

Intrinsic or Extrinsic Motivation?

Notes from Flo Longhorn and Clare Hobson feedback November 2018



How does normal motivation develop?

Children naturally have intrinsic motivation when born; they explore their environment and discover their abilities for enjoyment, personal satisfaction or mastery over their bodies. These explorations quickly link with external motivators such as the parent's encouragement or smiles. This process is a critical part of development because children need to learn many things and also to take risks to do so. Without encouragement, they may fail to engage in this necessary exploration. For example, a toddler may have a pattern of exploration in which they have a family member included in their explorations. This is so that they can begin to check things out in the world, but also come back to the adult for additional encouragement. In this way the toddler has developed both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation - a synergy of motivation.

Intrinsic Feedback

Intrinsic feedback means that you can have your own inner feelings, know who you are and are sure about what you want to say and do. This feedback also uses the interoception sensory system, sensitivity to stimuli from within the body. The learner is listening to what their inner body is telling them and then, if they can, will let you know about this information. Self-determination and fulfilment of their own needs are the motivators. There needs to be a dialogue for this to be useful. If no one listens to you and responds appropriately, then you drift into learned helplessness and gloom.

For example:

- 'My stomach, digestive tract, mouth, nose, and taste/smell systems are telling me I am hungry, so I will tell you, in my own way, so you can find a solution that will please me.'
- 'I feel a warm glow inside when I am near my friend, so I will tell you, in my own way, that I wish to be moved near him.'
- Research has shown that praise can help increase intrinsic motivation. Positive feedback that is "sincere", "promotes autonomy" and "conveys attainable standards" was found to promote intrinsic motivation in learners. But on the other side of that coin, external rewards can decrease intrinsic motivation if they are given too willy-

nilly. When learners received too much praise for completing minimal work or single tasks, their intrinsic motivation decreased.

To begin to understand intrinsic feedback coming from a particular learner requires:

- Sensitivity to the need/requirements of the learner.
- Allowing time to interpret the signals.
- An understanding of two-way unusual communications through bio-behaviour observations.
- Clear and concise observations of the feedback originating from the learner, over an extended period of time.
- Use of a happiness audit.
- Intensive scaffolding opportunities to begin with, and then a removal of some of the struts carefully (perhaps all eventually).
- Gathering of useful, significant data, use of video.

To enhance learning from intrinsic feedback given by the learner, some curricula ideas:

"I am who I am"- a project on the inner me.

- Development of self-image.
- I have power.
- Self-esteem work.
- I can be successful.
- Being treated as a valued member of a small group.
- Heightening of spirituality.
- Emotional literacy.
- personalised curricula.
- Use of intensive interaction, Sherborne movement or similar.

Enabling intrinsic motivation

- The opportunity to respond through carefully selected scenarios, preferred sensory materials/experience/places.
- Being with preferred children/adults.
- Repeated opportunities to reach outside themselves (physically or emotionally) by curious, provocative experiences that delight or astound.
- Developing of anticipatory skills through continual repetition of super-duper activities.
- Use of preference through choice (or one choice if needed) of a delectable experience/activity that is hard to resist.
- Playfulness valued (as opposed to playing) in simple reciprocal games.

Connecting Strategies

Ensure that practical skills are being practised to enhance the use/feeling of intrinsic feedback. For example, if an attractive, smelly object is being offered then you need to know you have hands that can reach and a nose that can twitch and smell closely.

Learning Environments

- Sensory and concrete.
- Some with emotional content at the fore.
- Carefully planned and documented.
- Vibrant, stimulating but not overwhelming environments.
- Or relaxed and non-threatening environments.
- Narrative observation of the scenario/activity.
- Some environments in which unexpected mistakes are planned to happen or routines are disrupted to arouse a response.
- Use of tablets/iPads/switches to communicate .
- Communication on their level and not imposed e.g. pictorial symbols are, in the main, useless.

Extrinsic Feedback

This is far easier to understand and to elicit a response. Extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from the outside world. Usually it is a reward or the satisfaction of being praised for an activity or behaviour. Sweeties come into the picture! It can also be feedback that is unpleasant, nasty or horrible. What is pleasant for one person could be agony for another. Families or carers are excellent at flagging up what succeeds with their child!

For very special learners, extrinsic feedback can be seen in positive interactions and pleasurable results. Educators do this well, but it is important to remember that overdoing the extrinsic feedback can be detrimental. For example, learners with autism usually dislike the 'singing and dancing well done!' routine we are familiar with, and prefer a simple, quiet 'well done' instead.

Idiosyncratic Feedback

This is feedback that is seen as very unusual or unpredictable. If it is coming from the child, it is usually bound up with behaviours that are significantly different, puzzling or completely out of the ordinary. It would link closely with intrinsic feedback, how they feel and how this links to behaviour and communications. It would be a major factor in their behavioural and communication development and in planning ongoing programmes.

If the adult gives idiosyncratic feedback to the learner, I would not see it as feedback but as a drawback. Most learners like to feel safe and have a steady consistent reliable approach both with adults and their environments of learning, so this feedback would not fit in at all.

Further useful documents/research and websites

'Interoception: The Eighth Sensory System', Kelly Mahler, 2018.

'When children with pmlid shine: passport to play', see DebbyWatson.co.uk.

'Creating a responsive environment for people with pmlid', Jean Ware, Routledge, 2003.

'Interoception' information on the Sensory Spectacle & Bridge School London websites. See <https://www.sensorspectacle.co.uk> and <https://www.thebridgelondon.co.uk>.

'Responding to the mental and emotional needs of people with profound and multiple learning difficulties', see *Promoting a More Inclusive Society* - www.pamis.org.uk.

'Life satisfaction for children with profound and multiple disabilities: what is it?', Gordon Lyons (find online). https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-90-481-9650-0_12 (30 euro).

"Pre-verbal communication schedule (PVCS)" - find at http://www.complexneeds.org.uk/modules/Module-2.4-Assessment-monitoring-and-evaluation/All/downloads/m08p030b/the_pvcs.pdf

The "Motivation Assessment Scale" is a questionnaire that assesses the function of behaviours alongside the dimensions of escape, sensory, social attention and rewards. Check online for various documents and practices.

"Affective Communication Assessment", Dr Mark Barber, records responses to systematic presentations of different stimuli. See <http://drmarkbarber.co.uk/ACAOWNERSMANUAL.pdf>.

"The effects of praise on the intrinsic motivation of children: a review and synthesis", Jennifer Henderlong and Mark Lepper, 2002, <https://www.reed.edu/motivation/docs/PraiseReview.pdf>.

Suggested tools that may be of use

- Happiness audit (found at flopuplications.com)
- PAMIS materials (Scotland)
- Play passport (Debby Watson research)
- MIPQ mood interest and pleasure questionnaire
- Routes for learning
- Quest for learning
- CLDD engagement materials
- Personal passports (Call Centre Edinburgh University) - www.callscotland.org.uk