

AFRICAN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
IMO STATE UNIVERSITY
NIGERIA
VOL. 9 NO. 3 SEPTEMBER 2020

MOTIVATING LEARNERS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

MARILYN U. OCHOMA (PhD)
Department of Curriculum Studies and Instructional Technology
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Attaining effective learning outcome is the goal of every teaching and learning transaction. The role of motivation in attaining effective learning is crucial. The teacher needs to consciously plan to motivate learners in order for learning to be effective. The study tried to x-ray the concept of motivation and its types; learners' behaviour; effective learning; and essential tips on how teachers can motivate their learners for effective learning. It was concluded that since every nation desires that her citizens contribute maximally to its well-being upon graduation from the school, teachers should make concerted efforts to motivate learners in order to achieve effective learning. The following are some of the recommendations made: Teachers should deliberately plan to motivate their learners both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated; the classroom should be a place that learners will be willing to learn; and teachers should be enthusiastic about what they teach.

Keywords: Motivation; Behaviour; Effective Learning.

Introduction

Motivation is essential in everything individuals do in life. For set goals to be attained in any sphere of life, motivation is needed. Motivation is essential as well in the teaching-learning process just as it is in the business sphere. For teachers to perform well, they need motivation likewise, the learners. Learners who are motivated and involved in the learning process tend to do well in their academic work. Such learners are not likely to misbehave in the classroom. Whereas, learners who experience boredom are not involved in the classroom activities hence, may not be motivated to learn. Such learners are most likely to misbehave in the course of the teaching-learning process and this has the tendency of affecting the effectiveness of learning at all levels of the education system. Effective teaching is what is often talked about. This has to do with the teacher doing the right things in the teaching process so that at the end of the teaching events, the goals and objectives of the lesson would have been achieved; the learner for whom the lesson was planned for, would have learnt (Ochoma, 2019). Such teaching produces the desired effect. Learning too needs to be effective, that is, produce the desired effect.

MARILYN U. OCHOMA (PhD)
MOTIVATING LEARNERS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

Some researchers are of the view that motivation is the most important factor for success, regardless of any inherent aptitude. Motivation in classroom is so vital that teachers need to plan their instruction in a way that the level of motivation increases as the instruction progresses. As teachers plan for instruction on daily basis, they need to carefully plan for how to motivate their learners so that learning will be effective, that is, produce the desired result. Each lesson ought to be presented in such a way that the attention and interest of the learners are aroused at the outset of the instruction, and retained all through the lesson delivery (Ochoma, 2016). Research on motivation is of relevance to the classroom teacher because he needs to have a clear idea about underlying elements that make learners behave the way they do (Ituen, 2004). It has been observed that in recent years, many countries have debated the issue of educational failure and viewed the deficiency of the school system as regards its failure to motivate the youth to the point where they feel like learning (Reggie-Fubara, 1990 in Ochoma 2016). It is against this backdrop that it is deemed necessary to x-ray ways of motivating learners for effective learning.

Concept of Motivation

Motivation is derived from the word “movere”, meaning “to move”. It is a scientific word used to represent the reasons for an individual’s actions, desires, needs, etc. Literally, motivation is the desire to do something. It is what makes an individual to do something and strive to succeed. It can also be seen as a force which directs and sustains behaviour towards the achievement of a goal. It is the force that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. The reason an individual has for doing a thing spurs him to continue until he attains the desired result. Motivation is the driving force used to meet the satisfaction of need. According to Awotuo-Efebo (2005), motivation can be seen as the choice of an activity one makes plus the persistence and intensity with which the activity is pursued. To Navid (2013), it is the factor that activates, directs, and sustains goal-directed behaviour. Whichever way we look at it, motivation is what causes an individual to take action for instance, whether to register for an educational programme that will enable earn a degree or to learn a trade and acquire a skill. Souders (2020) remarked that the simplest definition of motivation boils down to *wanting*. Motivation is what encourages an individual to behave in certain ways and push himself until the target is accomplished

In the teaching-learning context, motivation becomes an imperative propensity as it is the degree of involvement that learners exhibit in their learning activities. That is, the energy learners put into their academic work. It is a process by which the internal energies of the learners are directed towards effective learning. Motivation in the present context therefore, is the drive, energy or degree of activity that learners display towards their academic work.

Types of Motivation

Motivation comes from two sources, oneself and others. These sources form the types of motivation which are: *internal* and *external* motivation, or *intrinsic* and or *extrinsic* motivation. Internal or intrinsic motivation originates from within the individual. It is driven by an interest in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure. It is determined by factors inside the individual. It occurs when an individual is internally motivated to do something because it either brings him pleasure or he thinks that the

thing is important. As it relates to learning, intrinsic motivation occurs when a learner feels that what he is learning is significant and engages in the task willingly, works to improve his skills and thus increase his capabilities (Ryan & Edward, 2000).

According to Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks & Perencerich (2004), learners are likely to be intrinsically motivated if they:

- ❖ Attribute their educational results to factors under their own control, also known as autonomy or locus of control;
- ❖ Believe they have the skills to be effective agents in reaching their desire goals also known as self-efficacy beliefs;
- ❖ Are interested in mastering a topic, not just in achieving good grades.

Internal or intrinsic motivation has the advantage of being long-lasting and self-sustaining, while it has the disadvantage of being slow to affect behaviour and requires special lengthy preparation. It is necessary to note that information about indicators of the learner's internal sources of motivation - his interest, needs, attitudes and aspirations, etc., will help to make the classroom as well as the school, invigorating force to learners which will in return, make learning effective. External or extrinsic motivation on the other hand, comes from outside of the individual. It is determined by factors outside the individual. It refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain a desired outcome. It is drive to action that springs from outside influences instead of from one's own feelings. External motivation can thus be traced to the environment. In the teaching-learning situation, external motivation comes into play when a learner is compelled to do something or act in a certain way because of factors external to him. Instances of external motivation are:

- ❖ A learner studying very hard because of the reward he would have which can be a good grade, money, the certificate he obtains at the end of the programme, and so on;
- ❖ Participating in a competition in order to win a prize or trophy;
- ❖ Coercion, threat, fear of punishment and blame that the learner will likely face hence, the avoidance of disruptive behaviours.

When compared to internal motivation, external motivation has the advantage of enabling individuals to become easily motivated and work towards a set goal, while it has the disadvantage of the individual only being motivated as long as the external rewards are satisfying. Ituen (2004) rightly pointed out that the way an individual behaves is the result of a complex combination of elements from both the internal and the external sources of motivation. When the internal and external sources contribute positively to the way an individual behaves, the person behaves positively, but when it is otherwise, the person will behave negatively. For the individual to be balanced, both the internal and the external motivation must contribute positively. Borich (1988) in Ituen (2004) observed that the key to motivating learners is bringing the internal and external sources of motivation together in ways that actively engage the learners in the learning process.

Motivation and Learners' Behaviour

Behaviour is a response or reaction to either internal or external stimuli. It is the way and manner an individual may conduct himself. Learners exhibit all kinds of behaviour in the classroom. While some of learners' behaviours are desirable and can facilitate the teaching-

MARILYN U. OCHOMA (PhD)
MOTIVATING LEARNERS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

learning process, some are undesirable and can hinder the process. All undesirable behaviours are referred to as misbehaviours. Misbehaviour is any behaviour, action, or conduct that is incongruous with prescribed norms or standard of behaviour. Such behaviour is usually disruptive and has the tendency of interfering with the teaching-learning situation (Ochoma, 2016).

Learners are bound to exhibit one form of misbehaviour or the other, from time to time in the course of the teaching-learning process. Olorunfemi (1999) in Ochoma (2016) rightly stated that it is highly impossible to always gain 100 percent co-operation from learners, stressing that there could be some once-a-while deviation from rules which could be termed as minor misbehaviour, and others that are grievous or major. The following cues as identified in Ochoma (2016 p.122) are examples of undesirable behaviours that learners can exhibit:

- Hissing;
- Shuffling of the feet;
- Yawning frequently, an indication of fatigue or hunger;
- Improper bodily posture like leaning on the desk;
- Moving the eye to a wrong direction - backward, sideways, etc. rather than focusing on the teacher;
- Looking sleepy and tired, with eyes almost closed;
- Learners coming together to form smaller groups and engaging in other;
- Discussions, not related to the topic under discussion; and so on.

All of such behaviours are indication that all is not well. They are instances of misbehaviour. In dealing with misbehaviour, it is suggested that a teacher can:

- Ignore the misbehavior, especially when it is minor.
- Make use of non-verbal interventions such as facial expressions, eye contact, hand signals, etc.
- Make use of verbal intervention such as giving direct commands to address the misbehavior.
- Plan a penalty, if the misbehaviour is grievous (Olorunfemi, 1999 in Ochoma, 2016).

The following are some of the reasons why learners misbehave:

- ❖ Lack of clear instructional objectives;
- ❖ The repetition of instructional contents that learners have understood;
- ❖ Interrupting the flow of instruction;
- ❖ The teacher talking over the learners;
- ❖ The teacher just moving on with the teaching, whether learners understand or not;
- ❖ Attempt to run away from the reality of failure by the learner;
- ❖ Lack of interest on on-going activity on the part of the learner; and so on (Ochoma p.235-240).

It is necessary that teachers are sensitive and observant in the course of lesson delivery in order to identify undesirable behaviours and manage them accordingly. What is needed at such a time is for the teacher to motivate the learners; do something that will spur the learners to change their attitude and learn. The teacher can do any of the following in an attempt to manage instances of misbehaviour:

- ❖ Vary the activity;
- ❖ Change the pace of the lesson by lowering or increasing the pitch of his voice;
- ❖ Become more lively by cracking interesting jokes;
- ❖ Change the quality of his teaching or lesson presentation;
- ❖ Make use of attractive instructional materials; and so on.

Doing the above will go a long way to help in making a lesson lively, sustaining learners' interest in the learning task with the resultant effect of attaining effective learning.

Effective Learning

Learning is regarded worldwide as an evidence of success of an educational programme. Learning is not compulsory; it is dependent on the context of information. It does not happen all at once but builds upon and is shaped by what the individual already knows. To this end, learning can be viewed as a process, rather than mere collection of factual and procedural knowledge (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Learning is a process that begins at birth and ends at death. It is a continuous process; a life-long activity. Learning has been defined in various ways. On a general note, learning has to do with the act of acquiring skill or knowledge of something. It is the process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, experiencing something. It is active process that leads to a change within an individual due to the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitude.

As a technical term used by psychologists and educationists, learning is defined in behavioural terms to mean observable change in the behaviour of the individual. It is viewed as any change of behaviour which is a result of experience, and which causes individuals to face later situation differently. Oladele (1987) in Bolarin (1994) defined it as the process by which one profits from past experience. Uzoeshi and Iwundu (2002) defined it as relatively enduring change in behaviour as a result of practice or experience. Common to all the definitions of learning is the fact that there must be a change in behaviour for one to say that learning has taken place, and the change must be relatively permanent change. Learning is effective when it produces the desired effect; the expected change in the behaviour of the learner. Not until knowledge and skills are acquired and used, effective learning has not taken place. Effective learning produces changes or modification in the individual in question. The individual that is so exposed to the learning situation acquires knowledge and skills that he puts to practice with the resultant effect of visible change in behaviour.

Achieving effective learning outcome begins with clearly established learning goals which identify the academic content as well as the tasks or competencies the learners are expected to perform by the end of the learning task or upon the completion of the course. In designing an effective learning experience, it is necessary that:

- ❖ The learner's context, past, present and future, are understood;
- ❖ The learner's existing level of knowledge should be established and responded to; and
- ❖ Adequate and appropriate practice over time are be provided.

More often than not, effective learning requires more than just making multiple connections of new ideas to old ones. It requires that the learner restructures his thinking radically; change the connections among the things he already know; even discard some long-held views about things. Teachers are expected to facilitate the quantity and quality of learning if effective learning is to be attained. To successfully do this, learners need to be motivated.

Motivating Learners for Effective Learning

Motivation plays an important role in an attempt to attain optimal learning outcome. No learning can take place without the desire to learn. It has been observed that the failure of many teachers to motivate their learners to learn is a major cause of ineffective education. When learners are properly motivated by teachers, the door to learning opens; fear is expelled; learners' resources are liberated; and the stage is set for result-oriented teaching that will bring about effective learning outcome. A motivated learner is hard-working and persistent; industrious; and interested in learning. He has a goal he is pursuing, and he works hard until the goal is achieved. Motivation in the teaching/learning context can:

- ❖ Direct the learner's conduct towards a particular learning goals;
- ❖ Bring about increase in the effort the learner puts in, in the learning task;
- ❖ Increase persistence in learning activities;
- ❖ Heighten cognitive processing of the learner;
- ❖ Make learners enthusiastic about the learning task in question; and
- ❖ Lead to effective teaching and learning outcome.

Since motivation is of crucial importance to teaching and learning, it is necessary that every classroom teacher is acquainted with conditions that spur learners to learn most and those that hinder them from learning. The following are essential tips that will help teachers motivate their learners in order to attain effective learning:

- ❖ **Know the Learners:** Teachers should make concerted effort to know their learners. The need to know their cognitive level that is level of understanding level; their disposition; what is most likely to get their attention and sustain it; and so on. The interests of learners vary. Knowing their individual differences will enable the teacher motivate them to attain effective learning.
- ❖ **Mastery of the Subject Matter:** The teacher's ability to master of the subject matter of instruction is very important as it goes a long way in motivating learning. Nobody can give what he does not have. If a teacher does not know his subject matter very well, it becomes difficult for him to communicate it to the learners.
- ❖ **Adequately Plan for the Lesson:** The statement 'he who fails to plan, has planned to fail' is a universal truth. Lessons should be planned ahead of time. A lesson that is well planned takes into consideration time allotted for the lesson; concepts or areas that can be covered within the time frame; mode of evaluation; etc. With a concise plan, the atmosphere will be conducive for result-oriented classroom interaction that will make the teaching and learning process effective.
- ❖ **State Objective Clearly:** Teachers should be able to state the objective(s) of a given lesson as clear as possible. Vague and ambiguous objectives are prone to being misinterpreted. This may bring about lack of interest and motivation, culminating into minimal teaching and learning outcome.
- ❖ **Give Personal Attention to the Learners:** A teacher should be able to give personal attention to the learners as the need arises. This entails showing compassion to the learners; giving them a listening ear; etc. When a learner is not feeling fine for instance, the teacher should be able to give a word of encouragement, offer some advice, make some suggestion, etc.

- ❖ **Use of Praise and Reward:** A teacher should praise and reward efforts of the learners occasionally. Positive comments such as: well done, splendid, beautiful, good attempt, etc. can be very motivating. The learner's drive to achieve is affected by the expectations of the teachers, parents and peers. Encouraging them by words and deeds is essential. Praise has been found to be a more powerful motivator than blame. So, learners should rather be praised more often than being blamed.
- ❖ **Be Enthusiastic:** A teacher's ability to show enthusiasm in the subject he teaches goes a long way to motivate learners. The teacher's emotional and psychological dispositions notwithstanding, he should be excited and interested in what he teaches; he should be lively; and should enjoy the subject he teaches. It is only when the teacher is excited and interested in what he teaches that learners will be excited and interested about what they are learning. As a matter of fact, a moody teacher cannot motivate learners to achieve effective learning.
- ❖ **Allocate Tasks to Learners:** Learners should be given tasks to carry out. This will make them have the sense of belonging. Tasks allotted to learners should however, be commensurate with their level of development. This implies that the tasks should not be too difficult or too simple for the learners. Moreover, when the tasks are performed, appropriate feedback should be given. By so doing, learners will get to know their areas of strength and weakness, and as this enhances the effectiveness learning.
- ❖ **Variety:** Variety, they say, is the spice of life. A teacher should be able to make use of a variety of teaching methods, strategies and materials. This will cater for all categories of learners and in addition, bring about maintenance of order in the classroom especially when done in an orderly manner. Instructional materials particularly have a way of arousing the interest of learners and sustaining it all through the teaching-learning process. It is this sustained interest in the learning task that brings about effective learning.
- ❖ **Hand over some Control:** The teacher is the one in charge in the classroom. It is necessary that from time to time, he gets the learners to take ownership of some aspects of the class activities. This gives them a sense of partnership; a sense of leadership; and makes them complain less as they will see themselves as part of the success and failure of the teaching-learning process. This mindset motivates them and makes them work assiduously towards seeing that targets are met, resulting in optimal learning.
- ❖ **Smile and be Positive:** A teacher's smile and positive disposition are motivating. As much as possible, the teacher should maintain a positive disposition no matter the challenges he may be going through.
- ❖ **Respect and Treat the Learners as Human Beings:** When learners are respected and treated as humans, they will be motivated. For a teacher to be able to respect and treat learners well, it is necessary to find out who his learners are - their likes and dislikes, interest, aspirations, etc. This will enable him apply the right motivation therapy that will bring about effective learning.
- ❖ **Make use of Questions:** The use of questions in the course of teaching and learning is one technique that makes the teaching-learning process a learner-centred one. Eliciting questions and responses from learners thereby enabling them to participate, has the

MARILYN U. OCHOMA (PhD)
MOTIVATING LEARNERS FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

tendency of arousing their interest, and keeping them motivated all through the period of lesson delivery.

- ❖ **Involve Parents:** Teachers need to partner with the parents of their learners in ensuring that effective learning outcome is achieved. As much as possible, the teacher should get the support of parents and encourage them to work with him. When parents work in agreement with the teacher, the learner will be better motivated and effective learning will be achieved.

It is pertinent to note that for the classroom teacher to be able to motivate his learners for effective learning, he needs to be able to analyse learners' behaviour; their attitudinal problems and then have insight into how to deal them. Iteun (2004) observed that the forces that lie beneath motivation can be biological, social, emotional or cognitive. Awotuo-Efebo (2004) remarked that the society motivates people to perform certain kinds of acts that it considers desirable and not to do what it considers undesirable. Moreover, opinions of peers are also effective motivational tool. The classroom teacher should be able to utilise peer pressure in the positive direction in order to achieve effective learning.

Conclusion

Every nation desires that her citizens contribute maximally to its well-being, upon graduation from the school. Motivating learners in order to achieve effective learning is very vital if they are to contribute their quota to the common good of the nation. Teachers, on whose shoulders lie the responsibility of making learners learn, must live up to this task by putting to practice such tips as outlined in this work in order to motivate learners to achieve effective learning outcome.

Recommendations

Based on the issues explored, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers should deliberately plan to motivate their learners to learn; they should ensure that learners are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.
2. The classroom should be a place that learners will be willing to learn in.
3. Teachers should be enthusiastic about what they teach; be lively; and positive. Their emotional dispositions should not be allowed to interfere with their ability to perform as teachers.
4. Whatever behaviour learners put forth should not deter the teacher from attaining the goal of effective learning.

References

- Awotuo-Efebo, E.B. (2005). *Effective teaching: Principles and practice*. Port Harcourt: Paragraphics.
- Annie, C. *How to motivate students: Top 12 ways*. Accessed 24/04/ 2019 from www.teachhub.com/to.
- Bolarin, T. A. (1994). *Psychology of learning*. Lagos: External Communication Ltd.

- Effective teaching and learning*. Accessed 03/07/2020 from ww.project2061.org>online>chap13
Exploring motivation: Changing perspective. Accessed 24/04/2019 from cataque.pearsoned.co.uk.mo1...
- Ituen, S.A.U. (2004). *Elements of teaching*. Uyo: Abigab Associates Ltd.
- Motivation and motivation theory*. Accessed 2/10/2019 from www.encyclopedia.com >
- Navid, J. S. (2013). *Motivation: The psychological factors that guide us*. Accessed 21/11/2019 from psychology.about.com/.../motivation.
- Ochoma, M. U. (2016). *Handbook on teaching skills: Methods and practices*. Port Harcourt: Crystl Publications.
- Ochoma, M. U. (2019). Teacher's voice quality and teaching effectiveness. *African Research Review*, 13(3), 141-148.
- Reggie-Fubara, V. (1990). *Humanising classroom for curriculum development*. Port Harcourt: Pam Unique Publishing Company.
- Ryan, R. & Edward, L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and directions. *Contemporary education psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.
- Souders, B. (2020). *What is motivation? A psychology explains*. Accessed 30/05/2020 from <http://positivepsychology.com> > what-is-...
- Uzoeshi, K. C. & Iwundu, C. O. (2002). *Psychology of learning*. Port Harcourt: Harey Publication.
- Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. *Motivation*. Accessed 24/04/2019/ from en.m.wikipedia.org/wik.
- Wikipedia. *What is motivation?* Accessed on 30/05/2020 from <http://www.lawyerment.com> > article.
- Wigfield, A., Guthrie, J. T., Tonks, S. & Perencerich, K. C. (2005). Children's motivation for reading: Domain specificity and motivational influences. *Journal of education research*, 59(7), 299-309.
- What makes an effective learning experience?* Accessed 11/10/2019 from learnjam.com/what-makes-an-effective.