

# LEARNING MATTERS at LINGNAN

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*From the Editor:*

*Learning Matters at Lingnan are short papers on teaching and learning that aim to provide a forum for exchange of ideas about instructional matters. You are most welcomed to contribute to the forum by writing for Learning Matters at Lingnan, and/or responding to ideas that you either agree or disagree. Please send your ideas and contributions to the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC), Lingnan College.*



## How to Motivate Students?

As College Professors, you may have often wondered why some students are more involved in class, better prepared for discussions, ask more questions, and, in general, simply try harder than other students. Is it something about *them* or *you*? More important, what can you do differently to motivate students and enhance learning?

By trying to understand why students act as they do, we are struggling with what psychologists and educators term 'motivation' - a somewhat mysterious dispositional quality that facilitates learning. If you are looking for ways to motivate your students, the model that is presented here may offer some help.

Keller (1987) offers a very practical model of designing motivational instruction. This model is termed the ARCS model. The 4 components of the ARCS model acronym are: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction.

P.T.O.

# A

## Attention

Student attention may be fairly easy to catch, initially, but difficult to sustain over an entire course. Some strategies for gaining attention and holding it involve the use of incongruity, e.g. presenting evidence contradictory to an accepted theory. Other attention strategies might include varying the pace or style of presentation of the course materials, using humour, and planning activities that require student participation.

# R

## Relevance

Relevance, the 'R' in the ARCS model, is especially important in motivating learners, since competing priorities, such as part-time jobs or other commitments, reduce the amount of time available for learning. Skills and information gained through education or training must be perceived as usable beyond the course level. Course relevance can be emphasized by relating the content to learner experience or the learner's future goals.

# C

## Confidence

A useful strategy for confidence-building is to plan for 'success opportunities' which means not to fail students early on in the program. Other strategies for increasing student confidence include helping students to set realistic goals for themselves, providing clear and specific criteria for evaluation, and attributing success to learner effort when giving feedback. '*Your hard work really shows in this assignment - good job!*' or '*These answers show a great deal of insight; it's clear you've been reading very carefully.*'

# S

## Satisfaction

Satisfaction is feeling good about accomplishing instructional goals. To increase the chance of learner satisfaction, we should provide activities that allow new skills to be used in realistic settings, transfer of learning is intrinsically motivating. Flexibility and choice within the instructional program by providing options for objectives, study methods, and/or evaluations, can increase the learner's sense of control. Providing extrinsic rewards for progress and reinforcing students' intrinsic feelings of pride will also strengthen learner satisfaction.

The ARCS model provides structure for educators who are concerned about the motivational aspects of instruction. In teaching and learning, the components of *attention*, *relevance*, *confidence*, and *satisfaction* may determine whether a student successfully completes a course, and therefore are critical to the success of the teaching and learning process.

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### Reference:

Keller, J. (1987). Development and use of the ARCS model of instructional design. *Journal of Instructional Development*, 10(3), 2-10.

N.B. If you want to know more about the ARCS model, you may borrow a video-tape that features Professor John Keller's ARCS model produced for tertiary teachers in Hong Kong by the T&T project team. The tape is available at the TLC.