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DEFINING MOTIVATION:

PERSPECTIVES FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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Education in Early Childhood Education.

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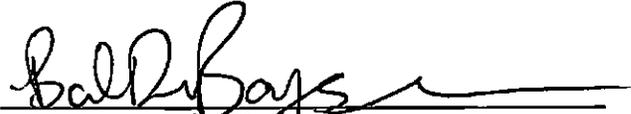
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Abstract

Motivation is suggested to be an important link to learning and achievement. However, it is unclear what previous researchers refer to as motivation because of the plethora of terms that are associated with motivation. The purpose of this study was to examine the definition of motivation in young children through the perspectives of Head Start early childhood educators. The Defining Motivation in Early Childhood survey was developed to examine motivation in terms of characteristics, indicators, origin, influence, and strategies that teachers use to promote it in a classroom setting. On the basis of factor analyses of the survey, as well as focus group interviews, a child's personal interest in a task or activity was suggested to be a defining belief of motivation in young children.

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Introduction

It is assumed by researchers (Berns, 2001; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) that

motivated preschool children's motivation can be observed and described by the people

that are close to them, namely parents, family members, and educators. The purpose of

this inquiry is to add a rich understanding of early childhood educators' conceptions of

motivation in their students to the existing literature. The research questions addressed in

this study are as follows:

- How do early childhood educators define motivation? Are there commonalities

  and themes that guide their definition? What are the specific traits that teachers

  use to define motivation?

- How does motivation develop? What are the important influences on motivation?

- What activities and behaviors do early childhood educators use in their classroom

  to promote motivation in their students?

Early childhood, the span of time from pre-birth to eight years old is arguably a

critical period, providing a foundation for the course of later life (Feeney, Christensen, &

Moravcik, 2001). Children's constant interaction with the environment, that sets the

stage for all early learning, is so frequent and pervasive that it almost appears to be an

innate drive. This interaction with the environment has been interpreted by some

researchers as indicating the depth of a child's interest to explore and engage with the

surroundings and the individuals in it (Hauser-Cram, 1998).

As an early childhood educator, I continually observe that children possess an

interest in learning. Their curiosity for novel things, their persistence, their need to

master their surroundings, and their desire to read their favorite books over and over

again are a few examples of their interest in learning. However, as these children reach upper elementary grades, their interest in learning seems to wane (Eccles et al., 1993; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). I am reminded of this often when speaking to colleagues who teach in elementary and high school grade levels. "My students don't care about learning...They are unmotivated," they say.

This disparity in interest and motivation is puzzling to me as an educator and researcher. It leads me to question what happens to students' motivation and interest in learning over the school years. More importantly to me, is whether there is a connection between the interest in learning that a child exhibits in the early childhood years and achievement in later school years. Is the interest that is shown in the early years any indication to what is called motivation in later years?

Motivation is a complex concept, which has been defined in multiple ways. Motivation has been linked to achievement (Gottfried, 1990), goals (Elliott & Dweck, 1988), biological drives (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002), and learning strategies (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). A general definition that is consistent with prior research is that motivation is the "process by which goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Much of the literature that strives to define motivation is based on school age individuals (kindergarten to grade twelve) and adults (college students and working adults). There is much less research that attempts to define and/or understand the development and sequence of motivation in early childhood. Thus, there is a need for new studies that focus on the early childhood period.

Current measures of motivation for populations other than early childhood are typically self-report measures of competence and expectancy beliefs in particular

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domains. Because young children are not the most accurate source in reporting their beliefs and values due to developmental factors such as limited vocabulary, communication skills, and higher cognitive functioning, it is necessary to find a reliable index to describe motivation (Bjorklund, 2005). According to current research (Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), motivation in early childhood is primarily exhibited through children's expressed interests. The child's views about the usefulness of a task in terms of future goals or the utility value of an activity cannot be held as a reliable measure because of the limited scope of their expressive and receptive language skills and cognitive processing skills. However, a young child's subjective values could be related to the choice of different activities. By analyzing a young child's interest through observation of performance, choice, and effort on a task or activity, more can be gauged about the child's motivation than through use of conventional modes of measure used for other populations.

Literature Review

Defining Motivation

    Terminology

In reviewing the literature pertaining to motivation, there seems to be many

definitions and related topics under the name motivation. Terminologies used include

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Carlton & Winsler, 1998; Gottfried, 1990; Landen &

Willems, 2001), performance-oriented and mastery-oriented goals (Elliot & Dweck,

1988), and achievement (Berndt & Miller, 1990). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

describe the intent in which an individual engages with a task or activity. Intrinsic

motivation is motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake; extrinsic motivation is

motivation to engage in an activity as a means to an end. Goal orientation explains

achievement behaviors and helps shed light on an individual's understanding, learning,

and performance on tasks. A performance goal represents a focus on demonstrating

competence or ability with the expectation of a reward. In contrast, a mastery goal is

defined in terms of a focus on learning or mastering the task for self-improvement,

development of new skills, or trying to gain understanding (Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

Achievement may be viewed as an indirect index of motivation. It is suggested that

students who choose to engage, expend effort, and persist in a task are likely to achieve at

a higher level (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

    Theoretical models that lead to common definition of motivation

Literature also presents different models of the origin or concept of motivation.

Drive theory by Hull and Spence explains that motivation is part of a drive, an internal

force that seeks to maintain an optimal state of bodily mechanism, that is inherent in a

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person in which there is a contribution of internal factors to behavior (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Weiner, 1990). Drives possess intensity (the extent that a drive activates behavior), direction (the object or goal of the drive), and persistence (continuation of the behavior until the goal is obtained or the need is reduced). When an individual experiences a need because of deprivation of an essential element, a drive is activated, causing the person to respond.

Social learning theory by Bandura helps to explain how children learn social behaviors, such as acts of helping and caring for others, aggressive tendencies, and behaviors appropriate for their gender (Meece, 2002). Bandura's theory suggests that learning occurs by the individual interacting with the environment, shown through modeling and social comparison. People learn by observing models, but the knowledge and skills they acquire may not be demonstrated at the time of learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Bandura's theory suggests that if modeled behaviors prove to be useful, people will attend to and learn from models (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

In terms of motivation, Bandura's self-efficacy theory states that motivation affects performance and learning in which one's view of their capability to perform a task will affect their desire to acquire more information in order to obtain a successful outcome (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Self-efficacy, people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances, is similar to perceived competence (person's perception of his/her competence), however, Bandura's theory is specific in terms of including the behavioral actions or cognitive skills that are necessary for competent performance in a given domain (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). It is suggested that when self-efficacy perceptions

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for a specific task are high, individuals will engage in related tasks that foster the development of their skills and capabilities, as well as exert effort in the face of difficulty and persist at a task. However, when self-efficacy is low, people will not engage in new tasks that might help them acquire new skills.

Self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan integrates the concepts of inherent needs with social-cognitive constructs (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Weiner, 1990). This theory assumes three basic needs: competence (desire to master and be competent in interactions with the environment), autonomy (desire to be in control of one's own behavior), and relatedness (wanting to belong or be attached to a group) that are assumed to be innate for all humans in all cultures and apply across all situations (Pintrich, 2003). Deci and Ryan propose that if these needs are not satisfied, motivation as well as cognition, affect, and behavior will suffer. It is assumed that if desires are not satiated, there can be a mobilization of behavior in order to meet the needs.

Lastly, the expectancy-value of achievement theory takes into consideration that one's achievement is directly predicted by the expectancies for success on the task and the subjective value on those tasks (Wigfield, 1994). The model assumes that students' beliefs about themselves, their expectations of their competence, and values are influenced by how students perceive their social environment and what happens to them as they move through it (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Achievement behavior is predicted by two general components: expectancy and value. The expectancy construct refers to the question, "Am I able to do this task?" Expectancy refers to the actual beliefs about whether they will do well on the task. It is assumed that higher expectations for success are positively related to all types of achievement behavior, including achievement,

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choice, and persistence (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The value construct refers to a student's response to the question, "Why should I do this task?" Responses would include interest (I'm interested in this topic), importance or utility beliefs (This is important for my future career), and costs (If I take this course, I will not have time to play video games).

Extracting the key points of the literature, motivation can be defined as "the process by which children's goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Observable motivation involves an activity, which in turn requires goals which may be intrinsically motivated, extrinsically motivated, or a combination of the two. It is a process that is not observed directly but rather inferred through behaviors such as choice of task, effort, persistence, and verbalizations. These behaviors can often be seen prior to a child starting a task or activity (e.g., showing initiative, being curious, and having a desire for competence) (Bergin, 1999). Furthermore, a child's actions during a task or activity such as perseverance, being highly engaged in the task or activity, and having a high level of achievement or skill (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) can be used to infer the child's degree of motivation.

In addition to general behaviors that a child exhibits in response to a task or activity, researchers have examined specific examples of behaviors, actions, and words that are observable cues that adults use to infer a child's level of motivation. Tudge and colleagues (2003) found that children who are more verbal, in particular those that engage in conversation with adults (namely teachers) are perceived as more motivated, and in some cases more competent (Tudge, Odero, Hogan, & Etz, 2003). Other behaviors, in particular concentration or focus on the task at hand and selection of

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challenging activities, are other cues that have been used to make inferences about a child's level of motivation in a particular setting (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Children's feelings or emotions relating to a task may also be important. Feelings of happiness or euphoria during a task are likely to foster interest when the task is reencountered (Bergin, 1999). Thus, eagerness and positive nonverbal cues that show enjoyment are additional examples of observable behaviors that researchers can measure when studying motivation.

Pintrich & Schunk (2002) describe the most commonly used behaviors that have been used in studies of motivation. These indexes include: choice of task (selection of a task under free-choice conditions indicates motivation to perform the task), effort (high effort, especially on difficult or boring material, is indicative of motivation), persistence (working for a longer time even when encountering obstacles is associated with higher motivation), and achievement (choice, effort, and persistence raise task achievement). These indexes of motivation are important because they are the yardstick that adults (researchers, educators, and family members) tend to use when trying to infer the presence of a child's internal state of high or low motivation.

Role of interest or subjective values

In the early childhood period, interest is seen to be the most defining characteristic of motivation. Whereas children in elementary, junior high, and high school take into account the utility value and importance of the activities that they take part in, interest is what dictates engagement with a task for young children (Wigfield, 1994). Developmentally, a young child's subjective values seem to be related to their choice of different activities. The child's views about the importance or the utility value

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of an activity cannot be used as a reliable measure because of the limited scope of their expressive and receptive language skills and cognitive processing skills (Bjorklund, 2005). By analyzing a young child's interest through observation of performance, choice, and effort on a task or activity, more can be gauged about the child's motivation than through use of conventional modes of measure used for other populations.

Research on interest has shown that there are two types of interest, namely individual interest and situational interest. Individual interest refers to interest that is built on stored knowledge through previous experiences which leads to a desire to be involved in activities related to that topic (Boekaerts & Boscolo, 2002). It is seen that students who score high on interest measurements for a specific task or activity do not necessarily spend more time on tasks and activities for which they show interest. However, they want to become involved with the activity for its own sake and the quality of their interaction with the material is superior. This superiority is indicated by the use of fewer rehearsal and more elaboration strategies, seeking more information, and reflecting more on the material (Boekaerts & Boscolo, 2002). In essence, this research indicates that individual interest is marked by a higher level of interaction with the task, shown through being inquisitive, taking initiative to find out information, and being reflective about the task at hand. Similar to intrinsic motivation, individuals with this type of interest seek out opportunities to learn more about the specific topic.

Situational interest, interest that is built on contextual features that make a task or activity interesting, is dependent on favorable environmental conditions in which learning occurs (Boekaerts & Boscolo, 2002; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Because it is dependent on the environmental conditions, situational interest is said to be more transient in nature.

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Situational interest may still be very intense and mirror intrinsic motivation or personal interest; however, the distinguishing factor is that this interest is dependent on learning environments and therefore may change or fade. Those who study situational interest examine the question of what is in the environment that captures the interest of the learner and keeps them engaged in an activity (Pintrich, 2003). Researchers in this field tend to ignore individual differences and look for general principles to describe how the features of the environment (i.e., classroom, media, and books) can generate situational interest (Bergin, 1999). In addition, situational factors such as hands-on activities, novelty, social interaction, and modeling allow for greater interest in activities (Bergin, 1999). Situational interest involves an affective component of positive affect, as well as increased attention. Situational interest must first be activated by capturing the attention of the individual then further maintained by incorporating activities that allow the individual to learn more about the topic.

Of the two types of interest, only situational interest is said to be manipulable by educators, at least in short-term encounters (Bergin, 1999). In terms of early childhood, this may not be a valid statement. Though in many ways situational factors are generally under control of the teacher, there are some developmental caveats that must be explored. During early childhood, children are still being exposed to various experiences and are in the process of developing their individual preferences. Because of this, it may be that both personal and situational interest may be manipulated by people close to a child (parents, family members, and educators). However, once individual factors are established, Bergin's (1999) belief that only others can manipulate situational interest becomes tenable.

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Links to achievement

Motivation is thought to be important because of its potential link to achievement in the future. It has been suggested that motivation has a role in developing self-regulated learning (a process in which students control and regulate their learning, allowing for better retention and more comprehensive understanding). Pintrich & Schunk (2002) define self-regulation as the process in which students activate and sustain behaviors, cognitions, and affects in ways that allow them to attain their goals. Motivational beliefs, namely self-efficacy, task value, and goal orientation have been found to be related to self-regulated learning. Self-efficacy refers to how one views their capability to perform a task; task value is the belief a person has regarding the importance of the task, and goal orientation, in particular, whether the focus is intrinsic or extrinsic goals. It has been shown that when an individual is high in these motivational beliefs, their ability to self-regulate their learning is higher (Pintrich, 1999). In addition, it was shown that children who exhibited high academic intrinsic motivation function more effectively in school in terms of achievement, intellectual ability, and perception of competence (Dev, 1997; Gottfried, 1990).

Developmental Considerations

Developmental changes

Research has shown that motivation for school-related subjects and tasks change across an individual's development. Children's judgments about perceived competence (which plays a role in the motivation process) undergo developmental changes. Young children describe competence in broad terms (smart versus dumb), with the ability to discuss fine-grained sense of competence for specific activities developing later. With

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age, it is seen that children acquire the vocabulary to describe their ideas in more detail; allowing their perceived competence to be more specific. However, it has been suggested that their concept of perceived competence changes with age (Harter, 1982; Wigfield, 1994). Even during the early elementary school years, children's subjective values are less differentiated, with interest and utility-importance emerging in areas such as math, reading, and sports as children mature (Wigfield, 1994). Studies that have focused on grades five to twelve have shown that achievement beliefs and values change across development. The general finding for academic task value beliefs is that older children's ratings of interest, importance, and utility for school subjects decline in comparison to the mean levels of younger children's ratings (Berndt & Miller, 1990; Eccles et al., 1993; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Through analyzing the change in expectations of success and goals, and subjective task values, developmental changes in motivation can be seen.

It has been seen that four and five-year-olds' expectations of success tend to be optimistic (Wigfield, 1994). They generally believe they will do well on tasks even if they repeatedly fail a task. Their expectations perhaps reflect the outcome they hope to achieve rather than the reality of their performance. It has been suggested that younger children are grossly inaccurate and overly optimistic in judging their likely performance, thus, they fail to employ strategies that could effectively improve their performance (Mussen, 1983). However, young children learn and acquire skills at such a rapid rate that their high expectations may reflect future successes. Moreover, these children characterize subjective task values primarily by their interest in the task (Wigfield, 1994). Their choice of activity comes from their personal interest in the activity and is not

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closely related to their performance level. Regardless of success or failure, a child at this age will explore all the activities and select one that catches his/her interest (Wigfield, 1994).

Change in motivation starts to emerge in the elementary years when students' expectations begin to correspond more closely to previous performances (Wigfield, 1994). It has been seen that following successes, there is an increase in expectations of success, however following failures there is a decrease in the possibility of achievement. Conceptions of subjective task values are primarily characterized by a child's interest in a task; however this interest is related closely to performance level (Bergin, 1999; Berndt & Miller, 1990). No longer are students primarily motivated by curiosity and interest regardless of success and failed experiences. Instead, students see tasks as valuable because they do well on it (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

For students in middle school, goals and expectations of success start to become multi-dimensional. Motivation for a student is not purely one element (e.g., mastery); in contrast it is a blending of social and academic goals (Dowson & McInerney, 2003). Social goals incorporated aspects of affiliation, approval, responsibility, status, and concern; whereas academic goals were made up of mastery, performance, and work avoidance. Students of this age are motivated to do a task or activity if it fits their social and academic goals, and if they believe they can succeed in the task (Dowson & McInerney, 2003).

In high school, motivation can be characterized as dependent upon future goals. It has been observed that many students do not go to school for the intrinsic enjoyment of learning, but because they have to or because they realize that education is important for

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their professional future (Husman & Lens, 1999). For these students, their interpretation of utility value is put into the context of the future. If a task or activity can benefit him/her in terms of future goals, such as social goals (impress a girlfriend), professional goals (to become a doctor), and/or lifetime goals (become rich), he/she might be more inclined to be motivated to the task or activity.

Contextual or External Social Influences

Ecological context

Research has not been clear on what is the primary influence to a child's motivation. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, there seems to be a connection between the child, family, school, and the surrounding community. In this model, the child is at the center of the model, however the child does not live in a vacuum (Meece, 2002). Bronfenbrenner believed that the social context of individual interactions and experiences determine the degree to which individuals can develop their abilities and realize their potential (Berns, 2001). The model allows for a systematic study of interactions including the child's role in his/her development. The process of socialization seems to be reciprocal and dynamic and includes many different groups that seem to exert their influence in various ways and times. In particular, there are four basic structures: microsystem (activities and relationships with significant others experienced by the child in a particular small setting such as family, school, peer group, or community), mesosystem (linkages and interrelationships between two or more of the microsystems such as the family and the school), exosystems (settings in which the child is not an active participant but which affect the microsystem, e.g., parents' jobs), and macrosystem (patterns or sets of instructions for the other systems such as society,

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subculture, or religion) (Berns, 2001; Meece, 2002). The various subsystems (family, school, community) are all embedded in a broader and social context and it is assumed to change over the course of development. Taking this into consideration, there are indications that parents, family, educators, and community are important influences of a child's motivation (Tudge et al., 2003).

Role of teachers

Social-cognitive models and constructs have tried to answer the question of what motivates students in classrooms. It has been a major research finding that when people expect to do well, they tend to try hard, persist, and perform better (Pintrich, 2003). It seems that as students have more confidence in themselves as learners (are able and will do well in a specific task or activity), they are much more likely to be motivated in terms of effort, persistence, and behavior than students who exhibit less confidence and belief that they are less able and do not expect to succeed. By understanding what motivates students in the classroom settings, teachers can structure their teaching styles to accentuate students' interests and motivate them to learn.

Teacher's guided activities in the classroom can be used to support children's motivation. Research has shown that following the notion of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development through scaffolding (strategies in which a knowledgeable other supports the child's learning through interventions that provide task information at different levels of structure, depending on the child's current capabilities) can increase motivation (Pratt, Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1988). Teachers can help encourage children's motivation by encouraging children to verbalize their activities and use scaffolding strategies to provide the child with the appropriate level of help (Carlton &

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Winsler, 1998). In addition, teachers must design tasks that offer opportunities for students to be successful, but are also challenging, and offer clear and accurate feedback to the child (Pintrich, 2003). It is important to provide opportunities to have students exercise some choice and control. Seemingly, motivation and learning is increased by allowing the child more freedom and by providing questions that allow the child to discover his/her own solutions (Carlton & Winsler, 1998). Furthermore, teachers can stress goals that focus on mastery, learning, and understanding.

The use of rewards can be used to promote mastery, learning, effort, progress, and self-improvement standards. Research, however, suggests that it should be less reliant on social comparison or norm-referenced standards (Pintrich, 2003). Praise and other external incentives by teachers have had mixed results. Praise given for success and progress in learning substantiates students' beliefs that they are learning and raises self-efficacy for learning. However, it has been suggested that praise does not relate well to student achievement and correlations between praise and achievement are weak and mixed in direction (Miller & Hom Jr., 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Other studies suggest that external rewards such as money and gifts have a significant diminishing effect on intrinsic motivation (Fair III & Silvestri, 1992).

The classroom environment should reflect an environment in which there is a community of learners that encourage personal and social responsibility and provide a safe, comfortable, and predictable environment. It is with the expectation that autonomy, mastery, and positive views of learning will emerge through proper use of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and developmentally appropriate strategies

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within a classroom environment (Carlton & Winsler, 1998; Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 1999).

Use of teacher's perspectives

The use of teachers' perspectives, one method used for reporting observed motivation in children, is seen as an effective tool to garner information regarding students' motivation. However, there has been considerable variation among reports, leading researchers who use this method for data collection to be cautious (Givven, Stipek, Salmon, & MacGyvers, 2001). In addition to the inconsistencies across the board in terms of accuracy of reporting students' motivation, teachers' expectations or theories about children can become self-fulfilling prophecies, and this can influence a student's motivation. Furthermore, it is important to note that teachers' expectations and feedback to pupils are related to children's intrinsic motivation. Teachers may encourage children whom they perceive as more capable and motivated, which in turn further produces more intrinsically motivated learning behaviors in children (Gottfried, 1990). Therefore, it is suggested to use a variety of data collection methods when gathering information regarding motivation.

In this study, teachers' perceptions were used to triangulate a definition for motivation in early childhood. Through the use of survey and interviewing techniques, common themes and ideas were identified allowing for a general definition of motivation to be formed that was applicable to the early childhood age group and characterize what is meant by the term motivation.

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Methods

This study uses a mixed methodology incorporating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Being able to integrate quantitative research in which the goal is prediction, control, description, confirmation, and hypothesis testing of a given data set with a qualitative method which focuses on the nature and essence of a phenomenon allows the research to be precise and numerical as well as comprehensive and richly descriptive (Merriam, 1998). Because this study is concerned with educators' beliefs, it is important to have data that answers numerical questions such as what percentage of teachers hold a particular belief. However, it is equally vital to describe and gain understanding of *why* teachers hold these beliefs. Having a methodology that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches allow for both empirical generalizations and more individualized descriptions of the context of individuals' beliefs, which creates a more comprehensive view of teachers' perspectives on student motivation.

Participants

Early childhood educational programs differ in terms of curriculum, approach, and focus. As a teacher, I know that each early childhood center is not the same. Thus, I attempted to sample a large number of teachers to reflect the diversity of classroom environments. However, I also wanted to draw from a common population of children. I employed a method, which according to Merriam (1998), is based on the assumption that I, as the researcher, wanted to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.

My research participants were teachers and assistant teachers employed at Head Start centers across Oʻahu, Hawaii. The Oʻahu Head Start, the Head Start program in

which this study sampled from, serves approximately 1,600 children each year and employs approximately 200 teachers and assistant teachers. Head Start, a federal program created in 1965, was commissioned to serve low-income families as a means to combat poverty and give children who are labeled as environmentally at-risk a head start in education by providing them a free preschool education. Head Start was formed not as a strict educational program; instead it was a comprehensive program that provided a broad array of educational, health, nutrition, social, and psychological services.

The sample for the survey component of this study consisted of 61 volunteers from the population of all teachers and assistant teachers at O'ahu Head Start. Respondents' teaching experience ranged from one to thirty-two years (M= 12.38 years, SD= 8.71 years). The sample was predominately female (95%). By self-report, 10% of the sample had earned only a high school diploma/GED equivalent, 17% reported a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, 48% have received an Associate (two-year) degree, 22% have received a Bachelor (four-year) degree, and 3% have attained a Graduate degree. Of those receiving degrees (not including CDA), 60% have a degree in Early Childhood Education, 4% have a degree in Elementary or Secondary Education, 24% have a degree in Human Services or a related field, and 11% has a degree in other subjects. As a means of comparison, the whole population of O'ahu Head Start teaching staff is predominately female (98%). Six percent has a high school diploma/GED equivalent, 31% has a CDA credential, 28% have received an Associate (two-year) degree, 35% have received a Bachelor (four-year) degree, and 0.02% attained a Graduate degree.

Participants for the focus group component of this study were seven early childhood teaching staff drawn from respondents of the survey who indicated that they were willing to be interviewed. Respondents had from three to twenty-seven years of teaching experience, and were predominately female (six females, one male). Forty-two percent of this group had received an Associate (two-year) degree and 57% have received a Bachelor (four-year) degree. All participants have their degrees in either Early Childhood Education or a Human Services field.

The participants in the focus groups were selected using the following procedure. Twenty-two of the sixty-one survey respondents indicated "yes" to a question indicating their willingness to join a focus group discussion and provided their name and contact information. These respondents were contacted by both phone and e-mail verifying their intent to participate in an interview with the researcher. Respondents were given the option to decline. Respondents who were still interested in the interview process were given a variety of dates to choose from that accommodated the schedule of the participant, availability of the interview location, and the researcher.

All respondents were told that it would be a group setting with the researcher and other teaching staff, and that the session would be audio recorded. Focus groups were conducted in person and did not exceed one-hour in length. Focus groups consisted of three to four participants with the researcher. All participants were given the guided questions via e-mail one week before the scheduled interview day. All interviews were audio recorded and the researcher took notes to validate phrases and ideas. Eight respondents were willing to take part in focus group interviews. Seven of the eight (88%) participants attended the focus group sessions and were interviewed.

Measures

The Defining Motivation in Early Childhood survey

The Defining Motivation in Early Childhood (DMEC) survey consisted of thirty-nine items which reflected three different facets of motivation: (a) defining motivation, (b) indicators of motivation, and (c) teacher's methods to encourage motivation. Each item was included in the survey because it was shown to be a factor in the motivation process based on prior research (Carlton & Winsler, 1998; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Jambunathan et al., 1999; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Pratt et al., 1988; Tudge et al., 2003; Wigfield, 1994). Research was done in the area of defining motivation and promoting motivation in the classroom setting and the results were combined as items in the survey. Items were constructed to represent a range of how motivation can be defined. Participants rated each item on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The DMEC also included a list of seven items regarding sources of motivation, based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model. For the study, participants rated these influences of motivation on a seven-point scale, ranging from 1 (most important influence) to 7 (least important influence). Two open-ended questions were included in which respondents were asked to define motivation and describe a motivated child in their own words. Space was also provided for respondents to comment on issues not covered by the survey. Finally, four items addressed demographic information: formal education, degree, gender, and years of teaching experience. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they would be willing to be contacted for an interview.

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Focus group interviews

The focus groups were a semi-structured interview process in which the researcher and three to four participants met to discuss children's motivation. The purpose of the focus group was to gain more insight on results from the survey. The focus group questions were designed after the findings of the survey were collected and analyzed to match with the data analysis of the survey items as a means to see if the analysis of the survey was justified and could be clarified by examples and insight and explanations from teachers. Interview questions focused on four areas of motivation: (a) defining motivation, (b) exploring the origin of motivation, (c) indicators of child motivation within the classroom environment, and (d) promoting motivation.

Open-ended questions for each section were asked for initial responses and paralleled the structure of the DMEC survey (e.g., "How do you define motivation?" "How do you think motivation develops?" "How do you know a child is interested or motivated within the classroom environment?" "How do you try to motivate your students?") Further probes were asked after each general question as a way to gain validation of survey findings through having the teachers agree or disagree with the factor and provide examples from their experiences. Questions in the first section (defining motivation) included defining motivation in terms of personal interest, mastery, predetermined, and/or external means. Questions in the second section (origin of motivation) touched on issues of how motivation develops and who are the most important influences of motivation. Questions in the third section (motivation within the classroom environment) included questions about describing what a motivated and interested child looks like and determining whether motivation is shown through a high

degree of self-directed learning or if motivation is shown through engrossment on a task. Questions in the last section (enhancing motivation) included how teachers motivate a child, whether motivation is included in the curriculum, and use of scaffolding strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and external motivation.

Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the Director of Oʻahu Head Start, as well as cluster managers, to conduct the research within the Head Start organization. In the winter term of the school year, all 214 teaching staff (assistant teachers and lead teachers in every Head Start center) was given the DMEC via managers at a staff training meeting. Managers were briefed on the purpose of the study and given instructions regarding distributing the surveys to teaching staff. Attached to the DMEC, that was distributed to each teaching staff, was a cover sheet explaining the purpose of the research and survey, a consent form, and an addressed stamped envelope to the researcher for respondents to send their completed survey to the researcher within a three week time period. Researcher contacted respondents via e-mail, phone calls, and reminder letters to return the completed DMEC by the end of the three week period.

Completed surveys were returned by thirty teachers (14% of the teaching staff). Due to the relatively low response rate, follow-up distribution of 214 surveys was conducted via training meetings. (Six training meetings are held simultaneously around the island with a manager leading her cluster's meeting.) During each meeting, the cluster managers were asked to provide time during the training meeting for respondents to complete the survey and return it to the manager at the end of the training session (to avoid surveys from being lost or forgotten). The completed surveys were picked up from

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the managers at the end of the day by the researcher. Thirty-one or 14.5% of the second set of surveys were completed. In total, 61 or 28.5% of the surveys were completed and returned by the Head Start teaching staff.

For the qualitative portion of the study, two focus group interviews took place in a classroom setting during non-instruction days. The researcher reviewed the purpose of the study, as well as how their participation in the interview will contribute to the research. The questions were presented in an open-ended format with the researcher asking the group a general open-ended question (e.g., How do you define motivation?) and giving the group ample time to respond to the question. Respondents were encouraged to discuss among one another their opinions, give examples, ask for clarification, and reply to the other individual's comments. Probes (in the form of the findings from the survey) were asked in a similar open-ended format to the group, allowing the respondents time to give their opinion and present examples of students who either illustrate and highlight their beliefs or disprove the finding of the survey.

Following each focus group, transcripts were created from the audio tapes. The researcher created transcript notes of the ideas that were expressed during each focus group for each question.

Data Entry

Individual data points were coded for each item in the DMEC and were entered into a SPSS data file. All data was double-checked and validated by a second party.

Results

Analysis of Defining Motivation in Early Childhood Survey

Descriptive statistics

To determine that the data had a reasonable amount of variation across responses, frequency tables were compiled to verify that there was adequate distribution of responses for each item. Tables 1 - 4 show the findings of a descriptive statistical analysis of each item of the Defining Motivation in Early Childhood (DMEC) survey.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of DMEC section 1

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Section 1: Characteristics of a highly motivated child			
1d Child is curious	4.47	0.54	60
1c Child enjoys task	4.37	0.71	60
1g Child shows initiative by choosing task without help from peers or adults	4.23	0.64	61
1h Child sticks with the task even when encountering difficulties; perseverance	4.18	0.85	61
1b Child has a desire for competence or task/subject mastery	4.05	0.79	60
1f Child is highly engaged and focused	4.02	0.85	60
1k Motivation is developed through experience (e.g., child learns and enjoys activity because of repeated exposure to it)	3.90	0.90	59
1a Child attains high level of achievement or skill	3.89	0.91	61
1e Child is goal-oriented	3.85	0.82	60
1m Motivation is task-specific	3.00	1.12	60
1i Child will do task or activity because he/she expects a reward	2.72	1.13	61
1l Motivation is something a child is born with	2.26	1.00	61
1j Motivation is determined by gender of the child	2.02	1.00	60
Valid N (listwise)			54

Note. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of DMEC section 2

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Section 2: Indicators (words, behaviors, and actions) that provide cues that a child is motivated			
2f Child is eager to try something new	4.38	0.61	61
2k Child uses positive nonverbal cues (e.g., shows enjoyment through smiling, wide eyes)	4.26	0.63	61
2l Child uses positive verbalizations ("I did it")	4.25	0.75	61
2d Child exhibits learned experience through verbalizations or play	4.16	0.71	61
2a Child asks many questions about activity or topic	4.13	0.67	61
2h Child shows autonomy and independence	4.08	0.76	61
2i Child shows or teaches peers how to do task or activity	4.07	0.81	61
2j Child spends a lot of time with task or activity	4.05	0.74	61
2g Child shows a high degree of concentration	4.03	0.73	61
2c Child completes task or activity	3.95	0.74	61
2b Child chooses task or activity	3.87	0.72	61
2e Child follows rules and expectations	3.67	0.83	61
Valid N (listwise)			61

Note. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of DMEC section 3

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Section 3: Methods that teachers use to encourage motivation in their students			
3k Offer hands-on learning for a comprehensive learning experience	4.57	0.56	61
3a Allow student to choose task or activity	4.57	0.56	61
3c Give encouragement	4.57	0.62	61
3i Modify an activity to match a child's level of skill	4.54	0.53	61
3b Ask open-ended questions	4.53	0.65	60
3j Modify an activity to match a child's personal interest	4.39	0.69	61
3e Give praise	4.36	0.71	61
3h Model interest in a task or activity	4.22	0.74	60
3g Model how to do the task or activity	4.21	0.84	61
3n Use materials that are familiar to a child's culture and family	4.18	0.76	61
3l Provide a challenging curriculum	4.03	0.86	61
3f Make a difficult or boring task into a game	3.97	0.87	61
3m Teach themes based on characters that are popular for preschool aged children	3.87	1.02	61
3d Give incentives	3.37	1.12	60
Valid N (listwise)			59

Note. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

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Table 4. Descriptive statistics of DMEC section 4

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Section 4: Influences on a child's motivation			
4c Media	5.73	1.65	60
4b Extended family	5.03	1.67	60
4e Peers	4.48	1.58	60
4f Teachers	3.87	1.43	60
4g Sibling(s)	3.55	1.43	60
4a Child	3.10	2.13	59
4d Parents	1.85	1.41	60
Valid N (listwise)			59

Note. Scale from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important)

For section four (influences on a child's motivation) of the DMEC, a descriptive

analysis was performed (see Table 4) and it was found that most teachers placed parents

as the most influential people for a child's motivation (M=1.85, SD=1.41). The child,

siblings, and teachers followed as the next influential people to a child's motivation.

Peers, extended family, and media were listed next as influencing motivation.

Factor analysis

A maximum-likelihood factor analysis with a varimax with Kaiser normalization

rotation was conducted for the purpose of reducing items into smaller, meaningful

subsets (Norusis & SPSS Inc., 1990). The use of a factor analysis helps identify the

underlying, not directly observable constructs. A good factor analysis solution represents

a relationship among sets of variables and helps explain observed correlations using as

few factors as possible. The use of the maximum-likelihood method produces parameter

estimates that are the most likely to have produced the observed correlation matrix if the

sample is from a multivariate normal distribution. A goodness-of-fit statistic is also

given to test the adequacy of the obtained factor solution. As a means of verifying a good

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solution fit, two guidelines were used for each factor solution. Each solution either showed a non-significant goodness-of-fit at the .01 significance level and/or had a ratio of the chi-square variable to the degrees of freedom below 2. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was performed in order to verify that there are enough items in each factor. Higher values indicate that the use of a factor analysis is a good idea. The varimax method for orthogonal rotation attempts to minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on a factor, which results in more easily interpretable factors. Separate factor analyses were conducted for sections 1-3 of the DMEC.

The analysis for the first section of the DMEC yielded a three-factor solution and provided an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2_{(42)} = 47.31$, p = .265, ratio = 1.13. Results are shown in Table 5. *Engagement*, loaded highly on items related to children enjoying the task, persevering, choosing their own activity, being curious, and repeating the activity. *Mastery*, loaded highly on items related to mastering an experience and becoming an expert at the task. Items included desire for competence or task/subject mastery, attaining a high level of achievement, child being highly focused, and goal-oriented. *Predetermined or externally driven entity*, loaded most highly on items related to motivation, being: task-specific, based on gender, something a child is born with, and children expecting rewards.

Table 5. DMEC section 1 - Factor analysis for characteristics of motivated children

	Factor		
	1	2	3
	Engagement	Mastering an experience	Predetermined/ Externally driven entity
1c Child enjoys task	.870	.268	.009
1h Child sticks with the task even when encountering difficulties; perseverance	.689	.383	-.009
1g Child shows initiative by choosing own task	.641	.372	-.076
1d Child is curious	.608	.140	-.173
1k Motivation is developed through experience (e.g., child learns and enjoys activity because of repeated exposure)	.441	-.083	.257
1b Child has desire for competence or task mastery	.163	.891	.052
1a Child attains high level of achievement or skill	.110	.794	.079
1f Child is highly engaged and focused	.408	.588	.173
1e Child is goal oriented	.414	.574	.261
1m Motivation is task specific	.314	-.119	.762
1j Motivation is determined by gender of the child	-.221	.064	.615
1l Motivation is something a child is born with	.071	.146	.592
1i Child will do task or activity because he/she expects a reward	-.096	.173	.590

Note. Percentage of total variance explained by each factor: Factor 1: 21.121%, Factor 2: 19.623%, Factor 3: 14.357%, Sum: 55.10%
KMO = .724

The analysis for the second section of the DMEC yielded a two-factor solution. The fit of the solution was acceptable, but not optimal, $\chi^2_{(43)}$ = 63.53, p = .022, ratio =1.48 (Heck, 2005). Results are shown in Table 6. *Self-directed learning* loaded highly on items related to a child showing initiative and being a self-directed learner. Items included the child completing a task, trying new things, being autonomous, following

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rules, choosing a challenging activity, asking questions, teaching peers, and verbalizing

about their experience. *Engrossment*, loaded most highly on items related to a child

showing enjoyment while participating in a task or activity, particularly spending time

being involved with the task (i.e., positive nonverbal and verbal cues, spending a lot of

time with the task, and showing a high degree of concentration).

Table 6. DMEC section 2 – Factor analysis for indicators of a motivated child

	Factor	
	1	2
	Self-directed learning	Engrossment
2c Child completes task	.800	.252
2f Child is eager to try something new	.757	.300
2h Child shows autonomy and independence	.691	.358
2e Child follows rules and expectations	.597	.138
2b Child chooses a challenging activity	.532	.345
2a Child asks many questions about activity or topic	.508	.489
2i Child shows or teaches peers how to do task	.477	.467
2d Child exhibits learned experience through verbalizations or play	.459	.383
2k Child uses positive nonverbal cues	.187	.910
2j Child spends a lot of time with task or activity	.338	.767
2l Child uses positive verbalizations	.310	.725
2g Child shows a high degree of concentration	.534	.563

Note. Percentage of total variance explained by each factor: Factor 1: 29.627%, Factor 2: 27.356%,
Sum: 56.98%
KMO=.869

The analysis for the third section of the DMEC, what teachers do to promote motivation, yielded a three-factor solution. These solutions provided a less than optimal fit to the data, $\chi^2_{(42)}= 70.45$, $p = .004$, ratio = 1.68. Note that item "Modify an activity to match a child's level of skill" was eliminated from the factor analysis because of a warning from SPSS regarding high loadings. Results are shown in Table 7. *Scaffolding*, has high loadings on items related to strategies in which a knowledgeable other supports the child's learning through interventions that can increase motivation. Items included a teacher modifying an activity to match a child's personal interest, modeling interest in the activity, using familiar materials, offering hands-on learning for a comprehensive learning experience, and making a difficult or boring task into a game. *Developmentally appropriate practices*, loaded most highly on items related to ways that a teacher encourages choice and expressive thinking within the classroom environment (i.e., allowing the student to choose a task or activity and asking open-ended questions). *External motivation*, loaded highly on items related to the use of either praise or material rewards to increase a child's motivation for a task or activity. Items included giving incentives, teaching themes based on characters that are popular for preschool aged children, providing a challenging curriculum, giving praise, and giving encouragement.

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Table 7. DMEC section 3 – Factor analysis for how teachers promote motivation

	Factor		
	1	2	3
	Scaffolding	DAP	External motivation
3j Modify an activity to match to a child's personal interest	.761	.391	.181
3h Model interest in a task or activity	.720	.272	.175
3n Use materials that are familiar to child's culture and family	.713	.142	.053
3g Model how to do the task or activity	.636	.103	.314
3k Offer hands-on learning for a comprehensive learning experience	.597	.423	.041
3f Make a difficult or boring task into a game	.383	.182	.241
3a Allow student to choose task or activity	.264	.785	.131
3b Ask open-ended questions	.429	.785	.075
3d Give incentives	-.005	-.035	.700
3m Teach themes based on characters that are popular for preschool aged children	.232	.006	.536
3l Provide a challenging curriculum	.165	.433	.481
3e Give praise	.114	.255	.462
3c Give encouragement	.330	.330	.447

Note. Percentage of total variance explained by each factor: Factor 1: 22.847%, Factor 2: 15.875%, Factor 3: 12.847%, Sum: 51.57%
KMO=.749
Eliminated item 3i – "Modify an activity to match a child's level of skill" due to high loadings and solution warning.

In each section, there were secondary loadings to some items. These items had loadings on both (and in some cases all) factors, with primary loadings being the factor that had a higher factor score. Note that the boxes with darker shading represent primary loadings and boxes with light shading represent secondary loadings. In particular, the item "Give encouragement" in section three had loadings in every factor. Section two also had loadings in both categories for the following items: "Eager to try something new," "Shows autonomy and independence," "Choosing a challenging activity," "Asks

many questions about activity or topic," "Shows or teaches peers how to do task or activity," and "Exhibits learned experiences through verbalizations or play."

Correlations

A Pearson correlation analysis was performed using the factor scores computed by SPSS for each section to see if there are any associations among the factors. Seven significant positive correlations were observed (see Table 8). The correlation between engagement and scaffolding suggested that teachers for whom engagement is an important defining feature of motivation report using more scaffolding strategies in their classroom ($r = .62, p < .01$). The correlation between engagement and self-directed learning indicates that teachers who describe children's motivation as engagement also see self-directed learning as an indicator of motivation ($r = .62, p < .01$). There was a correlation between mastery and self-directed learning. This suggested that teachers who define motivation as mastery also say that self-directed learning behaviors is an indicator of motivation ($r = .35, p < .05$). The correlation between predetermined/externally driven entity and external motivation suggested that teachers who define motivation as being predetermined and driven by external rewards use external rewards to encourage motivation in their classroom ($r = .34, p < .05$). The correlation between self-directed learning and scaffolding suggested that teachers who believe that self-directed learning behavior is an indicator of a child's motivation use more scaffolding strategies in their classroom ($r = .54, p < .01$). The correlation between engrossment and scaffolding suggested that teachers that see engrossment as an indicator of motivation use more scaffolding strategies in their classroom ($r = .27, p < .05$). Lastly, the correlation between engrossment and developmentally appropriate practices suggested that teachers

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that see engrossment as an indicator of motivation use more developmentally appropriate

practices in their classroom ($r = .29, p < .05$).

Table 8. Correlations among factor scores (** correlation significant at .01 level, * correlation significant at .05 level)

		Scaffolding	DAP	External motivation	Self-directed learning	Engrossment	Engagement	Mastery	Pre-determined
Scaffolding	Pearson correlation	1	0.148	0.085	0.536(**)	0.271(*)	0.620(**)	0.225	-0.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.264	0.520	0	0.038	0	0.105	0.418
DAP	Pearson correlation	0.148	1	0.041	0.164	0.292(*)	0.182	0.108	-0.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.264		0.759	0.213	0.025	0.192	0.442	0.991
External motivation	Pearson correlation	0.085	0.041	1	0.206	0.029	0.009	0.163	0.342(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.520	0.759		0.118	0.825	0.947	0.243	0.012
Self-directed learning	Pearson correlation	0.536(**)	0.164	0.206	1	0.099	0.622(**)	0.347(*)	0.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.213	0.118		0.449	0	0.01	0.958
Engrossment	Pearson correlation	0.271(*)	0.292(*)	0.029	0.099	1	0.204	0.241	-0.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.038	0.025	0.825	0.449		0.140	0.080	0.701
Engagement	Pearson correlation	0.620(**)	0.182	0.009	0.622(**)	0.204	1	0.068	0.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.192	0.947	0	0.140		0.624	0.920
Mastery	Pearson correlation	0.225	0.108	0.163	0.347(*)	0.241	0.068	1	0.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.105	0.442	0.243	0.01	0.080	0.624		0.907
Predetermined	Pearson correlation	-0.114	-0.002	0.342(*)	0.007	-0.053	0.014	0.016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.418	0.991	0.012	0.958	0.701	0.920	0.907	

A correlation analysis was also performed using the factor scores for each section and some demographic information. There was one significant correlation and one marginally significant correlation found (see Table 9). There was a correlation between predetermined and years of experience. This correlation ($r = -0.25$, $p = .08$) indicated that teachers with more years of experience in teaching are less likely to believe that motivation is a predetermined or externally driven entity (e.g., something a child is born with, determined by gender, task-specific, and/or driven by rewards). In addition, there was a significant correlation between self-directed learning and education level. This correlation suggested that teachers with higher degrees are more likely to see self-directed learning (e.g., child will complete task, try new things, ask questions, and/or teach peers) as an indicator of motivation. In general, it seemed as if education level and years of experience have little association with how a teacher defined or promoted motivation in the classroom. Based on the data, it was unclear where these teachers attribute their beliefs about students' motivation.

Table 9. Factor scores and demographic information

		Education level	Years of experience
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	0.07	0.17
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.61	0.25
Mastery	Pearson Correlation	0.18	0.05
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.21	0.75
Predetermined	Pearson Correlation	-0.11	-0.25
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.43	0.08
Self-directed learning	Pearson Correlation	0.25	0.19
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.05	0.17
Engrossment	Pearson Correlation	0.15	-0.1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.25	0.45
Scaffolding	Pearson Correlation	0.13	0.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.34	0.75
DAP	Pearson Correlation	0.11	0.16
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.41	0.25
External motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.08	-0.1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.55	0.47

Analysis of Focus Groups

Results for focus groups were organized among the main questions that were asked.

Defining motivation

Teachers were initially asked how they define motivation in young children. Teachers concurred with the definitions provided in the open-ended section of the DMEC survey, saying that motivation is the drive that makes a child accomplish a task and learn more. For defining motivation in terms of a child's enjoyment or excitement about, or personal interest in a task or activity, all the teachers agreed that when children are interested in a topic or activity (as shown through facial expressions, extended time spent

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on a task, and asking questions), the children were more apt to do the activity and talk about it. One teacher (94) said,

> If the activity is something that the child enjoys (for example, painting), he won't rush through the activity because it's something that he's interested in. I think that if he enjoys the activity, he'll work at it for a longer period of time.

Most teachers disagreed with the notion that motivation is predetermined, something a child is born with. Teachers felt that children need to be exposed to and given a variety of opportunities to learn and determine their desires and interests to see how to motivate themselves. One respondent (212) stated, "I think that children need to be exposed to determine their desires. How can a person know what they want and don't want without having some idea of what it is?" Teachers seemed to agree that motivation is something that you gain, or acquire with help. The help comes from people who are close to the child (parents, family, and teachers). However, some teachers said that traits such as drive, perseverance, and determination may be in the genes. One teacher (146) stated, "She clearly has her dad's drive, perseverance, and determination."

However, some teachers agreed that a behavior indicative of motivation is when children show a strong desire to master a new skill and become an expert in a particular area. Children who show motivation through mastery want to do more, know more, and do the activity over and over again. One teacher (69) stated, "someone who is highly motivated tends to grow in that [one] area, and they just accept the challenge because they know this, and they want to know more." The teachers differed as to the origin of the child's believed desire. Some teachers say that it is inborn (it is a strength or talent

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that the child already has); however others said that it comes from parents and/or grandparents providing opportunities for the child to explore and try new things.

There was a consensus that motivation is tied to external rewards. Some teachers used stickers or stamps to motivate good behavior and felt that their students responded to this and repeated the desired behavior because they wanted the external reward. Other teachers did not use tangible rewards but relied on praise as an external reward. They believed that their students responded to praise and became more motivated to repeat desirable behaviors to receive the praise. One teacher (212) said, "When he was able to count to 10, he received a lot of praise and a lot of attention from me that is why the next day he wanted to work with me again."

However, teachers felt that children are not only affected by external rewards; they will complete activities for intrinsic reasons (curiosity, internal gratification, etc.) "Even if nothing is given or said and an activity was to be placed on the table with no prior hint to what they needed to do, some children would do the activity and figure out what to do" (94).

Indicators of motivation

All of the teachers readily agreed that it was easy to pinpoint those students in their classrooms whom they believed to be highly motivated learners. Teachers said that they look for both verbal and nonverbal cues of children's interest in a particular activity. Teachers mentioned nonverbal cues such as smiling, eye contact with the teacher, a child choosing an activity on his own, sitting through the activity without being easily distracted, sticking to the activity, and going back to the activity as cues that suggest that

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the child is interested. Verbal cues such as saying, "I want to do it", "I want to go first, "Me," and asking all kinds of questions demonstrate to the teachers that the child is interested in the topic. One teacher (146) said,

> If the child chooses an activity on his own, and sticks to it, and goes back to it, I know he's motivated and interested. If he's smiling during the process or focusing completely, maybe the child wants to share it with a friend, maybe a child shows interest with some teacher-directed activity, [it shows me he's interested]. He'll be smiling, focusing, and asking questions.

Teachers agreed that a child who demonstrated a self-directed learning style is highly motivated. Teachers discussed several signs including children working on a task for a long period of time, sharing an experience with a peer, and not needing to direct the child through an activity are indications that a child is motivated. One teacher noted that these signs of motivation are similar in both children and adults.

Teachers mentioned that extended amounts of time spent on an activity and repeat experiences are indicators of a young child's motivation. Young children have shorter attention spans than adults and focus mainly on tasks and activities that either interest, challenge, or are novel to them. Thus, when a child spends a long time on an activity and wants to repeat the activity many times, teachers see this as a sign of motivation. . Teachers mentioned that motivation is characterized by a child being engrossed in an activity, taking time to put details in their work, working on an activity for long periods of time, and returning to an activity to finish their work. One teacher (139) described a child in her class who exhibited this type of behavior.

[She] kept coming…She would stand by the table and point to the kids…She wanted to do it again…and she smiled…That's when I knew that they wanted to do it again and again because they were so excited and happy about spending a lot of time doing a fun activity.

Promoting motivation in the classroom environment

Teachers mentioned using verbalizations such as praise, questions, and feedback to show the child that they approve or like what the child is doing. In addition, teachers incorporate materials that are familiar to their students as a means to capture a student's interest. Equally important was that teachers use a wide variety of activities to make things new and challenging. One teacher (158) described her efforts of promoting motivation in her classroom, in which she relies on familiar materials and experienced teaching tactics as a means to get her students motivated to do an activity. "I use real and natural materials. I ask open-ended questions, guide the child to see the many facets of a task, give real experiences. I try to notice what they are doing and comment on what they are doing."

Surprisingly, for most of the teachers, children's motivation was not a priority when planning the curriculum. Most had either a set curriculum that they had to follow or general ideas of what lessons and themes that they implement in the classroom. Their main concerns when planning curriculum was promoting kindergarten readiness and presenting a challenging curriculum that met the needs (learning styles) of their students. One teacher (212) stated,

We stick to a curriculum that we need to cover or should cover that would help target our goal (of getting our kids ready for kindergarten). Then we would provide activities that children enjoy doing.

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However, teachers felt it was important to provide activities that interest the children. One teacher (94) said, "If the activity is boring to the child, he won't learn because of the negative feeling he has toward the activity. So when planning, I always think of how the activity will work with the children."

More important to the teachers was that the children show interest in the tasks or activities that they plan. Because of this, teachers used materials within their lessons that have popular themes (such as *Pokemon*), adapt games to convey a lesson, and use lessons that the children are interested in to promote children's motivation in the classroom. Teachers mentioned that it is important to make the activities fun and enjoyable for the children; by this they meant that the activities are interactive and are guided by the children's interest and knowledge. In addition, it was also important to know how to guide the children's learning in such a way that allows for the child's ideas to be represented. "Modeling how to do an activity should be minimized. I think it is much more meaningful to guide a child with questions that honor their ideas" (158).

Teachers defined developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) as providing activities that (a) are at the child's level of learning, (b) challenging to the child, and (c) based on a whole-child approach. Utilizing developmentally appropriate practices is a way to allow the children to interact with the various activities and with their peers, and allowing teachers to have a realistic expectation and guideline of what children should and can accomplish. Though the teachers did not explicitly say that they believe using DAP strategies increases motivation or why they use DAP (because they were trained to or believe that it is the right thing to do), they see its worth. One teacher (69) discussed

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the importance of implementing developmentally appropriate practices into the classroom environment.

> It is doing activities with the children that are appropriate in a way that you know what to expect from a child and going down to their level and yet providing them some challenging tasks but not going to be overwhelming and over their heads. It (what you are teaching the child) has to be concrete that they can understand and in their language and it's based on the whole child.

In addition to the use of DAP, teachers felt that appealing to a child's self-esteem helped their students. Teachers felt that praise helps their students because it increases a child's self-esteem, increasing the likelihood that the child will do that activity and/or behavior again. Teachers saw the use of external motivation as positive because children respond well to the extra attention and the stamps and stickers. One teacher (212) said, "It feels good when someone notices you and receiving something for it even feels a lot better." However, teachers cautioned that the use of external rewards without also instilling intrinsic motivation does not help the child in the end.

> In some ways it will help the child's motivation level, but then the child will be looking for these rewards all the time and it can be a crutch for a child. In that, he won't be motivated unless he gets a reward (94).

Influences of motivation

All of the teachers agreed that a child's motivation is influenced by the child's surroundings. Teachers said that parents and teachers serve the important functions of modeling and encouraging motivation within young children. Interestingly, other influences such as media and peers which are deemed vital influences on the motivation of older children and young adults were not mentioned, and were seemingly not on the minds of these teachers as important influences for young children. One teacher stated,

I feel that the environment that the child lives has a lot to do with motivation. If it is a positive environment where you are given the space to try new things and to learn, I feel that the child will be more willing to try new things and be more motivated to do things. If you are patient and encouraging, the child will be motivated and try harder (94).

Teachers strongly agreed that the most important influence on a child's motivation is the parents or primary caregivers. Parents are there with the child and create a positive and safe environment for the child to develop. Teachers mentioned that there is a bond of trust between the child and the parent, and the parents' values and practices are translated and passed down to the child. There was agreement that "parents and teachers (are important influences on a child's motivation) because they're there with the child. They support the child just by being there," (140).

Although teachers believed that parents were the primary influence of a child's motivation they also believe that both parents and teachers have influence on a child's motivation. It seems as though anyone who is close to a child can promote motivation by encouraging the child, creating opportunities for him/her to explore and learn, and creating a positive environment for the child to be naturally curious and explore their surroundings.

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Discussion

Results of this study revealed a number of interesting findings. Not surprisingly, although motivation is hard to define, there was a general feeling that motivation is an important component of teaching young children. There was disagreement about motivation being predetermined, a priority for curriculum planning, and promoted by external rewards. However, there was agreement about motivation being defined based on a child's interests, shown through verbal and nonverbal words and behaviors, influenced by parents, and promoted by teachers through scaffolding and developmentally appropriate strategies. Most teachers indicated that motivation incorporates various behaviors and can be interpreted in many ways.

In terms of the research questions of this study, the following was found.

- How do early childhood educators define motivation? Are there commonalities and themes that guide their definition? What are the specific traits that teachers use to define motivation?

A major finding was that in early childhood, interest is a crucial part of motivation. Most of the teachers in this study supported the idea that a child's interest in an activity and/or task is a key indicator of motivation. Interest was a repeated idea in the factor analysis findings (factors such as engagement, mastering an experience, and engrossment all include items that reflect a child's enjoyment of a task). Findings in the focus group examples also identified interest as an indicator of motivation. This idea of interest as a key component of motivation in early childhood, is similar to the findings of prior research (Wigfield, 1994). Research indicates that individuals in higher grade levels

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(junior high and high school) suggest that the utility value of a task/activity is a basis for motivation as opposed to the fun or enjoyment of the task/activity (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Eccles et al., 1993; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). For young children, a child's level of interest (shown through traits such as child enjoying a task, perseverance, curiosity, positive verbal and nonverbal cues, and spending much time on a task) influences motivation.

- How does motivation develop? What are the important influences on motivation?

Overall, teachers do not believe that motivation is an inborn quality. Contrary to the tenets of drive theory (which assumes that motivation is genetic), teachers felt that motivation is something that is influenced and encouraged by the individuals who are closest to a child (parents, caregivers, extended family, and teachers). It is from these people that motivation for a task/activity grows and is encouraged. However, teachers seem to align themselves with the expectancy-value achievement theory, which takes into account expectancies of performance and success, and subjective values in the form of a child's interest. The findings suggest that young children choose activities based on perceived competence beliefs that lead to greater interest in the task at hand. Seemingly, these beliefs influence one another in reciprocal fashion (competence beliefs influence children's interest in the task and greater interest could lead to higher competence beliefs, and so on) (Wigfield, 1994).

Surprisingly, these teachers do not seem to sufficiently appreciate the power they have to influence motivation in a young child. According to the Defining Motivation in Early Childhood (DMEC) survey, teachers strongly indicated that parents are the most

important influence on a young child's motivation. Although teachers indicated that they are a secondary influence (in the focus group interviews, and a fourth influence in the DMEC), the gap between parents and educators was noticeable. During the focus group sessions, teachers stressed the impact that parents, caregivers, and family have on a young child and seemingly, as an afterthought; they mentioned themselves as having an influence.

- What activities and behaviors do early childhood educators use in their classroom to promote motivation in their students?

Teachers seemed to have eclectic views regarding how to promote motivation. Factors from the factor analysis revealed that teachers use scaffolding, developmentally appropriate practices, and external rewards in which all factors contained features of Bandura's social learning theory (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) such as: modeling, encouragement, and/or open-ended questioning. However, teachers seemed conflicted regarding using external motivation and did not elaborate on what constitutes developmentally appropriate practices in a classroom setting.

From the findings, it was most surprising that teachers rated themselves lower than parents, the child, and sibling(s) as an influence to a child's motivation given the fact that teachers spend a significant amount of time with their students. According to research, both family and teachers are among the most important influences of a child. "The family into which a child is born is the child's first reference group, the first group whose values, norms, and practices refers to in evaluating one's behavior" (Berns, 2001). However, some experts have argued that when children and youths are not connected

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with adults or communities who are concerned about their well-being, then schools must serve as the primary socializing influence in children's lives (Meece, 2002). This finding leads one to question how accurate was this conclusion and leads to other inquiries. Were teachers simply being modest or do they really underestimate their influence? Are teachers not in touch with their beliefs or the important role that they play? Are there other contextual influences that may constrain the teachers (reflection of the company they work for, population of children and families they serve, or unrealistic expectations to perform well from others)?

The findings suggest the need for additional research that focuses on teacher's beliefs. An individual's belief system has implications in what he/she practices. Whether it is beliefs regarding how a child learns, who impacts a child's learning, and if he/she can make a difference in a child's learning, these beliefs (conscious or not) comes out in a teacher's practice. Teachers should believe that they can and do make an impact in a child's life and are a significant influence on a child's motivation. However, this study revealed that teachers do not rate themselves as the primary influence of a child's motivation. This finding may suggest that preschool teachers feel less empowered to impact learning as much as other individuals in a child's life. Research exploring comparisons of early childhood teachers' beliefs with upper level teachers' beliefs regarding why they entered the field and how much of an impact they believe they can make in a child's learning may reveal findings that may collaborate this idea. Furthermore, it would be of value to study early childhood educators' views of locus of control (a concept that refers to generalized control over outcomes – external control

refers to individuals believing that outcomes occur independently of how they act and internal control refers to outcomes that are highly contingent on their actions) (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Do early childhood teachers exhibit high internal locus of control in relation to their students' learning? (Do they believe that their students' learning is under their control to some extent and that their skill and effort can make a difference for students? Or do they believe that there is little they can do to influence students' learning, that external factors such as parental and home environment are the major determinants of student learning?)

This study, though focused primarily on how educators define young children's motivation, also indirectly asked whether teachers think about motivation during their course of work. Teachers indicated that they do consider whether their students will be interested in a task or activity when planning for a topic. However, when they were asked directly if they think about motivation when planning their curriculum, the collective response was no. Although it seems that teachers have a curriculum that they follow, they also have the freedom to choose the activities that they believe will be best for their students. Teachers said it is important that their students be engaged and excited about classroom activities, which is a part of motivation (as seen through a child's interest being a key component of motivation). However teachers did not associate these traits with motivation.

It seems as if motivation is a vague concept to teachers. In general, teachers had a hard time articulating what motivation meant to them and why it is an important concept. In many ways, it is a general topic that they see as something that is good for their

students to have, but it is not a priority for them to encourage. In retrospect, rewording focus group questions by eliminating the term motivation and replacing it with a more familiar term such as "interest in learning" may have helped teachers understand the idea and thus express their feelings toward a child's motivation. It seems highly likely that teachers would be more familiar with the term "interest in learning" and share their experiences and beliefs with less hesitation.

However, if teachers are unfamiliar with the term motivation, one wonders whether there is enough attention given to this issue. Perhaps early childhood education teacher preparatory programs should incorporate coursework to highlight the topic of motivation. In general, little emphasis is given to motivation in these programs, so it should not be surprising that this issue is foreign to teachers. It seems that in this time of emphasis of school readiness, concern over schools that are not meeting expectations, and a push-down system of getting children prepared for school at an earlier age, motivation should not be overlooked. Perhaps by having teachers understand how vital motivation is to a young child's learning, the link to achievement, and their important role of encouraging and promoting it, young children can enter school and continue into their school years excited to learn for the sake of learning.

Limitations and caveats need to be noted. First, the sample size was small and not a good representation of the larger population of preschool teachers. This may limit the generalization of the findings. If the study were to be replicated, a larger sample size would be used. It would be of interest to replicate the study with a larger representation of Head Start teachers and to also repeat the study using a representative population of all

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early childhood education and care providers in an area (not limited to Head Start educators) and examine if the findings change. With the current study, the findings can only be generalized to educators with higher degrees who work with a population similar to Head Start. With a bigger and more representative sample, findings can be generalized across the field.

Moreover, though both survey and interview were used as data collection methods, there was no additional source employed to verify if the perceptions of the educators are accurate. This study relied on self-report strategies. However, if an observation component were added, teachers' stated beliefs could be compared to their practices in the classroom. By incorporating observation with the survey and interview, a more accurate triangulation of data could be acquired. Also, because the study was reliant on self-report methods, participants may not have gone into detail about classroom practices. To encourage honest responses, participants were told that their names would be not be used in the study; however participants may have offered to discuss only what they considered socially acceptable.

Lastly, the focus groups could be better structured to obtain more in-depth responses. In addition, there was a sense of hesitancy in the participants in spontaneously revealing their opinions and examples. Perhaps through establishing more rapport between the participants, an atmosphere that encourages sharing will form. The responses that were analyzed in this study were adequate and served to clarify the survey findings; however the responses did not clarify why the individual believes the things that he/she does. In particular, educators responded that they agree that motivation is based

on enjoyment and try to structure activities in a way that elicits the child's interest. However, it is unclear why they believe this. It is left open to discussion whether educators see motivation as enjoyment and interest, and structure activities based on these constructs because they believe that all activities for young children should be fun because children should play all day? Or do the teachers believe that they are teaching young children to enjoy an activity for the intrinsic and educational purposes? Or is it something in between? Because educators were not probed in a way that uncovers the origin of teachers' beliefs and how it relates to their perspective of a child's motivation, it is unknown why the educators responded in the way that they did.

Reflection

This study is valuable in that it provides a foundation for study of motivation in the field of early childhood. With motivation being such a broad concept, having a guideline of a definition of motivation is useful.

As an immediate consequence of this study, I will use it to examine my personal perspective of motivation in young children. In addition, I will consider my curriculum and compare my teaching strategies to see how it coincides with the findings of this study. As an educator, I am concerned with the motivation of my students, primarily because I want them to learn and thrive as they prepare for the years ahead in school. I want them to enter school, prepared cognitively, physically, emotionally, and socially, as well as interested and wanting to learn. I want to capitalize on their interest in areas of learning and nurture and encourage it. Hopefully, other educators will feel the same way and use these findings to look at what they are teaching, examine their teaching strategies, and present the material in a way that is captures the attention of their students and capitalize on that interest to create excitement about learning.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

I am conducting a research project for my master's degree and need the help of the teaching staff. I want to know what early childhood educators have to say about a child's motivation. I am only surveying Head Start teaching staff, so participation in this project is greatly appreciated!

The surveys should take no longer than 20 minutes to fill out and can be returned to me via the addressed stamped envelope that is attached to each survey. There is a brief explanation of my project on the second page of the survey packet, if there are any questions. <u>Surveys should be mailed to me by the end of the month (12/31), and I will follow up with the centers in January if I have not received them.</u>

My contact information is enclosed in the survey packet if there are any questions. Thank you for your help! I appreciate your time!

Angela Choy

Defining Motivation in Early Childhood Survey

Agreement to participate in the Motivation Study

This research project is being conducted as a part of a thesis for a master's degree in Early Childhood Education through the University of Hawaii-Mānoa. The purpose of the project is to examine early childhood educators' beliefs about children's motivation. Oʻahu Head Start educators are being asked to participate because of their expertise and credibility in the field, as well as their daily interactions with children.

Participation in this project will consist of completing a survey in which you will be asked about your beliefs about children's motivation. The survey also includes a section on background information, e.g. years of teaching experience. Some of you will also be asked to participate in an individual interview with the investigator. This interview will allow participants to discuss their beliefs about children's motivation in more detail.

Completion of the survey should take no more than 20 minutes. Each interview will last approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours and will be audio recorded for the purpose of transcription. Approximately 200 people will participate in the study.

Data from the survey and interview will be summarized into broad categories. No personal information will be included in the research results. To protect participants' privacy, all surveys and interview records will be identified by a code number only. Research data will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. All research records will be stored in a locked file and audio tapes will be destroyed immediately following transcription. All other research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. Participation in this research may be of no direct benefit to you. However, results from this project will help the early childhood field better identify and address education needs for children in this age group. This research will enhance the research literature by providing a richer understanding of early childhood educators' perspectives.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the project with no penalty, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please read and sign one copy of the enclosed consent form, and keep a second copy for yourself.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Angela Choy.

Mahalo,
Angela Choy
Principal Investigator

Consent Form
Motivation Study

Please read and sign this form and RETURN it to me

I understand that:
- I will be asked to complete a survey
- I may be asked to participate in an interview with the investigator
- Any information collected about me will be used for research purposes only. To protect my privacy, all information collected will be identified by a code number only.
- Even if I give my permission now, I can change my mind at any time, and I will not continue in the study
- Giving my permission or not has no effect on how I will be treated by Oʻahu Head Start or by the University of Hawaiʻi. Giving my permission does not waive any of my legal rights.

_____

Name (printed)

_____   _____

Signature   Date

(If you cannot get answers to your questions or if you have comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, contact Committee on Human Studies, University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822. Phone: (808) 956-5007.)

Consent Form
Motivation Study

Please read and sign this form. This is YOUR copy.

I understand that:
- I will be asked to complete a survey
- I may be asked to participate in an interview with the investigator
- Any information collected about me will be used for research purposes only. To protect my privacy, all information collected will be identified by a code number only.
- Even if I give my permission now, I can change my mind at any time, and I will not continue in the study
- Giving my permission or not has no effect on how I will be treated by Oʻahu Head Start or by the University of Hawaiʻi. Giving my permission does not waive any of my legal rights.

_____

Name (printed)

_____   _____

Signature   Date

Defining Motivation in Early Childhood Survey

This survey contains a set of statements about preschool students. For the fixed-choice part of the survey (questions 1-4), please circle the one response that best represents the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. For the open-ended portion of the survey (questions 5-7), please provide some comments that may shed light on why you feel the way you do. I would like to encourage you to write written responses. Feel free to use the back of the page if enough space has not been provided on the front.

1. Motivation is a complex term and it can be defined and interpreted in many different ways. When you think of a preschooler who is highly motivated, what characteristics describe this child? Please read the list below and decide how important each description is to *your* definition of motivation. Circle the one response choice that best matches how much you believe that characteristic is a part of what it means to be motivated. Feel free to list additional qualities that were not included by writing the term(s) in the blank boxes provided and rating them.

Term	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Child attains a high level of achievement or skill	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child has a desire for competence or task/subject mastery	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child enjoys task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child is curious	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child is goal oriented	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child is highly engaged and focused	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child shows initiative by choosing task or activity without help from peers or adults	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child sticks with the task even when encountering difficulties; perseverance	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child will do task or activity because he/she expects a reward	SA	A	N	D	SD
Motivation is determined by gender of the child	SA	A	N	D	SD
Motivation is developed through experience (e.g. child learns and enjoys activity because of repeated exposure to it.)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Motivation is something a child is born with	SA	A	N	D	SD
Motivation is task specific (e.g., child is motivated to do puzzle activities but is not motivated to read books)	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD

2. Motivation can be shown through a variety of words, behaviors, and actions. Other times, it can be more difficult to judge a child's level of motivation. Please indicate whether you believe the following terms are indicators of what motivation looks like in a preschool child, i.e., does this behavior provide a reliable cue that a child is motivated. Feel free to list additional qualities that were not included by writing the term(s) in the blank boxes provided and rating them.

Term	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Child asks many questions about activity or topic	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child chooses a challenging activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child completes task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child exhibits learned experience through verbalizations or play (e.g., child demonstrates what a firefighter does after going on a field trip to the fire station)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child follows rules and expectations	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child is eager to try something new	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child shows a high degree of concentration	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child shows autonomy and independence	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child shows or teaches peers how to do task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child spends a lot of time with task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child uses positive nonverbal cues (e.g. shows enjoyment through smiling, wide eyes)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Child uses positive verbalizations ("I did it")	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD

3. How do you as a teacher promote or foster motivation? Below are some common methods that teachers use to encourage motivation in their students. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of them. Feel free to list additional qualities that were not included by writing the term(s) in the blank boxes provided and rating them.

Term	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Allow student to choose task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Ask open-ended questions	SA	A	N	D	SD
Give encouragement (e.g. "You're doing good," smile, pat on back)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Give incentives (e.g. stars, stamps)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Give praise	SA	A	N	D	SD
Make a difficult or boring task into a game	SA	A	N	D	SD
Model how to do the task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Model interest in a task or activity	SA	A	N	D	SD
Modify an activity to match a child's level of skill	SA	A	N	D	SD
Modify an activity to match a child's personal interest	SA	A	N	D	SD
Offer hands-on learning for a comprehensive learning experience	SA	A	N	D	SD
Provide a challenging curriculum	SA	A	N	D	SD
Teach themes based on characters that are popular for preschool aged children (e.g. themes on bugs, dinosaurs, Pokemon)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Use materials that are familiar to child's culture and family	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD
	SA	A	N	D	SD

4. In your opinion, what influences a child's motivation the most? Below is a list of possible influences to a child's motivation. Please rank the order of each term from 1 to 7, with (1) being the most important influence and (7) being the least important influence.

Term	Ranking
Child	
Extended family	
Media	
Parents	
Peers	
Teachers	
Sibling(s)	

In this section of the survey, you are asked to respond to a set of open-ended statements. Please feel free to use the back pages of this survey if you need more space to fully respond to the statement.

5. I would describe a motivated child as:

6. I would define motivation as:

7. Please comment on any issues not covered by this survey that you think are important in motivating your students.

This final section includes a few questions about you and your teaching career.

8. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? Please check the box that applies to you.

       High school/GED (skip to Question #10)
       CDA (skip to Question #10)
       Associate's Degree
       Bachelor's Degree
       Professional Degree

9. What is your degree in? Please check the box that applies to you.

       Early Childhood Education
       Family Resources, Psychology, or other related Human Services field
       Elementary or Secondary Education
       Other, please specify:

10. Gender? _____ Female _____ Male

11. How many years of experience have you had as an early childhood educator?

_____ years

12. Are you willing to be contacted for a possible interview? (Interviews will be used to follow up answers for clarification and depth.)

_____ Yes*   _____ No

*Please provide your name and contact information if you are willing to be contacted.

Name:
_____

Phone number:
_____

E-mail:
_____

Best time to call:
_____

Appendix C. Focus Group Questions

1) Defining motivation

- Some of our Head Start teachers say they define motivation in terms of a child's enjoyment or, excitement about, or personal interest in a task or activity. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

- Others among our Head Start teachers say they define motivation in terms of a child showing a strong desire to master a new skill and become an expert in a particular area. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

- Other teachers believe that motivation is predetermined. It's something that some children just seem to naturally have, almost if they were born with it. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

- Finally, other teachers feel that motivation is externally driven, that a child is motivated to do something because of external rewards (for example, praise, stamps, or privileges).

- Do you have any further thoughts on the definition of motivation?

2) Exploring the origin of motivation

- How do you think motivation develops?

- In your opinion, who or what do you think are the most important influences on motivation? Why?

3) Motivation within the classroom environment

- How do you know a child is interested or motivated in the activity or task at hand? What clues do you read?

- Some of our Head Start teachers say they know when a child is motivated because the child shows a high degree of self-directed learning (for example, complete task, try new things, autonomy, choose challenge, asking questions, teaching peers, and verbalizing experiences). Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

- Other teachers tell us that they know when a child is motivated because the child seems to be engrossed in what he or she is doing (positive nonverbal cues, time on task, positive verbalizations, and concentration) in an activity. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

4) Enhancing motivation

- How do you try to motivate your students? Are there specific examples that you can think of that you successfully were able to help motivate a student? What kinds of things do you say, do, or present to the child that helps motivate the child?

- When thinking about how you plan your curriculum and activities, is the children's motivation one of the things you take into consideration?

- Some teachers say they use scaffolding strategies (for example, matching activities to a child's interest, using familiar materials, modeling the activity, using hands-on learning techniques) to promote motivation. Do you agree or disagree with this method? Why? Please provide examples.

- Some teachers say they use Developmentally Appropriate Practices to encourage motivation. What does this term mean to you? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- Some teachers say that they use external motivation (incentives, praise, and encouragement) to increase a child's motivation and interest. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Researcher (A): Defining motivation – Some of our Head Start teachers say they define motivation in terms of a child's enjoyment or, excitement about, or personal interest in a task or activity. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

112: I agree. When children are enjoying themselves, they are going to want to continue to do what they are doing and would like to learn more about it. When we are learning about transportation, the children were very much into it that when they go home, and they see various types of transportation, they would tell their parents about it (what type of transportation it was, where they belong, things like that). Their parents would come back to us [teachers] and would comment how their child couldn't stop talking about it. It also seems that when we move to other lessons and would come across familiar things, like transportation, they would start talking about it again.

94: I agree because if the child doesn't find the activity interesting, he won't want to do it or it won't hold his interest for very long. If the activity is something that the child enjoys (for example painting), he won't rush through the activity because it's something that he's interested in. I think that if he enjoys the activity, he'll work at it for a longer period of time.

158: I think I agree with this somewhat. I believe that a child's motivation is driven by someone that inspires them with real and meaningful activities, materials, and experiences. Through these things, a child will develop interests and find both excitement and enjoyment.

146: I agree on all terms. I'm going to draw from my Human Development major (sociology, biology, and psychology) and stick to what I was taught. I think motivation might be that children are modeling behavior they see at home. Like if their older family members are achievers and enjoy the process of doing different things, the children might follow through on an inborn desire. They might be strong willed or they might be trying to please others. They might be social animals, and be learning or competing with others in the classroom too.

140: I agree because when a person, when a child is motivated it shows in their excitement to want to know more about whatever is being taught. They show interest. They want more information. They will more readily go and do an activity about a topic or a theme. And they remember (words related to the activities and theme like) paleontologist. [The kids] they know what it is and they apply it to what they are doing.

139: [Referring to lesson done in class] Oh, like the dinosaurs. The kids are excited about the dinosaurs (points to drawings and paintings or dinosaurs around classroom.) When we are doing activities about fossils and ice discovery, it's something they want to do. It's something different. It's something out of the ordinary. So because they liked the activity, they did the activity.

69: Well, I think it's really hard to measure…motivation, so facial expression tells us that they are interested and that they are motivated. [They show us that they are excited through facial expression and that they want to do it] And they ask questions.

A: Others among our Head Start teachers say they define motivation in terms of a child showing a strong desire to master a new skill and become an expert in a particular area. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

140: I agree. Well, take for example when we are doing [a lesson about phonics]. Because they know the beginning and ending and the middle sounds, and they discover they can spell a word by pronouncing each letter, they want to do more.

69: Someone who is highly motivated, a person or child, they tend to grow in that area, and they just accept the challenge because they know this, they want to know more.

146: I think they might be born with that desire. Maybe their parents might provide opportunities for new skills. Their parents might push them. I have this one boy in my class and he is living with grandparents that dote on the boy. They have provided him with so many things, even a college textbook on dinosaurs. The boy has learned an incredible amount of facts about dinosaurs. We found out later that the grandfather wants to make sure the boy doesn't end up in special ed like he did.

212: We have this student in my class who likes drawing dinosaurs. This student draws so detailed and elaborate. He draws a lot better than I do and strangers can pick up what he drew without him telling you what it is. One day, I asked him what type of dinosaur he just drew and he told me the name. I made a comment that that dinosaur looked like the other dinosaur he just drew which was supposed to be a different dinosaur. I told him the difference and he kept drawing until I said that I could tell the difference.

94: I think that if the child likes the activity, he'll try to master the activity. Like if there's a new puzzle, the child will do it over and over till he can do it fast. But if the child doesn't like the activity, he maybe only does it just one time.

158: I don't agree with that one term "showing a strong desire to master a skill." I think children are motivated to attempt a skill when they are given opportunities to explore. Determination to master comes when the interest is there, so for me the interest part has to be there.

A: Other teachers believe that motivation is predetermined. It's something that some children just seem to naturally have, almost if they were born with it. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

146: I guess it could be predetermined, and the child really can't help being that way. I mean my daughter clearly has her dad's drive, perseverance, and determination.

94: I believe that some children are born with certain strengths that help them to learn better. I have a child who is 4 years old and can read. While playing on the computer one day, I put in a first grade math game and watched him do an activity that he had to move ladders that had numbers on them and stack them together to total 30. I watched him in amazement that he could do the activity on a consistent basis. I then changed the activity to another game where he had to add to a number and he used his fingers to count. So, I believe that he didn't know how to do the activity but something in his brain told him which ladder to pick to get the right total 10+8+12 equal to 30.

158: I think I disagree because as an adult, motivation comes and goes. It comes when I am introduced to new things and experiences and it goes when I have mastered a skill. I think children are similar. Motivation is apparent when the experiences are there and

they get bored when they have mastered a skill. New challenges should be given to continually maintain a level of motivation.

212: I know that I disagree because I think children need to be exposed to determine their desires. How can a person know what they want and don't want without having some idea of what it is? I have this student who when he came to my class, he was a handful who had no structure and had no desire to learn. All he wanted to do was play, play, play and got into trouble. He's four years old and he didn't know his colors, counting to 10, couldn't hold a scissors, pencil, everything. I would sit with him for a few minutes working on his numbers, colors, and whatever skills he needed. I sat with him one day for less than 5 minutes teaching him how to count to 10 and he was able to count to 10 by the time we were done. He was so happy. I learned that he is a fast learner and just needs to be challenged.

139: I disagree because it is something that a teacher or an adult that they get a child get excited over something. It's just not something that they're born with. It's something that you gain or acquire with help.

69: I'm not sure I agree with the question. I guess I see more of the external where a child is being motivated through teachers, environment, or things that surround them. But I don't know how they are born with it.

140: You learn how to motivate yourself, to be a motivated person. [So through things that you do, they acquire the motivation] Through things that you do, you learn to motivate yourself to do things and get through tasks that excite you or because they have meaning to you. If they naturally have it, I think it's more when they are babies. The parents always encourage them to try you know, go try crawl over there. You go get it yourself, so they become motivated. So, I guess they've learned to become more motivated and to motivate themselves. [So from a young age, they're encouraged to be motivated.] From infant times, yeah the parents encouraged them to crawl versus having them do everything for them. [So at preschool age...] the child will know how to do it themselves and be able to motivate themselves to look at different things and do tasks they like and things that are new. So it may seem that they are born with it, but really it was just nurturing from infant times. [It's still not that some people are born with it and some people are just not.] It's not like from DNA or something.

A: Other teachers feel that motivation is externally driven, that a child is motivated to do something because of external rewards.

139: We give stamps or sticker if they have a good day. We say good things when they do a good job too. Like, "oh [R] you did such a good job in setting the table today. Thank you."

140: We use praise.

69: In our classroom, I know we hardly do stamps anymore. We say thank you to them or if we notice something that is really positive we acknowledge it.

94: I don't agree that rewards are the motivation to do an activity because even if nothing is given or said and an activity were to be placed on the table with no prior hint to what they needed to do, some children would do the activity and figure out what to do.

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146: Some children might be insecure or not have been provided many opportunities for learning. They might just watch TV a lot or tag along with other family members. They may be scared of making mistakes and they need that extra encouragement or outside reward.

158: I think I agree with externally motivating with praise. I've learned that giving notice and attention to a child's efforts using praise strategies can motivate them to continue or try harder.

212: I would have to agree. Just like the child I talked about before, at home he got spanked for misbehaving, place on time out and yelled at but he didn't get any attention for good behavior. At school, he received time out for misbehaving but when he does well, he received a lot of attention and praise. When he was able to count to 10, he received a lot of praise and a lot of attention from me that is why the next day he wanted to work with me again.

A: Exploring the origin of motivation – How do you think motivation develops?

146: Maybe at an early age. If a baby is played with and sung to, and talked to and around others a lot, the baby will watch and take it all in, and interact too. Even as the baby starts making milestones (first word, step, etc.), if there is encouragement, he/she will continue and take it all in.

212: Maybe by exposure to something that creates a positive feeling.

158: I think it develops by an inspiring role model.

94: I feel that the environment that the child lives in has a lot to do with motivation. If it is a positive environment where you are given the space to try new things and to learn, I feel that the child will be more willing to try new things and be more motivated to do things. If you are patient and encouraging, the child will be motivated and try harder. Things like saying, "wow you're doing a good job" or helping the child in a positive way are good things to do.

69: I think it starts to develop as young as infants. I learned that when we touch babies, it helps their brain to develop. Developing the brain is essential in developing motivation. Touching is really important for babies.

140: I agree with [it developing] in the infant stage. [The influence of people around them is important.]

A: In your opinion, who or what do you think are the most important influences on motivation? Why?

139: Parents, caregivers, aunties, uncles, their family. By being a true parent.

140: Parents and teachers because...they're there with the child. [They motivate the children by] just by being there. They support the child.

69: Because they're there with the child and they are the most available and they have them for a long time. Like in school when they come to school, they are there for a long period of time. If they don't get the influence at home, they'll get it at school. But hopefully they get it everywhere. They affirm them. They encourage them or they are interested in their child.

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212: The child's primary caregiver because they are with the child every minute of the day when the child is not in school. They make the decisions for the child on what they can and cannot do, who to see, where to go, etc. The primary caregiver basically has a say in the child's life more than the child itself.

158: Parents are the primary influences because children have a strong sense of trust in their parents and learn values, practices, and everything from them. Second, teachers are an important influence in a child's life because teachers also nurture and guide young children in positive ways.

94: I feel that most children look for positive feedback from their teachers. So if we're excited in what the child is doing with the activity, they will be more motivated to do more. I feel that the most important influences in motivation are to make things fun, challenging, and if you are into the activity so will the children because they look to us for guidance and want to please us.

146: I can't say which is the most important. But everyone who is close to the child plays an important role.

A: Motivation within the classroom environment – How do you know a child is interested or motivated in the activity or task at hand? What clues do you read?

158: I observe their countenance; listen for verbal and non-verbal cues.

146: If the child chooses an activity on his own, and sticks to it, and goes back to it, I know he's motivated and interested. If he is smiling during the process, or focusing completely too. Maybe the child wants to share it with a friend. Maybe a child shows interest with some teacher-directed activity. He'll be smiling focusing, and asking questions.

212: I think the child who is able to sit through the activity without being easily distracted. The child will have an idea of what is being discussed and would reply or ask questions. They listen attentively – eyes on you, and are listening to what you are saying by being able to respond to what you just said. They have a smile on their faces and would help their peers.

94: I think a child takes out an activity; I would watch to see how he is doing the activity and try to direct him or pose questions and see how he responds if he is into it, I would try to challenge him.

140: By them saying that I want to do it. I want to go first. Me! They stay there for a long time, longer than normal. Or they are quiet versus or some will be quiet in terms of wanting to listen. Some kids would want to ask all kinds of questions, how come, why, can I, me?

139: Or by them doing a task and they sit there for the whole period. They sit there for the whole center time.

69: Yup, I agree with [saying that they want to be involved, staying there for a long time, and them asking questions.].

A: Some of our Head Start teachers say they know when a child is motivated because the child shows a high degree of self-directed learning (for example, complete task, try new things, autonomy, choose challenge, asking questions, teaching peers, and verbalizing experiences). Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please provide examples.

212: I agree because if you no care in what you are doing, why even bother helping your peers, and wanting to know more than you should? For me personally, I hate history classes. I found it to be a very boring class so when I had to take history classes, I didn't care to know more than I needed to pass the class. I aimed for that D and I received my D. I didn't go to class, did not care to read the book. I know what I needed and just did just that, nothing more. So, for children, I don't see the difference. If the child doesn't care about cars and are more into Barbie, than they will not care if they owned a car toy but would do any means to get a Barbie doll.

158: I agree because these are some of the same reasons why adults are motivated.

94: I would tend to agree because if a child wants to learn more about say how to spell a word, they ask me how do you spell love or mommy or ask how to do a certain activity or ask for help. Well if the activity has interest to the child, he or she will work on it for a longer period of time.

146: I agree. When a child masters a floor puzzle, they ask a friend to come and see, and they'll do it together again. If a child discovers plastic wrap breaks up when it's soggy (like today!), he shares the discovery with a friend and they talk about their discovery.

140: I agree because we see the signs of motivation being that they wanting to learn, wanting to do something. I guess that's how you know that they are motivated. [So through the things that they do, they are seen as motivated.]

69: And you don't need to direct them. They have autonomy. That shows that they are motivated and interested to do things. Sometimes I am preparing breakfast and children would be coming in. I don't have to tell them to get a toy. Sometimes they would just go and get a book and read it. And they will be there for a long time reading their book. And if they have a question they will ask me. Actually they'll choose different ones. So that shows me that they're interested in different things too. But we have some children who will pick the same book too.

A: Okay, other teachers tell us that they know when a child is motivated because the child seems to be engrossed in what he or she is doing. They show facial positive nonverbal things such as smiling, are happy. They spend a lot of time on the task. They say positive things and they concentrate on the activity. Do you agree or disagree?

140: I agree because like we said before those are signs or we determine those are signs of motivation. [The child] keep coming by, yeah. She kept wanting to keep doing it.

139: When we doing an activity about being a paleontologist. [J] kept coming. She would stand by the table and point to the kids, oh [C] look you're doing this and that. And then all the bones were found and she came back and I asked her if she wanted to do it again and she said yes and she smiled. She ran to go get her name and then she sat down. She did it like 3 times and she found all the bones. And then there's [M] who is

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hovering over. That's when I knew that they wanted to do it again and again because they were so excited and happy about spending a lot of time doing a fun activity.

158: I agree. When a child is showing these behaviors, he/she is showing an interest and has been inspired.

212: I agree. The boy in my class, who enjoys drawing, took his time in putting in details and would return to it to finish the work.

146: Yes, I agree. Today a boy didn't want to clean up for circle time, even after the 5 min. warning. He wanted to put together a magnetic cube (which is for age 7+ and really hard). He got mad and sulked. And he went back to it later, and did it.

94: Like I said before, I think that if the activity has interest to the child, he or she will work on it for a longer period of time.

A: Enhancing motivation – How do you try to motivate your student? Are there specific examples that you can think of that you successfully were able to help motivate a student? What kinds of things do you say, do, or present to the child that helps motivate the child?

158: I use real and natural materials. I ask open-ended questions, guide the child to see the many facets of a task, give real experiences. I try to notice what they are doing and comment on what they are doing. I also give an eye wink, a smile, something to show them that I see what they are doing and like it.

94: I try to motivate my children by trying to make the activities fun and with things that they can relate to. I try to give them positive feedback. I also try to change the environment often so things are always new and challenging for the children to do so they don't become unmotivated.

212: I try to provide a lot of positive praises, "good job, I'm so proud of you." "I'm glad you took your time to do your work and not rush into it." I do a lot of eye contact with a smile and when I don't smile with my eye contact, they know it's not good enough.

146: I present the children with a wide variety of activities. Learning centers change as their interest and involvement change. Today we were drawing in our Beginning Sounds books, in small groups. I asked if they could draw something that began with "n." No response. I showed them cards of pictures, and asked them to pick one that they'd be able to draw. They did. Then I asked if they wanted to write their own words, or trace mine. I try to keep them going, meet them at their level, stretch them perhaps if they were ready, and make it fun. Then I wrote their stories they had to say about the pictures, and would say "good job," or "wow, you're really growing." Some kids went on to do 4-5 pictures and words.

A: When thinking about how you plan your curriculum and activities, is the children's motivation one of the things you take into consideration?

146: For me, not really. I think more of their multiple intelligences, their gifts, challenging them for the next step, preparing them for Kindergarten.

212: We stick to a curriculum that we think we need to cover or should cover that would help target our goal. Then we would provide activities that children enjoy doing.

94: Yes, because if the activity is boring to the child, he won't learn because of the negative feeling he has toward the activity. So when planning, I always think of how the activity will work with the children.

158: Yes, I agree.

140: Yes, because every child has a different learning style. So the different activities are you try to do one that is hands-on, one is visual, and one is verbally. So the hand-on activity would be the digging. The verbal would've been talking about during large group. The visual would be like showing pictures and actually the hands-on is visual too. So that's part of it too. We try to make it challenging and provide different ideas or themes. Adjust to the learning styles of the children and what degree to what they know. For example, we're doing dinosaurs, but it's not just learning the different dinosaurs, but also the paleontologists and a little bit more in-depth things because our kids are repeaters and older. We needed to expand on what they already know and are exposed to. We [also] separate the activity over the course of several days so that at the end of the week, they can put the pieces together. Like paleontologist, they don't know what they word is, so by breaking that word down by saying people that dig for the bones of dinosaurs. You do that, then do an activity and say that you are a paleontologist because you're digging for dinosaur bones. So let's do that and you do the activity by example. So you break it down.

139: Encouragement, oh you're doing good. [are the specific things that we say and do when presenting the curriculum that helps them to be motivated and provides a challenge].

69: Or you can do it in small groups so it's not that overwhelming for some of the children. Or you use some open-ended questioning, so it's just not yes and no. You try to have them think about what you are doing and what they are doing. You ask them, how do you think this works or what do you think will happen if you blow on this? Not just yes or no questions. Some kind of question that helps them think about it.

A: Some teachers say they use scaffolding strategies (for example matching activities to a child's interest, using familiar materials, modeling the activity, using hands-on learning techniques) to promote motivation. Do you agree or disagree with this method?

146: I agree. It goes along with the beginning sound book activity I just described.

158: I agree, however modeling how to do an activity should be minimized. I think it is much more meaningful to guide a child with questions that honor their ideas.

212: I agree and have used them all. Our children enjoy playing bingo. So I made a bingo activity with every lesson. I have an ocean bingo, zoo bingo, fruits and vegetable bingo, body bingo, plants bingo, and holiday bingo.

94: I agree for example some of the children were into the Pokemon things so I went home and found some of my daughter's old Pokemon playing cards and made a matching game with numbers 1-10. They were really motivated to play this activity because of the Pokemon theme.

140: Yes, because part of motivation is doing something that the children are interested in. We've been using the theme of dinosaurs for the past two years and it's still good.

For our year long curriculum, we use the same themes but we adjust and expand based on the kids learning. We readjust and sometimes we put in new stuff that they're interested in.

A: Some teachers say they use Developmentally Appropriate Practices to encourage motivation. What does this term mean to you? Do you agree or disagree?

69: I just read this from the Creative Curriculum. From what I understand, it is doing activities with the children that are appropriate in a way that you know what to expect from a child and going down to their level and yet providing them some challenging tasks but not going to be overwhelming and over their heads. It (what you are teaching the child) has to be something concrete that they can understand and in their language and it's based on the whole child. [We as teachers] have to have realistic expectations.

140: Yeah, we won't teach them medical stuff that's way off. I agree [with DAP] because it makes the learning easier and not let frustration to come into play. It doesn't make us as teachers too frustrated because they're not picking it up the lesson.

158: I agree. It is important to use DAP because it demonstrates respect to a child as a person, thinker, achiever, and discoverer.

212: I agree. It means providing an activity to socialize with other's comfortably. You wouldn't give an adult a sticker because he/she listened very well, but you would to a child.

146: Yes, I agree. I am not big on too much structure, especially in relation to writing. No writing on lines, doing more than they're capable of. If they're not able to write, then we draw mountains, or straight lines, or circles.

94: I feel that the meaning of developmentally appropriate practice means that activity or techniques that help you understand what is appropriate for that child at that age. I disagree because not all children are at the appropriate developmental stage in all areas. So if the activity is not appropriate for that child even though he is at that age, he might get frustrated and be turned off by that activity.

A: Some teachers say that they use external motivation (incentives, praise, and encouragement) to increase a child's motivation and interest. Do you agree or disagree?

158: I agree with praise and encouragement because it gives internal motivation. Stickers, treats, and those sorts of things are not very lasting.

212: I agree. It feels good when someone notices you and receiving something for it even feels a lot better. So you would want to do it again in hope to receive that "feeling" that you don't normally receive on a daily basis.

94: In some ways it will help the child's motivation level, but then the child will be looking for these rewards all the time and it can be a crutch for a child. In that, he won't be motivated unless he gets a reward.

146: I've never been big on stickers. Kids usually just look for the sticker, or end up losing it. I do like to give verbal encouragement though. I'll say, "Give me a high 5," or "clap hands for so-and-so." Or a smile or a hug, or silliness. "Gee, I don't know if I should cry happy tears, because you're growing and doing so much." In large groups, I

read their stories, or show their art, and give a lot of attention to it. Then I'll tell them all to give themselves a pat on the back, or pat on the head, or hug-hug. They eat it up, and I don't think it gets in the way of wanting to do more. I don't think they tackle challenges just to please me. Well, maybe a few of them do. I just can't help but be excited when they do new things.

69: I agree to a certain extent. Sometimes with stamping, when I used to do it, sometimes I'd feel bad for children who don't get to have stamps. So, there's good and bad to it and I think it affects self-esteem. I don't want to have to...I don't really understand it that much but somehow I do feel bad when somebody doesn't get a reward, especially when I have to do it in front of everybody and this one person doesn't get it because they did something bad. I use [praise] but not so much of the sticker and stamps. I have nothing against it, but for me personally I feel bad. I can see the purpose of it, but I don't feel right about it.

139: For our children that we give sticker and stamps to, for most of the children it works for them to do good for the next day. They'll realize that they didn't get a sticker or stamp that day so the next day they'll try to do a better job.

140: I think it also helps for the parents know what the stamps and stickers are for. For our parents, they'll come and ask if they got a sticker or stamp today. Or we'll see the kids say to them, I got a sticker mom! I think it helps to strengthen the motivation if there is the reinforcement at home. For us, we usually give the kids the option. What should we do with so-and-so? It is them that give the consequence so it motivates that one child to do better because it's not just us saying you have to do better and that this is your punishment. It seems to work better when the kids are saying it instead of us. Now we have the kids give the consequence so that they know their expectations.

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