SUPPORTING STUDENT AUTONOMY TO FOSTER READING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

THE POWER OF CHOICE

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The unmotivated student
EXERCISE PROGRAM EXPERIMENT

(Thompson & Wenkel, 1980)

• 36 recent enrollees in a women’s health club signed up for a new exercise program
• All 36 women were given customized exercise plans based on their individual preferences, BUT...
  • Half of the women were told they were given customized plans based on their preferences
  • Half of the women were told they had been assigned a standardized exercise program

Which group was more motivated to exercise??
EXERCISE EXPERIMENT RESULTS

- Women who believed their exercise program was based on their own choices
  - had better overall attendance and less of a decline in attendance
  - expressed greater intention to continue exercising
THE POWER OF CHOICE

• **In the workplace:** Employees who are given choices in how to approach their work are more motivated, have better job satisfaction, and are more productive.

• **In gaming:** The most popular video games are those that offer players the most choices and control over game elements.

• **In medicine:** Patients are more likely to adhere to medical instructions when they are given multiple treatment options.
• **Self-Determination Theory**
  - Motivation depends on 3 basic psychological needs: **autonomy**, relatedness, and competence

• **Autonomy:**
  - A sense of full volition and "choicefulness" regarding one’s activities and goals
Autonomy comes from having opportunities to engage in **self-direction**

- Setting goals based on personal values and interests
- Making decisions around the necessary steps to achieve those goals
- Taking initiative in progressing towards those goals
INTRINSIC VS. EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

**Intrinsic motivation**
- Driven by internal rewards – the desire to do something for its own sake
- Examples of intrinsic motivators:
  - Personal pride
  - Enjoyment
  - Meeting a challenge

**Extrinsic motivation**
- Driven by external rewards – the desire to do something to earn a reward or avoid a punishment
- Examples of extrinsic motivators:
  - Financial reward
  - Fear of punishment
  - Trophies or ribbons
WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR THIS?

Would you do this?

Would you do this?
WHAT ABOUT THIS?
## Intrinsically vs. Extrinsicly Motivated Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intrinsically motivated learners</th>
<th>Extrinsicly motivated learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• are more task oriented</td>
<td>• study less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• show more interest</td>
<td>• show less interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• show more persistence</td>
<td>• show less persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use more deep level learning strategies</td>
<td>• use more surface level strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• retain more of what’s learned in the long-term</td>
<td>• retain less and have lower scores</td>
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</table>
CHOICE AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

1. Intrinsic motivation is more powerful when it comes to learning
2. Autonomy promotes intrinsic motivation
3. Autonomy comes from having opportunities to make choices
THE IMPACT OF CHOICE ON LEARNING: RESEARCH FINDINGS

- Students who experience more choice and autonomy in the classroom have higher levels of academic achievement (Eshel & Kohavi, 2003)

- Student-chosen learning tasks result in better performance than teacher-chosen tasks (Cosden et al., 1995)

- Students who are given choices around their learning activities exhibit fewer problem behaviors (Bennett et al., 2006)

- Autonomy-supportive teacher practices have a positive impact on student motivation and engagement (Hardre & Reeve, 2003)
BUT CHOICE IS SCARY!
WHERE CAN CHOICE FIT IN THE CLASSROOM?

Provide students with choices in:

- The level of perceived challenge
- The context or content used for practicing and assessing skills
- The tools used for information gathering or production
- The color, design, or graphics of layouts, etc.
- The sequence or timing for completion of subcomponents of tasks

CAST, 2011
CHOICE IN THE LEVEL OF PERCEIVED CHALLENGE

Students can choose the level of challenge

Students can choose the puzzle size
CHOICE IN CONTENT, TOOLS

**Sport?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Favorite Ice Cream Flavors of Rooms 202 and 204**

- **Vanilla**
  - Room 202: 3
  - Room 204: 1
- **Cookie Dough**
  - Room 202: 6
  - Room 204: 6
- **Mint Choc. Chip**
  - Room 202: 2
  - Room 204: 6
- **Oreo Cookie**
  - Room 202: 10
  - Room 204: 5
PROVIDING CHOICES THAT PROMOTE INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

• Choice should be:
  • relevant and meaningful
  • competence-enhancing
  • provided in “just the right amount”
CHOICES SHOULD BE: RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL

• Provide choices that are connected to students’ values, interests, and goals

• Relevant choices are:
  • Personal and contextualized to students’ lives
  • Culturally-relevant
  • Age-relevant
CHOICE SHOULD BE: COMPETENCE-ENHANCING

- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
  - Varying the degree of difficulty
  - Providing a range of tools and scaffolds
Choice is motivating, but too much choice can be overwhelming!

- Provide a restricted set of options and sufficient time to choose among them
Physiological activation of participants by goal condition

(n=34)

Avg number of peaks in skin conductance

Free Choice

Choice with Purposeful Agenda
UDIO: USING THE POWER OF CHOICE TO SUPPORT READING MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Theory of Change

How digital ecosystems can work to produce improved reading comprehension skills and motivation for reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Goals Achieved</th>
</tr>
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**Motivation**

- Provide access to high-interest content.
- Allow student choice in the selection of reading material.
- Develop student understanding of their interests.
- Provide opportunities for social experiences with text.
- Provide UDL supports for just-right reading challenges.

Improved engagement with reading.
Less aversion to learning from text.
More time spent interacting with and trying to learn from text.
Improved flexibility in the use of reading strategies.

**Improved motivation for reading.**

**Improved reading skill.**

**Reading Comprehension**

- Provide access to text when reading skill is low.
- Support the use of reading comprehension strategies.
- Use reciprocal teaching to anchor social interactions around text.
- Use writing in the service of reading.
LET’S PLAY!

1. Go to **udio.cast.org**
2. Enter the username written on your paper
3. Enter the password: **abc**
DISCUSSION

• What’s your reaction to Udio?
  • Is this something you can see using in your classroom?
  • Is it too much choice and freedom?
  • What changes or support would you need to be able to incorporate this into your instruction?

• What?
• So what?
• Now what?
THANK YOU!

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CAST

UDio National Center on the Use of Emerging Technologies to Improve Literacy Achievement for Students with Disabilities in Middle School