

## Motivation TED 505

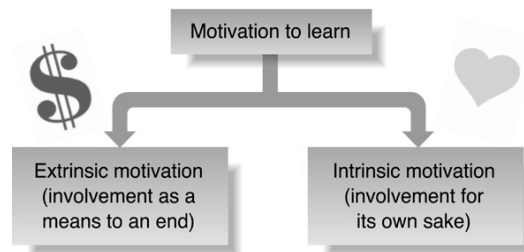
Dr. Jeff Sapp

## The Relationship Between Theory & Practice

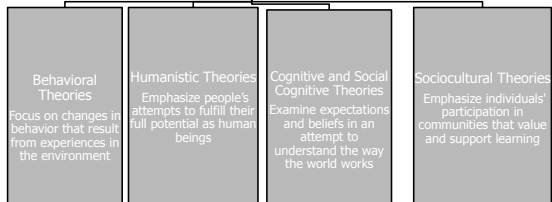
- I've been teaching my whole life.
- "Oh! I do that!" moment where my experience met theory.
- The more theory I learned, the more I realized that every move I make is rooted in theory.
- A common criticism of teacher education programs is something like this: "Um, Jeff, this sounds all nice and crap here on campus, but this shit won't fly in the real world classroom that I teach in!"
- My response:

## Theories of Motivation

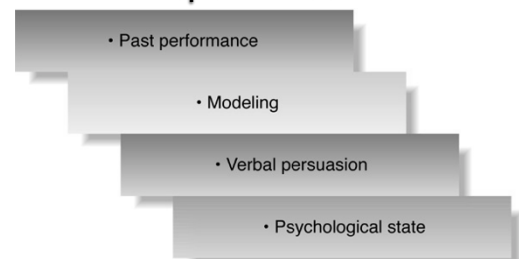
## What is your motivation for getting your credential?



## Theories of Motivation



## Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable of accomplishing a specific task.



**Learners high in self-efficacy:**

1) Accept challenging tasks, 2) exert effort, 3) persist when initially unsuccessful, 4) believe they will succeed, 5) discard unproductive strategies, and 6) perform higher than low-efficacy learners of equal ability.



## Attribution

◆ An attribution is a belief about the cause of performance.

## Attributions influence learners in 4 ways:

1. Emotional reactions to success and failure
2. Expectations for future success
3. Future effort
4. Achievement

Attributions	Locus (location of cause)	Stability (of cause)	Control (of learning situation)
Ability	Inside the learner	Stable (cannot change)	Learner out of control
Effort	Inside the learner	Unstable (can change)	Learner in control
Luck	Outside the learner	Unstable (can change)	Learner out of control
Task difficulty	Outside the learner	Stable (cannot change)	Learner out of control

*"You were so brave and bold and you really stepped it up this time! Your effort really paid off!"*

No.

*"You were brilliant!"*

Addresses the relationship between student motivation and risking failure, calling failure a temporary glitch that provides valuable learning opportunities.

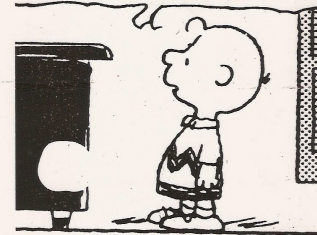
## Learned Helplessness

◆ If attributing failure to lack of ability becomes a pattern, learned helplessness, the debilitating belief that one is incapable of accomplishing tasks and has little control of the environment, can result.

## Learned Helplessness

- Learned helplessness has both an affective and a cognitive component. Students with learned helplessness have low self-esteem and often suffer from anxiety and depression. Cognitively, they expect to fail, so they exert little effort and use ineffective strategies, which result in less success and an even greater expectations for failure.

YES, SIR, MR. PRINCIPAL...  
I'M GOING TO GIVE UP  
SCHOOL... EVERYBODY SAYS  
I'M STUPID ANYWAY...



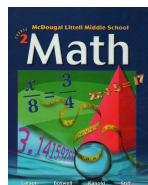
# The Sams!

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

Learned Helplessness (LH) is a behavior that is characterized by apathy, lack of motivation, and helplessness in the face of normal everyday problems and challenges. LH is the result of feeling chronically powerless over a situation or believing that a negative outcome will occur independent of one's response.

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

In other words, the student with LH believes that no matter what they do, they can't succeed; thus, a pattern of passivity and withdrawal occurs and the recognition that potential solutions exist is totally lost.



## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

We used to call these students "lazy." Now we know better. LH isn't genetic; it's *learned*, so it can be *unlearned*! Do NOT make the mistake of assuming that the student can **willfully control** the situation. The root of the problem, in fact, is **lack of control**.



“Pull yourself up by your bootstraps!”



In human studies, unsolvable tasks induce mild learned helplessness quite easily, and providing tangible rewards actually induces greater helplessness.

LH can be unlearned (with the help of a vigilant teacher and parents). Without intervention, though, the LH sufferer runs the risk of sinking into vicious cycles of failure that can lead to a long-term disorder, such as depression. Your goal as the teacher is to ensure the LH child experiences many consistent successes. Once the LH sufferer's feelings of accomplishment outweigh their feelings of failure, they'll be on the road to recovery.

## Classroom Management Issues

If the LH student's needs are ignored, they might commonly disrupt the entire class. Negative behavior can be an unconscious plea for help or a means of disguising inadequacy.

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

Although medication and behavioral therapy are sometimes needed in the treatment of LH, **sound teaching practices** are paramount when dealing with the sensitivities of the LH child.

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

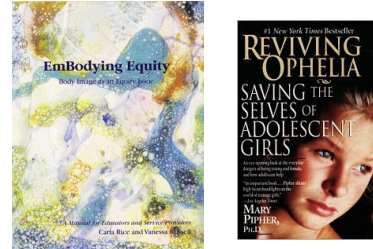
Overview:

- Chronic and serious disorder
- Issue is **perceived** control
- Under 5% of the total population
- Subpopulations are at a greater risk (80%) - i.e. epileptics, displaced populations, individuals suffering from depression

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

### Overview:

- Higher in grades 7-12 than in K-6
- Higher in males than females
- Individuals with LH may also suffer from depression (The highest subset of LH was found in depressives.)
- In animal subjects, it is the most aggressive rather than least aggressive who are at risk for LH. It is possible that this is also true in humans.
- LH among white and black high-school females has been shown to be positively associated with weight-related psychological conditions.



## LH is not Apathy



LH is different from **temporary** apathy or lack of motivation, common characteristics of our students. There are many reasons for apathy and it is important to rule out temporary situational causes. Only symptoms that are chronic and persistent are indicative of LH. Even then, a more serious disorder, such as depression, may be the root diagnosis.

## LH can be confused with other conditions:



- Apathy and inactivity are evident among depressed individuals.
- A teacher/student conflict or mismatch in learning and teaching styles can elicit symptoms like those of LH.
- The use of irrelevant or inappropriate curriculum can cause apathy.
- Apathy is a typical response to drug use, malnutrition, and/or trauma.
- Fatigue and/or sleep disorders affect motivation levels.

## Typical LH Comments

- "I'm just not good at math."
- "I was unlucky, it was Friday the 13th."
- "I don't get along with the teachers."
- "The system is fixed."
- "I'm never alert at test time."
- "The tests are always hard."
- "I never have time to study."
- "There are always students that beat the curve."

## 3 Categories of Perceived Causes:

- Internal vs. External - a personal trait vs. an environmental or circumstantial situation
- Specific vs. Universal - "Mr. Jones talks too fast for me to understand what he means" vs. "Math is just too hard for me."
- Temporary vs. Permanent - "I didn't do as well as I would have liked to on the test" vs. "I'll **never** pass math."

## Pessimism vs. Optimism

- The more pessimistic, the greater the likelihood of LH.
- “I am stupid” is internal or personal, universal, and permanent.
- “I could have studied more for a better grade” is external or circumstantial, specific, and temporary.

## LH student’s response to a good event?

“Boy was I ever lucky that day!”



## LH vs. Depression

- LH sufferers stop trying as a means of coping with their **perceived** loss of control: *“I can’t change the circumstances, so why try?”*
- Depressives **internalize** past failures to the point that their thinking becomes distorted and global: *“Nothing I do works, and everything sucks anyway.”*

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

### Symptoms:

- Statements of Powerlessness: What’s the point? Who cares? Why bother? So what?
- Passivity/apathy/listlessness
- Sarcasm/Disconnect
- Unwilling to participate
- Not hostile or aggressive (even when it’s warranted), just listless
- Automation - Just going through the motions
- Lack of appetite and weight-loss

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

### Likely Causes:

- Weak role models; surrounded by caretakers who feel helpless = becoming helpless yourself; some say LH is “contagious”
- Trauma-Induced Debilitation - Trauma + (1) intense negative experience (2) perceived lack of control (3) stops trying
  - Personal (“The problem is me.”)
  - Global (“It happens in all areas of my life.”)
  - Permanent (“It will always happen, so why try?”)

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

### Likely Causes:



- Unconscious Enabling - Teachers (or parents) who do **too much** for students can over time inadvertently reinforce, or induce, helplessness. Children need to be taught how to take care of themselves. Well-meaning parents who believe they’re saving their children from failing by doing their homework, rather than helping them with their homework, remove the natural consequences of failure and feedback necessary for growth.

## Learned Helplessness: *The Resigned Learner*

### Likely Causes:

- Internalized Oppression - A student who overhears a teacher or parent say they are "lazy" or "incapable" or "behind their classmates" in a subject may internalize the comment so that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

### What You Can Do:

- Teach and role model optimism!
- Deepen your appropriate relationship with them.
- Emphasize what a difference each person makes in your class and life.
- Encourage social relationships through cooperative learning.
- Provide appropriate choice to create a greater sense of control.
- Journal thoughts and feelings.
- Encourage involvement in school activities.
- Increase movement and physical activity.
- Get them involved in activism so they see they make a difference.

## What You Can Expect

### ♦ CHALLENGE LEVEL:

- Piece of Cake
- Work Smart, Learn Fast
- You've Got Your Work Cut Out For You

### ♦ SUPPORT NEEDED:

- Just You
- Work with Colleagues
- Get All the Help You Can

### ♦ EXPECT POSITIVE RESULTS:

- In Days
- In Weeks
- Over the Long Haul

"I totally frick'n  
love this  
expectation  
chart!" -Jeff

## Book Resources

- *Learned Helplessness: A Theory for the Age of Personal Control* by Peterson
- *Learned Optimism* by C. Peterson
- *Human Learned Helplessness* by Mikulincer
- *Learned Helplessness and School Failure* by Gordon

## Web Resources

[www.ldaca.org](http://www.ldaca.org)  
[www.supercamp.com](http://www.supercamp.com)  
[www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)

## Richard Bach

- ♦ ***"That's what learning is, after all; not whether we lose the game, but how we lose and how we've changed because of it and what we take away from it that we never had before, to apply to other games. Losing, in a curious way, is winning."***