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Intrinsic Motivation of Middle School School Students After a Global Pandemic

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Intrinsic Motivation of Middle School Students After a Global Pandemic

A Project Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

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Abstract

This study will assist teachers in the transition from distant learning to in person learning. For this purpose, the study looks at whether positive feedback made a difference in the amount of work turned in by students causing a difference in their intrinsic motivation to complete work. The study is being done on forty-nine middle school students. The first treatment group will receive positive words of encouragement on their assignments throughout their learning on a unit. The second treatment group will receive only a number grade on a three-point scale. The research will provide an intervention that could be done in all classrooms to help increase intrinsic motivation.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Introduction

In 2019 the world went through a pandemic that forced a dynamic switch in education to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This led to an extended period of time where teachers had to learn how to teach remotely and students across the world were learning through a device at home. Some schools had return to in-person plans set up for 2020, some schools did not have the return to in person learning until 2021. After returning to school in 2021 there has been a rough adjustment for the middle level grades at the school that I work in, after listening to the news in 2021 it has become clear that middle schools across the country are going through the same situation. In middle school, there has been a disconnection to their school and students seem to have forgotten what it means to be students. Due to the adjustment student's motivation has dropped, and that leads to the importance of finding what increases students' motivation and how teachers can help increase their student's intrinsic motivation to complete their work.

Brief Literature Review

The research written about intrinsic motivation has focused on where student's get their intrinsic motivation from. One of the factors was what is happening in the community, in 2020 that was COVID-19 it changed the way students learn and work (Holzer, et al., 2021). Family environments can also increase or decrease student intrinsic motivation. The idea that a school places an importance on the students social emotional learning as well as building those relationships can help a student feel more motivated to complete their work. The smallest impact that a teacher can do is provide positive feedback on student work (Tang & Baldwin, 2001).

One study conducted by Tang and Baldwin (2001) stated that when students received positive feedback from their teacher, they were more likely to extend their learning when given

the opportunity. Tang and Baldwin's research focused on undergraduate psychology students.

Tang and Baldwin's study was to see effects on self-efficacy and students increasing their

intrinsic motivation. By building that sense of self-efficacy students were more likely to

complete work on their own and outside of the school setting. In another study completed by

DePasque and Tricomi (2015) they found that students who were given feedback throughout

their learning process rather than at the end of their learning felt more connected to their teacher.

It further strengthened relationships between teacher and student. Their study was also done on

adults. Both studies were completed on older populations and related positive feedback to the

increase in intrinsic motivation among their study group. We want to conduct the same kind of

experiment at the middle school level to see if they can have the same benefit that the other

studies have shown.

Statement of the Problem

Upon returning to the physical school building after distance learning due to COVID,

there appears to be a lack of intrinsic motivation amongst students. Positive feedback, as stated

above, is one area where teachers have the ability to slightly increase students' intrinsic

motivation.

Purpose of the Study

This study will address how implementing motivational strategies impacts students'

intrinsic motivation towards learning in the classroom.

Research Question

How do implementations of positive feedback have an impact on student's intrinsic

motivation?

Definition of Variables

Variable A: The independent variable will be the types of feedback that is given to group one. Feedback messages will include what they did well on, how they compare to the rest of the class. Messages given to students will include how they compared to their peers (Corpus, Ogle & Love-Grige, 2006).

Variable B: The outcome will be to see the amount of work turned in overtime to see if students end up completing more work. This would be in response to see how the positive feedback during the learning process impacts their ability to complete and feel confident in their final assessment.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because middle schools across the country are experiencing a lack of empathy and motivation in students in middle schools (Detrow, 2021). Michael Cardona the secretary of education stated that there has been an increase in student's mental health issues such as depression and anxiety in an interview with *National Public Radio*: "Kid's Mental Health Crisis is at a Critical Point, Education Secretary Cardona Says" (Detrow, 2021). Cardona highlighted that this is a link to the pandemic and being disconnected from their school for over a year of learning from home. It is important to get students back on track to learning and increase their intrinsic motivation so that students take pride in their work.

Research Ethics

Permission and IRB Approval

In order to conduct this study, the researcher will seek MSUM's Institutional Review Board approval to ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects (Mills & Gay, 2019). Likewise, authorization to conduct this study will be seek from the school district where the research project will take place.

Informed Consent

Protection of human subjects participating in research will be assured. Participant minors will be informed of the purposed of the study via the Method of Assent (see Appendix X) that the researcher will read to the participants before beginning the study. Participants will be aware that this study is conducted as part of the researcher's master's degree Program and that it will benefit her teaching practice. Informed consent means that the parents of the participants have been fully informed of the purpose and procedures of the study for which consent is sought and that parents understand and agree, in writing, to the child participating in the study (Rothstein and Johnson, 2014). Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Student 1) without the utilization of any identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time will be outlines, both verbally and in writing.

Limitations

The first limitation will be not getting back feedback to students in a timely matter. It is difficult as an educator to stay on top of returning work over quickly with teaching content to over two hundred students. This could impact how relative the feedback is for the student. If they completed an assignment two weeks ago and are receiving feedback that would impact how relative that feedback is given. I would work on fixing this by creating a scheduled grading time throughout the week. Tuesdays and Thursdays will be dedicated to grading and writing feedback. To make the process of feedback more efficient it will be done over the grading websites of skyward rather than directly on their papers.

The next limitation would be COVID exposures that causes students to be at home for ten days. Students that are not attending class will miss the verbal and written feedback that is given during a lesson.

Conclusions

This chapter discusses the importance of the study that will be conducted on middle school intrinsic motivation. It shows how events that have been happening around the world have had an impact on students in the year of 2021 and could possibly come with a solution to dealing with the adjustment of returning to in person learning well as future skills that teachers could use to better their classroom environment. In the next chapter, there will be further discussions on the current research regarding intrinsic motivation.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

In 2020, schools across the country had decided to switch students and teachers for their safety to online learning. At first teachers and students learned and taught from home with little guidance of how to learn and teach online, after the school year ended and returned in the fall for the 2020-2021 school year most schools continued with the distant learning. In the year of 2021 when vaccines were distributed, some school districts participated in a return to in-person learning. After students had been shifted to online learning then back to in person learning the learning shifts had impacted students. After returning to in-person learning there was a pattern of lower motivation for students to complete their schoolwork in class. The purpose of the research is to determine how encouragement might impact students' intrinsic motivation. The following articles in review show research behind intrinsic motivation and what techniques are used to increase students' intrinsic motivation.

Motivation

There are two main types of motivation that students have intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the ability for students to complete work without being rewarded with something to motivate them. Extrinsic motivation is rewards that are external to get a student to complete work, often this includes a prize.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation has a lot of factors that can drive it up and down for middle school students. The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is where the motivation comes from, and it is important to know that they both work together for helping students get through their work. Students that are more extrinsically motivated can often experience a sense

of mental fatigue over time which will decrease their motivation in the long run (Herlamberg, Cnossen, & Taatgen, 2021). Outside factors can influence student motivation school, home, and society all have different impacts.

When students move from elementary school to higher education middle or junior high to high school, they experience a dramatic decrease in their motivation levels. This could be due to the school changes a student's feel students switching from the different types of learning often feel a sense of disconnect from their school and teachers. At the college level it is common for students to drop out of school due to the changes from a high school to a college. There is a motivation switch that happens between high school that students find difficult to build self-efficacy (Thompson & Thornton, 2002). To get students motivated educators need to consider teaching styles to switch to include a student-centered style and different learning style so that students can feel connect to their school. Students that feel like they are connected to the school develop a higher intrinsic motivation for learning and completing tasks. There was no correlation between grades and high intrinsic motivation but there has been found correlation between high intrinsic motivation, high grades, and a sense of connectiveness from the school (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010). The importance of social-emotional helps students to create a learning environment at school that is welcoming to all. Students that reported not seeing or experiencing bullying in their school had a higher intrinsic motivation score, the feeling that teachers, staff, and their students care about one another increases the student's sense of connectedness and increases the student's intrinsic motivation. Students with a low SES also have reported that when teachers show that they care they felt supported and were more likely to complete their

work and have better grades. Teachers should spend more time building relationships and covering social emotional learning (Reppy and Larwin, 2020)

The home environment can have an impact on student's motivation as well. At a younger age student that have access and parents put emphasis on play and explore time with hands on toys were more likely to spend more time on the activities that are provided in a class whereas students without that emphasis end up losing interest and becoming bored. Families with higher social economic status can provide the time and toys to place this emphasis over families with a lower SES ended up having students walking tv or playing videos limiting their ability to manipulate and express and thing freely (Choi & Cho, 2020).

In the year of 2020 students, all over the world were uprooted and had to learn from their homes due to the world-wide pandemic. This meant that schools sent students and teachers home to learn remotely and learn how to learn and teach remotely this societal change had a few short-term effects and will also have long-term effects on students and their motivation. Starting short-term effects were that students did not have the immediate access to the school's psychologist, the counselor, teachers, and special education services that normally are at their fingertips. The levels up depression and anxiety had drastically changed, and students were unable to receive the help and assistance they needed (Holzer, Korlat, & et al, 2021). Worldwide research was done that showed students that felt more a more connectiveness to their peers had a higher level of motivation but not by much. Those that felt disconnected from their learning and were not able to collaborate with peers had lower intrinsic motivation (Holzer, Korlat, & et al, 2021).

Motivational Strategies

One implementation that has talk in research for increasing student motivation is words of positive messages and feedback to the student from their teacher. This could be an email before they take a test, a verbal praise from their peers and their teacher, or a note written on their assignment. The importance of giving the feedback is because it helps to build a teacher-student relationship by having a teacher communicate how a student is doing and giving positive comment they are building a positive relationship and showing that a teacher cares how the student is doing in the class at completing their course work and assessment work building a caring relationship has shown beneficial for most students and it helps for students to become engaged with their learning (Heilat & Seifert, 2019).

The timing on when positive feedback and messages has an impact on students' motivation. When messages are sent before a test to decrease test anxiety and increase their motivation for studying materials it was shown that students performed better on their exams and were motivated to focus during their studying. This increased student's overall self-efficacy and ownership of their learning throughout their learning (Keller & Szakai, 2021). When they are given feedback during the learning process rather than the learning students felt a connectedness to their teacher and were even more motivated to practice the skills before their final event (DePasque & Tricomi, 2015). By creating feedback during the learning process students are aware of their learning and understand whether they are grasping the concept or if they are not, this leads to a relationship between the student and their work. In a study done in Taiwan it was found that students that were receiving positive feedback from their teacher were more likely to continue their learning through a hands-on activity that was available in a separate room that shows their intrinsic motivation to continue their learning just when presented with the

opportunity to do so (Tang and Baldwin, 2001). When praise is completed by their peers and

their teacher to the rest of the class when a student has mastered their goal or task ends up

increasing their intrinsic motivation though it is also considered an external award. (Corpus,

Ogle & Love-Griger, 2006).

  The types of messages a student receives also has an impact to how much it can impact

their intrinsic motivation. It was found that boys are more inclined to be motivated when it

comes to student competition styles of messages of encouragement. Examples include "this work

is top five in the class" or "This is one of the best assignments I have seen today". Girls

responded better to messages that included interpersonal goals words of encouragement could

include, "This is the best work you have done this year" or "I think you really blew this out of

the park" (Corpus, Ogle & Love-Griger, 2006, page 337).

  For students that have low intrinsic motivation the best way to increase their motivation

is setting achievement goals and reflection periods. This should be done on assignments that the

student is interested in, whether it's a project that they choose the topic, or a goal set outside of

the school setting. This can help the student see growth towards a goal that they set and when

they put in the work to make their goal, they see results of their work. This was done with

college student's increasing their skills with a pinball machine. They compared practice time to

enjoyment and noticed that students were able to spend extra time outside of the required time to

practice their skills to master the pinball machine (Harackiewicz & Elliot, 1993). This theory

could be brought into the classroom using project-based learning to allow the students to

physically see their learning.

Feedback should always be positive it is better to just show the grade that the student received, after negative feedback is given to a student motivation for them will decrease. When a student receives negative feedback their ability level in an academic achievement drops and self-concept of themselves goes down discouraging them from creating more goals (Weidinger, Spinath, & Steinmayr, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The research being done for this study is following a pragmatism view for ontology. This means that idea that student's motivation is changing due to their motivation dropping after a year of distance learning. Looking for a solution to increase student's motivation will help educators with their day-to-day work and help get students back into the swing of things. The epistemology would also be pragmatism because this study is trying to find the best method to solve the problem at hand (Patel, 2015). Finding out if positive encouragement is the best solution to create a change in the day-to-day classroom motivation and work.

Conclusion

The research on intrinsic motivation all has a pattern on what the best method is for teachers to increase their student's motivation. Positive feedback helps to create a relationship that shows a teacher care for their students. To further the research as talked about I would continue to look for factors related to feedback to students and complete a study of self-reflection and increasing the amount of positive feedback I provide for my students. See how it impacts middle schoolers by building a strong relationship with them through positive feedback. How it changes over the course of a year. It will be a small study but, as middle school is a small,

researched area, this could improve the professional community by understanding and

considering a way to make the transition from distant to in person learning more bearable.

Chapter 3 Methods

Introduction

This study looked at the impact of how positive encouragement on daily assignments can help to increase a student's intrinsic motivation. The study looked at two different classes of eighth grade social studies to compare the amount of daily work turned in over a period of time. Students in the district returned to in person learning last spring and there were noticeable differences in motivation and behaviors in the school. This difference carried over to the fall of 2021. The researcher will elaborate on how the study carried over to the fall of 2021.

Research Question

How does implementation of positive feedback have an impact on student's intrinsic motivation?

Research Design

This study was a causal-comparative study comparing two treatment groups. It was only an observation on the amount of work that students completed to see if their intrinsic motivation increases. This design of research was selected because it was an implementation that would not interfere with the student's day to day learning. The change happening is not going to change the student's routines making it unnoticeable for the students. The feedback does not deal with specific numbers it deals with the behavior in students. The changes in behavior will be tracked using a survey at the end of the given unit.

Setting

The school district that the study took place is at one of the highest performing school districts and largest in Southeastern Minnesota. The school district has 18,100 students ranging

from pre-school to twelfth grade and 27 schools total in the district. The two middle schools total

2,225 student breakdown is 1,125 at one school and 1,100 at the second school grades between

6th through 8th.

Participants

The study included on forty-nine students in the eighth grade. It was completed by two

different classes of eight-graders from two different schools. They are both taught by the same

teacher and the subject is social studies. Of the forty-nine students ages range between thirteen

and fourteen. There are twenty-five boys (51%), nine-teen girls (39%), and five (10%) identify

as they/them. The ethnical breakdown of the classes is: African American (25%), Caucasian

(47%), Hispanic (16%), Pacific Islander/Asian (12%). Five students have special education

plans, one student on a 504 plan, eight students have English as their second language, and four

students are gifted.

Sampling

The students that were selected are in the researcher's class. I chose the eighth graders

rather than the seventh graders because of the content of geography in social studies is easier to

have a lesson plan with more daily assignments than with the seventh-grade class.

Instrumentation

The students receive a survey at the end of the unit, this survey was created using google

forms and distributed through the specific google classroom. The day after the final assessment

for the unit they were asked a series of questions. These questions will start with a self-reflection

on their effort put into the class for that unit. It will move into asking what motivated them to

complete work and if they did additional research outside of class out curiosity for the subject.

These questions will help determine what type of motivation they have and how strong it was.

Data Collection

During the unit being taught numbers of how much work students turn in will be

collected. If they turn in some of their assignments or all their assignments. The survey at the end

will help to gather individual motivators and how they compare to the amount of work turned in

during the learning.

Data Analysis

Student's work in compared to their motivation will be analyzed to show whether a

student with high motivation turns in all their work. The end survey will also be looked at as a

mean for a percentage of students with motivation and how it changed over the course of a unit

and receiving positive feedback.

Research Question and System Alignment

The table below (i.e., Table 3.1.) provides a description of the alignment between the

study Research Question and the methods used in this study to ensure that all variables of study

have been accounted for adequately.

Table 3.1

Research Paradigm	Research Design	Research Question	Variables	Instrument(s)	Source(s) and expected Sample Size	Data Analysis

Mixture of quantitative and qualitative	Causal comparative, the variables cannot change but the environments can change for the treatment groups.	How does positive feedback impact student's intrinsic motivation?	The sample size is 29 eighth graders. Split into two treatment groups. The first treatment group is the independent variable. This group during the learning of a unit in social studies class will receive positive feedback on the daily tasks of their learning. This is the change in their environment. The second treatment group or dependent variable is 24 eighth graders in a social studies class receiving only a grade mark on their daily tasks of their learning for a unit.	IV: At the end of the unit after receiving positive feedback there will be a survey to collect the student's motivation levels. This is to see how much work they think that they put into the lesson. DV: At the end of the unit after receiving positive feedback there will be a survey to collect the student's motivation levels. This is to see how much work they think that they put into the lesson.	Middle school students. Sample size will be 49. 25 will receive positive feedback on work. 24 will only receive a number grade on a 3-point grading scale. Both classes will receive a reflection form on how much effort students are putting in to completing their work.	Intrinsic motivation levels will be determined by the amount of effort a student put into the unit. The survey will help to determine whether the student's motivation was high or low and to see whether the positive encouragement made a difference in the amount of effort they had.

Procedures

This study will take place over a three-week period, where they will begin a new unit. They will receive a survey before the unit asking them about their motivation. The data provided by the survey will help the educator to know where the class level and type of motivation before the study begins helping with baseline information.

Students will be asked to complete tasks throughout the unit in which the educator will provide either a grade or a grade and a message of positive feedback. The educator will track how each student individually gets their work accomplished and if they are staying on top of their daily work by a tally system.

At the end of the unit, they will receive another survey that will ask the same questions. This will let the educator know the level of motivation how it had changed over the course of the unit. Both classes will be looked at for the classes' motivation.

Ethical Considerations

The protection and well-being of the students is the top priority. The study taking place will not single any one student out or make them feel uncomfortable. This is a study that does not impact the learning of students or change their course. It is an implementation that would take place with or without a study being completed it is only being tracked to see the effects of the implementation.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the processes that will be put into place in one of the grades that I teach. It is a study being done on student intrinsic motivation and how the impacts of positive encouragement during the learning process can increase a student's intrinsic motivation. In the next chapter I will discuss the results of the process.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data Collection

The study was completed the Spring of 2022, this year students in Rochester Public

Schools had remained in- person learning unless they had been exposed to COVID or had tested

positive and needed to stay home and quarantine. The first year to return to in full in person

learning since 2020 when students went to online learning. Students were asked to complete a

survey before starting their new unit. This survey helped to the teacher to understand where their

motivation came from before they started a new unit. While students were going through their

unit in geography, they would receive timely feedback on their work. One group received written

positive feedback and grade on how they did. The other group only received their grade for that

assignment. Before the test was given the group receiving positive feedback also received letters

of encouragement and feedback on how the unit was going. The positive feedback was to see if it

would make a difference in student's intrinsic motivation and confidence to complete their final

assessment for that unit.

This study was done to see if the increase in student motivation would make an impact in

the amount of work turned in throughout a unit. If the teacher could give feedback to the students

that instilled a sense of pride, encouragement, or confidence This would hopefully lead to an

increase in the percentage of classwork turned in throughout the unit.

Results

How does implementation of positive feedback have an impact on student's intrinsic

motivation?

When looking at the results starting with the presurvey. The data showed that only thirty-

three percent of students would see an increase in their motivation if the teacher provided

feedback. Only thirty percent rely on intrinsic motivation as for why they get their work

completed.

   When looking at both classes their data both showed to go down throughout the unit on

the percentage of work turned in. Below is the data for assignments turned in throughout the unit.

Tables

Table 1

Assignment Percentage Turn in Rate

Assignment	Class 1	Percentage	Class 2	Percentage
Assignment 1	15/21	77%	20/26	71%
Assignment 2	11/21	34%	9/26	52%
Assignment 3	10/21	50%	13/26	47%
Assignment 4	8/21	38%	10/26	38%
Final Assessment	16/21	76%	18/26	69%

Table 2

Presurvey Results

Response of Motivation	Percentage	If positive feedback would impact their motivation	Percentage
Extrinsic	35%	Would not impact their motivation	33%
Intrinsic	30%		
		They were in the middle of the road with positive feedback	43%
Unsure/nothing	14%		
Left Blank	19%	Receiving positive feedback would increase their motivation	24%

   Note that table two shows the percent in type of motivation from the presurvey that

students completed before entering the unit.

Table 3

Post Unit Survey Results

Response of Motivation	Percentage	If positive feedback would impact their motivation	Percentage
Extrinsic	31%	Would not impact their	28%
Intrinsic	36%	motivation	
Unsure/nothing	12%	They were in the middle of the	36%
Left Blank	21%	road with positive feedback	
		Receiving positive feedback would increase their motivation	36%

Note that table three shows percentages after the unit from the students completing a post survey.

Data Analysis

After going through the data, looking at table one it is hard to determine if the decrease was due to a lack of motivation in the students or something else. One thing to note is that assignment one and the final assessment were two assignments that are graded in the end and repeated assignments that the students had done a lot of practice with. Assignments two, three, and four were all practice classwork for their assessment and according to the district and the policy for standards-based grading practice work cannot impact their grade. It was interesting because with class two there was not only a decrease in the assignments turned in but, the quality of the work that they turned in went down throughout the unit as well. When the unit was

completed, it was towards the end of the quarter and a lot of the assignments were handed in late because students wanted to have missing assignments turned in for the grade. When class was one was going through the unit the quality of work completed in between assignments had improved, students at the beginning were writing short statements but towards the end were writing in complete sentences.

Table two's data displays students' feelings towards motivation and it helped to understand where students get their motivation from. To see most middle schoolers, rely on extrinsic rewards to motivate them was not surprising. The intrinsic motivation was higher to start with then expected but so was the amount that was left blank. There was also a higher-than-expected amount of unsure or that they wrote nothing would motivate them. These were the categories of focus for the positive feedback. If timely feedback was given it might motivate them to complete their classwork.

In table three it is shown that the target group of moving the unsure or nothing motivated them had decreased but, more students had left this survey question blank. Which is inconclusive. Though the intrinsic motivation had increased and the extrinsic motivation did decrease which is where the blanks come in. When looking at the second data point of the survey there were more students that recognized that when they received positive feedback it made them feel more motivated to complete their work. There was a decrease in the percentage of students that were in the middle of the road of how the feedback would impact that and less percentage of students felt like positive feedback wouldn't make an impact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results did show an increase in student's intrinsic motivation. There was an overall increase in students' responses on the surveys on where their motivation came from. Responses ranges from "feeling proud", "getting good grades", "don't like the late work. It was not as high of a change that was expected but, it is difficult to measure feelings. The surveys also revealed that students were struggling overall for placing their motivation and some stated that nothing would motivate them which would be a result of returning to in person learning from distant learning during the 2019-202 and 2020-2021 school years. The positive feedback did not seem to make a difference when it comes to classroom work but work was completed at a seventy percent rate for graded assignments.

Chapter 5 Implications for Practice

Discussion

This study was completed to find a simple solution to increasing academic intrinsic motivation in students that had been working on their own because of the community reacting to a global pandemic. It was aimed to be a solution for teachers to be able to create a difference without adding any additional work to their plate. It worked on the importance of focusing on positive feedback to instill confidence in student's ability to complete work.

Action Plan

When looking at this study it can be used in the long term to create an impact on student motivation. The study was complete over a couple weeks of a whole school year, when fully implemented into a classroom teachers can create a stronger culture that puts an emphasis on the quality of work that students complete. It is a simple and highly effective way implementation in a classroom that shows the students not only that the work they are doing matters even if it is daily classwork but, it lets them know the teacher is taking the time to go through what they had written and completed to create meaning positive feedback that increases a student's confidence in their own ability to do their work. This was shown in the decrease of pushback when assignments were handed out and the silent room when the assessment was being taken.

It helped to build relationships with students that increased an understanding on how assignments can impact the final assessment and help lead to the final assessment. Students that struggled with their final assessment for this unit were also the ones not completing the classwork along the way. It is important to recognize that middle schoolers still need that combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Switching to an exclusively extrinsic motivation where they did

not receive a reward at the end of the unit was one thing that showed a noticeable change. When the cookies and stickers were tucked away for a couple a week and the high-fives and great jobs is what the middle schoolers were receiving, they were thrown off. They need that physical reward to also help motivate them. This is what parents can take home with them to create a plan that puts education as an importance for their students. They could create a long-term reward system with their student but include the importance of the positive feedback so that their students crave that sense of pride in their academics on their own.

This research could be the first step for districts to take to open up the dialog between the parents and teachers. Now, that COVID has started to settle the district has lost sight in teachers and parents working together as a home front across the country. Having parents and teachers working to develop plans for rewarding students in an intrinsic and extrinsic way it could create a strong front and community that the city needs back. When parents were trying to help their students learn from their houses and teachers were trying to teach from their homes it created tension between the two groups and conversation needs to be reopened to a point where the student is at the center of the new plan.

Plan for Sharing

With what was learned from this study I plan on sharing it with the parents of the students as well as the prioritized learning communities. I think it could be shared very informally with my fellow coworkers on the importance of creating a system that allows students get the feedback in a place they will see it. Students in the middle school need it handed directly to them or told to their face because it reminds them, they have the ability to complete their work.

Formally I will be sharing the information learned in this study to my administration through my professional growth plan, they will be able to see the numbers and discuss my research while in reflection discussions. I would like to discuss the importance of positive feedback with the instructional coaches to share with the other teachers because it is a simple tool that teachers could add to their toolbox that won't add to their plate.

I would also be interested in repeating this research in the future to see if the results would be different when we are out of the pandemic and all the fires seem to calm down more. Teaching online would shine a different light on student motivation from working with students still learning from home next year. It would be enlightening to find another way to increase their motivation as they continue to have that separation from the in-person classroom.

Resources

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Letter

John Adams Middle School
1525 31st St NW
Rochester, MN 55901
(507)328-5700

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Since, returning to in person school this past year I have noticed a pattern with students. That is the adjustment has been difficult for students. Students for a little over a year students learned from the comfort of their homes. Readjusting has been difficult; it seems like motivation for all students is down. I want to complete a study on students' motivation and what implementations teachers can do to increase their motivation.

While completing this study students will be asked to complete a few five-minute surveys throughout the year. They otherwise will not notice a difference in their day-to-day activities. Most of the implementations will be on my end.

As a part of gaining my master's degree through Minnesota State University of Moorhead I must complete a study. With the permission of the school district, I still need permission for my final paper to contain the information does not name from my study. Student's names will not be included in the final paper identities will remain anonymous. I would be implementing these regardless of my master's program because I believe that these implementations will help every student overall and their adjustment back to this year.

Please reach out if you have any questions or comments about this study. Please email me at erhengel@rochesterschools.org. You can also contact my action research professor Dr. Carlson at Kristen.carlson@mnstate.edu.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep. You are making the decision whether to have your student participate. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to have your student participate. You make withdrawal at any time without issues.

_____   _____

(Parent or Guardian Signature)   Date

Informed Consent Letter

Willow Creek Middle School
2425 11th ST SE,
Rochester, MN 55904
(507)328-5900

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Since, returning to in person school this past year I have noticed a pattern with students. That is
the adjustment has been difficult for students. Students for a little over a year students learned
from the comfort of their homes. Readjusting has been difficult; it seems like motivation for all
students is down. I want to complete a study on students' motivation and what implementations
teachers can do to increase their motivation.

While completing this study students will be asked to complete a few five-minute surveys
throughout the year. They otherwise will not notice a difference in their day-to-day activities.
Most of the implementations will be on my end.

As a part of gaining my master's degree through Minnesota State University of Moorhead I must
complete a study. With the permission of the school district, I still need permission for my final
paper to contain the information does not name from my study. Student's names will not be
included in the final paper identities will remain anonymous. I would be implementing these
regardless of my master's program because I believe that these implementations will help every
student overall and their adjustment back to this year.

Please reach out if you have any questions or comments about this study. Please email me at
erhengel@rochesterschools.org. You can also contact my action research professor Dr. Carlson
at Kristen.carlson@mnstate.edu.

You will be offered a copy of this form to keep. You are making the decision whether to have
your student participate. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information
provided above and have decided to have your student participate. You make withdrawal at any
time without issues.

_____   _____

(Parent or Guardian Signature)   Date

Appendix B

Course Completion for Erin Hengel

Congratulations on your recent course completion!

Name:	**Erin Hengel** (ID: 10439678)
Institution:	**Minnesota State University Moorhead** (ID: 3966)
Course:	**Social & Behavioral Research**
Stage:	**1 - Basic Course**
Completion Date:	**06 Sep 2021**
Expiration Date:	**05 Sep 2024**
Completion Record ID:	**44775455**

Appendix C

Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

For the following questions please circle one number from the 1-10 scale. 1 being no motivation at all and 10 being you get everything completed.

On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your motivation to complete your *homework*

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

On a scale 1-10 how would you rate your motivation to complete your classwork assigned during the hour.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

On a scale 1-10 how would rate your motivation to complete your work after receiving feedback on work you had previously done.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

When a teacher gives you, positive feedback how does that effect your motivation?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

What motivates you to complete your classwork?

_____