

Artisans' Behaviour Notes

This is a brief collection of thoughts and examples to help contextualise our behaviour ethos at ARTISANS and why we value intrinsic motivation so highly. At the end I have also added a brief framework for applying extrinsic motivation while building intrinsic strategies to move forward with.

Difficulties in motivation can arise when adults or others within the child's environment enforce external standards and replace the internal reward system with one that depends upon outside forces to supply all of the rewards (stickers, prizes, excessive praise). Children then begin to feel successful only if *someone else* rewards them for accomplishments. They lose their intrinsic motivation and may only feel success when someone else judges them as successful. In such situations, children may not develop feelings of self-worth, and will judge their own value by someone else's standards. Your child should never need to ask, "Did I do well?" they should know and be confident in their own successes.

A number of studies have demonstrated that offering excessive external rewards for an already internally rewarding behaviour can actually lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation, a phenomenon known as the over justification effect.

There are several strategies adults can use to help children remain more fully intrinsically motivated.

- Provide an environment that allows children to freely explore and to see the effect of their actions (i.e., toys that have visible or tangible changes when moved).
- Allow children ample time when working to allow for persistence. When children are deeply involved with an activity, make sure that they can finish without interruption. Resist the natural urge to "help," and let the child know if, for example, we have to go to assembly in a few minutes.
- Respond to children's needs in a consistent, predictable manner, but allow them to be as independent as possible. This does not mean ceding all control to your children. All children need clearly defined limits. Playing time, however, need not be structured and organized - everyone needs a valve release point.
- Provide many opportunities for children and adults to explore together and interact directly. It is important for both children and adults to be working together on an activity. This lets you observe, model, and encourage your children.
- Provide situations that give children an acceptable challenge. Activities that are slightly difficult for the child will be more motivating and provide for stronger feelings of success when accomplished. This may take some trial and error at first.
- Give children opportunities to evaluate their own accomplishments. Rather than stating that you think they have done a good job, ask them what they think of their work. You'll never go wrong by asking the question, "What do you think?" or "How do you feel?"
- Do not use excessive rewards. They tend to undermine children's ability to value themselves. Praise and rewards should be based upon children's effort rather than on the outcome as this teaches them what to value and use again.

The world through a child's eyes is an awesome place. Allow children to explore and discover their world. Around every corner is an experience just waiting to surprise and excite young growing minds; all they need is a small amount of direction. It is not necessary to praise and reward children for their own actions as they attempt to control their environment. The feelings of accomplishment they gain from results of those actions will often be reward enough. Providing excessive praise and rewards is unnecessary and can become harmful to children's motivation and desire to learn. Remember, the habits and attitudes toward learning that are formed in these early years set the mood for all future learning.

Who else is in your life who demonstrates this?

Now think of people you deem remarkable (Nelson Mandela type figures for me) where did their motivation sit?

At ARTISANS we should be able to use the words *fun, interesting, captivating, enjoyable, and intrinsically motivating* all more or less interchangeably to describe the activities the children are exposed to.

The factors that have been identified as increasing intrinsic motivation are:

- **Challenge:** People are more motivated when they pursue goals that have personal meaning, that relate to their self-esteem, when performance feedback is available, and when attaining the goal is possible but not necessarily certain.

- **Curiosity:** Internal motivation is increased when something in the physical environment grabs the individual's attention (sensory curiosity) and when something about the activity stimulates the person to want to learn more (cognitive curiosity).
- **Control:** People want control over themselves and their environments and want to determine what they pursue.
- **Cooperation and Competition:** Intrinsic motivation can be increased in situations where people gain satisfaction from helping others and also in cases where they are able to compare their own performance favourably to that of others.
- **Recognition:** People enjoy having their accomplishment recognized by others, which can increase internal motivation.

Nursery and Primary school is a time when a child will develop many of the ideas about school that will carry through the rest of his/her life. This is why many educators are attempting to teach with a mastery learning style. By using mastery learning, a teacher can intrinsically motivate children to understand a concept rather than simply regurgitating information. The key to increasing mastery motivation and then increasing intrinsic motivation is to teach children that poor performance and failure are not one and the same. Often, success becomes the goal and it is believed that performance will follow; rather, success is caused by high performance. This relationship is hard for children to understand and many simply find the correlation and then assume that the two also share causality. An emphasis on achievement has been thought to produce higher achievement, which is true on paper, but in the minds of the children; mastery is much more effective at producing high achievement.

Motivational research

A growing body of evidence suggests that intrinsically motivated learners deploy different learning strategies than those who are subject to extrinsic drivers.

Mark Lepper's research (1988) concluded that intrinsically motivated learners tend to employ strategies that demand more effort and that enable them to process information more deeply. They also prefer tasks that are more challenging and are willing to put in greater amounts of effort to achieve learning goals. Externally oriented children, by contrast, are inclined to extend the minimal amount of effort required to get the maximal reward. Research also shows that, in certain situations, extrinsic rewards have the potential for decreasing existing intrinsic motivation.

Lepper also concluded that being able to identify the relevance of learning goals also heightens motivation, as does contextualising learning, that is, helping children to see how skills can be applied to other situations outside the classroom.

Condry and Chambers (1978) found children with intrinsic orientation used more logical information gathering and decision-making strategies than did children who were extrinsically oriented.

The researcher Cyril Houle (1966) conducted one of the most well known studies on what motivates learners and identified three distinct motivational styles:

- **Goal-oriented learners** - who use learning to accomplish clear objectives such as passing exams and tests.
- **Activity-oriented learners** - who use learning as a means of socialising with others and developing relationships.
- **Learning-oriented learners** - who seek knowledge for its own sake and for personal growth.

Recognising the various motivational styles of learners can help teachers to identify the approaches to learning and teaching that will satisfy the needs of individuals. Self-study programmes, for example, will be unlikely to motivate 'activity-oriented' learners unless the programme contains some element of interaction with others.

Alistair Smith (2002) believes that motivation causes physiological changes in the brain. The internal reward system is activated so that the brain's circuitry - the amygdala, the nucleus accumbens, the basal ganglia, the brainstem and the hippocampus - are stimulated. Research shows that with proper motivation more areas of the cortex become involved and learning is quicker.

Daniel Goleman (1995) points to the growing amount of evidence which suggests that emotional intelligence is more important than academic intelligence. Goleman believes that self-motivation lies at the heart of emotional intelligence and that emotions control the on-off switch to learning. Learners who are relaxed and calm are much better placed to absorb new knowledge and develop new skills. Creating a non-threatening classroom environment where mistakes are viewed as

opportunities to learn, reduces tension, opens the mind and increases the opportunity for learning. By contrast, fear, anxiety, stress and anger are emotional factors that adversely affect learning.

Children avoid embarrassing situations as much as possible and if a child doesn't volunteer to answer a question, then he cannot get it wrong. Failure is debilitating to a child's education if that child is extrinsically motivated. Those children develop a learned helplessness as a result of failure feedback whereas intrinsically motivated children will view a failed task as a challenge and attempt it again, which avoids the helplessness effects. (Boggiano, 1985). Learned helplessness can lead to an academic, downward spiral caused by a subsequent lowering of motivational level. (Gottfried, 1994). It would seem that if a child's educational motivation is extrinsic, then a lower performance level would almost be expected during later years.

School based research

The Motivated School

Alan McLean (2003), a prominent Scottish psychologist, carried out extensive research into the motivation of children in Glasgow schools. This resulted in the publication of 'The Motivated School' - a body of work which has been influential at all levels in Scottish education. Mclean identified three internal drivers that motivate all learners and that a greater understanding of these drivers by schools and teachers can help to increase levels of self-motivation.

- **Affiliation:** feelings of belonging and connectedness with others. Children with a strong sense of affiliation feel that they belong to the school; they are included, accepted, respected and supported by staff and their fellow pupils.
- **Agency:** the degree of self-belief or self-confidence. It is the belief that one has the capacity and ability to learn and achieve. Young people who believe that they can learn and achieve their goals through effort and technique, are much more likely to succeed. By contrast, the belief that ability is fixed is a major cause of underachievement in schools.
- **Autonomy:** the capacity to be self-determining and to exercise control over our lives. In a school context, autonomy refers to the extent to which learners are empowered to make choices and decisions about their learning and to take actions either as an individual or as part of a group.

McLean believes that greater motivation for all can be achieved where schools foster affiliation, agency and autonomy, whilst reducing levels of alienation, anxiety and apathy. McLean's recently developed 'Learning Stances' framework focuses on the pupil's standing within the group and the nature of his or her engagement with others. The Learning Stances framework can be used to explain differences within and between learners and to determine different motivational drivers affecting each individual. The differentiating characteristics of each stance, together with the pupil drivers help teachers to provide appropriate learning experiences for pupils.

This underpins ARTISANS child leadership philosophy.

The implications for teachers and schools

'We need to rethink our traditional views of motivation. This means setting aside the assumption that people are primarily motivated by rewards and punishments, or getting good grades and instead assuming that, in the right atmosphere, young people will contribute and make commitments because they want to learn, to do good work for its own sake and be recognised as people.' Peter Senge, 'The Fifth Discipline'

There are profound implications for teachers, schools and the education system as a whole in Peter Senge's message. The implications go well beyond learning and teaching in the classroom to personal and professional development for teachers and how we lead and manage our schools. This means rethinking our traditional models of motivation so that schools play down the role of rewards, competition and comparing young people, emphasising instead the importance of personal goals and targets and fostering a climate that builds and sustains higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Hence ARTISANS focus on role modelling and on reflection.

Alan Mclean identifies strategies that will help schools to develop a climate where both teachers and children can become more self-motivated. He calls them the 'external drivers' of motivation. They are:

- **Engagement** - taking a genuine interest in individuals: valuing, respecting and affirming them as people and having high expectations of what they might achieve.
- **Structure** - providing people with a secure environment in which they know where they stand and are clear what is expected of them and what needs to be done.
- **Stimulation** - providing interesting, challenging and enjoyable learning activities that arouse their curiosity and make them want to learn.

- **Feedback** - talking regularly with people about what they have achieved and making using praise and positive comments where appropriate, but also ensuring that feedback is honest, accurate, and realistic and, where appropriate, critical.

McLean believes that these four drivers operate across two dimensions: **relationships** and **power**. Young people become empowered through stimulation and structure and find affirmation in engagement and feedback.

The main messages

- Motivation comes from the self: it is locked from the inside out.
- Although children are all born with intrinsic motivation to learn, levels of self-motivation decline as they progress through the education system.
- Children begin to form beliefs about their ability at an early age and these attitudes can affect motivation and achievement.
- Children's natural motivation to learn needs to be nurtured and stimulated rather than controlled.
- Children's thoughts, positive or negative, have a big influence on their motivation, especially their ideas about progress and ability.
- Intrinsic motivation is more effective than systems based on extrinsic rewards and sanctions.
- Emotions play a major role in both motivation and learning.

"The main difference between high ability achievers and high ability underachievers is that the achievers have learned the attitudes and strategies that enable them to be successful in a school setting."

Joanne Rand Whitmore, 1980

"In my experience... achievement depends on willingness to accept a challenge, take risks, make errors and the belief that one has the control over the outcomes. Achievement is hindered by perfectionism, fear of failure, and the belief that control, credit and/or blame belong to someone else."

P. Theroux Jan 1994

Practical ideas for developing intrinsic motivation

1. Challenge Them

Offer children opportunities to undertake real challenges. Encourage them to take intellectual risks. This gives children an opportunity to discover the relationship between effort and success; between success and motivation, and to develop higher self-concept. If the children do not see the need to make an effort they sometimes will not bother to make one. Even brilliant children are not motivated to achieve if the work is too easy. Gifted behaviours are often not evident until the child is actually being challenged. Most children are excited by a challenge if they have the strategies that they need to succeed. (See 5)

2. Build on Strengths First

Building on strengths first give children an opportunity to use their talents to achieve success by developing their strengths. While they are engaged in these successful tasks we can help them to learn how to improve other skills (teach to specific needs) in an environment where the child cares about doing a good job.

When the primary focus is on children weaknesses children are spending much of their time being unsuccessful, practicing what they do badly. This lowers self esteem and lowers motivation.

Failure is un motivating. Success is motivating when childrens understand why they are succeeding and are able to develop their confidence and competence.

3. Offer Choices

Offering choices develops ownership. When the child makes decisions he or she is more likely to accept ownership & control of the results. This sense of control fosters responsibility. When the control belongs to the teacher so does the ownership. However, always offer choices that are equally acceptable in your eyes.

Negotiate-How can children have input in order to reach the required goals? Can they reach necessary goals their way? When they achieve a non-negotiable goal perhaps they may have input on the follow-up activity. Remember it is not realistic for children of differing abilities to be expected to aim for the same goal using the same method. When children are offered opportunities to make decisions they learn a great deal about the consequences of their choices.

They also learn to value themselves and their own decision-making ability. Where ever it is appropriate, take advantage of the children's talents and interests to motivate them. Choices can be offered in the areas of: Topics, learning Processes (methodologies) and Products. Within any set topic or theme there are usually a variety of sub-topics where children may identify a personal interest. Learning processes can be varied and children can be encouraged to find alternative strategies for solving problems & then they can discuss the merits and disadvantages of each. Permit children the choice of product. There are hundreds of alternatives ways of producing information. For checklists of alternative Topic, Process & Product ideas.

4. Provide a Secure Environment

Permit children to fail without penalty. Learning how to deal with failure is critical for developing motivation and successful learning. Children should learn that they can and must learn from their mistakes. Fear of failure sometimes causes children to deliberately sabotage their own efforts because deliberate failure is easier to accept than the failures to which they fall victim. (No control is equated with being powerless.)

5. Teach Them How to Make Their Tasks More Manageable

Narrowing or broadening the topic to a challenging but manageable size is very important for developing motivation. However, it is not just sufficient for us to just give them manageable activities. Not only is this an essential problem solving strategy, but it is also an essential life skill. Children need to know how they can make their own activities more manageable. Even the most challenging tasks can be made more manageable by breaking them down into smaller parts and then prioritizing the steps. As each small part is achieved a measure of success is attained. As the successes mount up children begin to recognize their own enthusiasm for learning. (Effort and Struggle during skill development results in Success and Motivation)

6. Use Rewards & Sanctions with caution

Although there are appropriate places in education for both rewards and punishment, they are both external factors that can rob children of personal control. Obviously there must be consequences for different kinds of behaviours, and real success needs some kind of recognition or attention.

However, both rewards and punishment can be negative factors in developing intrinsic motivation. Rewards cause children to work for the wrong reasons. Punishment often fosters resentment and lack of co-operation. When rewards are external factors, motivation is also external and it will only apply when monitored externally.

Rewards are most effective when used with lower ability or unmotivated children when the rewards is used for a short time only.

- Never use rewards over a long period.
- Never increase the reward for increased expectations.
- Decrease the rewards as soon as they begin to become effective. Long use only reinforces the external control.

The real reward for good work must eventually become the satisfaction derived from effort and success.

7. Help Childrens Develop An Internal Locus Of Control

Locus of control is closely related to motivation. Childrens who feel they have the power to control some events in their lives are more likely to become self motivated than children who see themselves as powerless. If they don't believe they have any power/control over the events in their lives... then everything that goes wrong is someone else's fault, not theirs.

The child who perceives that he or she has no power will either see himself as a victim of chance (and/or other people's power) or as a warrior who needs to gain power to control or manipulate other people in order to avoid being helpless.

Children who have been praised too much, controlled too much, given too much power too early, rescued and/or blamed too often tend to be manipulative by either active or passive behaviours.

8. Avoid Power Struggles

Poorly motivated children are often disruptive. Avoid power struggles whenever possible, and never get into a power struggle unless you have the means to win. Choose your battles. Children who engage in power struggles also need to be offered choices, but the choices must always be limited to the ones that you find acceptable.

9. Use Ambiguity Occasionally

Give children opportunities to learn strategies for dealing with ambiguity and or frustration. Some children are convinced that every question has only one right answer. Help them realize that there is often more than one right method or answer.

If they see all questions as being either right or wrong they will probably see themselves as being good when they are right and bad when they are wrong. This doesn't leave much room for motivation.

Brainstorming with someone else is an excellent strategy for looking for alternative interpretations of and solutions to the problem of ambiguity.

Frustration can be motivating when you have problem solving strategies and you see problems as something to be solved rather than to be avoided.

Unmotivated underachieving children frequently use avoidance rather than an effective strategy when frustrated.

10. Offer Open-ended Activities to Develop Creativity

Give them opportunities and strategies to develop their creativity.

Childrens perform with higher motivation when their creativity is engaged. Challenge children to construct original & creative products to support their written reports.

11. Teach Childrens to Evaluate Themselves

Self-evaluation needs to address the questions: "What was done well?" & "How can it be improved?" It is far more powerful for children to recognize the answers to these questions than it is for them to be told the answers.

Children self-evaluation is often difficult for the first few attempts. Childrens want to achieve a high evaluation but are reluctant to "brag" about their success. It has been my experience that the majority of children lean towards being too hard on themselves, but some children can be unrealistically generous initially. The ability to realistically evaluate ones own performance improves with practice and is both empowering and highly motivating.

12. Attention Seeking Behaviours

Unmotivated children frequently seek adult attention. They can actively demand attention or passively demand attention, and the attention they seek can be either negative or positive attention.

Positive adult attention can be a highly motivating factor but only if it is earned by reasonable effort. It can reinforce poor motivation if it is overdone or given for the wrong reasons. Too much praise makes "no praise" look like an invitation for attention seeking behaviours. The child who is motivated by excessive praise may do very little when the praise is absent.

Negative attention for some children is just as satisfying as positive attention and in fact if they are used to a great deal of negative attention it may be more comfortable because it is so familiar. Difficult as it is, ignoring demanding attention seeking behaviours is sometimes more effective than giving negative attention. However, positive attention should be used to reinforce acceptable behaviours.

Passive children are the most difficult to motivate because they tend to waste their energy trying to get others to feel sorry for them. They refuse to take risks, sometimes sabotaging their own efforts to prove they deserve our pity. It is important to recognize these behaviours and guard against compounding the problem by being too sympathetic. Sympathy only convinces these children that they really do have a problem. It is important to recognize the moment when these children actually make some progress and to give the appropriate attention at that moment. They should receive a positive attention response any time they take a risk or make an effort.

13. Competition

Competition can enhance or reduce motivation depending on how it is used. It is good for some, but it may result in a few winners and many losers.

Unmotivated and or underachieving children often have difficulty dealing with defeat. Until they are ready to cope with defeat it is more productive to encourage children to compete against their own performance rather than with someone else's.

Competing against oneself under controlled conditions means that everyone wins. Use the clock. Time their performance for 1 minute, estimate what can be accomplished in 5 minutes. And challenge them to beat their own record over a longer time

span. Gradually increase the time factor and expectations. You can challenge children to compete against their own performance in the quantity and quality of their productivity, within a specific time frame or it can be used to increase on-task behaviour or decrease inappropriate behaviour. In fact most criteria which can be used to evaluate progress can be used for a children to compete against his/her own previous performance.

The long term goal is to teach children to lose gracefully and use defeat as motivation to improve. (See self-evaluation.) Eventually children must be encouraged to see "failure" as a positive experience. Every loss in competition and every failed attempt is an opportunity to learn what can be improved.

14. Childrens Need To Understand The Relevance Of All Their School Activities

Childrens who do not understand the relevance of a school activity are not usually motivated to accomplish it unless they are motivated to please the teacher. (External motivation.) Clearly establish the expected goal and required method. Let the children know the benefits that will be realized.

This is especially important when no choices are being offered.

15. Perfectionism - Is It Good or Bad?

Perfectionism goes beyond trying to do ones best. Perfectionism is getting hung-up on being perfect. Childrens need to take pride in their work but perfectionists allow their fear of making a mistake to inhibit progress. It can be seen in the child who keeps erasing everything, or keeps starting over making slow progress or not finishing. It can sometimes be seen in the child who procrastinates too much, forgets homework or loses work rather than admit it is not perfect.

These children need to learn that completing work on time is more important than being perfect, attempting is more important than succeeding, and failure is an opportunity to learn. Children need to see us (teachers and parents) making mistakes occasionally. We need to model and demonstrate the process of learning and recovering from our mistakes.

And we, as teachers need to remember that if it can be done perfectly, it is probably too easy. If it is perfect they are probably practicing (rehearsing) previously acquired knowledge or skills and may be learning nothing new at all.

16. Reinforce Required Strategies

One reason children have difficulty sustaining their motivation when working independently is because they either don't understand or don't remember the required strategies. Never assume a children knows how to do something independently unless you see it demonstrated.

Also children can sometimes remember all of the steps within a required strategy and still not understand why they are doing them. Conversely they can understand the strategy but forget the steps or the sequence involved. As Graham Foster has often said: "Just because it's been taught, doesn't mean it's been caught."

The strategy therefore is to make sure that the skills required for an independent task are readily available when a children is expected to apply them. This can be done by oral review, by have children keep a note book on skills and strategies, or by using posters and skill charts on the walls. When a children appears unmotivated to work independently have him/her demonstrate that he knows what to do. Don't be unduly influenced by their ability to verbalize instructions. Verbalizing instructions means they remember the steps, it does not necessarily mean they know how to do them.

17. Teach A Variety Of Organizational Strategies

Childrens need to know that there are countless numbers of effective organizational strategies. Initially it may be sufficient to have at least one effective method. However, as teachers we need to remember that non-sequential organization is not necessarily disorganized. Some children are very organized but they may be non-sequential or non-linear in their thought patterns. For these children a linear sequence of steps 1-10 may be inhibiting. They may be confused by what seems to be a logical sequence for a sequential thinker.

A variety of organizational strategies encourages children to build on the strength of their own thinking style, and they will develop an arsenal of strategies to chose from. Eventually they will learn to vary the strategy to suit the requirements of the task.

18. Role Models

Some apparently unmotivated children are not really unmotivated but are motivated to follow an inappropriate model. For example a significant person in their life might be demonstrating the role of "drop-out", "non-academic", "unsuccessful" or the "I didn't need to work because I was so clever or because it is boring " type. These children need a positive role model.

Teachers can become role models for children. We can demonstrate being an effective writer, an independent learner, a good loser etc. When time permits it is highly effective to model quality work by rewriting a few of their sentences or brief note facts (jot-notes) and ask them to decide which is better and why.

Peer editing or self evaluation where rubrics and/or specific criteria is applied to the self-evaluation process can also serve to illustrate good work habits and quality work.

19. Scaffolding

Scaffolding relates to the supportive role that a teacher undertakes to ensure success in activities where a children is being challenged. By consistent evaluation of children work teachers can provide just-in-time small group instruction to facilitate children being able to perform effectively at a level above that which they handle independently. It is important to remember that if a children can succeed thoroughly independently then he/she is only practicing something that has already been learned and the children is not being challenged to construct new meaning in the learning process. When encouraging children to stretch and take on greater challenges it is important the teacher provide the structure and guidance to make the learning successful.

What if they are not intrinsically to start motivated to start with?

Extrinsic motivation can be beneficial in a number of situations:

- External rewards can induce interest and participation in something the individual had no initial interest in.
- Extrinsic rewards can be used to motivate people to acquire new skills or knowledge. Once these initial skills have been acquired, people may then become more intrinsically motivated to pursue the activity.
- External rewards can also be a source of feedback, allowing people to know when their performance has achieved a standard deserving of reinforcement.

While intrinsic motivation is best, it is not always possible in each and every situation. In some cases, children simply have no internal desire to engage in an activity. Excessive rewards may be problematic, but when used appropriately, extrinsic motivators can be a useful tool. For example, extrinsic motivation can be used to get people to complete a task in which they have no internal interest.

Researchers have arrived at three major conclusions with regards to extrinsic rewards and their influence on intrinsic motivation:

1. **Unexpected external rewards typically do not decrease intrinsic motivation.**
2. **Praise can help increase internal motivation.** Researchers have found that offering positive praise and feedback when people do something better in comparison to other attempts (man of the match, most improved) can actually improve intrinsic motivation.
3. **Intrinsic motivation will decrease, however, when external rewards are given for completing a specific task or only doing minimal work.**

If a reward boosts your feeling of competence after doing good work, your enjoyment of the task may increase. Rewards, rightly administered, can motivate high performance and creativity. Rewards should never be bribes or used to control - they should be as intended a specific reward for a specific act.

I find this topic fascinating - so I hope some of that is contagious and you all become fascinated too.