938; Kohn, 2006). Furthermore, positively motivated individuals contribute to the greater cause of shifting our society toward one where education is valued and accessible to all people.

This paper takes the approach that, in addition to meeting the expectations of the NCLB Act, the teacher plays an important role in inspiring students to learn. Motivating youth to participate in school is central to a vast array of issues throughout society. Teachers have the unique opportunity to make schooling something different than what they experienced in their youth by providing a classroom environment that intrinsically motivates students to learn.

## Definition of Terms

Historically, theorists have argued about the fundamental nature of motivation. One reason for this is that when asked why they behaved in specific ways, individuals often have difficulty answering. Theorists interested in uncovering an individual's motivation for his/her actions have generally defined motivation in a manner that complements their specific point of view. Herein lies the challenge of defining a word that is used differently as a result of concrete contextualization and theoretical belief systems. As a result many have attached modifiers to the word motivation to clarify their meaning of the idea.

There are two main perspectives on the nature of human motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Those who subscribe to the theory of intrinsic motivation believe individuals act based solely from what they think in their minds. Alternately, those who subscribe to the theory of extrinsic motivation believe the external environment is what causes individuals to act. Based on the differences in theoretical perspectives about motivation, one must define clearly what is meant by the word, before investigating the research in this area.

The common thread among theoretical perspectives includes individuals and their actions. Therefore, this paper defines motivation as the amount of energy an individual is willing to put forth toward an activity (Deci and Ryan, 1985). This definition is broad and can easily be used in many contexts. Intrinsic motivation will be used to describe students' engagement in an activity due to their enthusiasm, spontaneity, excitement, concentration, or joy (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, 2007). Extrinsic motivation will be used to describe students' engagement in an activity to obtain a



desired reward or avoid an undesirable consequence. The word self-efficacy is used synonymously with confidence and refers to a person's evaluation of their capability to perform a task (Bandura, 1993).

### Limitations

This paper contains a vast array of previously conducted research studies. Much of the research was conducted in the United States involving middle-class Caucasian individuals. In order to fully comprehend the ramifications of motivation, future studies need to be conducted worldwide and consider such factors as culture, socio-economic status, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual preference in sample populations. Additionally, college age students and college level professors as teachers are used in many of the studies that are critiqued in this paper. These studies are indicated, and their transferability to kindergarten through twelfth grade students or teachers is discussed in chapter three.

### Statement of Purpose

The issue at hand is found in the structure of our socio-cultural system, which includes a capitalist economy, media constructed lifestyles, and an inherent movement away from a natural development through life. Public school is one of the few remaining common denominators in American culture and a critical interruption point for further cultural and individual deterioration. Teachers must take advantage of this crucial opportunity to positively shape youths' perspective of learning and move them toward becoming agents of change for a better way of life. Therefore, this paper explores situational and contextual motivation, teacher behavior, and student perception as related to motivation in elementary through college level students.

## Summary

This paper examines whether and how teachers can impact youth in their motivation to engage in learning. The NCLB Act of 2002 has caused public school administrators and educators to manage and teach to the strict process of standardized testing. These attitudes established by the federal government trickle down from principal to teacher to student. Perpetuation of a punitive system such as this instills teachers with a sense of anxiety that drives their teaching, causing them to lose focus on the most important part of being a teacher, which is inspiring youth with a love for learning. Instead, their students are forced to memorize decontextualized facts and information in order to regurgitate the information on high-stakes, federally implemented, standardized tests. It is within this imperfect academic environment that teachers must work to teach youth to follow their dreams.

As teachers our responsibility to change the system by bringing passion, love, and enthusiasm back to where it can have the most influence on the children is of utmost importance. Through an exploration of literature and current research this paper examines what positive effect, if any, teachers have on motivating youth, as well as whether increased motivation in youth predicts higher levels of academic success.

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Introduction

Motivation is a broad ranging topic that encompasses many fields of study; the historical background will focus on motivational theories that pertain to education. This historical background of motivational theory focuses on the most recent 50 years. It begins with a summary of current motivational theories from differing perspectives, followed by an examination of how motivation theory has changed throughout time. As the historical discussion moves closer to present day, the focus moves toward motivation and how it relates to learning and teaching.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century psychologists asked what, “What motivates people to do what they do?” Motivation at its core is the amount of energy one will put forth to satisfy a need. The study of this energy has a long history spanning from ancient Greek philosophers to present day neuroscientists. Motivation has been studied for individual needs and the needs of whole communities. Once this question was posed, humans became aware of the mind and had an elevated awareness of the self. Enormous effort has been spent trying to answer the simple question: What motivates people?

Currently, intrinsic motivation verses extrinsic rewards for desired behavior consumes much of the discussion of motivation in youth. In order to fully understand motivation in as it relates to education one must understand the difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic rewards for desired behavior.

### Summary of Motivational Theories

Cognitive theorists try to understand how and why people make decisions. One of the most prominent theorists in the psychology field is Freud (1914), who suggested that

there are two motivators in the individual: sex and aggression. Freud referred to this as drive theory and suggested that all actions and decisions individuals make are driven by sex and/or aggression.

Drive theory dominated the field of motivation during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Theorists such as Hull and Harlow debated the intricacies of motivation using drive theory and found it could not account for individual choices. Hull added to Freud's two-part drive theory and came up with four parts: hunger, thirst, sex and avoidance of pain. Theories of motivation evolved to include factors other than physiologically driven actions.

Maslow (1943) introduced the idea that motivation is based on basic human needs. He organized a hierarchical pyramid that represented his list of needs. The most important basic human needs, such as food, water, and shelter were at the base of the pyramid suggesting they are necessary for survival. Above the first tier are important needs not necessary for survival; these include: safety, love, belonging, and esteem. Maslow's (1943) perspective of motivation stems from the need to survive first, hence placing the most basic survival needs at the base of pyramid. According to Maslow (1943) at the peak of his motivation pyramid the highest level of motivation is self-actualization.

Through the mid-1900's theorists focused on the individual and what caused the individual to act or behave. Factors of these theories of motivation shifted and included the external environment. Not only did theorists notice that the external environment impacted individuals behavior, they started to frame whole theories based on the external

environment as the sole motivator. This point in history marks the development of a major perspective of motivation that shaped how many educators view motivation today.

### Mechanistic Theory

During the 1950's a mechanistic perspective dominated motivation theory and its implementation. This perspective characterized individuals as machines that need instruction. It was also argued that behavior could be separated from the individual and any individual could be molded or programmed, much like how a computer needs to be programmed. Thorndike and Skinner pushed a stimulus-response explanation of behavior. This meant the theory was based on environmental stimuli as being the main and only influence on behavior of individuals. This stimulus-response idea led many to believe that behavior is the only way to measure motivation. Institutions such as the U.S. Military readily adapted this mechanistic perspective of individuals for its immediate demonstrated success in behavior control.

Schools around the nation followed the military's lead and embraced Skinner's (1943) ideas of operant conditioning because of its ease in controlling student behavior. This theory of motivation became known as behaviorist theory and was characterized by teacher control of their students through a system of rewards and punishments. Behaviorist theory also implied that teachers are the unquestioned authority in the classroom. Teachers who adopted the behaviorist approach to classroom management enjoyed the feeling of being in control and minimal classroom disruptions. Skinner acted as the spokesperson for behaviorist theory during its rise in popularity.

As behaviorist theory grew, the nation was focused on the race with USSR to land on the moon. When the USSR launched SPUTNIK, it drove the United States public

awareness to focus on education as a way to increase chances of winning the space race. The United States became afraid and wanted to maintain patriotic pride. Behaviorist theory satisfied this exact niche' by producing young adults who, through rote memorization and repeated practice, demonstrated an increased ability to perform tasks such as solve challenging math problems and regurgitate facts with ease on standardized tests. Determined by a sense of urgency to produce more intelligent individuals, legislators of the 1960's and 1970's focused their energy on increasing the nation's education programs.

While Skinner received much of the public attention for behaviorist theory the other side of the motivation spectrum, intrinsic motivation, was being neglected. As early as 1890 William James, the empirical psychologist, stated that individuals do what their interest tells them and later Allport (1937) gave internal drive the name "functional autonomy."

This alternative perspective to the behaviorist theory of motivation suggested the mind is a major contributor in controlling behavior. The major difference is that behaviorist theory does not recognize the mind as active in deciding behavior, only that the external environment acts upon the individual. We now move from a mechanistic view of motivation to examine an organismic view of motivation.

### Organismic Theory

White (Elliot and Dweck, 2005) published a research paper that explained the need for a concept of self-direction and flexibility in psychological structures that allows one's attitudes to direct action toward the effective achievement of one's aims. Not only did this idea of individuals making their own decisions challenge behaviorist theory it

challenged the way people made their livings. Furthermore, it signified a shift in motivational theories that is still debated today.

We see a movement from a mechanistic view of motivation to what is called an organismic view of motivation. The mechanistic view holds that individuals are machine-like and their behavior can be broken in to pieces in order to understand the whole. Movement toward organismic theory is a movement towards the view that the individual is a whole-being that constructs its own experiences based on internal and external factors. This organismic view allows for internal decisions. This view picked up acceptance during the 1980's as teachers and theorists were searching for ways to increase learning. Deci (1980) stated that the individual tries to master the forces of the environment and the forces of internal drives of emotions in themselves. Also, organisms are vulnerable to internal and external forces both of which motivate individuals to act (Deci and Ryan 1985).

In 1950 Harlow coined the phrase "intrinsic motivation" after conducting studies on motivation in monkeys. He suggested that monkeys performed better when intrinsically motivated then when extrinsically motivated. The term intrinsic motivation has maintained the broad definition generally referred to when talking about motivation from the organismic perspective. Intrinsic motivation means behavior comes from within the individual and not from environmental influences. It is related to human development and nurtures growth and the maturing process of individuals.

Piaget (Singer and Revenson, 1996) demonstrated that people are driven by their mind rather than solely from an external environment. His findings contradicted Skinner's findings and Piaget became a lead proponent for motivation being described as

internal or intrinsic. Since Piaget's findings were reported, intrinsic motivation has been characterized as internally driven to perform an activity. For example individuals who engage in hobbies are intrinsically motivated, they are expending energy on the activity for the sheer pleasure. In contrast, a student who receives candy for doing homework is believed to be extrinsically motivated and would not engage in the same activity without the reward of candy.

Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation represent two opposing paradigms of three current motivational models: mechanistic, organismic, and blended models. There are some theories that combine both organismic and mechanistic characteristics.

#### Blended Theories

During the mid 1990's theorists debated motivation from two main perspectives, mechanistic and organismic; those who believed individuals needed external motivation, such as punishment or rewards; and those who believed individuals were motivated from their own mind. These two sides of motivation were debated hotly until theorists combined intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. More recent theories of motivation combine mechanistic and organismic perspectives. Pintrich and Schunk (1996) explain that,

the mechanistic model is characterized by the laws of science, reductionist and additive, continuous change in behavior, and is exemplified by a machine metaphor. The organismic model's principles are of human development, are non-reductionistic and non-additive (multiplicative), assumes that changes are discontinuous, and is exemplified by a growing organism metaphor. Blended models are based on interaction between person and environment, is non-reductionist and non-additive, posits that most changes are discontinuous, and is characterized by a historical event metaphor. (p. 23)



Several motivational theories in present day included both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In self-efficacy theory, individuals were motivated based on their perceived capability and confidence to perform a task. This perception is influenced by the external environment in which they were raised and the internal psychological environment that was constructed based on their experiences (Bandura's 1977/1993). In choice theory, formerly known as control theory, Glasser (1990) suggested individuals choose actions based on what they can control. Consideration included the internal environment related to the external environment. Accomplishment theory suggested individuals were motivated by the internal desire to have a sense of accomplishment. The individual feels accomplishment having performed the task as well as any external rewards received such as praise from a parent or teacher. Developments in neurology and technology have led to brain-based learning theory, which suggests individuals are motivated from the natural process of development. Brains were built to ensure survival; learning to adapt to and benefit from new situations is physiologically built into every living organism. Children learn to communicate their needs for survival, which accounted for an internal environment and awareness that their needs get met from an external entity, such as parents. These theories represented only a small portion of the many theories that occupy the present day discussion of what motivates students in the classroom.

Through a historical understanding of these theories our understanding of motivation continually changes. Evolution of the theories explored here pushes our understanding of motivation toward internal, self-driven theories that account for external factors. If physiological processes are related to motivation than the goal of

understanding what drives people is attainable (Zull 2002). Motivation is not definite and is debated to this day.

Motivation for a hobby is different than motivation in student learning because teachers play an important role in providing students with motivation. Chapter three examines current literature on student motivation in as it relates to kindergarten thru twelfth grade and college. Specifically, studies conducted for the purpose of understanding how teachers' behave so students will be active, engaged, and motivated learners are explored.

## CHAPTER 3: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Introduction

The literature on motivation in the classroom is wide-ranging. It examines goal-oriented contexts of motivation, the role of teacher enthusiasm and vitality, the social environment that is most impactful regarding motivation of adolescents, and includes discipline-specific concerns and issues that arise regarding student motivation and the variables that support or don't support their motivation. Perhaps most significant in this body of research is the students' perceptions of the teacher and of the students' self-efficacy in the process of their education.

The role of motivating situations is the broadest context of study of this literature. A motivating classroom is defined as an environment where students' learning is engaged through a teacher or facilitator. Energy in these classrooms is directed through "attention, concentration, and imagination," as part of the meaning-making process related to the larger environment (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 218). Constructing knowledge and learning while incorporating a multicultural perspective as an access point into developing respect, ethnic awareness, and an anti-bias approach is essential in the motivating classroom. The role of the motivating classroom is to enhance the pluralism of a democratic society. It allows and supports the freedoms associated with American democracy. Dewey (1938) spoke to the motivating classroom as experientially based—the foundation of learning as new experiences. Experience crafts the students' class-time towards those aspects Ginsberg spoke to when he stated that energy in the classroom is directed through imagination. Dewey augmented Ginsberg's belief when he argued that experiential education was based on real-world situations.

Like the classroom environment, motivating activities are fun, rewarding to the student at the intrinsic level, and instill a sense of achievement and accomplishment in the student. These activities enrich the students' lives and move them towards greater engagement not only with their direct educational experience, but also in non-school based activities. Related to motivating classrooms and activities is the idea of situational and contextual motivation.

#### Situational and Contextual Motivation

Brewer and Burgess (2005) conducted a study that questioned college teachers on methods used to increase student attendance in class. First, the authors asked, how differing teaching methods, teacher personality, and classroom management influenced student attendance. The second question asked whether and how students' perceptions of teaching methods, teacher personal qualities, and classroom management motivated attendance. Lastly, they tested to find which of the characteristics in the first two questions was most influential in increasing student attendance.

The researchers based their study on a set of questions created by Burgess in 1998 that asked students to consider prior experiences of motivational and non-motivational classroom situations. The survey prompted students to rate memorable aspects of the classroom that they felt impacted their desire to attend class. Participants indicated their answer on a 5-point Likert-type scale. One hundred fifty-six graduate and undergraduate students completed surveys. Of those, 89 were graduate students and 67 were undergraduate students. Surveys were randomly passed out to graduate and undergraduate students in their required major classes within the information sciences and human resources departments.

Using the data collected from the surveys, the authors conducted a two tailed t-test and a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA). The t-test indicated a significant difference ( $p < .005$ ) between mean scores from those students “motivated to attend class” and those students “unmotivated to attend class.”

Brewer and Burgess (2005) found that college student attendance had a significant correlation with the teachers’ personal qualities such as approachable, professional attitude, and respectful toward students. When asked, 62 percent of the students in the study listed teacher personal qualities as the most important motivational variable for their attendance ( $M = 4.69$ ). The least motivational variable was teaching methods ( $M = 1.73$ ). Further analysis of the teacher personal qualities that influenced student attendance showed that lack of respect and lack of friendliness most often deterred students from attending class. In contrast, students indicated that teacher knowledge of subject ( $M = 4.69$ ), enthusiasm ( $M = 4.62$ ), respect toward students ( $M = 4.65$ ), friendly and approachable attitude ( $M = 4.66$ ), and professionalism ( $M = 4.68$ ), were most likely to motivate attendance.

Song and Grabowski (2006) asked the question, “What effects do intrinsic motivation and problem solving skills have on students in goal-oriented task groups or groups composed based on self-efficacy?” The quasi-experimental design used to answer this question was a 2 x 2 factorial format. Students were divided into four groups, two characterized by heterogeneity and two characterized by homogeneity. Each group received the same task that required problem-solving skills to get to the solution. Directions for the task were focused on different goals. One of the two groups from each category received a performance-oriented set of directions, while the other received a

learning-oriented set of directions. The authors predicted that learning-oriented, heterogeneous groups would have a positive correlation with intrinsic motivation and problem-solving skills.

Song and Grabowski (2006) chose their subjects by asking parental permission of 96 eighth grade students from rural middle schools in the northeastern United States. The total number of students that participated in the study was 90. The sample population had roughly the same number of female and male participants, and was almost entirely European American. The authors divided participants into smaller groups according to the criteria listed in the description of the 2 x 2 factorial format.

A self-efficacy pretest assessed students and placed them into levels along a self-efficacy spectrum. The test was administered two weeks before the actual experiment. Students were randomly arranged into one of four groups. All groups received a web-based tutorial, which guided them through a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) activity. Each group was randomly given either a learning-oriented or performance-oriented goal. The learning-oriented version included messages reminding students that the goal was to understand the problem and find a solution. The performance-oriented goal included messages reminding the students to find the correct solution and make no mistakes.

Five instruments were used to measure the variables: self-efficacy, perceived goal atmosphere, goal orientation, intrinsic motivation, and problem-solving skills. Self-efficacy was measured using a 12-item, 5-point Likert-type scale assessment of math and science ( $\alpha = .81$ ) that was developed for middle school age students. Forty-four students scored a high efficacy rating ( $n = 44$ ,  $M = 49.98$ ,  $SD = 3.20$ ) and 46 scored below ( $n = 46$ ,  $M = 39.17$ ,  $SD = 4.38$ ). The authors tested students' perceived goal atmosphere with the

14-item Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scale (PALS) that measured student perceptions of the learning-oriented goal groups and performance-oriented goal group environment. In order to measure intrinsic motivation the authors used the Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI).

Song and Grabowski (2006) found two significant positive correlations. The first was between a perceived learning-goal atmosphere and a learning-goal orientation ( $r = .83, p < .01$ ), and the second between a learning-goal orientation and solution development ( $r = .50, p < .05$ ). The authors reported no significant positive correlation between learning-goal atmosphere and solution development ( $r = .25, p < .05$ ).

Correlations suggested learning-oriented instructions played a role in how students found a solution to a given problem. The way in which the goal of a problem was presented significantly impacted student's ability to find solutions. Groups of students who received learning-oriented goals for problem-based tasks more-effectively solved problems than groups given the same task and were expected to perform at a certain level. This suggested that performance oriented tasks may be less intrinsically motivating than learning oriented tasks.

Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, and Perencevich (2006) investigated the correlation between stimulating tasks related to reading, motivation to read, and reading comprehension. The authors tested whether stimulating activities, such as hands-on science experiments, increased student interest in reading. Based on their research, the authors suggested that the more tasks the students participated in, the more they would be motivated to read and comprehend that reading.

The subjects for this experiment consisted of third grade elementary students from four classrooms in two mid-Atlantic states Title I elementary schools. The students represented a diverse population of race, gender, and learning ability. This population consisted of students identified as Hispanic (6%), Asian (6%), African American (24%), Caucasian (53%), and Other (11%). English language learners represented three percent of the population, while eighteen of the students were enrolled in special education.

This quasi-experimental design had four classrooms total. In two of the classrooms, teachers assigned a high number of stimulating tasks related to reading. In the other two classrooms, the teachers assigned a low number of stimulating tasks related to reading. All teachers received the same professional development training for this experiment, which allowed them to unify their instruction of content and minimize error.

The data supported the expected correlation between stimulating tasks, specifically reading comprehension ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ), and motivation ( $r = .36, p = .01$ ). The findings suggested that students who were engaged with more stimulating tasks related to reading scored higher on reading comprehension assessments and showed more motivation to engage in further stimulating activities such as making observations and asking questions. Students receiving fewer stimulating tasks scored lower on assessments and did not demonstrate desire to engage in more stimulating activities.

Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, and Baker (2007) conducted a quasi-experimental quantitative survey that compared motivation of university students enrolled in on-line classes and traditional face-to-face classes. The authors based their survey on the assumption that students were motivated by curiosity rather than by external reinforcements. Therefore, learners were more likely to become involved in distance



education more deeply and thus experience and enjoy the knowledge acquisition process. They then analyzed intrinsic motivation based on the type of course (e-learning, traditional), student status (graduate, undergraduate), and ethnicity (African American, Caucasian, other).

The authors assessed motivation in students enrolled in traditional courses and e-learning courses with the 28-item Academic Motivation Scale – College (AMS-C28) survey. Then, the authors divided each survey topic into the following three parts: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and non-motivating. The authors used a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to analyze the data.

The sample population ( $N = 353$ ) was drawn from three universities located in urban Virginia and was composed of 301 (81%) female identified students and 52 (14%) male identified students. This study examined 24 classes total, 12 on-line, or e-learning, courses and 12 traditional courses. Of those 353 students, 172 (48%) were enrolled and attended traditional classroom classes and 181 (52%) were enrolled and attended e-learning courses.

Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, and Baker (2007) found that graduate students are more intrinsically motivated to learn when they are enrolled in e-learning classes. They found that the factors with the highest positive significant correlation were student status and course type ( $p < .043$ ). Based on the data, student status played a significant role in intrinsic motivation. The authors further divided intrinsic motivation into the following three levels: to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation. Graduate students proved to be more intrinsically motivated than undergraduate students for the first two levels of intrinsic motivation,  $F(1, 342) = 6.53, p = .011, n^2 = .02, F(1, 342) =$

5.30,  $p = .022$ ,  $n^2 = .02$ , respectively. However, undergraduate students had higher scores on extrinsic motivation,  $F(1, 342) = 4.05$ ,  $p = .045$ ,  $n^2 = .01$ . Furthermore, Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, and Baker stated, “e-learners report learning to be more pleasurable and they have greater satisfaction with the process of learning” (p. 423). According to the authors, ethnicity made no significant difference in the motivation variables in this survey.

Van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) asked the question, is there a correlation between self-regulated learning environments, motivation, and learning. Using secondary vocational schools in the Netherlands, van Grinsven and Tillema conducted a survey that explored the relationship between students’ learning environment and their learning strategies. The participants ( $N=643$ ) attended one of thirteen vocational schools in the Netherlands and were between 16 and 18 years of age.

The study van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) conducted was of a quasi-experimental design composed of two distinct parts; an on-site observation and student questionnaires. Five learning environments were used in the study and were characterized as: traditional education ( $N=72$ ), open learning center ( $N=69$ ), independent work group ( $N=344$ ), problem-oriented learning ( $N=72$ ), and project-based learning ( $N=66$ ).

The survey portion of this study included four different instruments, each measured different features. The Perceived Control at School Scale (PCSS) instrument had 16 items and assessed how students perceived their control and addressed their autonomy. The Interpersonal Teacher Behavior Questionnaire (ITBQ) has 48 items that guided subjects to create a framework of their teachers’ interpersonal behavior. The framework was divided by the three specific lenses of: supportive, corrective, and wait-and-see behavior. The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire Part 1 (MSLQ)

was a 34-item assessment questionnaire divided into three aspects of motivation: expectation, task value, and test failure. The MSLQ Part 2 asked subjects to report how they used cognitive, metacognitive, and management skills as it pertained to success in the classroom.

Based on their survey and findings, van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) reported that students were more motivated and enjoyed learning in self-regulated learning environments. Furthermore, teachers who used a more-restrictive coercive classroom management approach created a learning environment that produced decreased student motivation, lowered task appeal, and decreased performance. In contrast, the authors reported that teachers who approached management with supportive behavior had students that placed higher value on classroom tasks.

In a 4-year quasi-experimental study, Battistich (2001) explored the impact of the Child Development Project (CDP) on three whole-schools. The CDP was a whole-school intervention that transformed each elementary school into a caring community. The participants in this study included the middle school students that attended each elementary school during the CDP and teachers of each elementary school. A control group of students from elementary school not included in the CDP were also assessed. Participating students from three schools varied in ethnicity. One school was comprised of 100% African American students and the other two schools were ethnically-mixed at a ratio of 40% African American and 60% Caucasian. All schools served an urban population and most of which were eligible for free and/or reduced lunch.

The CDP took place at three elementary schools. Each participating school was matched with a comparison school that did not participate in the CDP. The longitudinal

study lasted four years. The author targeted and assessed middle school students who had previously attended the elementary schools that participated in the CDP. The assessment process consisted of perception-based questionnaires, analysis of school records, and student behavior rated by their teacher. Data from questionnaires were statistically analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Findings of Battistich's (2001) study suggested that the CDP intervention in elementary school positively influenced middle school students in several ways. Based on collected data from the surveys, the following aspects of students' lives increased: sense of school as a community ( $p < .02$ ), educational aspirations ( $p < .01$ ), trust in and respect for teachers ( $p < .05$ ), and liking school ( $p < .004$ ). In addition, students whose elementary schools participated in the CDP had significantly higher grade-point averages ( $p < .0001$ ) and achievement test scores ( $p < .002$ ) than students in the control group.

In a longitudinal quasi-experimental study, Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) investigated the relationship between academic intrinsic motivation, level of cognitive stimulation in the home environment, and socio-economic status in pre-adolescent youth over a five-year period of time. Throughout the five-year period, 96 youth and their parents were assessed at age 8, 9, 10, and 13 for intrinsic motivation, academic achievement, and socio-economic status. Parental participants represented a wide ranging workforce from manual labor workers to office managers. Most (90.6%) participants of the study identified as European American and there was an almost even gender split of 41 (42.7%) female and 55 (57.3%) male.

Over a period of five years, student intrinsic motivation level in math, social studies, reading, science, and school in general were measured using a questionnaire

called Children's Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI). Parents were also given questionnaires that assessed the level of cognitive stimulation in the home environment. The questionnaires consisted of the Home Observation for the Measurement of the Environment (HOME) scale, the Learning Opportunities Scale of the Home Environment Survey (HES), and the Intellectual-Cultural Orientation subscale of the Family Environment Scale (FES). The study was divided into two phases. The first phase assessed whether or not there was a relationship between a cognitively stimulating home environment and intrinsic motivation while the second phase assessed the socio-economic aspect of students' home life.

Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) found a correlation between home environment and intrinsic motivation. In phase one, statistical analysis supported a direct correlation between a cognitively stimulating home environment and intrinsic motivation toward learning in school. Findings of phase one suggested intrinsic motivation at younger ages has subsequent impact of future intrinsic motivation.

Little to no difference was reported by the authors when socio-economic status was introduced as a variable into the statistically analysis of the study, their findings supported and confirmed those of phase one. Based on the lack of change in the results, the findings suggested that academic intrinsic motivation was a consistent construct regardless of the inclusion or absence of socio-economic status.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Meijer (2007) investigated teacher and student behavioral characteristics and student stress levels following a major education reform to instill a core curriculum in secondary Dutch schools. The author posed three hypotheses that guided the investigation, they were: high cognitive ability reduced stress,

lack of teacher support contributed to student fear of failure, and teaching style impacted student perception of workload and teacher guidance. The author assessed these hypotheses by administering a questionnaire. The participants (N=3300), consisted of 12-15 year old students in secondary school in the Netherlands.

The data were collected using an academic test and motivation questionnaires. The academic test provided information on participants' cognitive ability, while the 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire assessed student perceptions of workload, lack of teacher guidance, fear of failure, cognitive capacity, and teaching style. Independent variables were assessed using the Achievement Motivation Scale (AMS) and the Cross-Cultural Skills Test (CCST). Based on the data collected from the questionnaires a regression analysis and a multilevel analysis were performed in order to statistically verify findings.

Meijer (2007) found no direct correlation between teaching style and student stress. The author reported that students who expended high effort experienced heavy workload whereas students who expended less effort also perceived their teachers' as lacking guidance therefore experienced a fear of failure.

Kovach and Hillman (2002) asked, "How does having a strong ethnic identity impact African, Arab, and European American students?" In their quasi-experimental study of high school aged people of color in three urban public schools, the authors administered a survey to a sample population (N=706) that consisted of 422 African American, 90 Arab American, and 194 European American high school students. Of those participants 385 identified as female and 320 identified as male. Socio-economic status encompassed a wide range from low-middle class to upper-middle class.

The authors administered a variety of survey questionnaires. The Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) assessed ethnic identity achievement, sense of affirmation, belonging, and commitment. The Protective Styles Questionnaire Revised (PAQR) assessed students' perceptions regarding self-protective properties and self-identification through in-group and out-group comparisons. The In-Group Common Fate portion of the survey assessed students' beliefs about occurrences, positive or negative, related to group and/or ethnic membership. A portion of the survey was dedicated to devaluing and valuing, which provided an indication of how students valued their individual selves in relation to values of their identified ethnic group. Students were also assessed for their perception of an incident outcome related to that individual's ethnicity and their perception of prejudice. Furthermore, students were surveyed on self-esteem, motivation, attribution of good and bad events, demographic information, and academic achievement. The students took one combined survey during normal class time.

Kovach and Hillman (2002) found that social, academic, and ethnic environments influenced motivation and achievement. Students identified as African American had a strong sense of future success, current performance, and an understanding that academic ability could predict academic achievement. The authors also reported that, students' with high ethnic identity were more likely to be academically motivated than students with low ethnic identity. Furthermore, students' with high ethnic identity placed higher value on completion of tasks, skill mastery, and demonstrated more academic motivation while at school than participants with low ethnic identity. The authors also reported that ethnic identity, academic achievement, and cultural and environmental influences lay a web of

interdependent relationships that shaped individuals. In contrast to factors of success, participants identified prejudice as a central reason for failure.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Bembenutty and Zimmerman (2003) investigated how gender and ethnicity influenced motivation, self-efficacy, delay of gratification, and learning strategies at a midwestern university. Participants of the study were 369 college students enrolled in introductory psychology courses. One hundred ninety participants identified as female and 120 identified as male. Ethnically, the participants were divided into four groups: male Caucasian (n=108), male Minorities (n=38), female Caucasian (n=165), and female Minorities (n=58).

Through a series of questionnaires formatted as a Likert-type scale, Bembenutty and Zimmerman (2003) assessed students' delay of gratification, self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation. They also used mid-term test scores, end-of-quarter test scores, course final grade, and frequency of homework completion as assessment tools.

Bembenutty and Zimmerman (2003) found that students who delayed gratification were more successful in classes and had higher grades. Additionally, results confirmed that students who believed in their own success were more successful. This study suggested the importance of teachers modeling a self-regulated learning process for their students.

The situational-contextual portion of this paper examined a wide-ranging set of current literature that addressed the main topics of classroom environment, activities, and situational context in which students are involved. There were several common weaknesses in these studies that required further investigation. For instance, Song and



Grabowski (2006), Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich (2006), and van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) had discrepancies in the sample size of their studies. Song and Grawowski (2006), and Guthrie, Wigfield, Humenick, Perencevich (2006) provided small sample sizes, which limited the credibility of the studies because small numbers of participants produced data for a specific population and could not be generalized to greater populations. Van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) had sufficient sample sizes, but the sizes differed drastically within the study. Furthermore, Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, and Baker (2007) used a sample population that displayed a stark gender imbalance of 81% of the participants identified themselves as female. In the context of their study the results proved useful. Again, due to the drastic difference in the number of participants, the study suffered in reliability and generalizability.

Battistich's (2001) and Meijer (2007) conducted studies that spanned long periods of time, four years and three years, respectively. Each of the studies weaknesses were that they lacked data from a control group. Only information collected from participants of each study was reported. Also, due to the length of the studies and young age of participants, the findings were unpredictable at best because there were so many internal and external variables that the authors could not control, such as personal development, socioeconomic status or geographic movement. In comparison, Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) conducted a longitudinal study of how a youth's home environment impacted academic intrinsic motivation. They reported sufficient evidence that suggested home environments that are academically enthusiastic nurtured youth with to be more academically motivated themselves. No quantitative data supported the authors' claims, yet much of the evidence was reported through observed.

Brewer and Burgess (2005) conducted a study that explored qualities teachers displayed that motivated their students to attend class. They neglected to account for the fact that their method of data collection was perception-based, which allowed much room for error. Both statistical tests suggested that teachers who motivated students to continue attending their classes used different teaching methods, different personal qualities, and different classroom management styles. Furthermore, Brewer and Burgess (2005) neglected to report socio-economic background, parental support, or extracurricular activity involvement. Additionally, Brewer and Burgess (2005), Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, and Baker (2007), and Bembenuity and Zimmerman (2003) conducted studies that used college students. Findings from these studies could not be generalized because developmentally, college age youth were mentally, physically and socially very different than youth of primary and secondary age.

While situational and contextual aspects of intrinsic motivation are important to motivating students of all ages it is evident in the above studies that the field as a whole needs further research. In the next section, teacher behavior is examined as a factor in academic motivation of youth.

### Teacher Behavior

Archer (1994) conducted a quasi-experimental quantitative multi-phase study at a midwestern state university that measured teacher's charismatic ability as leaders in the classroom. Archer (1994) tested six hypotheses including: formal recognition of merit impacts students perception of teacher charisma; a positive relationship exists between charismatic teaching and expressed trust in the teacher; a positive relationship exists between charismatic teaching and expressed commitment to class; gender impacts student

perception of teachers charisma; ethnicity impacts student perception of teacher charisma; and class subject impacts student perception of teacher charisma. Using these hypotheses, Archer (1994) devised a two-step investigation that would indicate positive or negative correlations to his six hypotheses.

The multi-step process of Archer's (1994) study had two major parts. First he created a bank of charismatic characteristics by interviewing deans, department chairs, teachers, and students. Interviewees identified distinctive characteristics and behaviors of charismatic teachers. This interview process included ten college professors and 25 college students. Of the college professors, eight identified as male and two identified female and of the 25 students interviewed, seven were male and eighteen were female. No mention of ethnicity or socio-economic status was included in Archer's (1994) report. All the participants in the interview process worked, taught at, or attended a midwestern state university and represented a variety of fields of study. The bank of characteristics from the interviews were sorted and placed into broad categories that captured the essence of its meaning. Through an interview process to acquire a bank of charismatic characteristics and a process of distillation of those characteristics into broad descriptive categories, Archer (1994) finalized the first part of his investigation by creating a questionnaire that addressed the six hypotheses of his investigation.

In the second step of this study, Archer (1994) administered the survey to one undergraduate class for 19 different university teachers. The total number of students that completed the survey was 474. The questionnaire was administered during normal class hours while the teacher was out of the room. Participants had the length of one class period to complete the questionnaire.

Archer (1994) found that students rated formally recognized teachers to have significantly higher charismatic characteristics than they rated non-formally recognized teachers' charismatic characteristics. This suggested students perceived teachers with formal merit recognition as more charismatic than teachers not formally recognized for teaching merit. Trust and commitment were reported to have a positive correlation with charisma, which suggested students' perceived trust and commitment as a charismatic trait of teachers. No positive correlations were found between student perception of teacher charisma and gender, ethnicity, or class subject.

Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) asked the question, "How third-grade teachers motivated students for academic engagement?" They conducted a qualitative investigation of nine volunteer third-grade teachers at Catholic elementary schools in South Bend and Mishawaka, Indiana where they observed classes, interviewed teachers, and collected samples of student work. The school's student enrollment included a diverse group of socio-economic backgrounds, from poverty to upper-middle class. Most of the participants in this study were identified as Caucasian, and one classroom was primarily comprised of students of color. The teachers who volunteered were female gendered and had all previously taught third-grade. Teaching experience of the teachers ranged between five and 23 years, class size was between ten and 28. According to Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003), the school welcomed parent involvement and many of the teachers knew parents personally, therefore, gave the school environment a sense of community.

Throughout the investigation, Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) used a coding method that directed them in creating categories of teacher behavior that

influenced motivation. Each observer coded their own field notes, observations, interview notes, and any collected artifacts. Observed behavior of teachers were discussed, summarized, and categorized. The authors agreed to discuss content and wording of each category of behavior until agreement was reached, therefore all author's notes aligned with each category. The authors included an element of checks-and-balances to maintain credibility of the study. The overall process of the investigation included verification of information reported in interviews and prolonged observations throughout the entire academic school year.

Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) found teachers fell into three distinct levels related to student motivation and engagement. The three levels were: low engaging teachers, moderately engaging teachers, and highly engaging teachers. Low engaging teachers had classroom management problems, used poor instructional methods, and created negative classroom atmospheres. Students were assigned less demanding tasks and were off-task the majority of the time. Moderately engaging teachers used more effective classroom management techniques, focused instructional methods, and created a positive classroom atmosphere in comparison to the low engaging teachers. Moderately engaging teachers were reported to assign easy tasks and therefore students were not challenged. Highly engaging teachers demonstrated an enthusiastic positive attitude. The physical classroom environment included table groups, while manipulatives and books were readily available. Highly engaging teachers also were reported to scaffold individual student learning. Students were encouraged through supportive praise to take risks and challenge themselves. Lastly, highly engaging

teachers adjusted their teaching style year-to-year, which accommodated for differing individual and classroom dynamics.

Young and Shaw (1999) asked the question, “What is effective teaching and how can it be measured?” They wanted students’ perspective of different teaching styles from a medium-sized western university. The authors used a 25-item questionnaire that asked students to rate one teacher of their choice from the recent past who they had taken a class from.

The participants of this investigation included 31 classes from different fields of study throughout the university totaling 912 students. Faculty members were asked permission from the authors to collect data in their classrooms where they administered the survey. The students encompassed a wide range of diversity. For instance, their ages ranged between 18 and 60 years with a mean of 29. Two-thirds of the participants identified as female, one-third identified as male. Information on ethnic and socioeconomic class was left out of the report.

Participants were given a training session in administering the survey to minimize error and increase reliability. Through this training process the authors reported a high level of student commitment to credibility of this evaluative study of teacher effectiveness. Once the survey was administered and collected, Young and Shaw (1999) conducted a multiple regression and a discriminate analysis to condense the data. Then they used a cluster analysis to compile a list of the most effective teacher characteristics.

Young and Shaw (1999) found that students identified seven effective teaching characteristics at the university. The following characteristics of effective teachers were rated very high on the survey questionnaire and they were: effective communication, a

comfortable learning atmosphere, concern for student learning, student motivation, value of the course, genuine respect for students, and course organization.

Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, (2000) asked the question, “Can a teacher actively promote a student’s intrinsic motivation to learn by presenting material in a dynamic, energetic, enthusiastic fashion?” To answer this question the authors devised a two-part quasi-experimental study that, a) assessed student perception of their own motivation with a questionnaire, and b) lectured students then tested the influence of enthusiasm on their motivation. For the first part of the study, Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, (2000) conducted an investigation on 93 undergraduate students that assessed perceptions of their own motivation, vitality, and some of their teachers’ classroom behaviors by using a 73-item questionnaire. Of those students, 80 identified as female and 13 identified as male. The second part of the study included 60 students, 30 female and 30 male, from the same small liberal arts college. The students were divided into two randomly selected groups that were delivered two lectures of identical content. One lecture was delivered with high enthusiasm and one lecture was delivered with low enthusiasm. Students then took a questionnaire that measured intrinsic motivation. All students who participated in both parts of the study were registered in an introductory or intermediate psychology course and received one extra credit point for participating in the study.

Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, (2000) found in the first part of the study that the highest reliability was intrinsic motivation ( $r= 0.96$ ,  $p< .001$ ). When the scores were ranked based on a zero-order correlation, autonomy support ranked first ( $r= 0.69$ ,  $p< .001$ ) and enthusiasm ranked second with a zero-order correlation of ( $r= 0.64$ ,  $p< .001$ ). Perhaps the most significant finding of this survey is the correlation between vitality and

intrinsic motivation. Of all the teacher variables tested vitality and enthusiasm displayed the strongest relationship ( $r = .79$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The authors suggested that “more than any important teacher behavior, enthusiasm is associated with having interested, alert, and energized students” (Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, p. 223, 2000).

For the second part of the study the authors compared high enthusiastic teacher behavior with low enthusiastic teacher behavior. Students were delivered lectures of the same content but with one of two non-verbal communication styles, high enthusiastic behavior or low enthusiastic behavior. This portion of the entire study sought to answer the question of, “How does non-verbal teacher enthusiasm impact student intrinsic motivation?” The authors randomly divided participants ( $n=60$ ) in half and gave identical lectures, except for non-verbal behavior, to each group of 30 students. Followed by each lecture, students took a questionnaire that addressed their perception of intrinsic motivation, psychological vitality, and perception of teacher enthusiasm.

The authors conducted an ANOVA statistical test for manipulation of variable, intrinsic motivation, and vitality. The manipulation of the variable enthusiasm proved successful in that participants reported expected perception of high and low enthusiastic teacher behavior in their respective lectures. The results of these tests complemented the results of the first study by showing a significant relationship between teacher enthusiasm and student intrinsic motivation. Vitality was reported to have a strong correlation to teacher enthusiasm. Finally, the author’s report suggested that when a teacher exhibited enthusiasm in the classroom, their students were more likely to be interested, energetic, curious, and excited about learning that topic.



In a multilevel growth model, Marsh (2007) investigated long-term trends of teacher effectiveness as perceived by students from Oxford University in England. In this study participants included 195 university professors who were evaluated by their graduate and undergraduate students on effectiveness over a 13-year time period of time. There were 31 different academic departments represented in this study and a total of 6024 classes used as the sample. Each professor averaged 30.9 student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. No demographic information was given.

For each course a teacher taught, their students evaluated with the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) questionnaire. The SET process is comprised of a questionnaire given to students near the end of the quarter. The instructor typically left the classroom while students filled out the questionnaire. Statistical analysis with this information over the 13-year period consisted of regression analysis and an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

Marsh (2007) found teacher effectiveness over a long period of time changed very little. Teachers' effectiveness as perceived and reported by the students on the SET process did not show increase nor decrease when averaged over the 13-years. Many individual teachers had varying evaluation results between classes and annually, but throughout the 13-year study very little reported change in effectiveness took place. These findings suggested teachers plateau in their effectiveness.

Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) asked the question, "What is the correlation between autonomous motivated teachers and autonomous motivated learners?" In a quasi-experimental study they examined self-motivated teachers and the correlation between self-motivated learners, participants completed a perception-based

survey assessing where they placed themselves on a four-part Likert-type scale of motivation. Participants included 132 female teachers and their classes from seven Jewish elementary schools in an urban setting in Israel that served lower- and middle-class families. The 1255 students ranged from grades three to six and 51% of the student participants identified as female, 49% identified as male.

The survey conducted by Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) consisted of a questionnaire administered by three trained research assistants. Teacher questionnaires assessed for autonomous motivation, exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and social desirability. Student questionnaires assessed for their perception of their teacher's autonomy- supportive and competence-supportive behavior and autonomous motivation for studying in the class.

Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) found two important patterns. First, students' perception of autonomy-supportive teaching is associated with their autonomous motivation for learning. This finding suggested that students respond to teachers who are themselves intrinsically motivated to teach. The second finding suggested teachers who described themselves as being more autonomous teachers had students who perceived them as more autonomous-supportive. Furthermore, Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan (2007) supported the hypothesis that "autonomous motivation for teaching promoted student autonomous motivation for learning" (p. 769).

Teachers had a significant impact on student motivation based solely on their actions. The teacher behavior portion of this paper examined a wide-ranging set of current literature that addressed actions by teachers in the classroom environment. However, there were several common weaknesses in these studies that require further

investigation. The most common weakness of the above studies is the fact that many of them were conducted using college students. Using college students limits any study to that specific age and academic environment. The findings from Marsh (2007), Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, (2000), Young and Shaw (1999), and Archer (1994) could not be generalized for primary and secondary schools because of the extreme developmental differences between primary age children and college age adolescents. In some cases, findings from studies conducted with teachers at the college level and teachers at the high school level may be transferred, but none of the studies addressed here identified this as a possibility. All studies conducted using college age individuals and/or college level teachers should be conducted using primary and secondary youth as subjects and/or primary and secondary level teachers to strengthen their findings.

Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) and Archer (1994) both conducted surveys of individuals who volunteered to participate. While this made conducting a study simple for the authors, it also exposed an inherent weakness in that no randomization was considered, therefore credibility of the findings was compromised. Furthermore, Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) reported no quantitative data in support of their findings, which again exposes an inherent questionable practice throughout their study, in that their reported findings are based on the observers' perception.

Another common weakness between Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003) and Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) is that they used only female teachers in their studies. Conducting studies that included gender imbalance posed a severe glitch in transferability of the findings and limited them to specific populations

that are identical to the population used in the study. For instance, Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007), conducted their study in Israel where most primary teachers are female and the findings may be able to transfer to that educational culture, but cannot transfer to the educational culture of other countries including the United States where males are an integral part of the educational culture.

Teacher behavior was shown to impact how one is perceived in the classroom and how that behavior could shift student motivation. In these studies every teacher's non-verbal action and verbal expression was interpreted by those that surrounded them. The perceptions students placed on teachers and the school at large had significant impact on how they identified themselves and how they acted. Through an examination of teacher behavior in the classroom, findings suggested that student perception was integral to their intrinsic motivation. The next sub-section analyzes student perception as it pertains to motivation to achieve academically.

#### Student Perception

Ryan and Patrick (2001) asked the question, "How does student perception of their social environment in eighth grade math class relate to changes in motivation and engagement when students move from seventh to eighth grade?" In their study of middle school classroom environments, students completed a perception-based survey of the social environment of their classrooms. The survey was administered twice, once during spring quarter of their seventh grade year and again during the following fall of their eighth grade year. The survey was conducted in 30 different math classes across the two different school districts and involved 15 different teachers. Their sample population consisted of 233 students drawn from two mid-Western school districts and identified as

African American (55%) and European American (45%). The majority of the population identified as female 57% and 43% identified as male. Free or reduced lunch was available for 40% of the population.

Students were surveyed on their perception of the following characteristics of their social environment. The characteristics were students' motivation, social efficacy with teachers and with peers, students' engagement, and perceived disruptive behavior. Trained research assistants administered the surveys to students in areas such as the cafeteria or library. The survey was performed in the spring for the first wave of seventh graders and the fall for the second wave of eighth graders. The administrator guided the students through an example Likert-type scale survey question. The students could then ask questions about the process of the survey. Once the survey started students circled their answer after the administrator read the question aloud. Three to four other assistants walked around the room during the questionnaire.

Ryan and Patrick (2001) found that social environments of seventh and eighth grade students influenced motivation. Factors that were most influential were students' perception of respect, teacher support, confidence, ability to learn, and minimized classroom disruption. Findings suggested that when students perceived their teachers as understanding and supportive they felt more confident and capable in themselves, their peers, and were ensured of having an environment free of behavioral disruptions. Confidence increased when students felt respected among their peers as well as received respect from their teacher. Public identification of individual student relative performance was perceived as belittlement and proved to lower confidence. Also, when students were

placed in competition with each other the survey showed lowered perception of confidence toward learning.

The longitudinal time frame of this study allowed the authors to monitor development of motivation in a wide array of students from diverse backgrounds. The authors reported that monitoring youth over a long period of time was a challenge because youth of this age were required to follow their parents if they, for example, moved to a new school district. In the case of this study, the authors lost 17% of the original sample population leaving only 83% of their initial population.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Gehlbach (2003) investigated factors that motivate 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who were at different levels of learning in California based high schools. Through a series of questionnaires and pre- and post-assessment measures, the authors examined perceived student motivation scores. Participants included tenth grade social studies students from seven high schools in California. The 600 students assessed were ethnically organized into: Hispanic 45%, Caucasian 31%, Asian 20%, and 4% undefined categories and 53% were female, 47% were male

The investigation took place in social studies classes, specifically in world history. Social studies content assessment tests were administered at the beginning and end of the school year. A 4-point Likert-type scale questionnaire on how the students perceived their own study habits related to their perception of historians. The final assessment questionnaire consisted of a 7-point Likert-type scale that measured student perception of the course. The scores for each of these assessments were compared with prior assessment scores and analyzed for motivation level of low, medium, and high prior academic ability students.

Gehlbach (2003) found patterns in motivation and achievement outcomes of prior high ability participants that suggested students who achieved at a high level were likely to continue to achieve at a high level. In medium, prior achieving students, motivation and cognitive factors showed to influence academic outcomes. Of particular interest, Gehlbach (2003) reported that low prior ability students had virtually no specific correlations among motivational factors.

Karsenti and Gilles (1998) asked the question, “How teaching practices influenced change in student motivation?” The authors conducted a qualitative study where they observed, wrote field notes and audio-recorded six elementary level classroom teachers and administered questionnaires to the students in the metropolitan Montreal area. In this study they assumed that elementary school students’ motivation changes naturally.

Three teachers nominated by their principals to be great student motivators and who favored student motivation in their curriculum development, participated in this study. Also, three randomly selected teachers from the same district participated in this study as the control group. The authors measured student motivation three times with a Likert-type scale questionnaire, once on the first day of class, once in week six, and again once in week ten.

Karsenti and Gilles (1998) found that the three teachers identified as more inspiring by principals had students whose academic motivation level changed from being less motivated at the beginning of the school year to being more motivated at the end of the school year. Also, they reported that those same students had higher self-determination and perception of competence. Furthermore, Karsenti and Gilles (1998)

reported the more motivating teachers “seemed to put more emphasis on effort than on ability” (p.8). For example, just before tests the three motivating teachers provided words of encouragement assuring their students they knew the information and were capable of success on the test.

Middleton (1995) conducted a quasi-experimental investigation that sought to answer two questions about motivation that were: “What similarities and differences did teachers and students believe about mathematics as being intrinsically motivating?” and, “Did teachers align instructional activities for mathematics with student motivational systems?” Through a process of observation, videotaping, and interviews with teachers, the authors recognized patterns that related intrinsic motivation to teachers lesson development. The study began with the development of constructs of individuals’ perception of motivation. Using these constructs as models, Middleton (1995) identified relationships between the constructs of each of the participants and their respective teachers.

Participants in this study consisted of five middle school volunteer mathematics teachers from a rural, middle-class, Wisconsin school district. Each teacher identified three of their most intrinsically motivated students and three of their least intrinsically motivated students that totaled six students from each teacher and thirty students for the whole study. There were nine females and six males in the highly motivated group and ten males and five females in the less motivated group. Twenty-eight students identified as Caucasian, one identified as African-American, and one identified as Kampuchean.

Middleton (1995) observed and videotaped each classroom for a 43-minute period that was intended to be a typical day in the classroom. During this time the author made



observational field notes about the physical arrangement of the classroom, content covered by the teacher, and any motivational action by the teacher. Middleton (1995) followed up the observations with teacher interviews that included ten questions related to motivation in the classroom. The author then developed both students' and teachers' motivation constructs by asking a series of twenty questions describing preference of activities. This information was entered into a computer program that created construct maps for each individual. After all the constructs were created by the author, the teachers then developed their own construct for each of their six students. The teacher-created constructs were based on how the teacher believed the students would create a motivational construct for themselves. Having teachers re-create their students' constructs gave the author unique information about how teachers perceived motivation in their classroom as well as suggested how teachers perceived student motivation at the individual level.

Middleton (1995) found some patterns that suggested students and teachers in this investigation had similar and different interpretations about intrinsic motivation in the classroom. Teachers demonstrated a low level ability to predict their student's motivational constructs. Teachers more accurately predicted less motivated students' construct maps than they were for highly motivated students. Team teaching was invaluable when teachers predicted motivational constructs as the team teachers had the highest accuracy and the highest motivation levels in their classroom. Furthermore, Middleton (1995) reported a correlation between how teachers perceived intrinsic motivation in their classroom and the activities they chose to do in class. A final result of this investigation suggested that all of the teachers who participated in this study had very

little knowledge of intrinsic motivation with regards to students. Teachers in this study generally taught math based on predefined goals from outside sources and did not intentionally create lessons with student motivation in mind.

Kerssen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003) asked the question, “How were students’ intrinsic motivation, interaction involvement, and task-mastery orientation impacted by face-to-face feedback from their teacher?” The authors sought to answer this question by administering a questionnaire to 423 students from a private western university, a public mountain region university, and a large mid-western university. Of the total participants 61% identified as female and 39% as male and 80% identified as Caucasian, no other ethnic information was reported. All students were registered in a public speaking class.

The authors administered the questionnaire after each student had received feedback from the teacher on their second speech presentation to the class. The questionnaire addressed the topics of instructional face-to-face support, intrinsic motivations to learn, classroom attentiveness and responsiveness, and beliefs about school success. The data were statistically analyzed using a regression analysis.

Kerssen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003) found that face-to-face feedback had a significant impact on assisting students who dealt with amotivation in school. Through the face-to-face interactions, teachers established more intimate relationships that gave their students a sense motivational of immediacy.

Hammouri (2004) asked the question, “What were significant factors that influenced mathematics achievement in students?” In this study of 8<sup>th</sup> graders’ perception of math achievement, the students completed a survey that addressed student educational aspirations, confidence in ability, attitude towards math, perception, mother’s perception

and friend's perception of math importance, and success attribution to luck and to hard work. Once participants had filled out the questionnaire they then took a test that assessed their current math ability. This also provided the author with material to cross-examine. Only participants who completed both the survey and test were used in the statistical analysis. 5053 13-year-old students participated and of those 3736 completed both the survey and test.

The questionnaire assessed the following eight variables: mother's perception of mathematics importance, friends' perception of mathematics importance, self-perception of mathematics importance, success attribution to work hard, success attribution to luck, educational aspiration, confidence in math ability, and general attitude toward mathematics. Each of these topics had specific items associated with them and were structured in a Likert-type scale. The author used the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) as the final portion of this investigation to assess mathematics achievement.

Hammouri (2004) found that all the factors stated above significantly influenced 13-year-old students' perspective of mathematics positively except success attribution to luck. The author used a one-tailed t-test that identified the following factors, each factor is accompanied by a correlation value (for all factors  $p < .05$ ): math ability ( $r = 0.34$ ); educational aspiration ( $r = .30$ ); self-perception of math importance ( $r = 0.24$ ); attitude towards math ( $r = .21$ ); mother's perception of math importance ( $r = 0.21$ ); success attribution to hard work ( $r = .15$ ); and friends' perception of math importance ( $r = -0.11$ ). Success attribution to luck resulted in a negative correlation of ( $r = -0.28$ ). One finding of particular importance is the significant impact a mother's perception of the value of

mathematics had on her child. The model of mathematics achievement between self-perception of math importance and mother's perception of math was reported as ( $r = .55$ ).

In a quasi-experimental study, Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007) investigated the correlation of teacher perception of class average self-determination, teacher self-determination, and the use of three motivational learning strategies: autonomy support, structure, and involvement in middle-school Physical Education (PE). The participants of this investigation were 787 students whose age range from 11-16 years and were taught by 51 different teachers. Of those students, 399 identified as male, 371 identified as female, and 17 were unidentified while the teachers' genders remained evenly divided. The questionnaires were administered to participating students while they were in P.E. class. The teacher was present yet remained at a distance from the students as not to influence any of their answers.

Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007) found that student self-determination could be predicted by perceived autonomy support, autonomy structure, and involvement. The findings suggested that teachers who invested time and energy into developing personal relationships with students fostered increased self-determination in their students. When students perceived support for autonomy, structure, and involvement by the teacher, their self-determination increased.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003) investigated how groups of children collaborate to learn, how leaders emerge from those groups, and how leadership may be associated with student achievement motivation in fourth and fifth grade students. Participants of this study were 294 students, of those 52%

identified as female, 48% identified as male, 78% identified as Caucasian, and 22% identified as individuals of color.

This multi-step investigation started with a pre-test survey that obtained demographic information and teacher rated math ability; this information was used to design collaborative learning groups. Students were divided into groups of three and assigned a math activity that required group planning and interpersonal skills. When groups completed their tasks they took a post-test questionnaire that assessed their perception of emergent task-focused leaders and emergent relationship-focused leaders. In an interview following the post-test questionnaire eighteen students were asked about group dynamics in relation to the math task they had just accomplished.

Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003) found that fourth and fifth grade students had an acute awareness of leadership roles within social groups. Through the interview process the authors confirmed that fourth and fifth grade students viewed leadership in the two distinct domains of: task-focused leadership and relationship-focused leadership. The report suggested that each type of leader fulfilled a specific role within each group. For instance, when time to complete a task became an issue, task-focused leaders emerged and when quality of product was more important, relationship-focused leaders tended to emerge. Furthermore, relationship-focused leaders emerged through drawing the groups' attention to learning from the task at hand. This suggested relationship-focused leaders naturally facilitated peer-to-peer learning.

Garber (2002) asked the question, "Why were academically capable students choosing to earn failing grades?" This question was examined through a series of interviews with nine freshmen and sophomore students who were deemed resistant to

learning by themselves or by one of their teachers. Participants included nine students from a Southeastern urban high school with a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or lower. The author chose an urban setting school because research suggested that minority youth in urban areas would present diverse motives for resisting school. No further ethnic, cultural, or demographic information was given.

Interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes and were audio recorded in full for purposes of validity. All information was verified prior to publication. Before they were interviewed, students took the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, which assessed for perceptions of self-concept.

Through interviewing nine learning resistant students Garber (2002) found that every student resisted for different reasons and some commonalities were also found. Many factors in school and outside of school contributed to reasons student's resisted learning. Some factors not related to school such as tough family life posed a major challenge and suggested that serious family conflict could prevent necessary attention to school work. Furthermore, exhaustion from jobs or extracurricular activities surfaced as contributing factors to resistance to learning. Some of the school related factors that contributed to students' lack of motivation in class included teacher behavior, teacher personality, physical environment, and lack of a sense of safety. Students reported they often felt being at school was like being at a prison. Some reported they felt unsafe because of so much violence. One final point of interest is the difference of perception between student and teacher. Garber (2002) reported students and teachers interpreted each other differently and would therefore describe the same situation differently. For

instance, a teacher may perceived a student as being resistant to learning while the student may have perceived the teacher as boring or unmotivating.

In a quantitative study, Tucker (2003) investigated the relationship between student grade point average (GPA) and the Strategies-for-Achievement psychology-based study skills class in beginning college students. Based on research that suggested students who perceived they were capable of academic success would be more academically successful. The author compared GPAs of students who completed the Strategies-for-Achievement class and students who did not.

Participants of the study were 226 college students from a large public mid-western university. The author divided demographic information into the following three parts: year in school, gender, and ethnicity. Year in school of participants was divided as such: freshman 51%, sophomores 22%, juniors 15%, and seniors 12%. Gender was divided as such: 54% were female and 46% were male. Ethnicity was divided as such: 32% were minority while 68% were non-minority; the author provided no further explanation of minority and non-minority. Tucker (2003) matched students who were enrolled in the course with students who were not in order to compare the GPA variables.

Tucker (2003) found a correlation between students' GPAs and successful completion of the Strategies-for-Achievement class. By comparing mean GPA scores of class takers (2.97) to non-class takers (2.48), the author reported statistical significance positively supported students who completed the course. Furthermore, students who completed the study skill class also showed better academic performance the following quarter than their comparison non-takers. These findings suggested that when students received psychological and theoretical foundational support for success in school, they

were generally more successful and attained a higher GPA than if they did not have the theoretical foundation for study skills and learning.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Bong (2002) investigated motivational beliefs among female high school students in Seoul, South Korea over an academic year. The 375 participants took questionnaires three times during an academic year that assessed their perceptions of self-efficacy, achievement, and motivational beliefs. All participants were high school freshmen students who identified as female and were of Korean ethnicity. Socio-economically students represented lower-middle to middle income families.

This investigation consisted of three surveys completed by participants throughout their first year of high school. The students took the first questionnaire at the beginning of the year, they took the second questionnaire after they received their mid-term grades, and they took the final questionnaire at the end of the school year. Surveys were arranged in a 5-point Likert-type scale format. Each questionnaire had the following two sections of variables: motivational/affective variables and contextual variables. The authors used students' final exam scores in Korean, English, and Math as academic achievement.

Bong (2002) found a variety of motivational beliefs among participants. The most significant findings were that contextual perception impacted motivation more than students' previous perceptions and prior achievement. Also, there was a significant correlation that suggested student self-efficacy positively influenced academic achievement in school.



In a quasi-experimental quantitative survey, Niemzcyk and Savenye (2001) investigated the relationship between student motivation and student performance of individuals who completed a computer literacy class at a large mid-western university. The participants consisted of students who enrolled in a general studies computer literacy course. There were 291 students, 193 identified as female and 98 identified as male while age ranged from 18 to 50 years with a mean age of 22. No further ethnic information was given.

The study used a three-part questionnaire called Strategies Used for Learning in a Computer Literacy Course. Volunteers filled out the questionnaire after the final exam had been completed. One portion of the questionnaire consisted of 73 questions adopted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) and focused on motivation and learning strategies. Another portion of the questionnaire asked open-ended questions focused on study habits. The authors compared Grade Point Average (GPA) and conducted a multiple regression analysis on the results of the questionnaire.

Niemzcyk and Savenye (2001) found a combination of varying results. The findings suggested students use both intrinsic and extrinsic goals in order to succeed. Answers from the questionnaire showed that many students believed earning a high grade was very important while they also indicated they took the course because they believed the content to be interesting. Statistically significant correlations were between motivation strategies, course grade, and learning strategies. These findings further suggested that students with a high level of intrinsic motivation and knowledge of learning strategies would achieve higher course grades than students with low motivation and/or no knowledge of learning strategies.

In a quasi-experimental quantitative study, Kinchin (2004) investigated preferred learning environments of 12 and 14 year old students in England. This study presented students with visual cartoons depicting the following two theoretical perspectives of learning: objectivist and constructivist. The objectivist perspective defined students as passive receivers of information oppositely the constructivist perspective defined students as active builders of understanding. Participants of this study were students of grade 7 and 9, 12 and 14 years of age respectively. All participants (N=349) resided in England. Two hundred forty-four participants were male and 105 were female.

The study consisted of two parts. The first part of the study addressed the question, “Wow could teachers engage their students in meaningful dialogue about teaching and learning?” The second part of the study addressed the question, “Did students possess the necessary skills to reflect on their learning and with an appropriate vocabulary to express themselves?” The authors used cartoon images depicting the objectivist and constructivist perspectives of teaching and learning. Each cartoon had accompanying dialogue that indicated respective learning philosophies. Participants viewed the cartoons and were asked to choose one cartoon they believed they learned like most. Following the cartoon choice, students received short questionnaires that asked students to also choose their preferred learning method.

Kinchin (2004) found that 12-year old and 14-year old students engaged in meaningful dialogue with their teachers about their learning. The author reported that showing students the cartoons accompanied by dialogue depicting teacher and student roles in objectivist and constructivist classrooms was successful in beginning a meaningful dialogue with students. According to the reported data, 310 (88.8%) of the

participants said they preferred a constructivist-structured classroom, while 39 (11.2%) said they preferred an objectivist-structured classroom. Kinchin (2004) divided comments made by students post-questionnaire for objectivist inclined students into two main categories of easier learning scenario and concerned with fulfilling the demands of examinations. The constructivist inclined student comments were divided into three main categories of: more interesting, more effective, and allowing students to have greater ownership of their own learning.

The student perception portion of this study examined a wide-ranging set of current literature that addressed topics of perception as it related to academic motivation in students. Students' beliefs and pre-conceived notions were considered important when conducting class. According to findings of studies in previous sub-sections, every action taken by the teacher was scrutinized by students. These perceptions constructed by students played a powerful part in the choices they made. There were several common weaknesses that required further investigation.

First, there were several studies that were perception-based. This goes for any study that asked participants to answer questionnaires or fill-out assessments of themselves on a Likert-type scale. In this sub-section Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003), Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007), Hammouri (2004), Kerksen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003), Middleton (1995), Karsenti and Gilles (1998), Gehlbach (2003), and Ryan and Patrick (2001) used perception-based questionnaires to collect data. This is not to say the findings of these studies are invalid, but the use of perception-based questionnaires can lead the participants toward desired answers. Also, perception-based questionnaires could give the illusion of free choice. In one study conducted by Karsenti and Gilles (1998),

they relied completely on volunteer principal's perceptions of what characteristics define a motivating teacher is like.

Again, a common weakness among some of the studies in this sub-section was their use of college-age individuals. Niemczyk and Savenye (2001), Tucker (2003), and Kerssen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003) used college age students to conduct their studies. While college-age students are easy targets for participants, their use for such investigation has little transferability to primary and secondary schools.

Sample populations that were not randomly selected or contained specific demographic characteristics were considered weaker because the findings cannot be transferred to the general population and therefore are limited to populations exactly the same as the sample population used in the study. For example, Bong (2002) conducted a study in a South Korean all-girls high school, much like Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan's (2007) study in an Israeli middle school. Both of which had unique sample populations and demographic settings. Furthermore, sample populations that were not randomly selected lack transferability and credibility. In the case of Garber's (2002) study, not only was there no randomization but the sample size of nine was very small. This made it hard to consider the broader scope of the study because each interview was so specific and unique.

Student perceptions of their teachers, the classroom environment, and the classroom social structure played a vital role in how students behaved and what they chose to do in the classroom. Despite the weaknesses of this set of current literature, it is evident that motivating students to engage in school is possible if teachers considered the

context of each situation in the classroom, their own behavior, and how students interpret the world around them when in the classroom.

### Summary

Chapter three analyzed several articles that discussed intrinsic motivation through the three domains of: situational contextual, teacher behavior, and student perception. Physical and social environment such as the classroom or district wide school reform is supported by current research as having an impact on student motivation both positive and negative. The research shows that teacher behavior impacts student motivation to achieve in a school setting. Furthermore, teacher behavior, such as specific teaching methods, personal qualities, and classroom management practices play motivate students to engage academically. The research continued that students' perception of their teacher and self-efficacy impacted motivation for achievement. Chapter four summarizes the findings of chapter three in relation to each domain. Chapter four will also describe implications for the classroom and provide suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

Youth who moved through the public school system had teachers that shaped their patterns of behavior while they developed into mature individuals. Teachers created learning environments that naturally increased intrinsic motivation and academic participation who were allies to all students of varied race, gender, sexual preference, or socio-economic status that essentially build healthy communities (hooks, 2003). Taking responsibility the education of youth was shown to be an important part of being a teacher that demonstrated how individuals who wanted to have a positive impact on their greater community learned about motivating students. Infusing youth with the desire to learn was part of the answer to creating critical thinking, life-long learners (Dewey, 1938; Kohn, 2006). Furthermore, positively motivated individuals contributed to the greater view of our society where education was valued and accessible to all people.

This paper took the approach that teachers need to inspire their students despite challenges, such as required standardized testing set forth by the government. Motivating youth to participate in school is central to a vast array of issues throughout a greater society. Teachers who presented motivating classrooms gave their students the unique chance to learn in a different way than what they experienced as youth. Providing a classroom environment that intrinsically motivated students to learn and develop into wholesome rounded individuals challenged teachers in these studies yet those who created student-centered environments rooted their student's perspectives with the essence of caring communities.

Chapter one examined student motivation and the role teachers' played in the broad context of current educational legislation, specifically the NCLB Act. According to current research youth experienced a deterioration of their natural curiosity from childhood through a continued exposure to the punitive educational system in place (Covington 2000). By the time students graduated and emerged as adults into society they were often left with little self-confidence and low motivation to move forward in life let alone challenge any injustices they came upon. Due to the limiting rather than encouraging nature of the NCLB Act, teachers who taught with passionate intention that emphasized the importance of student intrinsic motivation reversed the process of psychological deterioration. Through knowledge of strategies for motivation, public school teachers guided their students toward becoming successful community members. Highly motivated students in school showed to parallel high achievement and increased self-efficacy after graduation and throughout life. Furthermore, motivated students were more inclined to seek out opportunities that created positive change in the broader society (Kohn, 2006). Chapter one posed the main question of this paper, "What impacts, if any, does situational and contextual motivation, teacher behavior, and student perception have on student motivation to engage academically in the classroom?" This question was examined through a variety of research findings, studies, and theoretical discourse.

Chapter two presented a historical account of theories of motivation. Beginning in the early 1900's, psychologists theorized on a broad scale about what specifically causes (motivates) people to act. Initially, it was thought that anger and sex were the only things that motivated people to act. Some theories suggested individuals act from a place of basic needs. Since humans have developed mechanisms to take care of their basic needs,

such as agriculture and industry, theories of motivation shifted to include both an internal environment and external one.

Three main perspectives of motivational theory were debated among theorists: mechanistic, organismic, and blended perspectives. The mechanistic view is characterized by a stimulus-response system and suggested extrinsic rewards and punishments motivated people. Oppositely, individuals who made decisions based on their internal environment were characterized by the organismic view of motivation. Several blended theories of motivation were developed that included aspects of both mechanistic and organismic perspectives. Blended theories suggested that people balanced internal decision making with environmental factors. For example, Bandura's (1977/1993) self-efficacy theory stated that individuals were motivated based on their perceived capability and confidence to perform a task. This perception of motivation was influenced by the external environment as well as their internal psychological environment.

Chapter three examined current literature surrounding motivation as it related to learning in the classroom. Current studies fell into three broad categories: situational and contextual, teacher behavior, and student perception. Each area is summarized and analyzed based on the findings of each study.

Chapter four concludes the paper with a review of the first three chapters, an examination of the implications for the classroom, and suggestions for further research. Finally, a statement on motivation as it relates to education will bring this paper to a close.



## Summary of the Findings

Chapter three presented several findings that suggested the importance of teacher awareness of theories of motivation in education as well as strategies teachers could use to create motivating situations for their students. Each study from chapter three will be summarized and its conclusions closely examined for relevance related to motivation in the classroom.

### Situational and Contextual Motivation

This section of research was broad and covered motivation as it is influenced by the physical environment and situations in which students work. Motivation to perform academically was impacted by the physical environment. Rovai (2007) conducted a study that compared motivation in students who were enrolled in e-learning courses to students who attended traditional classrooms and found e-learning students were more intrinsically motivated to achieve academically. Song and Grabowski (2006) found that peer group composition was a motivating factor when students were trying to solve a common goal. This suggested interpersonal interaction was motivating for those students. Guthrie (2006) confirmed Song and Grabowski's (2006) findings and reported that students who engaged in group activities related to reading content were more motivated to read than individuals who had not performed the group activities.

Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) studied student's home environment and found that home environment played a major role in student's academic intrinsic motivation. The findings suggested cognitive stimulation at home lead to increased intrinsic academic motivation at school. Battistich (2001) conducted research on an elementary school intervention called the Child Development Project (CDP), which

transformed three elementary schools into caring communities of learners where students were in an environment that was characterized by collaboration between students, staff, and parents to meet student needs. The results of the study suggested that the CDP intervention had a significant positive impact on students' livelihood, grade point average, motivation, and positive attitude increased while misbehavior decreased. Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998) and Battistich (2001) demonstrated strong evidence that parent and community involvement contributed greatly to academically motivating youth.

Van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) found that students in self-regulated learning environments were more motivated and reported more learning enjoyment. Bembenuddy (2002) also confirmed college students who self-regulated and delayed gratification achieved higher and were more intrinsically motivated in school. These findings both suggested an increase in motivation when students are given the opportunity to be autonomous. The study performed by van Grinsven and Tillema (2006) used students from a vocational high school in the Netherlands, while Bembenuddy (2002) uses college students from the United States. Though these studies were conducted in different countries, both demonstrated that student motivation occurred naturally when they were given the opportunity and support to be responsible for their own education.

In a separate study in the Netherlands, Meijer (2007) found that student stress levels increased following major educational reform, which decreased academic motivation. This study lacks validity because there is no pre-educational reform information on student stress levels, therefore no control groups is present.

Kovach and Hillman (2002) conducted a situational/contextual study that compared academic achievement of students who identified with an ethnic group to a high degree with students who identified with an ethnic group to a low degree. Those students who identified with a specific ethnic group to a high degree were reported to achieve higher than those who do not identify with an ethnic group or identified only to a low degree. Furthermore, the study revealed that, “prejudice was frequently endorsed as a reason for failure among the ethnic minority participants” (Kovach and Hillman 2002, p. 30). Guthrie (2006) and Song and Grabowski (2006) reported that group activities motivated youth more than individual activities. These three studies suggested that individual’s cultural and social milieu had a significant impact on motivated students.

Major findings in the situational and contextual motivation section suggested that several levels of youth’s environment impacted their academic motivation. On an internal cognitive level youth who lived in homes that valued cognitive ability were reported to carry that same motivation into their school environment. Furthermore, on a cultural level, youth were reported to be more motivated if they held a strong identity with an ethnic group. Situations that fostered freedom of choice and autonomy in the learning environment were reported to be more motivating. The common thread among these findings was that situations impact motivation and primary and secondary level public school teachers who took advantage of this knowledge had youth who were motivated to engage school activities.

### Teacher Behavior

Teachers in public school settings who were found to effectively motivate third-grade students to engage in class activities had similar characteristics as teachers who

were found to effectively motivate college students. Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003), Karsenti and Gilles (1998) examined teachers and reported that highly engaging teachers demonstrated enthusiasm, positive attitude, make manipulatives and books easily accessible, organized students into heterogeneous groups, molded strategies to individuals, scaffolded student learning, and encouraged students to take risks by challenging themselves. While those teachers who demonstrated poor instructional methods, maintained a negative classroom atmosphere, and did not challenge their students were considered low engaging. Similarly, Brewer and Burgess (2005), Young and Shaw (1999), and Archer (1994) found that many university level students maintained good attendance because of teacher personal characteristics. Young and Shaw (1999) and Archer (1994) found that personality characteristics such as charismatic, expressive, approachable, and respectful toward students increased their desire to continue to attend class. Brewer and Burgess (2005) reported that teachers who lacked respect for students were un-motivating.

One misconception about teachers was that more experienced teachers were also more effective teachers. Marsh (2007) found that over a 13-year period of time, university teachers did not become more effective teachers. Based on student evaluations, Marsh's findings suggested teachers plateau in terms of their effectiveness. This study was perception-based and lacked concrete observed evidence. Moreover, university and college level teachers were more easily accessed by researchers for this investigation, but that does not mean findings from these studies could be transferred to kindergarten to twelfth grade public school teachers.

Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler (2000) conducted a study where college students received a lecture of identical content but had different levels of non-verbal enthusiasm. Findings from this study showed that intrinsic motivation was impacted on a subconscious level by teacher enthusiasm. Furthermore, Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) found that self-determined teachers had students who were more self-determined than teacher who were less self-determined themselves. These findings were similar to those of Archer (1994) in that, teachers who were self-determined and had high charismas had more academically motivated student. These findings suggested that confidence is contagious.

### Student Perception

This section of motivation revealed probably the most pertinent information related to the guiding question of this paper, which examined the relationship between teacher behavior and student motivation. Many of the studies were conducted through questionnaires that asked for students' perceptions of a given scenario or situation.

In research conducted by Bong (2002), evidence showed that students' contextual perception influenced motivation more than their prior achievement. This finding contradicted Gehlbach (2003), who suggested that students with high prior ability would continue to perform at a high level, while students of low prior ability had less predictable academic motivation. Teachers who recognized student's prior ability in the classroom could impact their contextual perceptions of self-efficacy surrounding academic achievement and motivation.

Niemczyk and Savenye (2001) found students used both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation techniques simultaneously. Participants in their study indicated that they

desired high grades and were willing to work hard for that purpose. These findings suggest also that students recognized the social value of effort to get a good grade. In some cases, students reported intrinsic motivation caused them to take the class because of interesting content. This combination of results suggested student's balanced hard work for a good grade with learning about a topic of interest.

Tucker (2003) reported findings that suggested students with knowledge of strategies for success would be more successful than students who did not have the knowledge of those strategies. Tucker's (2003) study contributed to justification for teachers to not only teach youth content but also teach them life lessons for success.

Ryan and Patrick (2001), Hammouri (2004), and Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007) found that social environments heavily impacted student motivation. According to Hammouri (2004) student motivation was influenced by their friend's and mother's perception of the importance of mathematics. While, Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007) concluded personal relationships between the teacher and student contributed to increased motivation, Kerssen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003) added that face-to-face interaction was a key aspect that motivated students in class.

Garber (2002) investigated why some students were choosing to get failing grades. Several students were interviewed and said factors that contributed to their choice of failing grades included poor family life, unmotivating teachers, and safety at school. Middleton (1995) argued that many teachers were unaware of motivational practices and did not align their lessons to motivate students. Furthermore, Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003) found that leaders emerged naturally simply when differentiated directions for group work. Moreover, Kinchin (2004) stated that students preferred a constructivist

learning approach. These findings suggested that teachers were not honoring their students' needs surrounding motivation to participate in class.

In summary, each sub-section contributed several specific factors that began to answer the guiding question of this paper, "What factors motivated youth to engage in classroom activities?" Through the exploration of current literature it was found that students were intrinsically motivated through an inherent connection to their home environment, the greater community of educators, and how their perception of the world. Teachers interacted with youth on a long-term direct day-to-day relationship through the many years of public school. When teachers created cognitively stimulating classrooms that were safe, physically and emotionally, for students to express themselves they participated and were found to be more intrinsically motivated. Through the findings of these studies, researchers recognized the importance for teachers to model intrinsically motivated behavior that sustains caring communities. The bottom line is that student voices should be heard and acted upon in order present school in a way that makes engaging in school more interesting than disengaging and disrupting.

#### Classroom Implications

Each of the sub-sections presented in chapter three apply to the classroom differently. Situational and contextual aspects of motivation related to classroom practice such that the physical, social, and emotional environments were considered. Teacher behavior plays a central role of student motivation throughout nuances of their personality, actions, and decision that impacted students directly. Student perception showed to have the most impact on intrinsic motivation in the classroom. When students perceived a strong sense of self-efficacy surrounding education, intrinsic motivation

toward academia tended to increase. Through a summary and critique implications for the classroom will be presented as a functional practice that teachers may find useful.

Use of technology was found to motivate students through e-learning courses in one study. Though the study was conducted with college participants, K-12 teacher can capitalize on the findings and incorporate technology through computer research and web-based communication programs such as blogs and wiki's. Use of cutting edge technology in the classroom takes advantage of student curiosity if the teacher presents the technology in such a way that allows for exploration. In many cases students will be able to assist the teacher with an understanding of the technology.

Rovai (2007), Song and Grabowski (2006), and Guthrie (2006) performed separate investigations yet their results suggest a common connection between technology, learning, and interpersonal interaction that motivates students. Again, as teachers we can capitalize on this by bringing technology to the classroom and challenging students to use it in creative ways. Furthermore, by placing them into heterogeneous groups, intrinsic motivation can be increased. Based on these findings both the internal and the external environment can be motivating agents for students.

According to Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried (1998), students who have a cognitively stimulating home life are more intrinsically motivated in school. Teachers who include parents as resources of content not only help to develop a more cognitively stimulating home environment, but also build caring community oriented relationships between the school itself and the individuals that comprise the greater educational system. In order to include parents in their children's education teachers can send homework that parents must participate in. Furthermore, through parent involvement in



school activities and student learning teachers create a more motivating environment for students' that is long-reaching from not only the school environment but also into the home environment, thus creating a culture of academic motivation.

According to Kovach and Hillman (2002) social stress plays a role in student motivation. When students do not feel safe or emotionally supported motivation can drop. This finding supports Maslow's (1943) theory, which suggests basic needs must be taken care of before individuals can be self-actualized. In the classroom, teachers must develop a good rapport with students personally and with the class as a whole in order for each student to be self-actualized and successful.

Teacher's behavior should be well thought through each time they act. Not only are teachers held responsible for the academic learning of youth they are increasingly being held responsible for developing youth as whole individuals, which includes social emotional learning. Additionally, teachers are role models within the greater community. According to Marsh (2007), Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley, and Vincent (2003), and Young and Shaw (1999) effective teachers are characterized by a desire and ability to evaluate their behavior and make adjustments for improvement. However, Archer (1994) recognized motivating teachers are formally recognized for their accomplishments. Archer's findings suggest our public education system is a meritocracy by the fact that teachers who have more formal merit are more motivating.

Teachers should strive to receive constructive criticism about their classroom practices from outside sources so they may increase their teaching effectiveness (Marsh 2007). According to Roth, Assor, Kanat-Mayon, and Kaplan, (2007) teachers who are

self-determined in the classroom will help students be self-determined themselves. Self-determination can be perceived from the outside though a genuine desire to be a teacher.

Student perception is at the heart of what motivates youth and is the interface in which teachers must interact with their classes. Student perception has a far more potent impact on youth's actions than any other specific variable discussed in this paper. Student perception is intrinsically related to teacher behavior and situation/contextual motivation. Teachers need to maintain an awareness of this fact as they engage in educating youth. Specific actions teachers can take to manage student perception are far reaching because students are always watching.

Currently, United States public school districts operate from a punitive mechanistic theoretical perspective, and according to Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003), Taylor and Ntoumanis (2007), Hammouri (2004), Kerssen-Griep, Hess, and Trees (2003), Middleton (1995), Karsenti and Gilles (1998), Gehlbach (2003), and Ryan and Patrick (2001) student perceived punishment stifles motivation. When students see teachers who are enthusiastic about learning for the sake of learning their perception of school is questioned because they are so familiar with receiving a reward or punishment for their effort in school. The most common form of rewards for effort in school is grades. One school district has gone as far as paying students for their efforts. The theory behind these extrinsic rewards is inherently flawed because the perception that students receive is that learning and school is not intrinsically motivating. One of the strengths of this perspective is its immediate short term gains of desired behavior such as low student disruption and misconduct. Furthermore, students will put forth more effort in school and get higher grades if they know they can get a reward. However, in the long run, rewards

significantly undermine intrinsic motivation. Students may become dependent on that reward for their effort, which can have far-reaching negative impacts, especially if money to pay those dependent students runs out.

Suggestions from the teacher behavior and situational/contextual section of this paper are included in how students perceive their physical and social environment. The following are specific suggestions for action in the classroom based on findings in this research paper: consideration of intrinsic motivation in each lesson plan, give students face-to-face feedback that is constructive not destructive or based on judgment, demonstrate a genuine appreciation for being a teacher, consider emergent leaders when designing groups, provide students with the skills to be successful such as specific study skills and learning strategies. These suggested teacher actions can build positive situations that impact how students perceive their own self-efficacy within the context of the classroom and their broader community.

#### Implications for Further Research

There are many areas in need for further research surrounding motivation. First and foremost most studies in this paper could be repeated with increased sample size. Also, many of the studies were limited to only one age group. Several studies were conducted using college age students or college professors. These studies need to be repeated with K-12 students and teachers because the circumstances in which the students learn under and teachers teach under are drastically different, specifically with the advent of the NCLB Act. One common thread of critique due to the nature of intrinsic motivation is the fact that many of the studies in this paper were quasi-experimental in that questionnaires were subject to interpretation by those filling them out.

Specifically, Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003) found two types of leaders that naturally emerge from collaborative learning groups of fourth and fifth grade students depending on the given directions. Their study was limited to fourth and fifth grade students. While this is important to understand during early stages of social skill development in youth further research about how those leadership roles relate to motivation of all students and how they change as students move through adolescence.

### Conclusion

Chapter one explained the importance of motivated youth and provided current developments in the educational culture of the United States. The NCLB Act lacked an essential element of support for schools that needed it most, while those schools were left to fend for themselves; their students suffered by not receiving the resources they needed for a good education. Many of those schools also graduated youth into this society who were ill equipped to act as agents of change for a better future. With the strict demand for increased test scores, teachers are left with little choice but to teach students through speed lectures and memorization of facts. In the face of this mechanistically driven educational system teachers must rise to the challenge of inspiring youth to live with a sense of motivated intention.

Chapter two discussed the historical background of theories of motivation. Beginning motivational theory suggested people act from one of two places: anger or sex. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, amidst a milieu dominated by a space race with the USSR, much debate finally produced two distinct camps on motivational theory by the mid 1900's; external motivation vs. internal motivation. Presently, many motivational theories blend these two perspectives recognized by the external

environment, such as parent influence, and the internal environment, such as our own desire, which interact simultaneously thereby giving humans the ability to rationalize their actions.

Chapter three presented current research and associated findings. The research was divided into three main sections: situational and contextual motivation, teacher behavior, and student perception. Situations and contextual motivation addressed environmental influences on student motivation such as classroom environment. The teacher behavior section explored specific personal characteristics of teachers and how they impacted student motivation. Effective teacher behaviors included enthusiasm, respect for students, and a genuine desire to be a teacher. The final sub-section in chapter three was dedicated to student perception. The findings in this sub-section encompassed both situational contextual motivation and teacher behavior inspired motivation demonstrating that given an engaging classroom context and enthusiastic teacher presence that instills a strong perception of self-efficacy students will be more intrinsically motivated to achieve academically.

Chapter four summarized the findings from each of the sections in chapter three. Furthermore, chapter four presented implications for the classroom and suggested students could be intrinsically motivated in the classroom through: interesting designed lessons, interaction with students on a personal level with respect and trust for autonomy, and expressing genuine enjoyment for being a teacher.

Further research into sustaining motivated youth begins with an understanding of what motivates youth in the first place. According to Yamaguchi and Maehr (2003), small collaborative groups of nine-year-old students will naturally produce leaders;

teachers are in the position to nurture those leaders toward continued development of their leadership skills. Finding creative ways to tap into every youth's leader within is a challenge teachers need to step up to. If current research suggests constructivist learning methods are more motivating than why are most public school systems in the United States still using a mechanistic classroom management model that is rooted in punishment? Motivating youth is challenging yet extremely rewarding in the long run. By designing intrinsically motivating activities and lessons, teachers naturally model the kind of motivated enduring learners we want to graduate from our public schools.

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