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Motivation Factors in Mastery-Oriented Instrumental Learning and Performing

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Motivation Factors in Mastery-Oriented Instrumental Music Learning and Performing

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

The ideal student is one who demonstrates mastery-oriented characteristics; most notable of which is an inherent focus on learning and improvement (Roebken, 2007). In the area of music, the ideal student also focuses on performance and must demonstrate competence relative to others (Donald, 2012). Therefore, the mastery-oriented performing student has the ability to learn, gauge his or her performance in relation to others, and adapt to improve the next performance.

At every level of music there are motivational factors that can promote or detract from mastery-oriented performance. Despite the vast array of music ensembles and styles, those who achieve high levels of performing possess positive motivational attributes. "Indeed, when people are inspired, they feel the drive to initiate, to continue, or to complete tasks" (Criss, 2011, p. 62).

Music, like other performance-based activities such as athletics, requires motivated students to achieve mastery-oriented learning, which correlates to higher levels of performing. Students must be motivated to: (a) take on the task, (b) select a performance goal, (c) strategize methods to attain the goal which may include requesting assistance, (d) continuously self-assess the sounds produced when practicing/performing, and (e) persevere through the anxieties that may accompany the official performance(s) (Jones, 2009). These components can be in any particular order and vary in importance per student, but they are the consistent factors that must be considered in music education programs. Programs that do not promote positive motivation strategies risk lack of student engagement (Oare, 2011).

Significance of the Study

An effective music educator will attempt to create intrinsic motivation in students. Music students are asked to apply themselves over a sustained period of time, access a level of focus conducive to mastery performing, overcome inevitable set-backs, and develop a set of behavioral and cognitive skills that can be accessed when facing undesired performances, anxiety and self-doubt (Martin, 2008). Student musicians can benefit greatly from identifying and developing positive motivation skills that promote autonomy and mastery-oriented musicianship. In my experiences directing music ensembles, I find these skills vary from student to student and are determined by a variety of factors including instructors, anxiety, outcomes, behavior, and cognitive adaptability (or lack of adaptability), among others.

Extrinsic factors can have a significant impact on motivation. For example, peers, social milieu, and parental input can exert a larger impact on the motivational skills of a young musician than intrinsic motivations (MacIntyre, Potter, & Burns, 2012). In the words of Pamela Pike, "…teachers must be aware of typical cultural and generational norms that influence our students" (p. 21). If the surrounding environment of a student musician has such an impact on motivation, it is paramount that music educators address negative motivational influences (Berr, Shockley, & Flowers, 2003).

When students are motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically, there is a higher probability for mastery-oriented learning and a larger propensity to perform at a high level. This, in turn, can positively influence peers, parents, and the social milieu of a school community.

Statement of the Problem

Of the many challenges in the field of music education, perhaps one of the greatest is to motivate students (Criss, 2011). Some students are easier to motivate. They may be interested in music early in their lives prior to receiving instruction and encouragement from a teacher. For other students, the interest in listening or moving to music is the extent of their musical motivation. Denac (2008) provided one example of parents who reported their children "preferred most to listen to music, to sing songs and move to the sounds of music, and less to play on instruments and be creative in music" (p. 1).

To further complicate the creation of motivated student musicians is the significant focus on the product or performance(s) rather than the skills needed to be a good performer (i.e., mastery-oriented practice technique). The belief that a music educator must first and foremost be a good musician and that such training is sufficient to being a good teacher can be problematic. Regelski (2014) indicated that music education is possibly developing into an activity where a musician must be at a high level of performing with little knowledge of how to educate students on the methods and motivation skills to achieve such a high level of performing as well. "In fact, many fine musicians who have easily found their perch on the performance pedestal have little idea of what is needed to teach students who don't learn as easily" (p. 78). Essentially, the possession of talent or performing prowess does not necessarily correlate to motivating others to mastery-oriented performing.

Research Question

One research question guides the development of this review of literature: What motivation factors exist in mastery-oriented instrumental music learning and performing?

The research provided through a variety of sources show that a student's motivation has multiple components. The sources for the research used in this examination of motivation came from the database of EBSCO, Sage Journals, Springer Link, and online publications of books recently published that encompass a myriad of music education topics. One unifying aspect shared between the researcher's results on the topic of motivation in students is its noticeable impact on the student. To examine what factors are consistently present in mastery-oriented performances, specific key words were useful in refining the search:

- Mastery-oriented performing
- Motivation in students
- Motivation in music students
- Anxiety in music students
- Success in high school music
- Disengagement in music students
- Motivational factors in master-oriented performing

Along with these key words, specific terminology (as listed below) was influential in the search for clarification and reinforcement of the factors researchers and educators have defined as motivational factors in mastery-oriented performance. The terms listed in the next section were defined by Martin (2008).

Terminology

Acquisition context: whether or not the student has gathered experience with music in a formal (structured) or informal (casual, unstructured) environments.

Anxiety: the physical feeling of being nervous and the fear of not doing well.

Disengagement: individuals either give up or are at risk of quitting.

Failure avoidance: if the individual's main reason to try is to avoid doing poorly or perceived as doing poorly.

Mastery orientation: being focused on understanding, learning, solving problems, and developing skills.

Outcomes: the student's resulting music performance and its perception or the ability to play a new piece of music, etc.

Persistence: individuals' capacity to persist in situations that are challenging and at times when they cannot do what is required.

Planning: how much individuals plan, prepare and train, and how much they keep track of their progress as they are doing them.

Self-handicapping: individuals knowingly reduce their chances of success.

Self-efficacy: individuals' belief and confidence in their ability to understand or to do well.

Social milieu: a peer's, parent,' group's, communities,' or general underlying opinion of or attitude toward something.

Task management: the way individuals use their time, organize their timetable, and choose and arrange where they prepare, practice and train.

Uncertain control: individuals are unsure about how to do well or how to avoid making mistakes.

Valuing: how much individuals believe what they do and learn is useful, important and relevant.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The purpose of the literature selected was to determine what factors of motivation exist in students who exhibit mastery-oriented instrumental learning and performing. There are several models proposed in regards to this topic; however, the model proposed by Martin (2008) offered an amount of components most congruent with my experiences in instrumental music education. In this model the intrinsic and extrinsic factors are taken into consideration. Additional literature was examined for the purpose of examining the complexities of the factors; in particular the possible relationships differing factors have on each other.

Motivation Factors in Mastery-Oriented Instrumental Music Learning and Performing

Martin (2008) developed a Motivation and Engagement Wheel (MEW) to identify the positive and negative dimensions in the motivation of student learners. These dimensions are grouped as to show the range from a very maladaptive (negative) component through a very adaptive (positive) component. There is also indications given to components that are behavioral verses cognitive. Ordered as such, the MEW can serve as a gauge for where a particular student may be in the process of achieving mastery-oriented performance.

The desired level of student motivation in mastery-oriented learning and mastery-oriented music performance is self-efficacy, in which a student musician is striving to learn and improve from performances through applying task management; planning; persistence; valuing; mastery orientation; and self-efficacy. These dimensions are placed not necessarily in sequential order, but in tiered fashion. Task management is the most basic of steps in which students identify aspects of the music in terms of what it is and what is necessary to achieve a successful

performance. Next, the planning stage commences, in which students identify strategies that will be effective and applicable to the task (music). This includes a timeline of sorts that students follow to achieve certain levels of progress, much like benchmarks or goals to meet. In this step, students monitor their progress and move on to the next step. They demonstrated persistence by continuing to practice effectively despite any setbacks due to unexpected difficulties. Students are likely find value in persistent efforts to learn music via interest in the music as well as recognizing intrinsic worth that the learning, along with the performance, of music is relevant to their musicianship and the audience. Thus, a desire to continue process again with new music endeavors (Roberson, 2013). The next two dimensions essentially encompass all of the previous through analyzing the performance, goals achieved, and pursuing further improvements. At this point Martin (2008) indicates the student has demonstrated mastery-oriented performing. The top half of Figure 1 illustrates the mastery dimensions.

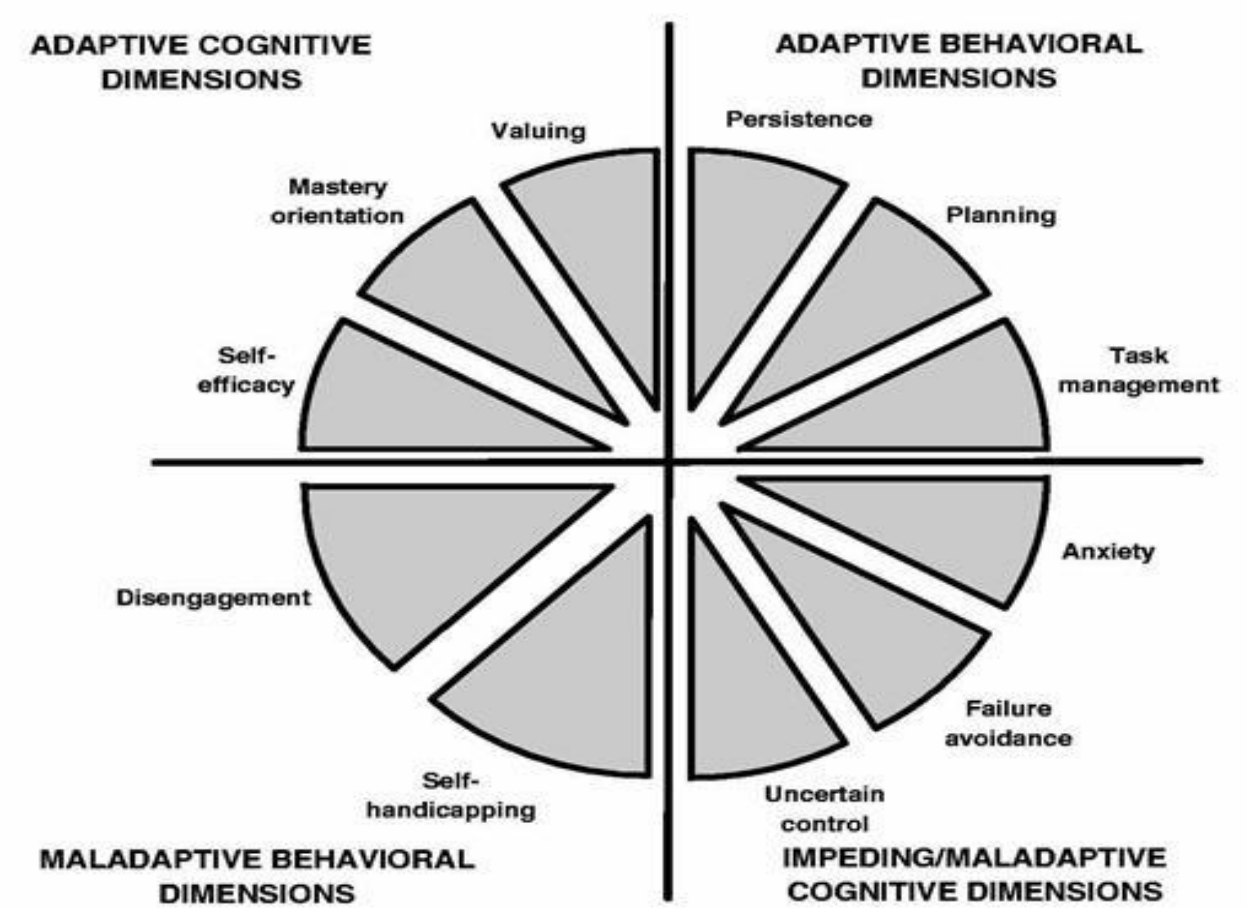

Figure 1
Motivation and Engagement Wheel—adapted from A. J. Martin (2007).

Figure 1. Motivation and Engagement Wheel (Martin, 2008, p. 129)

In contrast to the top half of the wheel that illustrates factors that facilitate motivation, the bottom half of the wheel illustrates factors that inhibit the process. Anxiety or fear of failure is a physical trait that can overwhelm some students and is one of leading dimensions linked to students not beginning the dimensions found in the upper half of the MEW. If students encounter the physical attributes of anxiety, they may be at risk of moving further from the first positive dimension of task management. If anxiety does become a prominent factor for the

student, he or she may begin to exhibit signs of avoiding difficulties (failure avoidance) and believe they do not know how to overcome unexpected difficulties (uncertain control). At this point, students are at an even larger risk of losing interest in music, and they may intentionally fail or avoid successful performing altogether (self-handicapping). Finally, students will become disengaged from the pursuit the performing music in which an instructor faces an arduous task of re-engaging students so that they to perform the music.

The MEW can give clarity students' current progression—or digression—from achieving the desired mastery level performing in music. However, finding evidence that a student may be in one the dimensions listed in the MEW does not necessarily give insight into *why* this is taking place. There are both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that can cause a student to be in any one of the dimensions, or move from one to the next.

Intrinsic Motivation Factors

Intrinsic motivation skills are those that exist within students and compel them to persist through the mastery learning process. Students who employ the mastery-oriented learning process in music have positive intrinsic motivation skills (Denac, 2008; MacIntyre, Potter & Burns 2012; McInerney, 2005). Students who function in the upper half of the MEW figure demonstrate what McInerney found to be an intrinsic desire to improve personally and clearly identify the specific skills or factors associated with mastery-oriented performance. However, if the intrinsic motivation of a student does not align with personal improvement, or any of the adaptive cognitive dimensions listed in the MEW, he or she does have an increased likelihood of digressing towards disengagement from music altogether (Pike, 2011).

Extrinsic Motivation Factors

Like intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors can work to either negatively or positively influence motivation in music students. There are, however, fewer identified factors in this area. MacIntyre, Potter, and Burns (2012) identified three factors associated with extrinsic motivation factors: Social Milieu, Acquisition Contexts, and Outcomes. Unlike the intrinsic factors these factors are much more difficult for the student to control and as such can have a more prominent impact on a student's motivational well-being.

Social milieu. The social milieu can have either a positive or negative impact on motivation. For example, in a successful music program where students are believed to possess a high level of achieving, participation numbers are consistently high along with a large percentage of students exhibiting positive intrinsic motivation dimensions as a result of positive extrinsic motivation. Such factors could be, but are not limited to, parental inquisition into their child's musical progress, peer involvement or acceptance of music, the community's overall exposure to the instruments or styles used in the music, and the effectiveness and adaptability of the teacher's approach toward music instruction. Although many factors affect teacher effectiveness, proper assessment can play a particularly important role. That is, assessments can be detrimental if students' performances are scored arbitrarily and do not provide the student with feedback regarding their strengths and weaknesses. Shuler (2011), a well-respected music educator and advocate stated, "We assess students first and foremost to provide us with information that enables us to help them achieve, and to provide students with information that empowers them to improve their own work" (p. 12). Thus, carefully designed assessments allow a teacher an opportunity to provide information that a student can apply to his or her next

musical undertaking. For example, feedback that does address how a student performed well while also demonstrating signs of anxiety can help the student. He or she can be led to believe that the next performance may also have a level of anxiety that can yet again be combatted with a focus on using the same musical strategies that contributed to a successful performance. In this regard, a well-designed and effective assessment can give the students a better ability to recognize maladaptive (negative) conditions and have a contingency plan allows the student to plan and persist (positive) through anxiety; which is a component of mastery-oriented learning. However, if the teacher does not design an assessment that can improve student learning, and help him or her advocate for mastery-oriented performance the intrinsic motivation factors are at risk to be negatively impacted (Shuler, 2011). Perhaps the most difficult extrinsic motivation factor to manipulate to promote positive motivation is the peer and parental impact.

It is quite possible, however, that one music educator, no matter how effective, may have a very difficult task of continually combatting the social perception of the relevance of music in a student's environment. For example, if a student has consistent contact and interactions with parents and/or friends who do not find anything motivating about music, it may be challenging to spark the student's initial interest in music before even attempting to keep his or her intrinsic motivations on the top half of the MEW. Upon recognizing this maladaptive quality in a student's social environment an instructor may call upon research that sheds light on the vast history of music's vital role in human culture(s) (Kent, 2006). This can be a proponent that leads a student to place value/relevance in music performance that counters his or her social environment.

Acquisition context. MacIntyre et al. (2012) described two components of the acquisition context has two components: formal and informal. Both formal and informal components typically are positively motivating, unless the context in which the student musician makes initial contact with music is a highly negative experience. However, this is relatively rare considering humans have an innate enjoyment of music as an artistic expression (Chanda & Levitin, 2013; Kent, 2006). There are, however, many genres of music beyond what the average student is exposed to and this requires motivation development in the student's performance of music. Thus, the acquisition context is placed upon the teacher or peer who is instructing the student and the environment they create that facilitates or hinders additional intrinsic motivation factors to perform music. A good example of this is found in the music used in today's vast array of worship services. They have incorporated contemporary instrumentation, song selection, arrangements into traditional worship music for purpose of motivating the congregation to be actively engaged in performing and thus motivated to continue learning new music through placing it in context with traditional worship music (Johnson, Rudd, Neuendorf, & Jiarr, 2010).

Outcomes. Outcomes add to the relevancy of music to a student and can serve as powerful extrinsic motivators. If the outcome of a music assignment—such as a performance—is consistently not ending with the desired results, the student can be negatively impacted. Many times this type of situation can be curtailed with appropriate music assignment selection, but in most cases a student with a mastery-oriented musical interest can see a poor performance as an opportunity to improve.

Extrinsic motivational factors are both numerous and diverse, and because of which they are perhaps one of the most difficult to curtail when negative in nature. Generally speaking an intrinsic motivator is needed to curtail a negative extrinsic factor, but this requires an accurate diagnosis of which extrinsic factor is in fact leading toward maladaptive, or negative, motivation (Jones, 2009).

Complexities of Motivation Factors

All studies and research into motivation intrinsic and extrinsic factors indicate that rarely are the MEW dimensions mutually exclusive (Jones, 2009; Macintyre, et al., 2012; Pike, 2011 Schmidt, 2005). Many different factors can have a direct negative or positive impact on each other. In other words, extrinsic factors can affect intrinsic factors and intrinsic factors can affect extrinsic factors. Thus, the motivational factors involved with mastery-oriented learning in music are complex and intertwined.

An example of this complexity if when a music student's friend who is not involved in music (extrinsic) may have a negative impact upon another student's belief that learning music is relevant (intrinsic) because of a negative motivational experience with a previous music teacher (extrinsic) (Schmidt, 2005). Another example is when a music student's initial contact with music comes from an informal acquisition context (extrinsic) such as hearing an older sibling practice at home. The student finds relevancy in music because of this context, which gives the student a much higher motivation (intrinsic–valuing) to seek out music performance.

Overall, motivation for mastery-oriented performance in music has multiple factors. However, researchers are finding more and more connections between the differing factors and thus continue to explore the relations between them along with the successful methods used by

instructors to overcome those that are maladaptive via extrinsic motivational support (Jones, 2009; Martin, 2008; Regelski, 2014). Music still holds a vital role in the cultures of the world and finding a way to identify what motivates students towards mastery-oriented performance is a big proponent in fostering positive factors and overcoming the negative.

Chapter 3: Conclusions

To better understand the motivation factors found in students who exhibit mastery-oriented performance skills, I reviewed the findings of a few selected researchers in Chapter 2. From the research I reviewed, I discovered some commonalities. Specifically, most endeavors—including academics, athletics, work (employment), and music—are dependent upon motivation to succeed.

Researchers agree that music is an inherent social psychological phenomena, which then leads one to logically deduce that music has inherent value with all humans (Chanda & Levitin, 2013; McPherson & Welch, 2012; Youth Music, 2009). Since the beginning of recorded history there is evidence that cultures have engaged in music, and recent studies place show that those with virtually no musical ability are under 4% of the general population (McPherson & Welch, 2012). Yet, those who engage in performing music are still a minority in the general population. For example, in England 45% of students report engaging in music performance and adults a lower 26% (North & Hargreaves, 2008). It is certainly natural to not have everyone be interested in performing music at professional or even semi-professional levels much like any other sport or hobby.

Even though humans may have an inherent love of music, this love does not translate into every student performing music. People must be motivated to perform music. Jones (2009) reported that the core motivational components that apply to music performance appear to be both actions and statements. In other words, students who are motivated in music and other endeavors take actions and consistently verbalize a general liking of the endeavor.

However, other researchers describe the factors that embody mastery-oriented performing as more complex than these two components (Chanda & Levitin, 2013; Martin, 2008; Schuler, 2011). One researcher (Martin, 2008) developed the Motivation and Engagement Wheel (MEW) to illustrate the complexity and comprehensiveness of a student's current level of motivation. The wheel progresses from the most negative motivational factor of disengagement from performing music up to the most positive form of self-efficacy. Within the 11 factors total listed on the MEW there are intrinsic and extrinsic components that can be either positive or negative to the student's motivation. When the components are put into context of their current state of motivation (intrinsic) as well as their home/learning environment (extrinsic) an instructor will have a better understanding of not only what currently motivates the student, but also what is likely to be helpful in assisting a student not yet at self-efficacy, or mastery-oriented performance level of motivation.

Pike (2011) found the expectancy-value theory helpful in explaining negative motivational factors. Students need to be guided towards a goal that is attainable and appropriate for the current level of motivation. Pike's research has indicated students can achieve mastery-oriented performing despite showing trends of heading towards disengagement. One issue that must be addressed is anxiety.

Of the dimensions listed on the MEW spectrum of motivation, anxiety is consistently reported as major factor in the path towards disengagement from performing music (North & Hargreaves, 2008). It is possible that anxiety, in some degree, is an inherent component of performing music as it is found in all levels from elementary to professional (Taborski, 2007). Yoshie, Kudo, Murakoshie, and Ohtsuki (2009) reported that high-level pianists with anxiety

manifested negative musculoskeletal issues when performing. Some issues were so severe that it eventually led to the ending of their careers. Given that anxiety is the first of the negative dimensions on the MEW, it should be addressed if complete disengagement is to be avoided. Yoshie et al. also reported that non-evaluative performing can reduce the levels of detrimental anxiety.

To counteract the negative physical aspects of anxiety during a mastery-oriented performance, pre-performance actions/warmups might be helpful (Yoshie et al., 2009). In addition, the reaffirmation that a particular performance is just one of many and part of process towards a musician's growth and improvement can assist in anxiety relief (Taborski, 2007). However, there is no definitive solution that will solve the problem in all cases.

Recommendations

Further research into how non-musical factors such as socioeconomic status, family presence, music instruction methods, or peer environment could be useful to better understand factors that lead towards the negative dimensions of motivation as presented on the MEW. Future research should explore the lives of students outside of the music classroom who are motivated and not motivated. If the non-motivated students could be convinced of the reciprocal effects of continued mastery-oriented performing on non-musical aspects of their education it may be possible to counter the digression down the MEW toward disengagement. For example, research has found that students receiving music instruction have increased their IQ scores from those taken before music instruction (Schellenberg, 2004). This phenomena is most commonly referred to as the Mozart Effect, and has been the fuel for many music educators that face the elimination, or devaluing, of music from educational settings.

More longitudinal research should examine the positive effects of music on the overall educational engagement of students who are involved performing music. Although the research of Horton, Bustamante, Edmundson, and Slate, (2014) produced examples of positive outcomes associated with music, more research needs to be conducted. Convincing the students, as well as those within a student's social milieu, that are in jeopardy of entering the negative dimensions of the MEW of the overall benefits of staying in their music program(s) may be proponent in swaying the student back into the positive dimensions of the MEW.

Reflections

My own experiences of 13 years in music education have just recently reminded me of the power of informing students and parents of the positive effects associated with music education. At an incoming ninth-grade orientation, I mentioned the findings of the Horton et al. (2014) study that test scores increased for students involved in high school music programs. Following this I had contact with two different families who were present at the event and whose children had left the music program during the previous 2 years. Like most parents, these want to assist in the positive development of their children and indicated this was brought up in the discussion with their children in regard to their continued involvement with band. As of right now the students are still in band and their overall performance in high school academics is above average.

I feel if parents and students had more knowledge of these positive outcomes, they would be more motivated to perform music. Most likely, it would not be the only component or strategy needed to reaffirm or regain students, but it could be useful in the process. I do not want to state that music is the "cheat code" to life by any means, but there is data out there that

supports the benefits to a student's overall development when involved in music (Shellenberg, 2004).

In summary, the motivational factors surrounding mastery-oriented performance in music are diverse and complex. The methods employed by successful instructors vary greatly and depend upon a myriad of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Therefore, one cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of how to motivate all students. However, we must continue to do our best to lead students toward mastery-oriented performance pedagogy.

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