

Motivation

Motivation is a sometimes touchy subject that has to do with our eagerness and willingness to do just about everything in our lives. Motivation is usually divided into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. There have been countless articles, books, etc., written on the subject, including ones about grades in school, performance in the workplace and especially in working with gifted children, including music students.

“Extrinsic motivation is when I am motivated by external factors, as opposed to the internal drivers of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation drives me to do things for tangible rewards or pressures, rather than for the fun of it. When I do something, I have to explain why I do it. If I am being rewarded extrinsically for doing it, then I can explain to myself that I am doing it for the reward. In this way, rewards can decrease internal motivation as people work to gain the reward rather than because they like doing the work or believe it is a good thing to do. In effect, extrinsic motivations can change a pleasurable into work.” **Deci (1971), Petri (1991), Lepper, Greene and Nisbett (1973)**

“**Intrinsic motivation** refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on any external pressure.[2] Intrinsic motivation has been studied by social and educational psychologists since the early 1970s. Research has found that it is usually associated with high educational achievement and enjoyment by students. Explanations of intrinsic motivation have been given in the context of Fritz Heider's attribution theory, Bandura's work on self-efficacy,[3] and Deci and Ryan's cognitive evaluation theory (see self-determination theory). Students are likely to be intrinsically motivated if they: 1) attribute their educational results to internal factors that they can control (e.g. the amount of effort they put in), 2)believe they can be effective agents in reaching desired goals (i.e. the results are not determined by luck), 3)are interested in mastering a topic, rather than just rote-learning to achieve good grades.”

Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Common extrinsic motivations are rewards like money and grades, coercion and threat of punishment. Competition is in general extrinsic because it encourages the performer to win and beat others, not to enjoy the intrinsic rewards of the activity. A crowd cheering on the individual and trophies are also extrinsic incentives. Social psychological research has indicated that extrinsic rewards can lead to overjustification and a subsequent reduction in intrinsic motivation. In one study demonstrating this effect, children who expected to be (and were) rewarded with a ribbon and a gold star for drawing pictures spent less time playing with the drawing materials in subsequent observations than children who were assigned to an unexpected reward condition and to children who received no extrinsic reward.[4]” **Wikipedia**

“**Definition:** Extrinsic motivation refers to motivation that comes from outside an individual. The motivating factors are external, or outside, rewards such as money or grades. These rewards provide satisfaction and pleasure that the task itself may not provide. An extrinsically motivated person will work on a task even when they have little interest in it because of the anticipated satisfaction they will get from some reward. The rewards can be something as minor as a smiley face to something major like fame or fortune. For example, an extrinsically motivated person who dislikes math may work hard on a math equation because want the reward for completing it. In the case of a student, the reward would be a good grade on an assignment or in the class. An extrinsically motivated student, for example, may dislike an assignment, may find it boring, or may have no interest in the subject, but the possibility of a good grade will be enough to keep the student motivated in order for him or her to put forth the effort to do well on a task”. **Carol Bainbridge, Gifted Children Guide**

My personal experience is that intrinsic motivation is much more sustainable, and will keep you playing and enjoying music for your whole life. It is a much stronger motivating factor in my teaching, as well as in my own playing (and in other things I do, like exercise and eating healthfully). Extrinsic motivation has its place, though. Extrinsic motivation can be the “fake it til you make it,” that will help develop the skill of cultivating intrinsic motivation. The question isn't so much which kind of motivation inspires you to play the flute, but which kind is *more* a part of why you play the flute.