

Case Study: Self-Efficacy and Student Learning

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Case Description

I am in my third year of teaching at Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City Public Schools. According to the 2016-2017 Oklahoma City Public Schools Statistical Profile, CHHS has a population of American Indian 3.7%, Asian 0.6%, Black 11.1%, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.1%, Hispanic 71.8%, White 11.0%, and Multi 1.7% (2017). 30% are English Language Learners (2017). 95.0% are considered Economically Disadvantaged (2017). In my previous two years as an educator, I have witnessed the drastic effects learning environments have upon student achievement. Though an obvious oversight, traditional pedagogical practices continually ask instructors to teach using the same methods. Despite my efforts to try new activities and increase community involvement, I still have students who do not reach standard measures of mastery. My concern is why students are not “getting it.”

In my limited time of teaching, I have been frustrated with the lack of motivation in students. Students do not turn in their assignments. Students do not study for assessments. Students do not care if they fail. These statements are extreme hasty generalizations; however, they do describe the majority of the student population in my classes. I have rocked my brain attempting to determine the cause of such behavior. I have determined that lack of self-efficacy and learning strategies is a substantial influence in the cause of student success.

Perspective I: Self-Regulation and Self-Efficacy

As a high school teacher, I challenge my students to be accountable for their work and their grades. In my school, teachers are to allow students to make up tests and assignments until the end of each semester; this practice to me has caused much wrestling with my innate beliefs about personal responsibility because I think this expectation has caused laziness. In my school, we also cannot give a student a grade lower than 50 %, called Base 50 grading, as long as they

truly attempted the assignment. Some students take advantage of this practice and believe that if they put their name on the assignment or try the first couple questions, they will get at least 50 percent; some teachers allow them to do this as well.

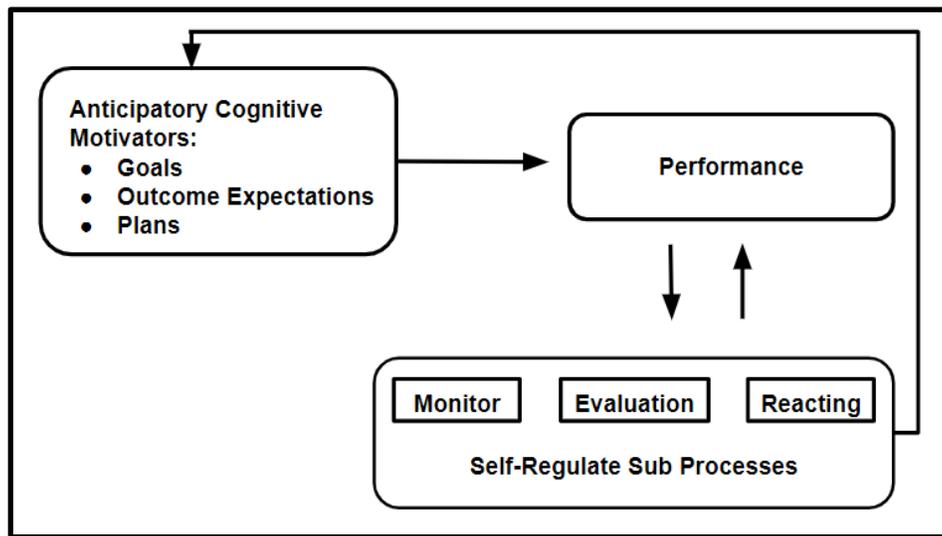
This battle is one I have fought time and time again. I follow the school policy on grading and make-up work but have created a classroom work policy to encourage students to work in class. For make-up work, I have a bin that has every assignment that we have done. If a student was absent or did not do the assignment, they can check the grade book and then check the make-up work bin to get the assignment. However, sometimes getting students to check their grade book is a battle. I try to eliminate every excuse possible by offering multiple places for students to get assignments, especially being at a school where not all students have access to money to buy books or at-home internet or technology to complete assignments. My in-class policy is that students must work in class. If a student violates this policy, the discipline is as follows 1) warning, 2) one-on-one discussion, 3) call home, 4) 1 day of lunch detention, 5) 2 days of lunch detention, and 6) admin. If a student is completely defiant after step 1 and 2 in the same class period, I will call for admin and make a call home to a parent or guardian. The desire is that students are held accountable and that by implementing this policy students will be motivated to work. By increasing self-efficacy and motivators and teaching self-regulation practices, I believe that students will be successful in completing classroom work.

Overview of self-regulation

Ormrod (2016) states, “Cognitive and social cognitive theorists have begun to portray effective learning . . . as a process of setting goals, choosing learning strategies that can help a person achieve [their] goals, and then [evaluate] the final outcome” (p. 351). The process in which we act on our desired performance is called **self-regulation**. Our purpose, cognitive

motivators (i.e. goals, outcome expectations, and plans), influence our performance. Our performance leads to our sub-processes. The sub-processes (i.e. monitoring, evaluating, and reacting) affect our performance. The sub-processes cycle back into our anticipatory **cognitive motivators**, which are the intentions for performing such action or behavior. After going through the sub-processes, we may change our cognitive motivators based on our performance.

Figure 1



Heddy describes in Figure 1 (2018) an example of the process of self-regulation. A person has cognitive motivators such as goals, outcome expectations, and plans to guide their self-regulation. **Outcome expectations** are the supposed results of future actions (Ormrod, 2016). These components influence the desired performance, in turn, influences are influenced by the self-regulation sub-processes. These sub-processes are influenced by and influence future performance by determining how the person monitors and evaluates the performance. If the person is not pleased with their performance, they evaluate and then may recreate their goals. The goals become **process goals** for which the individual thinks about each step to accomplishing the ending task; “process goals focus on strategies needed to execute the task (e.g., ensure hands are placed properly on the response buttons; visually focus on the target

stimulus)” (Themanson, Pontifex, Hillman, & Mcauley, 2001, p. 1). A major component of the self-regulation process and motivation is **self-efficacy**. Self-efficacy (Ormrod, 2016) occurs when “learners are more likely to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they can execute the behaviors successfully” (p. 130). Ormrod (2016) states that “self-regulating learners typically have high self-efficacy regarding their ability to accomplish a learning task (Ormrod, 2016, p. 351).

Overview of self-efficacy

As a part of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is a part of self-regulation. In developing self-efficacy, a person’s past experiences affect their belief in their ability to succeed. **Social cognitive theory** is a theory that suggests learning occurs by observation (Ormrod, 2016) Furthermore, self-regulating learners (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Pajares, 2004) form **efficacy expectations** that they can successfully perform the task or behavior on their own (as cited in Ormrod, 2016). Bandura (1989, 2008) states that people who use small failures as opportunities to grow and success have resilient self-efficacy (as cited in Ormrod, 2016). Those who believe they can succeed in various activities or areas are more likely to try more challenging tasks (Ormrod, 2016). People who apply their belief they can succeed in many areas because of past success develop generalized self-efficacy (Ormrod, 2016).

Overview of motivation

The general definition of **motivation** is the “internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular directions, and keeps us engaged in certain activities” (Ormrod, 2016, p. 424). There are two specific types of motivators, extrinsic and intrinsic. **Extrinsic motivation** (Ormrod, 2016) occurs when motivation is spurred on by things out of the individual’s control or the task. **Intrinsic motivation** (Ormrod, 2016) occurs when motivation is created based on the

desire from the individual and the task. Optimal intrinsic motivation is represented by **Self-Determination Theory**, which focuses on the movement of an individual into intrinsic motivation. Under a sub-theory of Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (2001), cognitive evaluation theory, which states that “effects on intrinsic motivation of external events such as the offering of rewards, the delivery of evaluations, the setting of deadlines, and other motivational inputs are a function of how these events influence a person's perceptions of competence and self-determination” (p. 3). The three basic needs for intrinsic motivation are competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The student needs to feel competent in the material to prove to oneself that they can succeed with the concept. The student needs to feel like they have some control over their learning, so the teacher needs to create activities and assignments that provide autonomy. Topics of assignments, if at all possible, need to be relatable to the student, so they see more value in the material. Each of these components is a vital part of increasing motivation.

Overview of the effects of self-efficacy on motivation

Researchers agree that self-efficacy greatly influences motivation, specifically intrinsic motivation (Ormrod, 2016). In regards to learning, Ormrod (2016) states that self-efficacious individuals:

are more likely to initiate and persist at activities, more likely to be cognitively engaged in what they're doing, and more likely to use effective strategies in a learning task. Thus, motivation—and again, especially intrinsic motivation—sets the stages for self-regulation (p. 487).

The self-regulation process is reliant on motivators and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy plays a major role in the self-regulation process as the individual learns and adjusts behavior from previous experiences. Self-feedback helps the individual to reflect on past experiences, thus the learner

obtains more knowledge about the task at hand (Themanson et al., 2011). For learners to have the motivation to attempt a task, which is intrinsic motivation, they must believe that they can succeed. Extrinsically motivated individuals need outside sources for motivation, thus self-efficacy is lower or the desire to attempt the task, in general, ceases to exist.

Diagnosis

As an educator in a low-income, highly diverse, minority population, I have determined that low self-efficacy has influenced the students' motivation to complete assignments. I challenge my students to be accountable for their work and their grades; however, many still have many missing assignments and tests in the grade book. The result is that many fail the course and repetition of the class. When asked if they want to pass the class, the students do not always have a definite answer of "yes." Students sometimes answer with, "I don't know," which I do not believe is truly the case, but a mask for the belief that they cannot succeed. For this reason, I reiterate that low self-efficacy has influenced the students' motivation to complete assignments to pass the course. My hypothesis is that students do not have a process to regulate their behavior of completing assignments. The teacher will need to include self-regulation practices in their lesson plan to help students create a self-regulation plan. If a student tried a self-regulation plan now, they 1) may not have the motivation or self-efficacy to begin and 2) if they fail they may not have the self-efficacy to try again. Since their motivations and self-efficacy are lacking, the teacher will first need to go through the processes of increasing self-efficacy and motivation.

Strategies for increased self-efficacy and motivation for self-regulation

In order to increase motivation successfully for self-regulation, I need to build the students' self-efficacy with the **four sources of self-efficacy**: past mastery (past performances),

vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological state. This process will promote eliminating reasons for not having the motivation to do work. After increasing student self-efficacy, I will need to increase motivation in order to get students into the intrinsic motivation stage through the self-determination theory for self-regulation to work.

To build self-efficacy, I need to provide students with lower level work for them to have past performances from which to build success. Past experiences are a large source of students' self-efficacy in performing a task (Schunk, 2005, p.73). After proving to the student and the student proving to themselves they can succeed in English, I can move into the next source which is a vicarious experience. In this stage, students are observing alike student's performance. I can facilitate this step by placing students in work groups and giving each student a role; this process ensures each student is encouraged to be a part of the work. While working in the group, the students can observe students like them who can perform the task as well. However, vicarious experiences "typically [have] a weaker effect than actual performance because vicariously-induced self-efficacy can be negated by subsequent performance failure" (Schunk, 2005, p. 73). For this trivial reason, I need to be sure to carefully place students with low self-efficacy with students who understand the material and will include the low self-efficacious student.

Students also gain self-efficacy from social persuasion or encouragement. Like vicarious experience, social persuasion can have the opposite effect if the student still does not succeed at the task (2005). Encouragement and feedback need to be authentic and not spurious. For example, other students and teachers alike need to give genuine encouragement to the low self-efficacious student. As the teacher, I am more in control of the encouragement I give the student

versus coming from other students, thus providing encouragement at each step of the assignment and reminding the student of past mastery can boost self-efficacy.

Lastly, physiological state, one's emotions, affect their self-efficacy. To keep emotions positive, I can provide engaging and relatable material for the students to engage. Pekrun, R., Frenzel, A. C., Goetz, T., and Perry, R. P. (2007) state that "if demands are too low, as in monotonous routine activities, there may be an insufficient challenge and a lack of intrinsic value, thus producing boredom" (p. 21). According to Pekrun et al. (2007), boredom is a negative deactivating emotion, which means that a student will not be engaged and be held back from being engaged because they are not interested. At this point, the students' motivation is not raised to the intrinsic level of motivation that is future utility in which the student recognizes the necessity for the material as it relates to their future; therefore, they will do their best to succeed.

If the students increase self-efficacy, they will have more motivation to attempt and complete a task. Since self-efficacy has been raised, students need to move motivation of completing work into intrinsic motivation. To increase motivation, I need to use self-determination theory by reinforcing competence and creating autonomous and relatable assignments. By previously showing the student success in past mastery in content, the student's competence was reinforced. Within in group work or individual assignments, the student needs to feel like they have autonomy in their learning, but it needs to be guided. As students work together in groups, each can be given a specific role and responsibility. To create relatedness, the topic of the work needs to be relatable and current. I can pick the topics for students depending on the activity, or I can pick a few, and they can choose from the options. For example, if they were to analyze rhetorical devices in a speech, I can provide them with current presidential speeches or some from previous music or movie awards shows that are current.

Once self-efficacy and motivation have been increased, the student is more likely to follow self-regulation plans. For class, I can create lesson plans that continue to build on the four sources of self-efficacy as well as scaffolds the three factors for motivation, in addition to building in days for reflection of one’s work. These metacognitive days will be used as a review of what material was learned, but also to reflect on what the student needs to continue to learn.

Figure 2

	GOAL: OBJECTIVE/ ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE 20%	INSTRUCT: TEACHER INPUT/DIRECT INSTRUCTION —I DO/WE DO 20%	ENGAGE: STUDENT ACTIVE PARTICIPATION – YOU DO (STUDENT ACTIVITY) 45%	ASSESS: IDENTIFY STUDENT SUCCESS/ RETEACH AND EXTEND LESSON 15%
M	SWBAT identify rhetorical appeals in commercials.	Teacher will lead students in review of rhetorical appeals.	Before the activity begins, the students will fill out the K (What I know?) and W (What I want to know?) of a KWL chart. As a class, the students will watch 4 commercials to discuss which appeal is used and how it is used including what kind of evidence is used.	Teacher will review rhetorical appeals with students. Students will fill out the L (What I learned?) of the KWL chart.
T	SWBAT use rhetorical appeals to sell a product.	Teacher will introduce students to an infomercial activity by showing two commercials. The teacher will ask which appeal and what the advertiser used to sell the product.	The students will pick one item in the room and create an infomercial that will be presented in class that day.	Teacher will discuss appeals used in student infomercials to sell their chosen product.
W	SWBAT identify rhetorical appeals.	Teacher will review rhetorical appeals with students.	Students will listen to a portion of a speech and watch a short clip to identify the appeal used and how it persuades the audience. The students will then answer the following writing prompt in Schaffer	Teacher will discuss appeals used in speeches.

			format: Artists, salespeople, speakers, and politicians all use rhetorical appeals to persuade their audience to agree with their message. What rhetorical appeal was used in the past video? What are two examples of how it can persuade audiences?	
TH	SWBAT identify rhetorical appeals and devices.	Teacher will review rhetoric with students.	Students will participate in a Rhetoric Kahoot to review the Unit IV terms.	N/A
F	SWBAT review knowledge of rhetorical appeals. SWBAT demonstrate growth by self-selecting and reading for an extended period of time.	Teacher will review students of rhetorical appeals and independent reading requirements.	Students will review knowledge of rhetorical appeals by answering journal questions about their learning this week. Students will spend class independently reading their chosen novel.	Students will complete weekly reading assignment.

Figure 2 (Dickinson, J., Bradley, A., & Finchum, C., 2018) displays an example lesson plan for a week. The students are learning the rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos. Students will have previously taken notes on rhetorical appeals and devices; this week’s lesson is meant to dive in depth to rhetorical appeals and put the student’s knowledge to practice. On Monday the students are guided by me through watching four commercials and discuss which appeals are used in each video. To encourage self-regulation thinking, the students will fill out a KWL chart before engaging and after completing the activity; the K stands for “What I know about the concept?,” the W stands for “What I want to know?,” and the L stands for “What I learned?” On Tuesday, the students pick one item in the room and create an infomercial that is presented in class that day. This activity is used for students to be active with the material and to

have autonomy in the classroom. Although the activity allots autonomy, it is guided with direction and instruction, so the students do not feel incompetent with the material. Throughout this activity, students are placed with alike students which will promote social persuasion and vicarious experience. Although self-efficacy and motivation have been increased, the lessons still need to promote the processes so that the students do not revert back to their old ways.

On Wednesday, the students show their knowledge of rhetorical appeals by analyzing a portion of a speech and watch a short clip. The students demonstrate their knowledge by writing an argument to prove their claim about the rhetorical appeal used in the video and how it appeals to the audience. After getting more in-depth with the material, Thursday, students review their knowledge of rhetorical devices and appeals to repeatedly check and reflect on their gained knowledge. The activity, Kahoot!, is fun and engaging; it can get quite competitive between students. This activity should keep student emotions positively engaging. To end the week, students spend time self-reflecting on learned material from the week focusing on what they succeed and on what they need to improve. Price-Mitchell (2015) encourages teachers to use self-reflecting journals for the student to use each week. The student can answer questions such as “What was easiest for me to learn this week? Why?, What was most challenging for me to learn? Why?, What study habits worked best for me? How?, and What study habit will I try or improve upon next week” (2015)? Writing in the journal helps students reflect and explain their own success and failures.

After gaining self-efficacy and increasing motivation, the students are ready to begin thinking about their think (i.e. metacognition). By weaving in days in class to reflect, students begin to think more about their learning processes. The students will set goals and outcome expectations. Throughout the week students will monitor their progress with encouragement

from the teacher. On the metacognitive days, students will evaluate their performance from the week and adjusted expectations. Although I continue to include days in class to reflect, students begin to create their own self-regulation plans without pressure from the teacher.

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