Review of Motivating Students on a Time Budget: Pedagogical Frames and Lesson Plans for In-Person and Online Information Literacy Instruction

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Abstract: *Review of* Steiner, S. & Rigby, M. (Eds.). (2019). *Motivating Students on a Time Budget:*

Pedagogical Frame and Lesson Plans for In-Person and Online Information Literacy Instruction.

Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries. 315 pp. *This* is a series of essays that

discusses the theoretical framework of student motivation. In addition to discussing theory, the book

demonstrates how this theoretical framework used in conjunction with pedagogical tools can create a

class that is engaging for the students through detailed lesson plans and exercises used by the authors.

This book is an excellent resource for both novice instructors that are looking to learn about

instructional design and experienced instructors who are interested in revamping their classes.

Keywords: instruction, pedagogy, information literacy, motivation, instructional design, lesson plan

As an instructor, there are few experiences more harrowing than standing in front of a classroom of students who are not engaged. You can tell from the blank looks on the students' faces and the deafening silence in the room that the students would rather read the phone book than be in the class. Librarians can especially relate to this phenomenon because of the unique challenges we face. Despite the importance of information literacy and our enthusiasm for the subject, it is a challenge to engage students in part because they often assume that they already know these skills by virtue of their familiarity with online search engines (p.8). Engaging students becomes more challenging when the librarian is teaching the research class as a guest lecturer, which is often the case. *Motivating Students on a Time Budget: Pedagogical Frames and Lessons Plans for In-Person and Online Information Literacy Instruction* discusses student motivation and provides evidence-based tools for creating a class experience that engages students. This book is an excellent resource for both novice instructors that are looking to learn about instructional design and experienced instructors who are interested in revamping their classes.

Motivating Students on a Time Budget is a collection of essays about the theory behind student motivation to learn, as well as how to structure lessons and exercises that are engaging to the students. Steiner and Rigby (2019) created *Motivating Students on a Time Budget* to be a collection of resources that assist new instructors and inspire experienced instructors. This book achieves that goal with thorough explanations of student motivation theory, as well as by providing a plethora of tools that the reader can use that are grounded in evidence and pedagogy, such as lesson plans and exercises.

Ultimately, the goal, when examining student motivation, is to determine what drives students to learn and why. Student motivation "is crucial to their ability to retain and implement learned

material in other contexts" (p.96). When evaluating student motivation, understanding the student's

extrinsic motivators versus intrinsic motivators is key (p.8). Extrinsic motivators are the strategies that

everyone who has gone to school is familiar with: "grades, scores on standardized exams, pleasing the

teacher, and attaining external rewards and honors" (p. 8). Intrinsic motivators, on the other hand, are

the internal motivators that drive students to learn on their own, usually topics that "have intrinsic

interest for the individual" (p. 86). Intrinsic motivators more readily allow students to be self-directed

in their learning and thus more autonomous (p.86). Additionally, in one-shot classes, where the class is

not graded and the lecturer does not have the opportunity to build bonds with the students, extrinsic

motivators tend to be lacking,

So how can librarians engage students' intrinsic motivators given the constraints of a one-shot

class? The chapters in the book address this question by focusing on the "motivational underpinnings"

of activities used in class (p.2). In this way, the book is different from other publications that discuss

"motivation-related topics" such as active learning (p.2). This difference in approach becomes

apparent in the chapters that follow, where the theory of motivation is the focal point for discussing

lesson plans and activities. The book is also different from other publications discussing instructional

design because of the focus on short-term motivation: motivating students in the single class versus a

semester-long course. The first part of the book discusses student motivation more broadly, focusing

mainly on information literacy instruction in the short-term. The book describes the ARCS model of

student motivation, which is in many ways the foundation of student motivation theory, while also

delving into other theories of student motivation as well as pedagogies that can help engage students'

intrinsic motivation. The remainder of the book provides lesson plans and activities "which highlight

specific motivational strategies and pedagogies" that were used by the chapter's author (p. 3). Each

chapter that discussed lesson plans and exercises connected the lesson to the ACRL Framework, and the author provided feedback on the lessons as well as suggestions for adapting the lessons for different circumstances.

Motivating Students on a Time Budget was easy to digest without sacrificing explanation, which made the relatively dense concept of student motivation accessible. Even though the book is divided into the two components described above, the organization of the book did not reflect that division. The theory is sprinkled throughout the book as opposed to discussed thoroughly in one section and applied with lesson plans and exercises in the next. However, this lack of organization does not prevent the reader from understanding the theory because of how well written the individual chapters are. The reader can selectively read chapters that are of interest because the student motivation concepts underlying each lesson are reviewed in each chapter quite thoroughly without being overly dense. This approach is advantageous because the reader can re-read individual chapters without needing to re-read the entire book for context. In that way, this structure more readily allows the reader to use the book as a reference tool for lesson planning.

I found the lesson plans and exercises particularly interesting. The lesson plans were detailed and organized, which is useful for anyone who is new to instructional design or who is unfamiliar with the pedagogical concepts within the chapter. The authors provided much information about the evidence and theoretical underpinning of the lesson, and I appreciated that the chapters involving lesson plans and activities were supported by research and grounded in evidence. Even the chapters that did not have lesson plans were useful, as indicated by the chapters about using games for student motivation ("gamification"). For example, Chapter 10, which discussed gamification, did not include a lesson plan and instead provided a detailed discussion of how to design a lesson using gamification, as

well as tools that are available to support these lessons. Chapter 11 provided in-class exercises that

used games as well as an in-depth discussion of the design process. As someone who was previously

unfamiliar with the use of games for in-class activities, these chapters gave me enough information

that I could try to apply the concepts in my teaching with some confidence. The lesson plans usually

include notes of how to adapt the lesson as well as feedback the author received from students that

have participated in the session, which is useful for a librarian hoping to adopt these lessons in their

teaching.

While this book has many strengths, it also has some limitations. The most glaring limitation

was that relatively little time is spent discussing student motivation in the online context compared to

in-person instruction. Chapter 4 in the book discussed student motivation in the online environment,

while chapter 19 discussed in detail a lesson that utilized an online discussion board within learning

management software. These two chapters, though, were the only ones that discussed online learning.

Given the prevalence of online learning tools in librarianship, such as research guides and tutorials, it

was disappointing that the discussion of student motivation in online environments was limited.

Librarians who are interested in learning more about an evidence-based approach to online learning

should read the book *E-Learning and the Science of Instruction: Proven Guidelines for Consumers and*

Designers of Multimedia Learning by Richard Mayer and Ruth Clark in addition to the chapters

mentioned above.

Despite this limitation, *Motivating Students on a Time Budget* is an excellent resource for new

instructors and for experienced instructors that are interested in experimenting with new techniques.

The book provides an excellent foundation in the theory behind student motivation and discusses how

this theoretical framework used in conjunction with pedagogical tools can create a class that is

engaging for the students through detailed lesson plans and exercises used by the authors. The

discussion of theory followed by detailed lesson plans is incredibly useful for new instructors who may

not be familiar with these concepts or know how to apply them when designing a class. The variety of

concepts and activities are also a great source of inspiration for experienced instructors looking to

experiment with new methods for engaging students. This book is a welcome resource in the

instructional librarians' toolkit, and I look forward to utilizing some of these concepts in my teaching.

References

Clark, R. & Mayer, R. (2016). *E-Learning and the science of instruction: Proven guidelines for consumers and designers of multimedia learning*. (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.