

# A New Look At the Motivation and Enthusiasm in Teaching and Learning in the View of Educational Thinkers of the Twentieth Century

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## Abstract

The present study is a review research. First of all, necessities and facilities of considering the factors of motivation, enthusiasm, and love in teaching-learning process in children will be described. Then, the opinions and views of some scholars of education in this regard will be mentioned. The purpose of this study is to stress the possibility of considering these aspects in the process of teaching and learning. By reviewing these philosophical views and opinions, the authors tried to explain how to take into account motivation and enthusiasm in teaching and learning. The results of this study contain the points that can be applicable to the process of curriculum planning for teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Motivation; Child-centrism; Teaching; Learning

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## Introduction

Education, in its broadest sense, involves any process except mere inheritance which help the formation of mind, character, and physical ability of individuals. Education exists throughout our life, because along with any major change that occurs in our life, we should learn new ways of thought and deed. More specifically, education is the inculcation of certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes to each generation. Organizations such as the schools are responsible for doing so (Ahanchian & Ghaedi, 2009; 10).

Despite issues such as “providing curriculum” and trainings that become more formal every day and are approved for education, how much is the condition provided in schools for children to express their

thoughts? Do teacher allow children to get involved in determining what to be discussed? While the major procedure and policy intends that children become autonomous learners, schools, with excessive emphasis on the issue that what would happen to children in the future, implicitly and explicitly consider childhood a limited and trifling period (Ghaedi, 2010; 12-13). Furthermore, it should be noted that learners need to experience the taste of love, intimacy, friendship, happiness, forgiveness, humility, mercy, purity, contentment, magnanimity, and generosity and approach becoming, getting, and rising by nurturing their human taste (Kordi, 1996; 25-34).

Unfortunately, some educators believe that learning is filling the mind with memories and the objective of education is emphasis on memories not changes in behavior. If they consider education as to mean changes in thoughts, desires, habits, beliefs, and behavior and also understanding the materials taught, they would select, plan, and execute educational objectives to suit this meaning. As pervasive desire, talent, need, and motivation are effective in learning, such matters should not be overlooked in defining the objectives (Nikzad *et al.*, 2006; 19). One of the key concepts is learning from the perspective of psychologists and teachers is motivation that is used to explain the different levels of performance. When some problems such as academic failure occurs in an education system, learner's motivation is remembered as one of the major cause. In educational theories, motivation is also considered a key concept. Although a student's motivation should naturally deal with his/her interest in participation in the learning process, it also takes into account the reasons and objectives underlying the involvement or non-involvement with educational activities. Spaulding (1992) states that motivation is the key to learning. McClelland (1989), of pioneers of research on the effect of motivation on academic progress, believes that the future of any society depends on the current level of academic progress motivation in students of that society (Bahrani, 2005; 104-105).

Another important issues in teaching and learning is enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is an element of perfection and perfection is the goal of learning. Formal or informal education is a human network that helps the learners to reach perfection. However, if a learners do not know that the purpose and direction of what they are learning and its effect on their life, they are not considered motivated and enthusiastic learners (Kordi, 1996; 17).

If students realize that their teacher is sensitive to them, understand their emotions, and encounter life with fun and vitality, they establish a deep emotional relationship with their teacher and this relationship makes faster and more effective the exchange of information between teacher and students. Aesthetically, this is the right of students to treat with Discouragement and aridity and even hate someone who has not perceived their beautiful right of compassion, warmth of look, shining of humble and needful greeting, and fluidity of soul. Perhaps, teachers' abnormalities in the perception and understanding of feelings, emotions, motivation, and passion of children one reason for behavioral, emotional, and educational abnormalities in children (Kordi, 1996; 24).

Many eminent scholars and philosophers of different schools of thoughts during ages and centuries have not ignored human and its education and considering motivation, enthusiasm, excitement, and love in teaching and learning. They have sometimes proposed tips, principles and goals that have acted as a guide to education system of a society for a long time. Hence, the present study deals with the views and opinions of educational thinkers of the twentieth century about the importance of considering motivation, enthusiasm, and affection in education and teaching-learning process. It seems that the results of this

study contain the points that can be applicable to the process of curriculum planning for teaching and learning.

### **Research finding**

To achieve a successful and effective learning, teachers need and welcome motivated, interested, and assiduous students. According to Torrance (1993), the learners who are self-motivated and self-directed in learning activities and achieving educational goals need less external incentives. On the other hand, apathy or low level motivation in students mostly affect teachers adversely. In fact, low motivation causes depletion of resources and potential and reduced efficiency of teaching and learning. Redman (1997) also believes that in teaching-learning process motivation has a close relationship with desire, willingness, and effort of learners. When students are not interested in a subject, they react and listen to the teacher differently. In the face with uninterested students, teachers, with indifference to students' learning and achievement and only to evade the responsibility, may present a subject in a boring and non-interactive manner. Such a situation may be exacerbated periodically (Tella, 2007).

Inner motivation toward learning has been emphasized by great teachers like Dewey (1913). Important educational implications will be realized in light of the inner motivation of students. The positive effects of inner motivation involve grade and academic progress (Gottfried, 1990), volume and scope of the study (Wigfield and Guthrie, 1997), recognition and recalling the subjects taught (Renninger and Wozniak, 1985), comprehension (Ryan, Connell, and Plant, 1990), creativity (Costner, Ryan, Bernie, and Holt, 1984), and positive emotions at school (Patrick, Skinner, and Connell, 1993). Additionally, enthusiasm of teachers can bring enthusiasm to students. The relationship between enthusiasm of teachers and their effectiveness has been assessed in many studies. For example, the effect of teachers' enthusiasm on academic progress of students (Brigham, Scruggs, and Mastropieri, 1992) and doing homework (Bettencourt, Gillett, Gail, and Hull, 1983) has been studied. The eminent thinkers and scholars of education have stressed the importance of above-mentioned topics that their words can be useful in teaching-learning process. The next part of this paper deals with the views and opinions of thinkers of the twentieth century about education.

### **John Dewey**

John Dewey is of great thinkers who has always put children and paying attention to their spiritual dimensions on the top of his words. He believes that schools should generally set their programs based on the desires of students in order to motivate them for learning. Dewey divides the desires of children into four types including desire for social relationships, desire to explore and investigate objects, desire to work and be active, and desire for artistic expression. In his opinion, if a school activities program is set on based on these four desires, it will help students' normal growth and development and make learning bracing to them (Shoarinejad, 2002; 479-480). Dewey argues that school should provide a favorable environment for the actualization of love and talents of students through work and activity that is the main essence of life. He also believes that schools should provide a happy and joyful environment to students (Esmaeiltabar, 2007; 258). Dewey states that the major flaw in today's schools is that instructors wants to impose information on student by force without regard to the abilities and desires of children. The result of such a conception of school and education is the use of textbooks as the only tool for teaching,

accumulation of large amounts of data in memory, and training the memory, reasoning, and determination by authoritarian methods. In such an education system, natural motivations of students, their experience in family life, and finally their personality are overlooked. So, Dewey oppose traditional system of education in which emphasis is only on memorization and repetition of specific information. In terms of thinking, he says, "If in most schools students cannot be motivated to think, it is probably because of the fact that they cannot start from an experienced situation out of school which can initiate thinking. Hence, schools also should be as close as possible to the community outside the school and try to eliminate the imaginary wall between the school and the community" (Ghaedi, 2004; 67). Dewey points out that students truly learn something that has experienced it personally. Such activity should be arisen from their interest in the subject the need they feel to learn it (Kardan, 2009; 231-233). About taking into account the interests of students, Dewey mentions that teachers will be successful in application of problem-solving method if they select the topics that students are interested to understand and learn them. However, this does not mean that teachers should teach only what the students are naturally interested in, but it means that teachers should get use of natural motivations of students such as the desire for self-expression, curiosity, and so on and providing an introduction about the theoretical and practical benefits of the subjects in order to make them eager to learn.

### **Bertrand Russell**

Bertrand Russell stresses the role of human emotions and initiative. He deals with different aspects of sensitivity, especially sympathy, which means to be happy with happiness of others or suffer the pain of others. He emphasizes that sympathy is of importance when it involves not only our relatives and close friends but also those who are not affiliated to us. If so, much of violence will disappear. The lack of such a condition causes people do not care the problems of those who are not close to. In terms of education, Russell believes that paying attention to the mind and passion of instructors is of great importance and raises character education which takes up to six years old. He also notes that all parts of an education system cannot be changed to be pleasurable. However we are eager to learn the knowledge, parts of it would be boring. But, if students become aware of the values of these boring and tiring parts, they would engage in on their own and without any obligation. In his idea, the true mission of philosophy is to analyze the concepts (Esmaeiltabar, 2007; 258-259).

### **Karl Jaspers**

Karl Jaspers considered great value for motivation and happiness. He believed that philosophical enlightenment aims to awaken human. According to Jaspers, the biggest disadvantage of today's educations systems is forgetting to honor human. He explain it by the fundamental points of philosophy of existence. In philosophy of existence, the word "existence" is only used for the routine life of human and, in this sense, existence is different from concepts like "to be", "to exist", and "to be found". Opulence, warmth, and being on the way are the first signs of existence. Jaspers believes that existence is to have, to be original, to be what we are, to select ourselves, and to live consistent with the values that have been accepted. Jaspers mentions three philosophical tests that underlie the awakening of human. These three tests are the result of understanding the truth of world, the truth of oneself, and the truth of

God. Humans fail all three tests, but this failure awakens them from negligence. Hence, failure is not only the end but also it is a start for self-actualization (Esmaeiltabar, 2007; 259).

### **Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori emphasizes on the needs of instructors. His education system is based on the principle that if teachers want to know the needs and talent of all their students and nurture their body, mind, and ethics to the perfection, they should value and honor the freedom of all of them. If students are deprived of free activities, they will be unaware of the obvious realities and event of the world that are the basis of education and all the information provided to students by the school would appear shakable and unprincipled. Montessori believes that human mind owns latent talents that the surrounding environment would either actualize or cease them. In her idea, a healthy growth and development of humans requires freedom (Esmaeiltabar, 2007; 260).

### **William James**

According to William James, education is to organize the forces that have been stored inside human begins as tendency to act and then habits. Education can and should replace more complex reactions by initial and innate ones and finally form a series of useful practical, emotional or mental habits in children. In order to be more successful, talented instructors should be fully familiar with children's mental life which is flowing and evolving like a stream and acts like an active system and also understand their initial reactions including fear, joy, curiosity, imitation, and the need to build and create (Kardan, 2009). In response to the question that what is the most important behavior in education, James says, "Teachers, first of all, should encourage students. Positive behavior is a stimuli for development, while negative treatments impede the growth of students. Affection and understanding are important in education like other aspects of life" (Shoarinejad, 2002; 460).

### **Kilpatrick**

He believes that the needs, interest, and abilities of the students should be the center of education. Accordingly, Kilpatrick proposed new educational method in 1918 that is known as "Project" method. In this method, educational activities are based on students' interest and students do or learn something they like to do or learn. In fact, "project" is not only an entertainment but is it a learning tool to regulate thoughts and stimulate learning. This is one of the best ways to stimulate an effective and collective learning and is applicable in almost all academic levels if the principal and teachers of a school have the patience to implement it and prefer it to the traditional method of stuffing the brain of student with scattered information (Shoarinejad, 2002; 498-499).

## **Klapard**

In the book “Experimental Pedagogy and Child Psychology”, Klapard writes, “Open a pedagogical dissertation and see if you can find a genuine guideline about teaching the senses, observation, memory, fatigue, provocative teaching, or mathematics.” He believes that schools programs must be relishing and only nominal revisions will not solve any problem. Renovation of education system firstly means renewing the methods, not processing or revising the programs and textbooks. Mechanical work not only neutralizes the creative mind but also obscures the view of others for discovery and creativity and prevents progress.

## **Ovid Decroly**

Ovid Decroly believed in taking into consideration the children and their interests, motivations, and happiness. He criticized the education system of his era from four dimension; 1- Schools valued curricula more than students. 2- Various lessons were not linked together. 3-Students were mostly receiver rather than active learners. 4- School activities often led to boredom and discouragement of students. To overcome these shortcomings, Decroly proposed the "center of interest" program.

## **Makarenko**

Makarenko also believed that education and teachers should assess and discover the needs of their society in order to set the goals and consider all aspects of personality of their own and students (Esmaeiltabar, 2007; 147-149).

## **Conclusion**

Before finishing the discussion and in order to achieve a more useful and eloquent conclusion, it is necessary to review a school of thought in which human is seen as a noble creature. Humanism school, the most important figures of which are Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, emphasizes on humans and their existential dimensions. Humanism is a system of thinking in which human desires and values are precedent over everything else (Schultz, 2008; 339). Humanists emphasize on interests, values and personal abilities for wise choices and human perception of self (Shoarinejad, 2002; 582). The basic elements of the humanist approach to teaching and learning are as follows:

- 1- Communicative factors or variables: An effective teaching starts with the establishment of a relationship between teacher and students. In a classroom which is based on a good relationship between the teacher and students, it cannot be said with certainty that students learn more, but it can be stated that:
  - They feel good about what they have learned.
  - They feel better about themselves
- 2- Contextual or environmental factors: Each classroom has a social, emotional, and mental atmosphere which can affect the academic status and self-perception of students.

Teacher plays the role of central variable as the leader of a classroom. The fact that a class, as a group, how behave and how feels about itself mainly depends on how a teacher plays his/her role in that classroom (Shoarinejad, 2002; 586). As already noted, humanists pay special attention to relational, emotional, sentimental, emotional, etc. factors in teachers and students.

Rogers, one of the eminent figures of humanism school, mentions an innate and main motivation named natural tendency to become actualized and fostering the abilities and talents from a fully biological aspect to highly advanced psychological aspects of existence. To become what Rogers calls it “the perfect man” is the main objective of self-actualization (Schultz, 2008; 368).

In terms of the purposes of education, humanists believe that humans should be viewed as they are. This means that the great needs, motivations, and abilities of humans should be accepted and humanity must be considered superior over everything in any educational activities and humans should be viewed as the goal not as a tool. The purpose of education should not be only to increase the knowledge of students, but their emotions should be also trained and educated, otherwise students would be imperfect persons. Feelings, emotions, and thoughts of learners should be the central issue in education. Humanism also stresses further improvement and development of human relationships.

According to contemporary scientific humanists, the purpose of education should be to provide the objective needs and interests of human and humanity must be taken superior over human resources. The curriculum should be prepared according to this objective, so that each person finds the opportunity and possibility to benefit from a healthy and favorable life and actualize his/her talents and abilities as much as much possible (Shoarinejad, 2002; 587-588).

Now, it is noteworthy that how should we treat what the schools and students of our age are facing with? Or, according to Victor Frankl, meaning-seeking of human has globally failed in today’s world. The feeling of being meaningless, that is usually accompanied by the feeling of emptiness or, in other words, “existential gaps” (Frankl, 1995), conquers more people every day. Its primary manifestation is boredom and pain, while boredom is indicative of loss of attention to this world and pain shows lack of innovation for doing something in order to change something in this world (Frankl, 1995; 32). Perhaps, the root of this problem could be cut in the most basic system and organization of each society, that is, schools. One of the very elegant solutions in this regard is the solution proposed by Maslow, one of the founders of the school of humanism, Dewey, Russell, Jaspers, Montessori, James, and other dignitaries of education. The points that can be extracted from their theories on teaching and learning can be very helpful.

Maslow, the proposer of the theory of satisfying the needs (motivation of growth), expresses that the unique and holistic principle that binds human multiple motives is that when a weaker needs is fully satisfied, a new and higher need will appear.

Applications of Maslow's theory of motivation in teaching is very promising. One of these entirely practical applications is that teachers should do all they can to ensure that the more basic needs of students are satisfied, then they can try to deal with higher needs of students. If students are physically in a good mood, they feel safe, comfortable, belonged, and respected and they would be probably more prepared to seek to meet their need for understanding and knowing in classroom.

It seems that even if teachers do their best to satisfy all basic needs of students, it is less probable that they manage to provide an opportunity for all students to always act in accordance with the highest needs.

For example, child who feels that his/her parents do not love him/her or her/his peers do not accept him/her, may not respond effectively to the efforts of the teacher. If his/her need for love, belonging, and respect is not satisfied, he/she would be less likely to be in mood of learning.

Maslow's theory of motivation is consistent with the views of Dewey, Piaget, Russell, Montessori, Kilpatrick, Decroly, and advocates of open and free education systems. They assume that if opportunities are given to children, they can make wise choices. Their approach to education involves providing interesting opportunities for learning, so that students can choose the activities that are personally interesting and valuable to them. However, to encourage this type of education, it is necessary to seek an optimal balance between freedom and supervision. Dewey has analyzed it carefully and mentioned it in his book "Experience and Education". Open education has been suggested as the most promising solution because it combines freedom and guidance.

#### **The desired targets in setting the motivational experiences of teachers:**

- 1- According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the issue if considering the general needs of instructors has been mentioned by many scholars of education like Dewey, Montessori, Kilpatrick, and others.
- 2- It should not be ignored that instructors play the most important role in satisfying the needs caused by lack of demands that can be satisfied only by others.
- 3- Teachers must recognize that learning experiences encourage students set their dreams according to the reality of their life and become success-oriented, the point that has been repeatedly mentioned and emphasized by Dewey.
- 4- The need to encourage students to master the basic information that would be useful later.

#### **Motivating and maintaining the interest in learning:**

1- Teachers should do their best to satisfy the needs arising from neglecting physiological, security, belonging, and respect needs. A teacher should:

- A) Pay attention to the physical conditions of students
- B) Make a classroom safe in terms of appearance and mentality

Montessori has also emphasized on the importance of physical and mental conditions of students.

C) Show the students that he/she is interested in them

2- Teachers should arrange learning experiences in a way that all students can get some self-respect.

3- When encouraging students to reach a realistic level of dreams and desires, approach progress, and gain a positive perception of self, teachers should try to direct learning experiences towards success. Dewey and Russell have also emphasized these points in their educational philosophy and considered them important. Teachers should:

- A) Use the goals and realities that require effort but are achievable.
  - B) Use the results of studies with emphasis on positive aspects
  - C) Take into account the advantages and disadvantages of material and symbolic (immaterial) rewards.
- 4- Teachers should be careful about the destructive impact of excessive competition. Teachers should:
- A) Encourage cooperation using a variety of councils
- 5- Teacher try to encourage the desire for progress in students who need.
- 6- Teachers are better to use natural interests, create new interests, and encourage learning for learning. Paying attention to the interests of students has been mentioned and emphasized by scholars of education such as Russell, Jaspers, Kilpatrick, and other.
- 7- Teachers try to create enthusiasm and motivation for learning the material that are basic but not naturally appealing.

In addition to what was said, it is necessary to deal with the pain that exists in the education system of our country. This pain is that teacher gaze at achievement of goals. This sometimes has brought nothing but suffering for both teachers and students in teaching-learning process. It should be noted that emphasis on targets is not appropriate in all matters or teaching methods and if it, purposeful behaviors may be reflected unpleasantly. John Holt, in his book "How children fail", argues that too much emphasis on guided learning causes children emphasize on questions rather than the issue itself. In such circumstances, schools become temples in which correct answers are worshiped. As a result, students mainly become producers rather than thoughtful people. Holt also believes that elicitation of correct answer, actually because of determining the goals that are excessively specified, cause children to become obsessed with the fear of failure. If they cannot reach the goal (to give the correct answer), they are failed. The more specific the question is, the more relevant their failure to that specific case would be if they cannot answer. In order to avoid failure, students resort to all kinds of ways to fulfill the obligations specified (Biller, 2002; 418-431).

What that seems to another treatment to such a pain teachers should know and understand the students, as teachers are identified and understood by children. Teachers and parents must understand their students and children, as students and children understand them, with the difference that errors and mistakes of children, because of being unconscious and immature, are more justifiable than those made by their parents or teachers. These are found through survey method. Unlike superficial and unscientific survey of students and children, that of parents and teachers should be genuine and scientific. Therefore, it is essential for teachers and parents to review educational books and publications to understand that children are mobility-seeking, thrill-seeking. Innovative, fast, and motivated; interested in activities with instant results; have warm affections, fragile and sensitive emotions, and broad thoughts; and are going through emotional, sexual, social, identity, and value crises. In addition, teachers should continuously survey the features, traits, moods, and conditions of their students and compare it with the previous perceptual

survey and thereby achieve a creative, valid, and reliable perceptual survey of their students in their mind. In other words, teachers should know that how their student were in the past, how they are now, and how they will be in the future in order to motivate and guide them towards achievement of educational goals and objectives.

On the other hand, it is essential that educational places become warm and pleasant with affection and, in alignment with inner desires of learners, modernism, diversity, and freshness should be promoted both in physical and mental elements of a classroom (Kordi, 1996; 18-21).

It should be taken into account that philosophical questions can be used to identify the role of students and their motivation. Thinking, listening, and speaking are activities that occupy the body, heart, and mind of human. As mathematics and physical education are considered in the school curriculum, according to many philosophers, art should also be taken into account, because it is the only thing that can bring emotion, faith, love and excitement to rigid and boring classes. Nietzsche says, "Art is a means through which people can realize their possibilities and make possibilities out of impossibilities." The duty of art is to save eyes from the darkness of night and redeem human from anxieties and excitements of manifestations of will. So, he believes that there is a good will which deals with identifying and demonstrating (Elahi, 2005; 126). Moreover, what that blank space of which seems to be very empty is teaching philosophy. However, this philosophy is understandable because it is considered a way of life. Teachers should keep in mind that words cannot and should not be separated from behaviors. Careful listening and reasoning are the constituent of behaviors and thoughts of students that should be taken into account. Opinions and comments should be explored, but when it is feasible to manipulate, format, and change the shape of them (Ghaedi, 2010; 27 and 95). Skilled teachers should try to wipe the fatigue and boredom of students with providing a warm and emotional atmosphere in classroom and encourage students to grow and reach the extremes by being consistent with their emotions.

Another thing that teacher must remember is that they determine the philosophy of life, way of life, way of education, principles of human behavior, and goals of human life. Values that are the foundation of our life philosophy determine that what things are the "Do's" of human education and how they should be achieved (Kordi, 1996; 24 and 55). It should be noted that philosophy, as the beginning and end of our existence, determines the success of teachers in educating healthy people with great spirits and good manners.

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