Chapter 1: Introduction to Motivation

Orientation Slide

Transcript:

This module explores the expectancy-value theory of motivation. You will learn how to identify if a student’s struggle with motivation is related to expectancy, value, or both. There are two other modules in this series that explore expectancy and value in greater depth and provide concrete strategies for building each of these aspects of motivation.

Introduction to Expectancy-Value Theory of Motivation

Transcript:
In any given classroom, there is a range of student motivation. Some students are extremely motivated. They come to school ready and excited to learn every day.

Alternatively, there are some students who may appear to be unmotivated. They come to school but don’t seem interested in learning. Building these students’ motivation may be a lot of work, but it is possible.

**Teacher Comments**

Listen to these common teacher statements concerning student motivation.

Teacher 1: “Eric is always off-task! I can’t get him to do anything.”

Teacher 2: “Robert just can’t do the work. I give up.”

Teacher 3: “Angie doesn’t have any confidence when it comes to math.”

Teacher 4: “Samantha just doesn’t care about school.”

Teacher 5: “Michael is such a lazy student.”
Module Purpose

These statements blame students for their low motivation.

Transcript:

Each of these statements is problematic because they blame students for their low motivation, and seem to absolve the teacher of any responsibility. In reality, building student motivation is part of a teacher’s job.

Moving forward you will:

- explore motivation theory and different elements that affect motivation
- become familiar with common behaviors that correspond to these elements
- develop strategies for addressing these specific aspects of motivation when working with students

Lack of Motivation
Transcript:

It's safe to say that we've all had, or will have, a student who is unmotivated. A lack of motivation might manifest itself as an unwillingness to begin or complete assignments. It also might look like disengagement, or a negative attitude.

Motivation researchers Elizabeth Linnenbrink and Paul Pintrich state that teachers need to understand how and why students are motivated (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002).

As a student, I may be motivated during reading because I like the teacher, I like reading, or because I believe I am a good reader. During math, though, I may be unmotivated because I don't like the teacher, or think I'm “bad” at math.

Chapter 2: Characteristics of Motivation

Characteristics

Transcript:

Motivation is not a fixed thing. A student’s motivation may vary depending on the academic content, task, or activity.
Motivated Children

Typical characteristics of a highly motivated student include enthusiasm, interest, involvement, and curiosity. Highly motivated students tend to persist on a given task and are better at coping with challenges and setbacks.

The opposite could be said of unmotivated students. They may appear to be apathetic, indifferent, uninvolved, or even withdrawn. A student with low motivation will often give up when a task becomes challenging. This student may not even begin a task if she believes that it is too difficult.

Chapter 3: Motivation Theory

Motivation Theory

Transcript:
Let’s talk about motivation theory.

Motivation is a complex concept. There are many different theories about what causes someone to be motivated, and what can affect their motivation. We are going to discuss one of these theories: the expectancy-value theory. This theory was pioneered by professors Alan Wigfield and Jacquelynne Eccles (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000).

**I can and I want**

![Expectancy-Value Theory Diagram](image)

**Transcript:**

Expectancy is a student's belief about how well he or she will do on a task. It is the “I can” part of student motivation.

Value refers to a student’s overall desire to complete a task or engage in an activity with academic content. This is the “I want” part of student motivation.
The Expectancy-Value Theory

Transcript:

At any given time, a student’s motivation is affected by both expectancy and value.

Consider a student who has the skills necessary to compute quadratic equations but doesn’t think it’s important. In this instance the student can do the task, but doesn’t want to. This student is struggling with value and is unmotivated.

Alternatively, consider a student who doesn’t have the skills or confidence to compute quadratic equations, but believes that it is useful and important. He wants to do the task, but can’t. This student is likely feeling unmotivated because he is struggling with expectancy.

Chapter 4: Expectancy

Characteristics of Expectancy
Transcript:

It's helpful to think about expectancy in terms of two things: the abilities a student possesses and his belief in his intelligence. Research shows that a student’s belief about his intelligence is directly tied to academic success. Students develop both conscious and unconscious beliefs about their intelligence. These beliefs are heavily affected by a student’s experiences in school and can vary based on task or content area.

As teachers, we need work to understand our students’ expectancy beliefs about a task, content area, or school in general. We can do this by observing the student, having a meaningful conversation, and then applying specific strategies that will build motivation and increase academic success.

When we encounter a student who demonstrates a struggle with expectancy, it’s important to know that change won’t happen overnight. We must work with the student to show him concrete examples of how, with effort, his abilities will improve.

Chapter 5: Value

Characteristics of Value

Transcript:

Now let’s take a look at value, or the “I want to” part of motivation. There are numerous factors that can influence the extent to which a student values a task, a class, or even school in general.

Like expectancy, value may differ according to task or content area.

Think about a student who values science because she believes it’s important, worth the effort, and thinks the teacher works to make it interesting. This student has a high value for the class and content area.

Now think about another student in the same science class. This student does not believe that science is important. He thinks that the class requires too much effort and doesn’t think the teacher makes class interesting. This student probably has a low value for the class.
Chapter 6: Expectancy Value Quadrant

Expectancy-Value Theory Quadrant

Transcript:

In this section, you will identify the areas of motivation in which a student is struggling. To do this, you will use a resource entitled the Expectancy-Value Quadrant.

Quadrant

Transcript:

The Expectancy-Value Quadrant illustrates how expectancy and value are related and can influence student motivation.

Take a moment to review this four-square and think about how expectancy and value are related.
Running a marathon

Let’s examine this quadrant using the analogy of running a marathon.

Dave is an active adult. He believes that daily exercise is important in order to stay healthy. He proudly displays numerous ribbons and medals he has won from various marathons. Dave can and wants to run a marathon. Dave’s expectancy and value are high.

Nikki’s friends are signing up for a marathon. They ask Nikki to join them. She enjoys running, but doesn’t believe that she would ever be able to finish a marathon. Her lack of confidence inhibits her from signing up, even though she wants to. Nikki’s expectancy is low, but her value is high.

Les runs daily. He enjoys running before he goes to work and again in the evenings. On weekends he typically goes for a long run. However, Les has no desire to run in a marathon. Les can run the marathon, but he doesn’t want to.

Sam is not interested in running at all. She doesn’t believe that she is a good runner no matter how hard she tries. She can never run more than a mile. She doesn’t think that running is important or useful either. Sam can’t run the marathon and she doesn’t want to. Overall, her motivation is low.

When working with students, it’s important to keep in mind that they may be struggling with expectancy, value, or a combination of both.
Place Jack

Transcript:

Let's take a look at how this can manifest itself in a classroom. Meet Jack, a student in Mrs. Ramos' sixth grade class. Read through her observations of Jack and click where you think he falls on the quadrant.

Feedback

Based on what we know about Jack, it’s safe to say that he has low expectancy and high value. His below-grade level assessment scores and lack of basic skills indicate a real struggle with ability. In addition, constantly asking for his teacher’s help is indicative of a struggle with his actual skill level as well as a lack of belief in his abilities. However, it seems that his value is intact as evidenced by his enthusiasm for participating in class and desire to complete assignments. Mrs. Ramos will have to work with Jack to increase his skills and belief in himself.
Conclusion

Transcript:

When you apply this quadrant to one of your own students, it can be used as a starting point for building her motivation. Once you have identified she is struggling with expectancy or value, proceed to the corresponding modules entitled Helping Students “Want” to Achieve and Helping Students Believe They “Can” Achieve. If her overall motivation is low, consider visiting both.

Think back to when you were a student. Did you have a teacher who - for whatever reason - motivated you? Alternatively, did you have a teacher who didn’t really seem to care? Building student motivation takes time and effort. Which teacher do you want to be?