

# Musings on the Teacher's Art



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Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-0554-5

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0554-4

*'If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.'*

—*Cicero*



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**PART I:**  
**CHARACTER**



## CHAPTER ONE

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEACHER?

*A professor is someone who talks in someone else's sleep.*

∞ W. H. Auden

What makes a good teacher? There is no one “golden rule.” Teaching is a skill: a competence that can be studied and learned. Having a positive disposition undoubtedly helps a teacher with how they teach. Sustaining interactions that are nurturing and inspire creativity among students are important teacherly tasks. But what is it that informs good teaching and learning? Learners enquire and teachers not only impart their knowledge but teach students *how* to enquire, and for more serious matters, to *inquire*. Furthermore, an appreciative inquiry in the learning process helps teachers and students to engage together, and motivates students to study (Johnson 2014, 9). As Ohlemacher relates (2015, 5): “[t]he process itself has four parts: *Discovery*, where people uncover what gives life to an organisation; *Dream*, where people envision what might be possible; *Design*, where people translate the ideal into action, and *Destiny*, where people actualize their plans and determine how to sustain their success.”

Most people would hope not to get four “Ds” in their assessment, but the “four Ds” of *Appreciative Inquiry* help to inform our understanding of the teaching and learning process. But what about values in education beyond this? Do they matter for motivation and achievement in teaching and learning? Increasingly, yes, as they are the foundations on which most learning behaviours are structured. Faith, hope and courage are three Christian tenets usually associated with the travail over adversity (or at least obstacles) associated with lengthy periods of study in the learning process. These ‘virtues’ are also associated with the motivations for people who work in dangerous professions—police officers, ambulance officers and paramedics, fire and rescue officers, and sometimes armed forces personnel. Even so, people in the teaching professions (such as instructors, lecturers and academics) need these qualities—often in more prolonged, yet less acute, forms, during their teaching lives. And students need them too because they have frequently made sacrifices in order to further their study. Yet, what are these qualities? Are they attitudes, traits, or even ways

of being? Take ‘hope’ for example. As Thakre and Mayekar state (2016, 408), “[h]ope is a cognitive set of positive expectation for goal attainment that is based in a reciprocally derived sense of successful agency (goal directed determination) and pathways (directions of ways to meet goals).” As anyone will attest, even the most accomplished teacher will have found some aspects of their role challenging. In some geo-political global contexts, teaching itself is a challenge beyond the ontological security of the self, and for no apparent rational reason, other than occupying a territory in political dispute. But more frequently, contestations in teaching are intellectual, rather than physical. The perspicacity to go against popular opinion in a matter of belief or fact, the self-belief to conquer prejudice or bullying or forgiveness over personal attack, the endurance and fortitude to maintain professionalism over long stretches of engagement, the capacity for compassion for those who struggle with learning, or disability—these are all qualities of a teacher who requires faith, hope and courage for learning to succeed. In today’s fast-paced world it may be better not to ask oneself ‘how should I be?’ but rather, ‘what problem can I hope to solve?’ The numerator of teaching takes place in a social and geographical context but its denominator, learning, is an activity that can be self-directed. But sometimes problems are not solved until one addresses the question of ‘how one should be?’ and often attitude is paramount.

Education, teaching and learning are important because they contribute to societal development and inherently of their own nature, resist the spread of conflict. As San puts it (2016, 36):

Currently, we are witnessing societies suffering from the destruction of wars and violence in different geographies. Violence affects and damages in psychological, social and spiritual domains in human life. Therefore, peace has become essential for both individuals and communities at this time. In societies with a well-established peace culture, people have the opportunity for self-realisation and to discover and actualise their capacities. Moreover, members of such societies support each other and work for the happiness of others. Education is the core element in establishing a culture of peace in societies.

Furthermore, hope, a corner-stone of a teacher’s motivation, promotes courage and solidarity (Kadlac 2015, 337). Koerner (2014, 65) defines courage as having three main elements: a morally worthy goal; an intentional action; and perceived risks, threats, or obstacles. Sometimes it takes courage to venture opinions against the status quo. Everyone has heard the adage of ‘sticking to your guns’ but faith is the ability to remain directed, follow a path, and overcome physical or psychological obstacles

and adversity. Faith produces courage—either to act or to be (Harbour and Kisfalvi 2014, 495). To work properly, or to create the conditions in which to work properly, education requires peace, teaching requires faith and hope, and learning, requires courage.

Almost everyone has experienced learning from someone by some method—either by imitation, instruction, or by doing. Arguably, while good teachers might be born; they are more demonstrably ‘made.’ Yet the difference between learning from someone who has the time and the attitude to teach, and learning from someone who is just doing what they do anyway, is insightful for the learner. One can know how to imitate but not how to perform. In addition, for teaching, some personal qualities are undoubtedly helpful. Patience, tolerance, a liking for helping others, an ability to relate, an ability to focus on others, concentration beyond the self and knowledge that a person cannot control every idea or action are all beneficial dispositions for the classroom. Good teachers are often good listeners, but they are also better communicators—able to assert themselves socially and knowing of when to let others talk. We have all heard the adage, ‘learning doesn’t occur in a vacuum.’ Good learners, while not always passive recipients, often are actively engaged in seeking out new knowledge and putting themselves in novel learning situations, new places and among different people. Responding to people intuitively but also recognising that certain objectives and characteristics, are useful strategies for a teacher. For example, teachers should be aware of the differences between younger and older learners. As Johnson notes (2014, 5):

[A] relevant distinction between adults and children is the self-directed nature of learning by the adult learner. Children tend to be passive participants in the learning process as they are recipients of instructor knowledge. ... Adults have an ability to learn informally from their daily interactions and experiences, or they, may seek out knowledge on their own. When adults enter a formal classroom they are often seeking to participate in the process of learning for a specific purpose, as a means of gaining, specific, relevant and meaningful knowledge.

One way we learn is by tolerating and recognising change and acting to optimise the functionality of our environment and the experience for ourselves. Another is by studying the successful actions of others and adopting successful techniques. Innovation may result from knowing a field well and desiring to exercise intuition about exploring new pathways and new outcomes. Either a subtle mix of old and new or, more radically, a totally different way of doing something can produce such new pathways and new outcomes. With teaching, we can neither forget the basics that

underpin the received wisdom of what is required to show learning to succeed, or how much technology now facilitates and overlays the lessons teachers provide. These two challenges appear to fork in different directions but they are not unsurmountable. It is often said the best technology is the kind you do not notice; so too perhaps with teaching. A good teacher will let their classroom and their student become absorbed in a subject for themselves. They will not only be unobtrusive to the students' learning process; they will teach the student ways in which the self does not get in the way of their own or others' learning. Good teachers inspire students to absorb what they learn and reflect on it—students become active listeners. According to Bain (2004) “creating confident classrooms” involves successful fulfilment of the interaction model of communication, with a sender and receiver and a feedback loop (but carried-out less in a functional and more in an organic sense). A good lesson might be one you barely knew you had, so seamless would the learning integrate into your daily activity and assimilate into your cognitive experience. To create a natural critical learning environment, Bain (2004) advocates several points:

- a teacher should strive to get their students' attention and keep it
- a teacher should be more oriented toward the student than toward a discipline
- a teacher should seek incremental commitments from students in their learning behaviours and repertoires
- a teacher should be ready to help students' learning outside of class
- a teacher should be mindful of engaging students in disciplinary activities
- a teacher should strive to create diverse learning experiences for their students.

Further, teaching in the classroom should often focus around good rapport, using warm language, getting students to talk, and offering students explanations for things they don't understand, and in anticipating their needs and concerns (Bain 2004, 99–134).

**Table 1.1: Seven principles of learning**

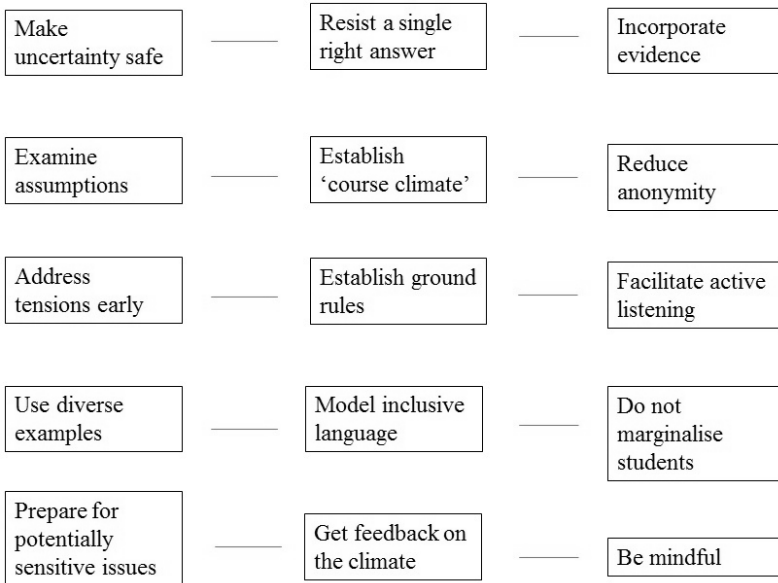
(after Ambrose et al. 2010, 3–6):

1. Learning is a developmental process
2. Prior knowledge can help or hinder
3. Organising knowledge matters
4. Knowledge grows from connections
5. Motivation counts
6. Goal-directed tasks and targeted feedback are essential
7. Current developments interact with the learning climate
8. Self-directed learners monitor and adjust their approaches to learning

Chambliss and Takacs (2014, 158–159) argue that the best actions of teachers are clearly effective, highly leveraged, widely available, and resource neutral. Sound like a fork-lift truck driver? Good teachers are also leaders who are effective at helping students and working with others for maximum effect. They use teaching spaces to help people meet, schedule strategically, connect, motivate students to help each other, and stimulate engagement (Chambliss and Takacs 159–162). Some successful college students are those who meet people, choose teachers over topics, engage in high-contact activities, and keep their academic and social options open (Chambliss and Takacs 163–165).

**Figure 1.1: Good teaching actions in the classroom**

(Ambrose et al. 2010, 180–186)



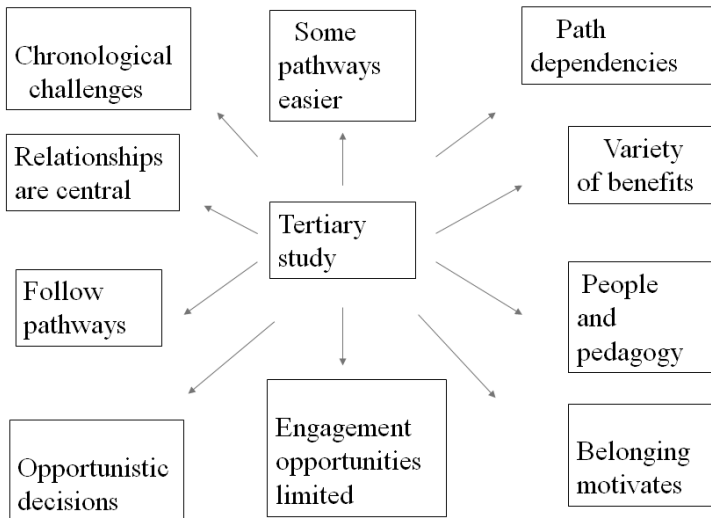
According to Bain (2004), the best teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects or disciplines. Whether or not they have long or short publication lists, good teachers follow important developments within their fields of knowledge, do research, think about their subjects, and study the knowledge of others in their fields. They also take a broad interest in issues in the subjects they teach in, and are conversant with controversies and epistemological and ontological concerns of the disciplines in which they teach (Bain 2004, 15). But often good teachers are also interested in the people they teach – they are ‘people persons’ and enjoy thinking and discussing the similarities and differences in their cohorts. In addition to all these actions, they use their knowledge to develop techniques for further learning, such as grasping principles and organising concepts, theories and examples (Bain 2004, 16). In class, good teachers *simplify*, *clarify* and *explain*. They explore provocative implications and reflect on their own thinking and that of others. Exceptional teachers consider lectures, tutorials, lessons and discussions as serious intellectual events (Bain 2004, 17). They prepare well, ask themselves focused questions such as, “What size group will I will be teaching?” “What learning



experience have they had?” “How will I best assess the students against the learning content?” “What technology will I use?” “What learning support is available?” By taking an in-depth approach, the best teachers do more to stimulate higher achievement in their classrooms.

### Figure 1.2: The characteristics of teaching and learning

(after Chambliss and Takacs, 2014, 155–157)



In the learning environment, teachers try to create ‘natural’ critical and reflective learning environments. Natural environments are particularly attuned responses to people and place and the moderation of communication and interactions. Good teachers believe that students learn by confronting intriguing concepts and problems, posing authentic challenges, rethinking assumptions, and examining models of reality. Learners who are successful may establish a sense of control over their environment, work collaboratively, feel simultaneously challenged and supported, and sense that their work will be considered honestly and fairly (Bain 2004, 18). So without getting yourself completely at home at helps to have a sense of inhabitancy in the classroom environment. A classroom is not as sterile as an operating theatre and not as partitioned or free-for-all as a zoo. Good teachers also aim to promote trust in their students by treating them equitably. They are open and honest, and may reflect on

their own intellectual journey, ambitions, triumphs and frustrations while encouraging students to be honest and develop a curiosity about what they are learning and even life in general. Good teachers practise openness and try to be ‘decent’ in their engagement with people, respecting boundaries and aim to respect the dignity of others (Bain 2004, 18) – they respond to people as people. Successful teachers also self-review; they engage systematically in assessing theory on activities and making changes based on updating their knowledge. Good teachers are also learners, constantly trying to improve their efforts and their students’ efforts (Bain 2004, 19). You have to be prepared to put the effort in, but the good news is: “Learning never exhausts the mind” -- it almost always stimulates it – for both students and teachers.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### MOTIVATION

*I think it all comes down to motivation. If you really want to do something, you will work hard for it.*

∞ Edmund Hillary

An integral part of teaching requires motivation for learning to take place. From the student's perspective, as Kahane states, in academia "you begin as a fundamentally inadequate novice and set about stacking up knowledge, skill and accomplishment to deserve the esteem of those who survey and evaluate your performance" (cited in Hill 2011, 17). Motivation is a feature not only of student learning but also of classroom instruction and, indeed, the interactive teaching techniques that are part of what happens in classroom learning. Hence, teaching and learning are an exchange, and occur on a gradient that also reflects motivation levels of the classroom, or learning space. It is one thing to know how to use the SMARTboard and another to keep people focused and interested over the course of a fifty minute lecture, and yet another again to feel completely confident that all methods of assessment best capture student performance in learning. As Chrichton notes (2017, 47), "we preoccupy ourselves with measuring the performance of learning. We assume that what is demonstrated is what is known. As a consequence, we elevate what can be made explicit and what can be narrated, and somewhere in there we miss the point that learning is not a performance. It is a process." Motivation provides the impetus and intention for the learning process to occur. But what is "learning motivation" in essence?

According to Johnson (2014, 7), the four basic principles of learning motivation are attention, relevance, confidence, and self-regulation. We need to focus on a learning object (or subject), to know its context, to have confidence that we can understand it, and potential apply it to other relevant situations, and we have to know that we can sustain and reproduce our thoughts and actions elsewhere and at other times. Motivation can be derived internally and externally, and is enlivened by identification with the learning process and influenced by interactions and

perceptions within it. Although positive classroom experiences can produce a positive self-image, motivation, of adult learners at least, is held to be largely the responsibility of the learner, although positive learning experiences can naturally produce positive self-beliefs.

As Pintrich states (2003, 699), motivation is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, meaning “to move.” Motivation is the term given to the overcoming of inertia in a learning context, to the transition of the learning gap between a given and desired state of knowledge or skill competence. As Dykstra et al. suggest (2011, 2), “[s]tudents who are intrinsically motivated engage in an activity for enjoyment, to learn, and/or out of a sense of accomplishment, while extrinsic motivation arises out of a need to be rewarded, for example with a higher grade, or to avoid a penalty.” The “control theory” of motivation assumes that people are compelled to act by the “promise of reward or the threat of punishment” (Deci 1996, 1). This is consistent with the behaviourist psychology of stimulus and response. However, the cognitive complexity of people (and particularly educationists) reveals that there is far more to motivation in learning than “sticks and carrots.” A debate continues about whether a motivational “ethic” exists, or whether it is possible to have a single motivation, rather than a combination of many at any one time. But, in as much as motivation is an inherent part of human nature, everyone has a right to find motivation—a willingness, if not inherent justification, to act towards a particular goal. “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” urged the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, in a poem of the same title (Thomas, 1934). Life is sustained through nurturing and teachers nurture learning. An educationalists role may also be to supply a motivation in the classroom or learning space, if one is lacking, or at least to be attuned to different levels and kinds of motivations in an audience, and to be able to manage classroom expectations. Although people are conditioned by their environment, acting for others is different from acting from “free will” in line with a person’s own volition. A teacher might experience both kinds of motivation, acting for oneself in delivering a lesson according to plan but also acting for others in doing so. As Deci suggests (1996, 2):

When autonomous, people are fully willing to do what they are doing, and they embrace the activity with a sense of interest and commitment. Their actions emanate from their true sense of self, so they are being authentic. In contrast, to be controlled means to act because one is pressured. When controlled, people act without a sense of personal endorsement. Their behaviour is not an expression of the self, for the self has been subjugated to controls.

However, the significant correlation between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement in the psychology of learning is widely known (Goldberg and Cornell 1998). If one is personally engaged and motivated, one is more likely to learn. Inspiring that enthusiasm in others, is an ability of good teachers. Conversely as Deci explains (1996, 59), “[m]otivation requires that people see a relationship between their behaviour and desired outcome, and instrumentalities are the linkages that allow people to see these behaviour-outcome relationships.” This link can in some circumstances be economic and extrinsic, or intrinsic and emergent from either ambition or affective bonds. Motivations and their associated affective elements are some of the most important factors in a student’s learning and academic performance, which is implicit yet seldom formalised within a given teaching pedagogy though they might be acknowledged in the classroom context. It is of course also implicit in andragogy, although adult learners are typically thought to be more focused in their motivation than younger learners. As Johnson relates, (2014, 3) the “[b]asic premise of andragogy holds that adult learning occurs through a process of action and self-reflection. Appreciative andragogy emphasizes the positive nature of adult learning and the enhanced view of self that will occur through supportive interactions with an instructor.”

Motivation is commonly defined within the teaching and learning environment as the interrelation of motivational beliefs (the inherent value of tasks) with achievement emotions (such as enjoyment, boredom or anxiety) and academic performance (Artino et al. 2010, 1203). The concept of motivation has given some educational psychologists pause to reflect on the appropriate theories of mind that might encompass its role in the teaching and learning process. In this respect, the main challenge to the “information processing” model of learning has come from the necessity to include more subtle emotions and intentional beliefs in the learning process and to acknowledge the fact that all people are different and no two people’s perception of the learning context may be equal. It is often useful to bear in mind that students (and indeed teachers) learn in different ways. The VARK distinction has often been made between learners who might prefer one learning mode among the visual, auditory, read-write and kinaesthetic. So teachers might be advised to promote adaptive methods that let students appreciate their own learning style for, as Kumar and Chacko relate (2010, 1121), “students who are unaware of their learning styles tend to study superficially without understanding underlying concepts.”

Social cognitive theory holds that human functioning results from a “triadic, dynamic and reciprocal” relationship between behaviours (individual

actions and choices), with personal factors (beliefs, intentions and expectations) and emergent factors in the physical and social environment (Artino et al. 2010, 1204). According to this model, task value is balanced with self-efficacy. Task value involves a student's belief of how relevant or interesting an activity (such as a course module or qualification) is to them, while academic self-efficacy involves beliefs about the interrelation of student's self-assessment and outside reinforcement of their ability to perform academic tasks (Artino et al. 2010, 1205). Thus a learning experience is valued more if it is also considered relevant and the learning objectives accomplishable. As Botkin et al. suggest (1979), academic learning requires a shift from maintenance learning (acquiring knowledge do deal with current issues) to dynamic learning (requiring development of new ideas), and this experience can be, of itself, highly motivational. New knowledge is exciting. By comparison, the control-value theory of motivation defines achievement related emotions as "internal affective rewards," which are associated with the completion of learning tasks. This emotional self-evaluation may vary from enjoyment associated with new learning, to anxiety in completing a specific task, to frustration and disappointment if the result is disproportionate to the effort involved (Artino et al. 2010, 1205). The learning of knowledge has utility but the experience of learning affects the enjoyment of the outcome.

Unless learning conditions are made as equitable and comprehensible as possible, many learners can perceive the entire learning process as an exercise of both overcoming perceived limitations in self-efficacy and frustration with current perceived levels of competence. Therefore, motivational beliefs defined in terms of "task value" and "self-efficacies" are correlated with enjoyment related to learning activities (such as those experience whilst a learner is on a course), yet also related to anxiety in those learning activities (Artino et al. 2010, 1205). This means that task value beliefs are reasonably accurate predictors of learning satisfaction or boredom. If a learning task or course is seen as useful, relevant and important, students are more likely to feel motivated in completing a task if they enjoy it (Artino et al. 2010, 1210). The design of lessons and course materials is a relevant factor in enhancing the joy of learning. An overriding characteristic must be keeping communication between student and instructor clear. Indeed, the advent of personal and mobile virtual technologies has led commentators to speculate that it impacts on the entire learning and teaching communication exchange style. How we communicate is nearly as important as what we communicate, and communication is a core component of learning. As Tapscott (2009, 172) notes, "the old model of employee development—*recruit, train, supervise,*

and *retain*—is outdated. The more appropriate employer-employee paradigm for this generation, we believe, is *initiate, engage, collaborate, and evolve*.”

## Emotion and motivation

Positive emotion is beneficial to learning; however, negative emotion can, in some circumstances, contribute as a motivation for learning. Just because someone fails to enjoy something does not necessarily mean they fail to complete the task or complete it well. Like some perceptions of tiredness, perceptions of lost enjoyment may not necessarily greatly affect the outcome of a learning task. However, enjoyment of a learning task when it is experienced, is a kind of intrinsic reward. Emotion and affect are described as “feeling[s], emotion[s] or desire[s], especially leading to action” (Sikhwari 2007, 523). These take place on a continuum with most people experiencing a range. Students who are confident about their learning and their learning environment are less likely to be disadvantaged when experiencing the inhibitory effects of anxiety in the learning performance. It takes some students practice in self-control to prevent ‘freezing out’ and panicking in some learning situations, and teachers can do some things to make students more (and not less) at ease. They can practice some forms of empathy, and also enhance student engagement by letting students express themselves in controlled ways. Enjoyment of the learning process is positively associated with successful educational outcomes but these are engendered by incremental steps of knowledge acquisition, making these smaller steps more engaging and fun, is part of the teacher’s task. Sometimes a teacher will need to also engage with the classroom mood or ‘vibe’ as well as with the learning material and ‘manner or style’ of teaching. Therefore, teachers should strive to provide motivational inspiration in learning environments as well as the relation of subject content and the application of teaching pedagogy wherever possible. As Wesch states (2011, 28), “[c]are, responsibility, respect and knowledge are not only the foundations of love, they are also the foundations and goals of learning, and are themselves the most important things to learn.” Arguably, consideration of values ought to be second nature to the teacher, because the classroom experience invites a temporary suspension of the performance of everyday life. However, in academic learning contexts, work performance and assuring work quality and improvement may be different (although related) tasks. Therefore, while motivation for improving work quality is an implicit part of the learning context, it can be seen as distinguishable from both teaching and

research, as it requires an extra reflexive or moderating component. (Massy et al. 2007, 17). There are techniques for improving each, however. Appreciative inquiry, for example lies in the ability to “engage, enthuse, energise and enhance learning communities” (Kadi-Hanifi et al. 2014, 584).

It is useful for teachers to find ways to enhance the interrelation between a learner’s self-concept, motivation and academic achievement: appreciative inquiry is one such way in that it encourages teachers to enact self-determined change in the learning space (Sikhwari 2007, 520). In some forms of teaching the separation between teacher and learner is narrow and in others it is wide, controlling the ‘distance differential’ is a product of complex psychological and communicative exchanges. However, prominent commentators have observed differences traditionally thought to exist between students and teachers that derive from different motivations. As Derek Bok (2006, 34–35) explains:

The members of Arts and Sciences faculties have special values and priorities, like all professionals. Above all, they are preoccupied with the challenge of discovering and transmitting knowledge and ideas. To them, knowledge is not a means to other ends: it is an end in itself—indeed, the principal end of academic life. Most students, on the other hand, have different reasons for acquiring a college education. They tend to look upon knowledge and ideas less as ends in themselves and more as a means toward accomplishing other goals, such as becoming better, more mature human beings or achieving success in their careers.

Understanding of motivation takes place in the context that most teaching pedagogies emphasise cognitive factors at the expense of affective factors. Intelligence is seen as the raw ingredient of student success. However, increasingly the affective component of learning—what teachers and students feel about themselves in relation to the learning task—is increasingly important. As Kahane states, when describing his own teaching motivation, “[i]nstead of modelling academic (and teaching) mastery as an escape from lack, I hope that I invite students to recognise that they are already good enough, and their learning can be a way of more fully experiencing themselves and their fundamental adequacy” (cited in Hill 2011, 17). If a person feels up to the task, more often than not they can accomplish it. Increasingly, affective factors play a critical role in the motivation, attitude and self-concept of students. If you feel ‘good’ chances are, that you are also ‘doing well’ in an educational context. Higher achievement is associated with optimal attitude, positive self-concept and efficient use of study time while students with a negative attitude may impose limitations on their achievements before they are even



participating in the learning task (Sikhwari 2007, 521). Recognising and over-coming self-imposed limitations is complex and can take a lifetime but it is not impossible, if one puts one's mind to it. Aspects that influence students' behaviours include whether they:

- are able to feel success or failure
- are able to feel accepted or rejected
- have positive emotions in the learning environment (such as happiness, joy of learning, self-satisfaction and reciprocity)
- feel defeated or are up to the task
- seek the company of nourishing people.

Sikhwari (2007, 522) suggests that the main influence of high motivation in students is to give them the ability to effectively select and persist in information processing. If a student is motivated and interested, then the depth of processing, memory, knowledge acquisition, attention and comprehension increases leading to a more rewarding learning experience. These are all concepts that directly help to inform teaching and learning but which require constant practice rather than special access. As the famous New Zealand rugby All Black forward, Richie McCaw (who has a doctorate from Lincoln University in Canterbury), once put it: "I don't believe in magic. I believe in hard work."

### **Self-concept and motivation**

A student's self-concept is central to their understanding and perception of the learning process. Self-concept refers to a set of ideas that a student may believe about themselves, which exists on a continuum of positive and negative effect. As Teoh et al. suggest (2009, 721), factors related to personal beliefs include "significance of learning, confidence, interest, efforts, family support, independence, self-direction, teacher's attention." In this context, although positive and negative affect can greatly influence student motivation, such affect is more dangerous when not accompanied by conscious cognition and the possibility for remediation through the introduction of motivational elements that improve it. Thinking before you speak is always a good idea! In addition, positive and negative affect may, or may not, be related to a student's actual potential for educational performance. Like tiredness, it is one of the conditions of performance but not the only one. Indeed, from a third-party, objective perspective, its influence may be overrated. A student can be negatively motivated and pass an examination, and be positively motivated yet fail—motivation is

but one intervening factor in a complex interrelation of effects, including mastery of subject content, experience and self-reliance. Furthermore, a 'self-concept' is an evolving factor in the construction of a person's educational life. A student's 'self-concept' is neither finite nor static, and may change on a ratio of positive or negative influences depending on the student's values, thoughts and intentions; the hospitality of the learning environment; and the prevailing organisational culture and circumstances (Sikhwari 2007, 523).

Motivation also involves personality. A person's will to succeed is seen as a driving force in closing the gap between current and future states of knowledge that involve acquiring skill and qualifications. Asserting oneself, is a factor of personality. Moreover, motivation is not inherently something that is "done to people, rather is something that people do" (Deci 1996, 21). It is also an intrinsic factor in workplace organisation as well in the personal psychological fabric of students' lives. Sikhwari (2007, 523) suggests that motivation comprises a set of dependent / independent variables in relationships between the learning and the learning activity, which account for the persistence and direction of a learner's behaviour if all other factors such as aptitude, skill, understanding, intelligence and environmental constraints are held constant. Further, any learning-teaching situation may be characterised by what may be termed "autonomous dependence" (Deci 1996, 90). This differs markedly from overly controlled environments, which are characterised by "coerced or controlled dependence" that may suppress motivation (or be perceived as being amotivational) (Deci 1996, 90). Motivation is also related to attitude as an underlying constant when formulating a learning disposition. A definition of 'attitude' is offered as "[m]ental and neural states of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on a person's response to objects and relations" (Sikhwari 2007, 524). As such, attitude is seen as a concept that might be real or imagined: it involves the cognitive, evaluative orientation of an individual (Sikhwari 2007, 524). Attitude differs from motivation in as much as the attitude concerns a general tendency to behave in a particular way towards a task, while motivation is concerned with providing the reason or driving force towards accomplishing the task (Sikhwari 2007, 524).

Individuals who experience relatively high stress and feelings of discomfort at university but a lower sense of control are more likely to experience a decreased sense of wellbeing. In turn, they may feel limited enjoyment and motivation to accomplish learning tasks (Gavala and Flett 2005, 52). In comparison, in situations where people experience a higher sense of academic control with higher comfort from the environment, their

sense of wellbeing is also higher, as is their experience of motivation. On the whole, people *like* autonomy, they frequently want to be a causal agent in managing their own learning (Deci 1996, 94). Interestingly, Gavala and Flett (2005) found no moderating effects of cultural identity on motivation. If people are presented with a comfortable working environment that is culturally congruent to them, then this creates corresponding increases in psychological wellbeing, academic enjoyment and motivation regardless of factors of personal identity (Gavala and Flett 2005, 52). Two conditions that contribute to academic success are:

- maintaining good working relationships
- having solid people support.

Motivation is related to attitude in as far as an evaluation of an experience as positive or negative may interact with the willingness to continue change or discontinue a particular task. Academic achievement, for example, may be its own reward, or it may be a means to further reward (such as a qualification for employment). However, motivation becomes particularly important when equity issues such as socio-economic status, low incomes, and low education produce limited opportunities for development. In such situations, where both few external drivers of motivation and negative stimulants for attitude exist, intrinsic motivation becomes far more important. Extrinsic rewards, when part of educational development, need to be equitable (Deci 1996, 55). That is one of the reasons why having both public and private education systems side by side without much government regulation is problematical, it produces inequities.

However, at the level of the classroom choice is also relevant for motivation. If a person chooses to be involved in a particular activity for curiosity or intrinsic reasons, they are more likely to value it (Shroff et al. 2008, 114). Coping behaviour is also predicated on personal efficacy in relation to task engagement. If personal efficacy in task engagement is seen as higher, then people will become more motivated; if it is seen as lower, then people may become demotivated (Shroff et al. 2008, 121). Coupled with intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation—such as a teacher's attitudes or instructional design quality—are important, yet these factors are only one pedagogical overlay aimed at stimulating self-regulation among students. Self-regulation may include three factors: “personal functioning by goal setting, self-evaluation in academic performance” and using the “learning environment by seeking information

and assistance” (Teoh et al. 2009, 712). Taking ‘time-out’ to reflect on learning tasks, can be time well spent.

### **Concepts in academic motivation**

As Yoshida et al., suggest (2008, 1401), motivation is related to a variety of educational outcomes. These outcomes include curiosity, persistence, motivation and performance. As such, it is external factors that may affect an internal state, which in turn “arouse, direct and sustain behaviour” (Tan 2009, 156). Motivation may also be related to calibration As Hallinan suggests (2009, 155), “[c]alibration measures the difference between actual and perceived ability. If you’re as good as you think you are, then you are said to be well calibrated. If you are not as good as you think you are, then you are said to be poorly calibrated.” Therefore, in the educational enterprise (or in any learning task), it is preferable that the learner starts from a well-calibrated condition. This will entail a reasonably realistic view of their learning competencies, which in turn will make them less likely to suffer demotivation from negative feedback. Demotivation might result if these learning competencies were too widely calibrated. In addition, a well-calibrated individual is more likely to respond to the conditions of optimal motivation that are possible in the learning situation of a self-determined learner. Related to calibration is the fact that students can be motivated when they perceive no contingencies, opportunistic incentives or barriers between actions and outcomes (Yoshida et al. 2008, 1401). Curiosity contributes to motivation in as much as it is one driver of persistence in learning and performance (Yoshida et al. 2008, 1401). The antithesis of motivation is the situation of “learned helplessness,” which can arise when people are exposed to uncontrollable stresses that condition them to fail to recognise and escape from controllable stresses—causing demotivation and even, in some cases, depression (Yoshida et al. 2008, 1401). Conversely, the motivation for accomplishing learning tasks can be defined as the psychological propensity for pleasure and satisfaction after successfully completing a task. Classroom motivation is also related to certain instructor / teacher characteristics such as “fairness ... caring, enthusiasm, consistency and impartiality” (Dykstra, et al. 2011, 2). Motivational values—such as a desire to learn, personal incentives (intrinsic and extrinsic) and striving for excellence—may be affected from such conditions as interest, learning from others, taking responsibility for learning, intrinsic and extrinsic tasks, and social rewards (Yoshida et al. 2008, 1402). While completed tasks are seen as more pleasant and incomplete tasks as less pleasant, task recall is higher for completed tasks

than incomplete tasks. Further, instructors who maintained highly structured, organised and outcome-focused lessons are more likely to inspire motivational learning confidence in students (Dykstra et al. 2011, 2). For students of lower ability, completion of low-level tasks is more rewarding than attempting to complete higher level tasks that motivate other groups (Yoshida et al. 2008, 1410). Tan (2009, 156) argues that student achievement is attributable to both environmental and genetic conditions, but it is not possible to improve the learning performance of someone who is not motivated.

As Wilson suggests (2009, 272), motivation explains behaviour and actions. It is defined as being “the force which starts and sustains our activities towards achieving our goals” (Wilson 2009, 272). Motivational goals are thought to be divided into two kinds: proximal goals (with short-term objectives) and distal goals (with longer-term objectives) (Baumeister and Tierney 2012, 70). Certainly, uncompleted tasks tend to lead to a form of negative reinforcement as the conscious present of the learner may be continually reminded by a stream of reminders from the unconscious. Termed the ‘Zeigarnik effect,’ it is thought these incessant yet minor motivational reminders from the unconscious to complete (learning) tasks are actually triggers for the conscious mind to make plans for the effect of the uncompleted task (Baumeister and Tierney 2012, 83). If a student focused on their performance also has high motivation but lacks an internal interest, then they are more likely to adopt “surficial” approaches to learning (Wilson 2009, 278–279). This finding emphasises the need in some learning situations for intrinsic goal setting rather than an over-reliance on external goal setting (Wilson 2009, 278–279). Surface learning is thought to be a characteristic of students who do not focus on their performance, while students who do focus adopt a more strategic approach to learning in which intellectual achievement is valued and obligations are intended to be fulfilled (Wilson 2009, 279). It is also thought that conflicting goals may lead to a less positive emotional outlook instead of affirmative actions.

According to Dornyei and Shekan (2003), motivation describes three factors:

1. why a person does something
2. how long the person does it for
3. how hard the person pursues it.

However, because people are infinitely complex, no single definitive path exists to discover what motivates a person. Adding money into the

mix in motivational contexts is more complex and not, of itself, to be considered an entirely beneficial ingredient in the learning process. As Deci explains (1996, 29), “[w]hen people say that money motivates, what they really mean is that money controls. And when it does, people become alienated—they give up some of their authenticity—and they push themselves to do what they think they must do.” Therefore, monetary motivation is thought to undermine autonomy and volition in some circumstances. At the level of extrinsic reward, Adair (2006, 113) also points to the shortcomings of money as a motivational tool, “[a]t best money is a crude measure of the value of work. Is a pop star really worth a thousand times more than a brain surgeon?”

Diminution of autonomy may lead to mal-adaptive consequences (Deci 1996, 31). While in everyday life diminution of autonomy serves as justification for service and job performance, morally it is not self-justificatory. In the teaching context, Gardner and Lambert (1972) describe motivation as persistence that teachers and learners show in the learning environment towards achieving a learning goal. A distinction is apparent between intrinsic motivation (behaviour for its own sake) and extrinsic motivation (behaviour as a means to some external reward) (Bektas-Cetinkaya and Oruc 2011, 72). The motivations of many people may be seen as being on a continuum between self-determined and controlled motivation (Bektas-Cetinkaya and Oruc 2011, 72). However, little attention is often paid to the environmental factors of motivation, whether physical or social in effect. However, a study by Clemens (2008) revealed both that the socio-economic status of a student has a large effect on their academic achievement and that motivationally supportive environments are positively related to academic achievement (Bektas-Cetinkaya and Oruc 2011, 72).

### **A summary of different theories of motivation**

As Wilson suggests (2009, 272), motivation is the term used to explain why we act in certain behavioural patterns at given times, and is a “force which starts and sustains our activities towards goal achieving.” Four major theories underpin motivation.

1. *Attribution theory* suggests that our actions are the result of making sense of our environment: the search for causes to perceptions, feelings and events creates a behavioural dynamic of socially constructed reality (Wilson 2009, 272).