



Indicator: The school promotes motivational competency in school rituals and routines, such as morning announcements, awards assemblies, hallway and classroom wall displays, and student competitions. (E6)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that the Motivational Competency helps students engage in and be excited about learning, and it helps to inform teachers and parents about what factors influence how and what their children learn. Schools should embed these principles into their daily rituals and routines to emphasize the importance of the Motivational Competency to its school community. This can be done through physical displays in the school, morning meetings in classrooms, and morning announcements throughout the school.

Questions: What rituals and routines already exist in the school? Which existing rituals could easily incorporate principles of the Motivational Competency? Are there new rituals that need to be created? How will the administration lead and support this effort to embed the Motivational Competency into schoolwide practices?

What is the Motivational Competency?

The Motivational Competency explains why students engage with learning, how hard they will work on a particular task, and why they do or do not persevere to achieve their goals (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). Usher and Kober (2012) identify four dimensions of motivation: competence, control/autonomy, interest/value, and relatedness. Toshalis and Nakkula (2012) write that, “we are motivated to devote energy to those activities in which we expect to succeed, and we subsequently tend to value those activities over others” (p. 10). If a student feels capable of accomplishing the task before them, they will be more likely to deeply engage in the work and persist.

This internal, or intrinsic, motivation also occurs when students truly enjoy or are interested in their work or goals (Redding, 2006). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) explain:

Motivation is wanting to do one task when there are competing tasks available. The learner believes that the task is important and has a belief in his or her ability to master the task through dedication and hard work. The learner persists even when mastering the task becomes difficult. (p. 8)

Many other factors affect a student's level of motivation – including their familial or social context, the classroom environment, and the degree to which teachers create an environment of mastery learning (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015; Redding, 2016). This concept of relatedness may not be as intuitive for teachers and parents to understand and foster collaboratively (Usher & Kober, 2012). Carreker and Boulware-Gooden (2015) outline a number of strategies that teachers can use to boost their students' motivational competency, including expressing confidence in their students' ability to complete and succeed in the work, sparking students' interest in lessons by starting with a related but fun activity, providing encouragement and support for students to keep going, and allowing students to make decisions about project groups or topics. Redding (2006) also highlights ways that teachers can

balance high expectations with a culture of caring, ensuring that students feel known, cared about, and recognized for their efforts.

Recognition for effort, as opposed to commendations for innate ability, is a critical piece of developing a growth mindset. Headden and McKay (2015) explain that students with a growth mindset “believe that with effort, their ability and performance can improve... The positive attitude prepares them for the realities of later life, helping them recover when their efforts fail to produce the outcomes they have come to expect” (p. 8). In contrast, students who have been rewarded and commended simply for being smart tend to have a fixed mindset, leading them to believe that their efforts are inconsequential and that they will simply either be good or bad at a given task (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Headden & McKay, 2015).

Consequently, teachers who focus on student effort and mastery of a goal, instead of performance on a test or a grade on a report card, are more likely to foster a growth mindset and consequently, higher levels of motivation, for their students (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Usher & Kober, 2012). This type of mindset can also be developed in the home, as a result of parental expectations, attitudes, and habits, making it even more important for schools to engage families in their children’s learning and provide them with strategies that they can use at home.

Why Should Schools Promote the Motivational Competency in Rituals and Routines?

In order for the principles, values, and skills associated with the Motivational Competency to become ingrained in students, its implementation must extend beyond the classroom. In addition to helping families promote the Motivational Competency at home, school staff and leadership need to think about how they can encourage these practices throughout the school day. Incorporating the Motivational Competency into school routines and rituals, such as morning announcements, student showcases, and morning meetings helps to embed the competency into the overall culture and value system of the school (Redding, 2014; Educator Competencies, 2015).

Redding (2014) defines school culture as residing “resides in the school’s collective values, beliefs, and norms, and evidenced in its mission statement, rituals, routines,

and relationships among its personnel and students” (p. 13). Horsch, Chen, and Nelson (1999) discuss the importance of these shared rituals as a way of uniting the entire school community around its responsibilities and principles, stating that:

This shared ritual provides a level of continuity that allows for a dialogue among staff members about the purposes and practices of the school community as a whole... each classroom has become part of the larger school community, and each student has become the responsibility of all the teachers. (p. 7)

Put another way, Mullis and Finch (1996) emphasize the welcoming, inclusive, and communal nature of school rituals, writing that:

A supportive interpersonal environment, an academic climate that encourages student achievement, a sense of comfort, and a cooperative spirit among the students are additional positive elements. Rituals are a vital means of creating, expressing, preserving, and transmitting these interpersonal qualities of the school’s organizational culture. (p. 246)

A notable example of a ritual that promotes the Motivational Competency is the morning meeting, which is part of the Responsive Classroom framework. In schools that use this framework, the school day begins with each class sitting in a circle, talking and sharing with each other. The teacher can use this time to make announcements and review previously learned material in a fun and social way (Horsch, Chen, & Nelson, 1999; Horsch, Chen, & Wagner, 2002). As the entire school participates in this practice on a daily basis, it becomes a more comfortable part of the culture, encouraging students to interact positively with their peers and teachers, take academic risks, and start their day in a productive and structured way (Mullis & Finch, 1996; Horsch, Chen, & Nelson, 1999; Horsch, Chen, & Wagner, 2002).

Routine practices that incorporate the Motivational Competency can be as involved as the daily morning meeting or as simple as highlighting student work on bulletin boards and displays (Educator Competencies, 2015). Regardless of the level of involvement, this incorporation of the Motivational Competency into the everyday, non-academic aspects of the school will help students and families see the importance of its components.

References and other resources

- Carreker, S., & Boulware-Gooden, R. (2015). *The personal competencies: Through the eyes of the classroom teacher*. Center on Innovations in Learning at Temple University. Retrieved from http://www.centeril.org/resources/PCs_and_the_Teacher.pdf
- Christensen, C., Horn, M., & Johnson, C. (201). *Rethinking student motivation: Why understanding the 'job' is crucial for improving innovation*. Innosight Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.christenseninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Rethinking-student-motivation.pdf>
- Farrington, C., et al. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners. The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review*. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved from [https://raikesfoundation.blob.core.windows.net/media/SA-Rec-Reading-CCSR-Noncog-RF-Full-Report-Revision-\(1.14\).pdf](https://raikesfoundation.blob.core.windows.net/media/SA-Rec-Reading-CCSR-Noncog-RF-Full-Report-Revision-(1.14).pdf)
- Gonzales, J. (2016). 5 questions to ask yourself about your unmotivated students. *Cult of Pedagogy*. Retrieved from <http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/student-motivation/>
- Headden, S., & McKay, S. (2015). *Motivation matters: How new research can help teachers boost student engagement*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Retrieved from http://cdn.carnegie-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Motivation_Matters_July_2015.pdf
- Horsch, P., Chen, J-Q., & Nelson, D. (1999). Rules and rituals: Tools for creating a respectful, caring, learning community. *Phi Delta Kappan*.
- Horsch, P., Chen, J-Q., & Wagner, S. (2002). The responsive classroom approach: A caring, respectful school environment as a context for development. *Education and Urban Society*, 34(3), 364-383. Retrieved from <http://eus.sagepub.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/content/34/3/365.full.pdf>
- Mullis, F., & Fincher, S. (1996). Using rituals to define the school community. *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 30(4), 243-251. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/stable/42871224>
- Redding, S. (2006). *The Mega System: Deciding. Learning. Connecting*. Academic Development Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.adi.org/mega/>
- Jobs for the Future and the Council of Chief State School Officers. (2015). *Educator competencies for personalized, learner-centered teaching*. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/Educator-Competencies-081015-FINAL.pdf>
- Redding, S. (2000). *Parents and learning*. Geneva: UNESCO Publications. Retrieved from <http://www.education.ne.gov/21stccclc/Afterschool/FamilyPartnerships/Parents%20and%20Learning.pdf>
- Redding, S. (2014). *Personal competencies in personalized learning*. Center on Innovations in Learning. Retrieved from http://www.centeril.org/publications/Personalized_Learning.pdf
- Redding, S. (2014). *Personal competencies in personalized learning*. Center on Innovations in Learning. Retrieved from http://www.centeril.org/publications/Personalized_Learning.pdf
- Redding, S. (2016). Competencies and personalized learning. In M. Murphy, S. Redding, & J. Twyman (Eds.), *Handbook on personalized learning for states, districts, and schools* (pp. 3–18). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University, Center on Innovations in Learning. Retrieved from http://www.centeril.org/2016handbook/resources/Redding_chapter_web.pdf
- Toshalis, E., & Nakkula, M. (2012). *Motivation, engagement, and student voice*. Jobs for the Future. Retrieved from http://studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/Motivation%20Engagement%20Student%20Voice_0.pdf
- Usher, A., & Kober, N. (2012). *Student motivation: An overlooked piece of school reform*. Center on Education Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=405>

©2016 Academic Development Institute