

# FACT SHEET

## Motivation

Motivation is having the desire, energy and drive to act and persevere to achieve a goal. What motivates us to achieve is a goal or incentive, or a sense of lack or deficiency. Therefore motivation can be positive (desiring praise, reward, or satisfaction) or negative (avoiding criticism, punishment or disappointment). Motivation may be intrinsic (coming from within) or extrinsic (coming from outside).

The following are examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (notice that some are positive and others negative):

Intrinsic	Extrinsic
I find that really interesting	I'll graduate with a law degree
I am determined to achieve that outcome	My friends will be impressed
I'll hate myself if I don't get it done	I don't want to let my family down
I really enjoyed learning about that	I'll make lots of money
This is really meaningful for me	I can't get a promotion until I get a degree
I can't wait to see the finished product	I will be a person of status in society

According to McClelland's achievement motivation theory,<sup>1</sup> motivation is based on needs:

- 1 Need for achievement:** 'high achievers' who are motivated to excel. These people need challenging but realistic goals, and feedback on their accomplishment
- 2 Need for power,** be it personal power (to direct and control others) or social power (to organise others to fulfil organisational objectives). These people need to lead and to persuade others
- 3 Need for affiliation:** to create harmonious relationships with others and to feel accepted. These people need to work in teams and be well liked

According to Bandura<sup>2</sup>, students are most likely to feel motivated if they:

- Believe they can achieve a better mark if they work harder (as opposed to believing it is all about how smart you are, as a matter of fixed ability)
- Believe their action can achieve the desired outcome (as opposed to luck)
- Want to get good marks by deep understanding rather than rote learning

Being able to understand, monitor and control motivation is a subset of emotional intelligence. It is something that can be learned and practised. Everyone loses motivation from time to time - it is just a matter of having strategies to re-motivate ourselves. See Activity Sheet: Finding Motivation.

1 McClelland, DC *Human Motivation*, Scott Foresman & Co (1985).

2 Bandura, A *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*, Freeman, New York (1997).