

VIDEO SUMMARY

Understanding Student Motivation

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Understanding Student Motivation | Motivation and Engagement | psychological-literacy

Students come to class for different reasons. One may want to learn, another needs the credential, another is preparing for work, and another values friends or wants to avoid a negative consequence. Faculty motives vary too. Motivation may be oriented towards a desired outcome or towards avoiding an unwanted one. It may arise from interest, enjoyment, or purpose, or from external rewards such as visibility, employment, or a grant. Use these categories to investigate motivation and plan support.

McClelland's three-needs framework offers another way to ask what matters now. A learner driven by achievement may seek challenge and a sense of accomplishment. Someone motivated by affiliation may prefer collaboration, clubs, and relationships. Power in this framework means influence: leading, shaping a decision, or organising others. A teacher who understands the current driver can offer a suitable role or route and investigate each case of disengagement on its own terms.

A clear goal makes motivation easier to act on. SMART turns 'improve my grades' into specific behaviour, a baseline and measurable target, an achievable degree of challenge, a realistic or relevant plan, and a deadline. Writing the goal may expose the skills, study methods, collaboration, support, or smaller milestones that are missing. Faculty should make their own goals equally concrete. If the aim is stronger critical analysis, specify the problems students will tackle, the evidence of progress, the changes to teaching and assignments, the workplace relevance, and the review points across the term or over several semesters.

Goals need revision. Observe what is happening, take the next action, reflect on the result, and adjust. Ask what matters to the learner now, make the next step clear, provide the support it requires, and review progress with curiosity and specific evidence.