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Motivation Theory

One of the most foundational topics that every art educator needs to be familiar with is motivation theory. Books on motivation addresses research and techniques to address students’ motivation but also teacher motivation. Motivation impacts what, when, and how we retain information. What can be more foundational to our art classroom. Unfortunately, only 14 articles have been published in *Art Education* magazine, *Studies in Art Education* or the *Visual Inquiry*: *Learning and Teaching Art* journal. I and many of my WLU graduate students, who chose to write their thesis’s on the topic, hope to change that. I will reference several books on motivation at three different levels of reading difficulty.

For those who are novices to the concept of motivation, I recommend purchasing one or both of these books. *What every teacher should know about student motivation*, by Donna Walker Tileston, 2nd Edition published in 2010, it is a short and to the point book. It covers basic terms and tips for classroom application. Chapter two is my favorite in this book because it explains the cognitive foundations to what drives human motivation. The second option for teachers new to motivation theory is Classroom Motivation by Eric Anderman and Lynley Anderman. First published in 2010, it is most likely on its third edition by now. It is easy to read has eleven chapters, each a worth while read. I particularly enjoyed the chapter on *Working with Parents* and *Motivational Problems*.

For those art teachers who have been exposed to motivation theory literature, I have a few books that can deepen your understanding of this important topic. Motivation in Education: Theory, Research, and Applications, by Dale Schunk, Paul Pintrich and Judith Meece, 4th Editon published in 2020 is a book that one can reread for years. Spanning 334 pages of content over ten chapters, it is a book that teachers can reread for years. My favorite chapter is *Social Cultural Influences of motivation*. The second book is Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning: Theory, Research and Applications, by Dale Schunk and Barry Zimmerman. Published in 2007, this book combines motivation theory literature with its closely aligned sister literature Self-Regulated learning theory. “Self-regulation refers to the process by which learners personally activate and sustain cognitions, affects, and behaviors that are systematically oriented toward the attainment of learning goals”(Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007, p.vii). These books introduce entire subliterature of motivation theory in much more clarity and depth, such as Expectancy-Value Theory or Attribution Theory. Both these books are graduate level reading, but the content is worth the read if this topic interests you.

For those interested in researching or writing about motivation in their classrooms, I have two more books that take motivation theory to a more detailed level. These two books require focus and time to process what is being said at time s but this is typical for authors in the cognitive sciences actually completing and publishing motivational research. Human motivation is internation and documentational evidence requires indirect patterned actions, words or behaviors to confirm causation. The two book I am stating are books that have been written as standard barriers for the field of motivation theory. In other words, the field itself recognizes it is time for a comprehensive book to be published and it calls many leading authors to write their contribution to the book. Because of this, each chapter is unique and very specific. The first book is *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*, published in 2005 Edited by Andrew Elliot and Carol Dweck. The next book is *Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Kathryn Wentzel and David Miele. I tend to go back to this book as I write articles using one of the five subliterature’s of motivation theory.

Book on motivation theory is more accessible today than it was back in the ealry1980s when it first started. There are specific books which address learned helplessness children or a “*Parents Guide to Understanding Motivating Children*, is a good one. I recommend just doing a book search. Motivation theory is such an important topic in art education, and I hope you find it useful in your pedagogy.