

MOTIVATING INDIVIDUALS TO SCHOOL LEARNING

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Abstract: The author presents the importance of motivating students to learn, for lifelong education and development. He presents twelve theories explaining triggers, directions and stability of human behavior. General theory of rational behavior formulated by Z. Zimny is presented as explanatory for all human behavior. Other theories consider only some specific human behaviors. Z. Zimny composes the theory basing on original philosophical system, which he calls "cognitive attributivism". He redefines the concepts of instinct, desire, need, value and emotion. He gives them different interpretation by describing them in a new conceptual system. This theory is consistent with the theory of efficient action (praxeology). Using as support the general theory of rational behavior, the author has formulated nine conditions in order to efficiently motivate students to learn. Three conditions apply to the educational program, the next six concern forms and methods of implementation of the educational program. If these nine conditions are fulfilled, students will have the opportunity to form their habits of learning, improvement and work organization. In addition students develop ability to learn and a positive attitude to themselves, their development and activities in the environment. School educational program implemented according to above mentioned nine conditions is accompanied by students' positive emotions, which additionally strengthen and preserve acquired habits. Hence, it can be assumed that students' motivation to learn will remain long after graduation.

Key words: motivating, learning.

Introduction

The creation of a positive and a strong motivation for learning is a key issue during the school period. Motivation determines individual student's developmental opportunities throughout his or her life. During the school period the students shape the habits and attitudes towards learning and their development. Students are eager to learn when they are convinced that it is beneficial for them (i.e. are their current and future needs met), and when they know what steps are needed to be taken and in what order they should be conducted. It is important also for the steps to be possible to be realized. In order for the students to achieve satisfactory progress in learning, activities should focus on three areas: the development of learning abilities, learning skills and motivation to learn. Implementation of measures undertaken in these three areas will be effective when they will be matched with appropriate learning tasks for students which complexity and content corresponds with their life experience (T. Zimny, 2003). Inappropriate selection of learning tasks weakens motivation, and sometimes even discourages to learn.

Historical background

The search for answers to questions about the cause of human behavior, its direction, strength and durability brought many theories. The ones significant enough for me to include here are: the instincts theory (Wilm), the drives theory (tissue) (Freud, Hull), the need theory (Murray, Maslow, McClelland), behavioral theories (Watson, Morgan, Boring), the reinforcement theory (Skinner) social learning theory (Bandura, Berkovitz), development theories (White, Piaget), humanistic theories (Rogers), expectancy-value theory (Pekrun, Edwards), the theory of goals (Locke, Latham, Ford), Robert Franken's views on the lack of a single reason explaining the start, direction and persistence of human behavior. He seeks answers in the biological construction of the brain, in learning, cognition and self-regulation. Franken indicates that different behaviors have different sources.

The instincts theory indicates that the source for one's behavior is instinct implemented by nature so it is based on genes. (Wilm, 1925 p. 40 after Franken, 2005, p. 25). This theory was created by Sigmund Freud (2010) and later developed and modified by Clark Leonard Hull (1943). They claimed that the drives generate a tension which is reduced by a person through objects. Freud believed that instincts are the source of the formation of the representation of such objects, and Hull showed that these objects are discovered during random behavior. Hull believed that the reduction of tension, thereby reducing the power of instincts, creates reinforcement and therefore the behavior is repeated until forming a habit. The needs theory was created by H. Murray and later developed by (among others) A. Maslow and D. McClelland. Murray assumed (1938), that a person is born with a particular set of needs, and they determine the direction, persistence of human behavior and

individual differences due to the strength of feeling different needs. Five years later, A. Maslow arranged them by creating the pyramid of needs. The first group is considered to be more urgent. McClelland D. (1985) draws attention to the needs that arise almost exclusively as the effect of the environment.

B.F. Skinner (1995) describes the ability to modify human behavior by using rewards and punishments that is by strengthening and weakening. Skinner's views show the mechanisms of manipulation, therefore, apply only to that part of human behavior that results from external influences, rather than subjective, creative activities. The basic premise of the theory of motivation and development (Piaget, 1981) is the adaptation of a person to one's environment through its own development. It is supposed to take place through development, acquisition of knowledge about one self and the environment and the acquisition of new skills. Theory indicates insufficient meaning of instincts and drives of humans to adapt to the environment. This is due to changes taking place in environment.

The expectancy - value theory (Edwards 1961) shifts the focus towards human choices, so it considers only conscious behavior. This approach is important because it suggests a mechanism for human choice, due to the potential impact of assigning different behaviors and different opportunities of the different values.

Rogers (2003) introduced the concept of organismic valuation process. This term indicates that a person in a situation where other peoples' values determine his or her behavior is losing orientation in what is good and beneficial for him or her, the person loses individuality and the possibility of development. One should use his innate ability to assess what is beneficial for himself or herself.

The theory of goals by M. Ford (1992) points to goals as the driving force behind human behavior. He lists six basic types of goals. This theory is similar in its concept to the theory of needs. However, Ford does not use one of the links which is a need but is seeking for the source of human behavior rather in external factors. Also, Locke and Latham (1990) described a theory of goal setting. They conclude that goal setting motivates a person to action, directing his or her attention, mobilizes forces to action, encourages perseverance and helps to determine a strategy. Objectives should be both complex and defined.

In order to clarify the source, direction and persistence of human behavior the social learning theory of A. Bandura (2007) is important. In this theory, the key role is played by information acquired by observing the behavior of other people. A person watches consciously others behavior and in a similar situation can repeat this behavior despite the fact that previously he or she did not perform it. This applies to a number of simple actions. The observed person and its relationship to the observer are also important - it should be a significant person. This theory draws attention to the fact that human behavior has its origins in passively assimilated information.

The general theory of rational action

The general theory of rational behavior by Z. Zimny (1977) includes those theories and the concept of R. Franken. This theory is a general one in relation to the earlier and surprisingly the later concepts of motivation of human behavior, including energy and information necessary for the conduction, direction, and persistence of behavior as well as individual differences between people due to their biological construction and the environment. It explains the reasons for starting, directing and persisting of human behavior, including the action. With regard to the action, which is a targeted and intentional act, it is based on the theory of efficient action (Le Chatelier 1972, Kotarbinski, 1965). The theory describes the components and stages of human activities which are reflected in the general theory of rational action. Z. Zimny formulated his theory (1977) by the ontological and epistemological assumptions of cognitive attributivism (2007). Its elementary cognitive assumption is that the matter has four attributes: mass, energy, information and value. He redefines and gives a new interpretation of the concepts of instinct, desire, needs, emotions, feelings by describing them in a different conceptual environment system.

The basic premise of the general theory of rational action is that a person lives in its environment. The environment system as stronger from nature creates a risk to people. The person has the energy resources of various types (basic and functional) and various control options of these resources (physiological, neurophysiological, conscious, self-conscious and socially conscious). It explains not only the cause of the conscious behavior, but also of the behavior not having these properties. It specifies instinct as genetically encoded knowledge of the properties of the environment in relation to their property and ability to properly control one's own activity in the environment. The sources of human activity – his or her behavior and actions - are drives or needs. Drives control the behavior of a person on a neurophysiological level, and the needs on a conscious level, so that they can operate simultaneously. Drives are associated with compensation of unconsciously lacking something, or the human desire for any activity. In case of lack of an unconscious nature, the activity is undertaken by the impulses and instincts, and in the case pursuing any activity it is habitual.

Awareness of the lack of something goes first as the realization of one's own activity (taken under the influence of desire), and secondarily as an awareness of the kind of lack (the quality) that caused this activity. Only when one knows what kind of lack lead to the activity he or she can enable self-conscious control in which the control role of instinct is taken over by more and more conscious motives. The transition from

neurophysiological control to conscious control is complex. Conscious desire more or less effectively blocks the self-conscious control, putting the processes of reasoning and desire in the form of rationalized drive. One realizes the lack of something and his or her own activity, but his or her behavior is not planned and does not have to be rational. The multi-stage pattern of awareness shows a smooth transition from the behavior under the influence of desire and needs. The action can be noticed only with the full awareness of the needs and the planning of its reduction.

Z. Zimny defines a need as conscious imbalance of the organism combined with interaction with the environment that causes a risk to the organism and the expectation of changing this state to a state of equilibrium, or at least reducing the risk. The need includes a component of a goal as a state of balance and a component of function changing imbalances and threats to the state of equilibrium and safety. Any need holds a quality or a type, quantity or volume and intensity (power) meaning the speed at which the action should be undertaken in order to eliminate the threat or at least reduce it without threatening health or life. Need is a conscious lack, so it is subjectively perceived by people, rather than being given externally in an objective manner. It has three characteristics; quality, quantity or size and intensity, and not two properties (the type and strength) as described by Murray and Maslow.

However, a completely new breakthrough in the process of explaining the causes, direction and persistence of human behavior is the acknowledgment that the awareness and reduction of human needs is not an act but a process and this process has five stages. The awareness of the imbalance of the organism due to the existence a need, induction is carried out in the following stages (Z. Zimny, 1987, pp. 19-21):

1. Awareness of organism imbalance
2. Awareness of what is this imbalance and what quality it has
3. Awareness of what can overcome the lack.
4. Awareness of how to compensate for the lack.
5. Awareness of having adequate possibilities to conduct an operation in a known manner with using known means to compensate for the lack.

The process of induction of needs and at the same time creating goals of action is carried out from the general to the specific needs, while reduction takes the opposite pattern. First, we are aware of the overall imbalance in our organism, then specify the location of this imbalance in the organism and what it can restore this balance. On the other hand we are looking for appropriate measures and tools to obtain the missing good to finally get the orientation and the ability to use tools and resources. Reducing the need is reversed. Similarly, action planning goes from making general to specific purposes. We realize specific objectives to ultimately achieve the objective of the overall operation. The general theory of rational action suggests that the goals are placed as a result of awareness of the needs and possibilities of its fulfillment.

Induced and agreed to be reduced need requires the formulation of appropriate general subjective measures appropriate to the task. Way to achieve formulated task and achieving the goal is the subject of a multi-level decision-making process in which we take further decisions depending on the increasingly detailed levels. These decisions may be cognitive (identifying a given situation) or executive (how to act in such a situation). Then the constructed program of activities leading to the achievement of the objectives referred to as more and more general. At each level there is a general set of possibilities - a set of possible goals - of which one has to make a choice.

The connection between motives and program of action is pointed out by K. Obuchowski (1983, pp. 22-25) by defining motive as „verbalization of goal and program enabling an individual undertaking a given activity” targeted to achieving a aimed goal. Emotion is, however, information about the value, or the importance of the stimulus for the body. Emotions are the result of the valuation of information provided by the reticular activating system. The reticular system analyzes the content of the information extracted from the receptors. The stronger the motive the more strongly emotions are experienced. Emotions increase the subjective force of the stimuli and reinforce the reaction for it. Therefore, once a negative value is assigned with negative emotions the change is very difficult.

Z. Zimny (1977, pp. 103-106) identifies two types of needs: biological and functional. He divides the biological needs into physical, mental, and socio-psychological called by the author as social. Physical needs are further divided into the needs of goods and the need of money. He divides the psychological needs: the need for theoretical knowledge or the knowledge of one's own properties and the properties of objects and surroundings, the need for practical knowledge or the knowledge of the values of properties of objects and surroundings for themselves, the need for operations skills, attitudes towards the needs of the world, society, economic assets and the impact of their own and others' action. Social needs are further divided into: the need for passive acceptance or tolerance to live with, the need for acceptance or tolerance in active cooperation, the need for social recognition and the need for the sharing of power or decision-making. The functional needs are divided into the needs of power and the needs of efficient performance.

Motivating the student to learn in school

Every human activity, behavior based on instinct or consciousness takes place in certain internal and external conditions. Those conditions are called the human situation (Tomaszewski, 1979; Z. Zimny, 1977). Therefore, a situation is always somebody's situation and it describes the relations between an individual and his or her environment. A value for a person is what can fulfill the need and therefore something on which his or her life and development depends, and (Z. Zimny, 1977; Borecka-Biernat 2006, p. 12) knowledge and skills consist the internal possibilities of action in order to reduce the need in external conditions defining the external possibilities of human behavior (Z. Zimny, 1987; Tomaszewski 1979; Biernat-Borecka, 2006, p. 12).

Tadeusz Kotarbiński points out that a person can only act if an impulse pushing him or her towards action occurs. This impulse according to Z. Zimny is victorious motive. (1977, p. 109). Motive is an expected value of something that according to gained information probably has a needed quality in certain size or quantity and remains in a defined probable relations to the desired state. The victorious motive being the impulse for action is the one in which that relation is the most desired one in the eyes of one acting (1977, s. 110). Z. Zimny emphasizes that the probability discussed in defining the motive has a subjective quality and is more correctly recognized when the decision-maker has greater experience and greater knowledge of the surroundings.

It had previously been assumed that the behavior has two properties: the awareness and purposeful action on the subject. The transition from unconscious behavior to conscious behavior is smooth and similar is the transition from unintentional to intentional behavior. Assuming that the behavior may be unintentional and unconscious (tics, convulsions), deliberate and unconscious (instinctive), pointless and conscious (addictive behavior mechanisms of addiction is explained by R. Franken [2005, pp. 232-271]), and a conscious and deliberate (actions). In addition, there are habitual behaviors which were originally conscious and deliberate, and only subsequently become flexible and automated, thus partially are unconscious and even pointless, when the situation changed the person and the habit remained and does not lead to achieving a goal anymore.

People have three types of activities: fun, learning, and working. Each type of activity requires a different kind of motivation. Fun is the human experience of the pleasure of the activity for itself. The result of this activity is not important. Motivation for fun may be important only if you want to provoke a particular type of human activity.

The work is the result of the action enabling meeting the people's needs. Working entity receives in return the equivalent in the form of wages. It allows one to meet his or her needs. Motivation to work may include, among other things, increasing the equivalent, working stops – transfer of equivalent stops. Motivation to work applies only to the time of performance of the work.

Learning consists of the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about oneself and one's environment, and practical knowledge about the importance of the environment for the individual, mastering the skills of operations in order to change the environment and possibly satisfy the needs and shaping respond to the environment, or the elements of the environment. Learning changes human potential into properties more favorable for him or her, and it is an important result of this process.

Knowledge is a human need to become aware of his or her needs in order to reduce them and to work. Attitudes give people orientation in what is beneficial, what is neutral and what is harmful.

The school curriculum is to be constructed in a way that a student will:

- Gain knowledge
- Master skills,
- Shape attitudes towards oneself and the environment

In such a way that will help him or her to fulfill his or her needs at any level of education.

The school curriculum should be realized in such a form and way that the student will:

- be provided with good patterns of behavior by observing teachers and other members of the staff,
- master his or her skills in making decisions and choices,
- receive didactic task suited to their current capabilities,
- improve the skills of cooperation,
- had his or her social and functional needs fulfilled
- will not be deprived of his or her physical needs.

Above I formulated 9 conditions of strong and positive motivation of teaching a student in school which resulted in the general theory of rational behavior: 3 of them deal with the curriculum and 6 with the form and ways of its realization. Below I will discuss the significance of the conditions for the process of motivating students to learn.

The school curriculum is to deal with the student's environment and in particular natural, social and economic environment. The student is to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge and to master the skills regarding the operations needed to fulfill his or her present and future needs with the emphasis on those present. The curriculum is to be constructed from the perspective of the student and not certain scientific disciplines. The ones who construct the curriculum should ask themselves the question: what should a person know in order to

operate in the society, to be well prepared to lead his or her development and to be ready to take conscious and well analyzed decisions.

A curriculum which fulfills the given conditions makes the work of teachers and school easier. The conditions assigned to forms and ways of realization of the curriculum deal not only with classes but entire school with the way it's organized, the social and physical conditions. It is this organization and the conditions of work that bring the students patterns of interpersonal contacts, patterns of attitudes towards work, the results of work and towards environment. If a student gets different, sometimes contradictive, patterns of behavior, than he or she rejects them all choses one more suitable for him or her. That is why it is the task of the head of the school to make sure that all teachers convey the same patterns of behavior.

The condition of students mastering their skills of decision making and making a choice is hard to meet and requires from the teacher full orientation in which range he or she can give the student freedom of choice and how to realize it? That requires from the teachers subjective attitude towards the students. The student can choose elements regarding the task, its time of realization, and quantity by himself or herself.

The condition of receiving didactic task suited to student's current capabilities requires from the teacher good knowledge of the students and keeping in touch with their current progress. It also requires the teachers to have a wide choice of tasks from which he or she can choose ones which are suitable for the students. It is therefore needed to organize the didactic work and apply didactic means which enable diverse education (T. Zimny, 2008). Not meeting this condition causes the student to loose interest with strength related to the difference between the difficulty of the task and the skills of the students, no matter if the task is too easy or too hard.

In order to develop cooperative skills and the skills of fulfilling social needs by the students it is necessary to organize group tasks. The group tasks can have different characteristic. All the members of the team can perform the same task and reach the goal together. Thanks to the cooperation the task is fulfilled faster. The team might be divided and each group performs different activities. The teacher chooses the members of the groups, the students do it or it can be chosen together. The group performs the task and while doing it clarifies the performance and spontaneously act in a manner based on willingness. The task might take place in school or after the classes. It is however obligatory that the result of the task will be useful for students and perchance by others. This will make the students see a point in their efforts.

The condition of fulfilling the social needs of the students while learning is based on the feeling of the acceptance of the student and his or her actions in the classroom and appreciation of his or her progress and achievements. This causes difficulties in regards to those students who are discouraged and those having difficulties in performing any task. The teacher in such a situation is to find the strong aspects of the student's personality and skills and emphasize them to himself or herself and to other students in order to enhance the student's self-esteem and motivate him or her to make effort.

Participation in power, in decision-making regarding an individual student or the entire class should be introduced by the teacher. It is important that the teacher knows the area in which this should take place. The student has to have the feeling of having power and its growth by showing him or her significance of the decision for him or her and for others. It is important to inspire students to enhance their efficiency by gaining practice and by improving the actions undertaken.

Sometimes the students' basic needs are deprived by lack of food, medical care, school items, clothing appropriate for the season. School should aim in regards to the frame of its tutelary tasks to make sure that that the students have their physical needs fulfilled at a basic level which will allow them to focus.

Conclusion

After fulfilling those 9 conditions, the student has a chance to obtain habits regarding learning, improvement and organization of work from the preparation stage to the control stage. Moreover, student has a chance to develop his or her skills and talents of learning and to develop a positive attitude towards oneself, his or her development and acting in an environment. The student has a chance to prepare to control his or her development, to making decisions regarding himself or herself as well as others and institutions. Realization of curriculum which fulfills these conditions will be accompanied by positive emotions of the student which will reinforce and fix the obtained habits. Therefore it might be assumed that motivation of the students towards learning will last long after graduation.

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