

Transcript

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Hello and welcome to Tech Talks with me, Katrina and me, Porsche. Today we've got Julia, Holly, Charlie and Tayla and we're all training EPS at Southampton University. We've been discussing how pupils engage in learning based on their motivation. But what is motivation? So we use Martin's definition of motivation which states that motivation applies to students energy and drive to engage, learn, work effectively and achieve to their potential at school and the behaviours that follow from this energy and drive. Well thanks for clarifying Charlie. So what do we mean by learning? So Ofsted say learning is an alteration to the long term memory. If nothing has been moved to long term memory, then nothing has been learned.

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And Thunderstrom and Bjork add to this by saying that the primary goal of instruction should be to facilitate long term learning, that is, to create relatively permanent changes in comprehension, understanding and skills. OK, so we've understood what motivation is and what learning is, but what is the role of motivation in the learning process? So as a group we've had some really interesting discussions around the factors which motivate an individual to learn. Daniel Winningham in cut for his article gives a thoughtful, provoking view. He says that motivation alone doesn't automatically lead to successful learning. He explained that if an individual has the right mindset to learn and they persevere with something even when it doesn't interest them, then they learn. He further pointed out that the end goal, for example professional growth, can become a motivating factor in wanting to learn something. He recognised the value of self-directed learning and the sense of autonomy and engagement this can bring. However, he does point out often if the learner lacks expertise and if they completely direct their own learning, then they can miss the advantages of the teacher.

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He suggests that to benefit from more both more autonomy and expert guidance, the key is to seek input from knowledgeable individuals to shape yourself directed learning effectively. This led us to consider that if motivation doesn't automatically lead to successful learning, then what can school staff do to create conditions in which pupils are encouraged to learn? So one of the key themes that appears across the literature, but particularly from Ryan and Deci, self determination theory, is the link between autonomy and motivation. So having control of your learning is going to drive you to want to do it. A study that really helps put this in a classroom setting was conducted by Mavropoulou in 2019 and looked at the effects of autonomy in a dance class.

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The pupils were assigned to one of three groups, two of which had very little autonomy, so working through the usual curriculum or taking traditional dance classes, and the third which took dance classes specifically designed to allow pupils to have an element of choice in their body movement, for example hip hop, where they can rearrange routines or make their own moves out of taught examples. Pupils in this final group reported higher levels of motivation

than pupils in the group with lower levels of autonomy. That reminds me about a time when giving an older pupil autonomy to choose where they sat in the class led to improve learning outcomes for them. They were struggling to stay focused and when given the choice, they asked to move from the front back of the class. This felt quite counterintuitive to be honest at the time. However, they reported being less anxious and they were less distracted, and therefore the quality of their work improved. That's really interesting, Julia. It sounds like there are so many different ways you could offer autonomy in a classroom. So how would you recommend deciding where that would be appropriate? That's a great question. So Stefano identified 3 different types of autonomy.

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Organizational, which refers to things like your classroom setup, Procedural, which would include how the information is delivered, so maybe a video or a presentation, and cognitive where pupils are able to evaluate their work and there's value to each of these.

Organizational autonomy leads to stronger feelings of belonging and security in the classroom. Procedural autonomy helps get that first buy into a topic, but cognitive autonomy is where you see that real long lasting commitment to learning. Thanks Charlie. This does make sense. But how can this actually be managed in a school setting where you can't realistically give people's free choice over everything? Of course. So like most things, there is a balance to strike here. So coming back to Cookster's article, which Julia discussed earlier, if autonomy comes at the cost of great teaching, then we're not going to be able to shape our learning as optimally as we can with their support. So you want to keep that sweet spot of guidance with an element of control. So, for example, you might deliver your teaching about creative writing, set clear instructions for your pupils, but allow them to choose perhaps the settings for the characters and their story. Oh, thanks, Charlie. That's really helpful.

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I guess some peoples like to have that freedom, but then they can also benefit from knowing what is expected of them. Yeah. So well structured lesson plans can help peoples know what is expected of them, which helps give them a sense of competence. Competence is another key component of Deci and Ryan's self determination theory. So this theory suggests that a people's competence can significantly affect their motivation to learn, as they're more likely to be engaged in a task when they feel able to do it. So competence also shares similarities with Bandura's concept of self efficacy, which is a person's belief that they can do a desired behaviour successfully. OK Holly, So what can teachers do to help build a people's sense of competence? Support is a key feature throughout. So support can come in various forms such as sort of providing structure, outlining clear goals, outlining rules and expectations. So for example, step by step instructions.

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So the setting of clear expectations is essential for people to develop a sense of effectiveness as without any clear guidance they're simply left confused and cannot make progress towards a particular goal. I suppose that support during tasks is also important and not just at the beginning of setting a new task. Yes, definitely. So providing guidance such as through helping with time management and supporting the transitions between tasks and lessons is also really beneficial. When I was teaching in my classroom, I found that helping to break the learning down into kind of smaller steps and helping the pupils to kind of achieve in each of

them steps helps them to kind of feel more motivated to continue with the task and move on to the next, the next element of the task that they've been set. Yeah. And it's also important to remember that different pupils will feel competent in different tasks. Yeah. So having around 30 pupils in a class can make it difficult for teachers to provide tasks that everyone feels competent in. Yeah.

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So it can be about providing differentiated learning tasks for different pupils to express their talents and to give them more chances of success. And McCrea 2020 also suggests that making the first task achievable for everyone is another way of giving pupils more chance of success. Teachers can also help people to feel more competent by highlighting their progress and development to them. So Woolford in 2020 also suggest that encouraging students to reflect on their own work can increase competence. So this links to the idea that self-assessment can help children feel more competent as it helps them develop a sense of ownership and awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. And this can be done in various ways and will depend on ages and abilities. So for some students, self-assessment may not be possible, but teachers can note people's reactions to and responses to their work. Teachers might use picture cues to elicit people's views on how they felt about tasks.

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It might be a discussion with the teacher or teaching assistant, and when having discussions with people's teaching staff can also accompany this with positive feedback to boost the child's confidence. Thanks, Holly. That's really helpful. It's just making me think about scaffolding and how actually it's sounds like really appropriate scaffolding is key to help increase a child's competence. Yeah. So providing scaffolds allow all students to access the learning that matches their ability, and it can also improve their self efficacy. To be able to provide effective and appropriate scaffolds, school staff need to understand their people's sense of belonging within the school community and the relationships they form with their peers and school staff has the potential to to be a key component to drive motivation which can affect learning outcomes. This is a really key point. Julia and I know from experience in a range of settings as an assistant educational psychologist that many teaching and support staff are really, really good at building positive relationships with their pupils. And a lot of staff put in a lot of time to understand their pupils and to try and relate to them.

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Yes, and this is the final component of self determination theory. So for example, we looked at some a study where Goya and colleagues in 2019 built on previous research which showed high rates of discipline citations. So behaviour warnings that the research was done in the states in schools. So the higher rates of discipline citations in school predicted lower life outcomes for a disproportionately higher number of black and Latino boys. Their research then wanted to test if the discipline citations arise in part from negative cycles of interactions between pupils and teachers, But they therefore delivered two types of interventions. Some were combined interventions, which included work on social belonging, values, affirmation and growth mindset, and some were single interventions. So just on growth mindset, all interventions proved effective in improving well-being in school.

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However, the combined interventions were more robust to regressions over time. Their conclusions were that these interventions in some way interrupted and altered the behaviour of pupils and the patterns of interactions between pupils and teachers. So this helps us to understand just how important pupil relatedness and sense of belonging is to positive people engagement in school. I see what you mean. It just leads me to wonder then if a greater sense of belonging can lead to higher expectations of these pupils, not just from the teachers but also from the pupils themselves. Yes I completely agree with this. So if pupils have a secure sense of belonging, it seems they're more able to access learning and this can improve their long term educational outcomes. So how can we develop positive relationships and a sense of belonging for pupils in school? That's a really good question. So it's fairly common practice in England that school staff understand and value the importance of creating a school culture which aims to foster positive relationships.

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For example, school staff will welcome all pupils in the morning and after break time by making eye contact, for example having warm body language and smiling and naming their pupils so they feel seen. Many teachers do a brilliant job of creating a shared classroom space which people pupils feel a connection to or pupils are right to take responsibility roles in the class and in the wider school community. School staff invite people to share information about themselves, for example what their family unit is like, their interests and their hobbies. All these things allow for those conversations which help pupils to build positive relationships with their peers and staff, to build and increase relatedness. And I think a really interesting point that you made, Julia, was about the interests and knowing the interests of your class both in and out of school.

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And this links really nicely to interest theory, which basically says that an interest is an object, a topic, or a person that can help support the development of learning. And in interest theory, they refer to two types of interest. So individual interest, which is kind of an enduring, stable and lasting interest in a subject, and then situational interest, which is more of a psychological state which is experienced in a particular moment. So maybe in a classroom, both have the ability to increase motivation for learning. Thanks, Taylor. I'd never heard of interest theory. What sort of research is there that explores this? So Reber, Canning & Harackiewicz said that to increase individual interest, you first have to increase situational interest. And they go into a couple of different methods for doing this, but some of the main ones were to do with context personalization, which is essentially where you move your content to be customized using the people's preferences.

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So any preferences that the child has in your classroom, you make the content relevant to their interests and then active personalisation is giving the pupils kind of more autonomy into making the connection between the learning that they're being provided and their interests. This advised me when I worked in a pupil failure unit, sometimes it was very difficult to motivate and engage the students and I found that by customizing the task to the child's individual interests, such as one particular young boy loved football, then they would be more likely to be motivated to complete the work. However, the one boy who loved football would often not complete any work unless it was football related, which can sometimes

cause issues in itself. And that's a really nice example of how they've used context personalisation to increase the situational interest for that lesson. But we have to be really careful when we're considering the diversity of interest in your classes. It can be really hard to personalise all the content to all of the pupils. So staff sometimes look for different ways to increase the situational interest at a time, but the different ways that they use can negatively impact the individual interest of other learners.

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There's a piece of research that said that using catch features and novelty, so things like pictures or kind of bright and catchy PowerPoints can have a positive impact on the situational interest and the task involvement of those with low individual interest in that particular subject. But if a student comes in with high individual interest in them, lessons where they've used catch features and novelty, it can lower the situational interest for those students. So what strategies could school staff actually use to develop individual interests then from situational interest? So Wolfok says that using active participation in lessons can help to increase situational interest, which then subsequently increases individual interests.

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So things like creating projects which are long lasting and having experiments which kind of break up the lesson content and planning for tricks and working towards those tricks can help create an enduring interest throughout the lessons. Thanks Tayla, That's really helpful so far. All of these sound bite ways to encourage pupils to motivate themselves internally, but I'm thinking that there are a lot of ways that learners can be motivated externally too. Yeah, absolutely. So extrinsic awards can have short term benefits which might be used as a hook to get that initial dopamine hit. That's a really key part of feeling motivated. This reminds me of when I was teaching in Year R and I'd have a new class. So initially I would start off I would reward them for like expected behaviours such as sitting on the carpet or remembering their carpet space with a tangible reward like a sticker or marbles in a jar until this was part of their everyday routine and then I would move on to rewarding other behaviours more explicitly. However, every now and then I would reward an expected behaviour just to reinforce it and keep them motivated through either verbal praise or a tangible reward.

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That's really interesting that you say you reduced those rewards as it became an expectation. Because some research suggests that providing those external rewards can lead to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. And this is believed to happen because the external motivator is then devaluing the internal motivator that a learner had and Lepper called that the over justification effect. So in a school, it may be that external motivators could be used to hook a learner in, but alongside all the other strategies that we've discussed so far and not for extensive periods of time. Well, thank you. We've covered so much today and we can see what a huge role in motivation plays within learning. I'm just thinking back to the quote, Julia, that you shared at the beginning, which said that motivation alone is not enough to result in successful learning. And the theories and the research that we've explored today kind of agree that actually there are so many things that can impact a pupil's motivation and learning.

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We had a look at self determination theory which suggests that autonomy, competence and relatedness are key drivers for motivation. And school staff can enhance these factors by providing pupils with choice, ensuring that pupils experience success by breaking tasks down to a level that they can access, and also through noticing their pupils through eye contact or welcoming pupils by name so that they feel valued within their school community. We've also discussed the importance of pupils having individual interest to increase their motivation, which school staff can create by hooking pupils in initially using situational interest and then maintaining this interest through sort of long term project work or trips that require active participation. Well, that's it for today. Thanks to Julia, Holly, Tayla and Charlie for such a valuable discussion and thank you to all the listeners for tuning in. We hope that you are feeling motivated to motivate the pupils you work with by using some of these practical ideas in your setting.

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