

Exploring Methods of Improving Intrinsic Motivation in Online Courses

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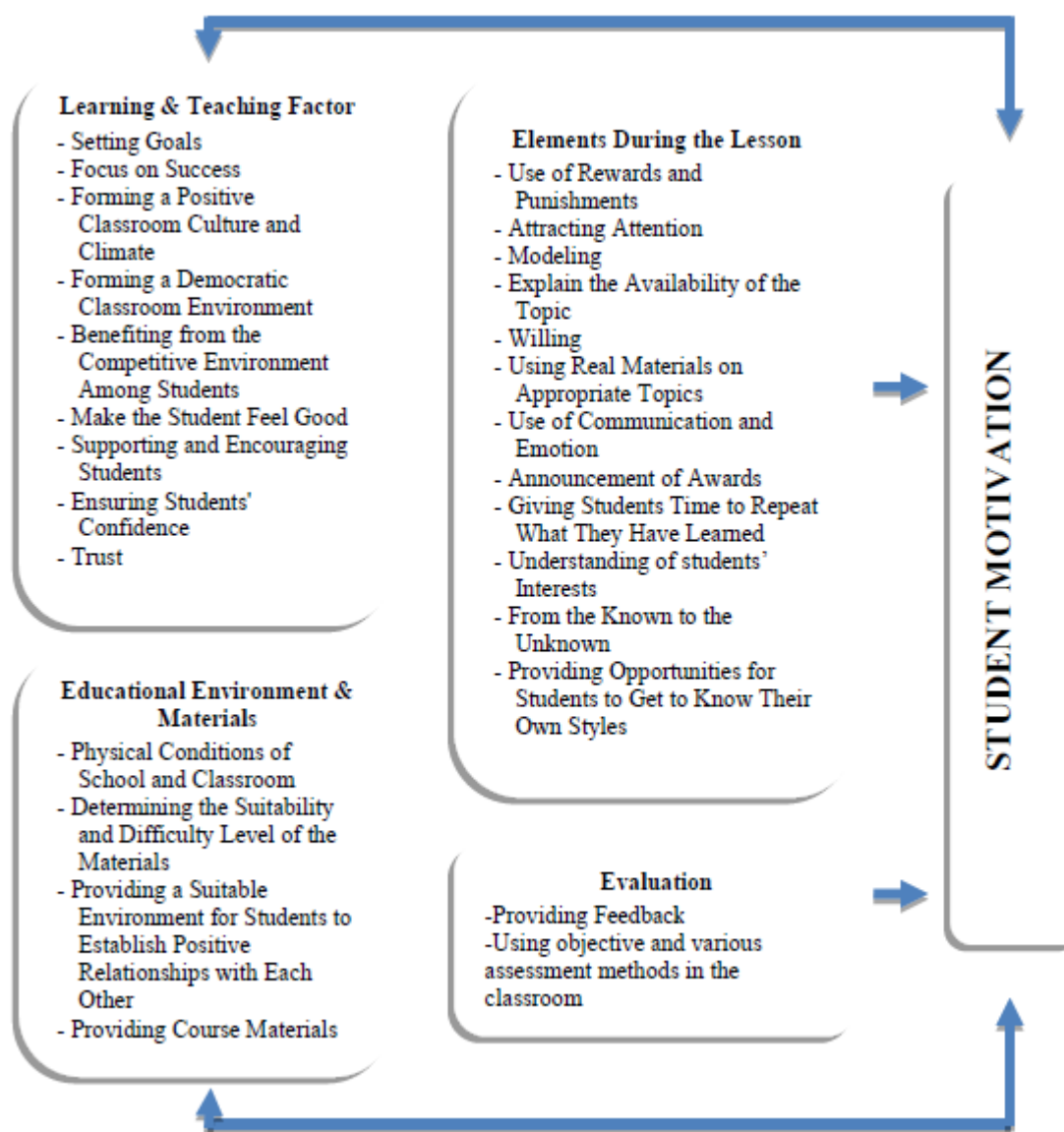
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## Introduction

One of the most difficult aspects of teaching and learning is maintaining the motivation of the students throughout the course. For our purposes Motivation is the on-going process of performing target-orientated tasks. (Cook & Artino, 2016) Which is a pretty good place to start with when considering the challenges of the online learning environment. Besides the general desire for academic success “motivation... is also believed to be one of the main determinants of success and failure (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Thronbury, 2006)” (Güneş & Alagözlü, 2020).

The model created in the 2020 Motivation in the classroom will be sufficient in outlining what makes up student motivation illustrated in the Figure 1 below.



Whereas Kilic et al, were examining the motivation in the classroom this study will examine it in in online courses.

In his Editorial: Three Types of Interaction Michael Moore defines how a learner will interact in a course. These three interactions are:

1. Learner-Content Interaction
2. Learner-Instructor Interaction,
3. Learner-Learner Interaction.(1989)

The importance of these three types of interaction is clear, but there's been an emphasis on the Learner-Learner interaction in studies of online motivation. Danka's study focuses on using gamification principles to motivate learners online.(Danka, 2020) Donaldson and Bucy, looked at an online group collaboration project. (Donaldson & Bucy, 2016) and Marta-Lazo looked at sMOOC's courses designed with a social interaction at their core. (Marta-Lazo et al., 2019) All these studies have found the value of using the technology we have to create a community online and that can increase motivation and engagement with a course, but what about those whose entire goal was to work at their own pace? In the gaps between the many concerns of modern life? We are now in a world where being separated by physical space is no longer a barrier to creating a community. However, being separated by time is still an issue. Can we still find ways to motivate students and have higher engagement in an asynchronous format?

Online courses have a lot of static information most interaction is between instructor and student, with limited interaction between students. This is in part by design because the convenience of the online platform is that the course can be accessed any time anywhere which opens up courses to those with busy schedules work, and family commitments that would prevent them from physically attending a class.

Requiring presence on synchronous sessions, or group projects can fly in the face of this flexibility and while advanced technologies can aid in this remote collaboration as evidenced by recent world crises it still requires being in a place at a certain time with the time to spend.

Group projects and synchronous online lectures are incompatible with some student's lifestyle and learning preference. How can we provide a learning experience that allows for completely asynchronous learning without leaving students feeling isolated and abandoned and as a result unmotivated to continue?

### **Research Procedures**

I propose a study of non-traditional college students working primarily online in an either 2 or 4 year degree. I have contacts with a small private college to do a test batch locally, but the study could be performed nationwide with students on 16 campuses. We conduct interviews remotely asking their preferences when it comes to online learning and what motivates them and excites their interests in general as well specifically when it comes to online learning. It will also ask about the convenience and usefulness of synchronous online sessions and required group projects. With a view to defining their motivation to do school work in lieu of any other commitments like jobs, or family commitments and if it's even possible to choose school given those possible external factors.

I would suggest a pre-and post-course interview to establish the student's incoming expectations and how those expectations and desires were achieved or not. The interviews would take place over at least two terms to establish new student expectations and continuing

student reactions to the ongoing course style. Then once students begin working from campus do a third interview to see how their reactions and motivations contrast with their answers regarding the online work.

I'd got with the most diverse group possible getting students with many different experience and lifestyle profiles as possible in order to build up a picture of how students work online.

### **Implications and contributions to knowledge**

This study will look at the possible ways students can use the online course materials. I think that the focus on recreating what's diminished or lost through the online course format is misguided. We should focus on what can add. What tools, and services can be provided to increase student motivation without the requirement of recreating a traditional classroom experience?

<b>Research phase</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Initial Interviews	Establish a baseline for their lifestyle and level of motivation	TBD
Post-term Interview	Identify the level of ongoing motivation given the current synchronous requirements for courses.	
Second term interview	Identify level of satisfaction with this approach.	
On campus interview	Compare and contrast with online experience.	

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### Research schedule