Intrinsic Motivation to Learn: The Nexus between Psychological Health and Academic Success

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Intrinsic motivation (IM) to learn, if cultivated, can lead to many academic and social/emotional improvements among K-12 students. This article discusses intrinsic motivation to learn as it relates to Self Determination Theory and the trouble with relying solely on extrinsic motivators. The academic benefits of IM in the specific subject areas of reading and mathematics are reviewed, as well as various psychological benefits (e.g., enhanced persistence, prosocial behavior and happiness). Science-based methods of fostering IM in students are considered, especially enhancing children's environments through elevating teacher and parental autonomy support. Suggestions for integrating intrinsic motivation with behavioral interventions are also provided.

KEYWORDS: Academic engagement; intrinsic motivation; elementary school students; high school students; parenting style; behavior change

Teachers frequently struggle to motivate their students (Brophy, 2008; Froiland, 2010) and most students lose intrinsic motivation to learn each year as they move from first grade to high school (Lepper, Corpus & Iyengar, 2005). Intrinsic motivation to learn entails engaging in learning opportunities because they are seen as enjoyable, interesting, or relevant to meeting one's core psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to self-determination theory, all people seek to satisfy three inherent psychological needs: the need for developing competence, the need for relatedness (creating meaningful connections with others), and the need for autonomy (perceiving that one is able to initiate and regulate one's own actions). Satisfaction of these psychological needs promotes intrinsic motivation (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). Motivation can fall anywhere on the continuum from amotivation (lack of the intent to act), to extrinsic motivation (seeking to avoid punishments and gain external rewards), to introjected regulation (studying or behaving well because one feels pressure from within), to identified regulation (recognizing the importance or value in developing a behavior or skill), and finally, to intrinsic motivation (behavior motivated purely by the inherent benefits) (Deci et al., 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomous motivation is a broad term that encompasses both identified regulation and intrinsic motivation, which are the two highest forms of motivation, according to self-determination theory. As an illustration of the motivational continuum, an amotivated student would be uninterested in completing homework, so implementing a contingent reward system could help the student move from amotivation to extrinsic regulation, such that the student would likely study just hard enough to gain the rewards or avoid negative consequences. A student whose behavior is regulated through introjection would turn in his/her homework on time to avoid feeling like a terrible student or to avoid guilt, while a student whose behavior is regulated through identification would voluntarily study more because he/she realizes the importance of doing well in school. Intrinsically motivated students seek to learn more about a subject of interest both in school and outside of the regular school day because they find enjoyment and deep purpose in learning; their behavior is fully regulated from within. Identification and intrinsic motivation (the autonomous forms of motivation) are the most enduring forms of motivation and are robustly related to academic success and psychological well-being (Deci et al., 1991; Froiland, 2011a).

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THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN SCHOOLS

Intrinsic motivation is associated with high levels of effort and task performance as well as preference for challenge (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008), which are desirable attributes to cultivate among students who will eventually be competing in the most educated work force in history. Children who have well developed intrinsic motivation are more likely than others to demonstrate strong conceptual learning, improved memory, and high overall achievement in school (Gottfried, 1990). Students with high levels of intrinsic motivation are more likely to experience flow, a state of deep task immersion and peak performance which is accompanied by the sense that time is flying by (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). The benefits of intrinsic motivation to learn also include broader measures of school success like improved psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008), positive affect while doing homework (Froiland, 2011a), and less drug abuse (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon & Lewis, 2000). Studies have also shown that students with higher intrinsic motivation at the outset of the semester displayed more persistence and were less likely to drop out of school (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992; Hardre & Reeve, 2003). Intrinsic motivation is also a strong factor in performance, persistence and productivity for adults in the working world (Grant, 2008) and is a pathway to happiness for adults and children (e.g., Froiland, Smith, & Peterson, 2012), which makes it vital for children's success and life satisfaction after school. The aforementioned reasons alone are enough for school psychologists to shift their focus toward increasing intrinsic motivation to learn in their students.

Furthermore, school psychologists report that motivational issues account for 25% of student referrals, which indicates that motivation should be considered regularly during assessments and preventive work (Cleary, 2009). This percentage may be an underestimate because parents and teachers may believe that introjected children are intrinsically motivated because they do not require external prompts and salient rewards; when in fact such children lack intrinsic motivation and often experience significant academic anxiety (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Although school psychologists have much more expertise in motivation than parents or teachers have, they also often fail to accurately assess children's motivation because many focus solely on whether children are extrinsically motivated, and neglect to assess the child for other types of motivation. As a prime example, consider the can't do/won't do assessment that is considered a best practice for use by school psychologists within an RtI framework (VanDerHeyden & Witt, 2007). This entails first measuring a student's performance on an academic task using normal procedures. If a child is found to be at risk for failure at Tier 1 of RtI, then the can't do/won't do assessment can be done at Tier 2 to help determine interventions to strengthen either her motivation or skills (VanDerHeyden & Witt, 2007). For instance, a reading fluency probe can be administered. Then, the student is told that if she increases the amount of words read aloud per minute significantly, she will receive a tangible prize. If she improves her fluency significantly on the second trial, it is assumed that her deficit is in motivation rather than in skill. In one study over 25% of students fell into the motivational deficit category (VanDerHeyden & Witt, 2007). While the can't do/won't do assessment elicits a greater awareness of motivational vs. skill needs among students, the focus is solely on extrinsic regulation and neglects intrinsic motivation or anything in between (e.g., identified and introjected regulation). Thus, the related motivational interventions are focused on the extrinsic regulation of behaviors (through reward systems similar to the one used during the assessment). This is problematic because studies have shown that students who are excessively extrinsically regulated lose initiative and do not learn as well, particularly when learning is intricate or requires conceptual understanding and creative processing (Benware & Deci, 1984; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987).

Moreover, despite the fact that a contingent behavioral reward system often results in positive behavior change, these changes are often not enduring (due to extinction once the reward system is removed; Hardman, Horne & Lowe, 2011) and are not nearly as healthy, due to the generally negative association between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Deci et al. (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of the effects of extrinsic motivators (e.g., tangible rewards, praise) on the intrinsic motivation levels of subjects from pre-school to college age. The results showed that

there is a significant negative correlation between intrinsic motivation and tangible rewards, whereas praise did not negatively affect intrinsic motivation and sometimes enhanced it (Deci et al., 1999). In light of this finding, it is important that school psychologists teach educators how to focus on cultivating and maintaining intrinsic motivation to learn, and are careful not to rely heavily on tangible rewards as a means of ameliorating students' academic effort. If behavioral techniques are used, then authentic and enthusiastic praise should be the primary motivator.

Importance of Promoting Intrinsic Motivation in Literacy

The statistics on reading motivation are especially alarming. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 73% of children do not read frequently for enjoyment (Perie, Grigg & Donahue, 2005). The general lack of intrinsic motivation to read is in accordance with the finding that U.S. is ranked number 33 out of 35 countries as a nation, on a survey of reading motivation (Mullis, Martin, Gonzalez & Kennedy, 2003). Therefore, American educators need to start placing more importance on fostering intrinsic motivation to read, and school psychologists can be the catalysts of this change.

Children who understand the benefits of reading perform better and enjoy many aspects of literacy (Csikszentmihalymi, 1990). Normative reading achievement increases more for those who are intrinsically motivated to read (Unrau & Schlackman, 2006) and intrinsic motivation is positively associated with reading more frequently, fluently, and with greater comprehension (Guthrie,Wigfield, Metsala & Cox , 1999; Law, 2009; Becker, McElvany, & Kortenbruck, 2010). None of this is surprising because intrinsically motivated readers use more reading strategies than their peers, such as the following: rereading difficult passages; having a purpose in mind before picking up the text, taking notes while reading as well as questioning and making inferences about what they have read (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

The frequency with which children read is an important factor that is directly tied with intrinsic motivation. In a longitudinal study, Becker et al. (2010) showed that the children who see reading as a desirable activity read more frequently and thus develop better reading skills. Intrinsically motivated readers are inclined to read more often than non-intrinsically motivated readers because they discover the inherent enjoyment in the activity (versus reading only when some contingent reward system is in place or when they feel under pressure to read). Ultimately, intrinsic motivation leads to greater reading skills due to richer and more frequent engagement with printed material (Becker et al., 2010).

One well-researched intervention that targets intrinsic motivation to read is the Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) program. The CORI program targets the improvement of reading engagement in students in the 4th and 5th grades. They define reading engagement as the simultaneous use of motivational processes and cognitive strategies while reading. CORI focuses on promoting the following five motivational processes that are pivotal to reading engagement: intrinsic motivation, perceived autonomy, self-efficacy, collaboration and mastery goals. The program works by showing teachers how to incorporate five instructional practices into their classroom that are directly related to the five motivational processes. These processes include autonomy supportive teaching and intrinsic goal setting. A meta-analysis of 11 different implementations of the CORI program in different schools showed that the students in the CORI group compared to the control group had higher intrinsic motivation to read, higher teacher ratings on reading engagement and read significantly more for enjoyment and outside of the classroom (Guthrie, McRae & Lutz Klaudia, 2007). School psychologists could teach the five instructional practices of the CORI program to teachers in their schools, thereby promoting intrinsic motivation to read in their students.

Benefits of Fostering Intrinsic Motivation in Math

Academic intrinsic motivation significantly declines over the average students' K-12 school career, but the greatest decline is in intrinsic motivation toward mathematics (Gottfried, Fleming, & Gottfried, 2001). In a recent study, the United States scored significantly lower than 17 of 33 other member countries

of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on a measure of motivation for mathematics (Fleischman Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). Because cutting edge economies will increasingly be based on science, technology, engineering and applied mathematics skills, improving mathematics achievement is essential if we want to prepare students who can compete globally and solve the complex problems of the future (Lee, 2011). Therefore, educators need to emphasize intrinsic reasons for learning math.

Like reading, math requires strategies and persistence to become successful. Intrinsically motivated students are more likely than their peers to use effective math strategies such as estimating, visualizing, and checking (Montague, 1992). They are also more prone to select deeper performance and learning strategies. For instance, if given a choice between a simpler or a more complex math problem, the intrinsically motivated child would choose the more complex problem because he/she prefers a challenge and wants to test his/her understanding of the material. Then, if the method for solving this problem is not immediately apparent the child may use his/her creativity to solve the problem in an unorthodox way, and persist through the problem, expecting eventual success (Middleton & Spanias, 1999). Mathematics courses can be arduous and intrinsic motivation can energize children to invest the effort and utilize the strategies necessary to be successful.

Additionally, Stipek, Salmon, Givvin, Kazemi, Saxe and MacGyvers (1998) found that students who had teachers that emphasized learning mathematics rather than just getting the answers right perceived themselves as being more competent in mathematics and experienced more positive emotions toward the subject. These same students also made greater gains on a fraction assessment that was given to them after a lesson on fractions (Stipek et al., 1998). Stipek et al. (1998) pointed out that math reform leaders were calling for the same types of changes that motivation experts are calling for, such as more positive verbal feedback, emphasis on deep understanding rather than performance goals, multiple ways of finding solutions and support of risk-taking when problem-solving rather than chastising children for getting the problem wrong. In other words, both math reform experts and motivational experts are calling for teachers to use an autonomy supportive style of instruction. In accordance, school psychologists can consult with teachers to show them how to adopt an autonomy supportive teaching style in the mathematics classroom (see the "Ways of Promoting Intrinsic Motivation in Students" section).

The Importance of Intrinsic Motivation to Learn and Special Education

Fostering intrinsic motivation to learn is especially important with students in the special education population. According to a study conducted by Grolnick and Ryan (1990), children labeled with a learning disability have lower perceived competence than a matched-IQ control group. As mentioned in the introduction, competence is a core psychological need within self-determination theory. In the same study, teachers rated learning disabled students as lower in motivation, competence, and self-esteem. School psychologists could help special education students elevate their perceived competence and autonomous motivation by teaching them to generate their own goals for academic progress, showing them graphs of their progress over time, and reminding them of intrinsic reasons for learning the material (e.g., "You'll be able to use these writing skills to share your witty jokes with more people"). In another study, Deci, Hodges, Pierson and Tomassone (1992) found that autonomous forms of motivation (i.e., identified regulation and intrinsic motivation) in students with an emotional disturbance and or a learning disability (at both the elementary and high school levels) positively predicted math and reading achievement. Because children in special education are at a higher risk of dropping out of school than other children and intrinsic motivation predicts more persistence and lower high school dropout rates (Hardre & Reeve, 2003), intrinsic motivation to learn could help special education students enhance both their high school completion rates and achievement.

Benefits of Facilitating Intrinsic Motivation for Emotional Health and Behavior

Besides the home, school is one of the primary places to cultivate happiness in children and intrinsic motivation is a key ingredient for developing happiness (Froiland et al., 2012). Intrinsically motivated

children are highly engaged in their learning and have a proclivity to experience a state of flow (Shernoff et al., 2003) and school days seem to go by relatively quickly because the students are enjoying themselves (Conti, 2001). Conversely, the school day often seems cumbersome and miserable to amotivated or extrinsically regulated students who feel they are forced to be there with no deep sense of purpose.

Besides being important for psychological well-being, happy children in schools can contribute to a more positive school environment, making the school a better place for not only the students but also the faculty and staff (Chafouleas & Bray, 2004). Intrinsic motivation is linked to prosocial behavior, which involves being agreeable, helpful and caring about the welfare of others (Grant, 2008). Intrinsic motivation is crucial to helping children become prosocial and altruistic citizens. School-wide interventions that elevate intrinsic motivation to learn and prosocial intrinsic motivation, also lead to reductions in drug use, violence, and vandalism (Battistich et al., 2000), as well as foster a sense of school community where students care, respect, and feel a commitment to one another (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson & Schaps, 1995). Therefore, elevating intrinsic motivation is an attractive goal for school psychologists because it is strongly related to multiple facets of academic success and psychological well-being.

WAYS OF PROMOTING INSTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN STUDENTS

Autonomy Support in the Schools

Autonomy supportive schools, classrooms, and home environments promote intrinsic motivation for students (Froiland, 2011a; Froiland et al., 2012). School psychologists can teach parents and teachers to promote autonomous motivation through the following components of autonomy supportive communication: empathic statements; allowing students to make their own choices when appropriate; letting students know that they value creative self-expression; giving students time to solve problems on their own and providing suggestions or hints only when needed; highlighting the interesting or meaningful features of a task or assignment; asking children what they learned after they receive a good grade, rather than solely celebrating the grade; and using motivational analogies, such as "Spending time on homework is like sowing seeds, eventually you will reap a big harvest of precious knowledge and skills" (Froiland, 2011a; Reeve, & Jang, 2006).

An autonomy supportive teaching style can initiate cascading effects that enhance the classroom and school atmosphere. When teachers become more autonomy supportive and share their own passion for subject matter, they will not only enhance the intrinsic motivation of their students, but those inspired students will also spread their motivation to their peers in other classes (Froiland et al., 2012; Radel, Sarrazin, Legrain, & Wild, 2010). Furthermore, students who are intrinsically motivated elicit increased autonomy support from their teachers over the course of the school year, which leads to further increases in student intrinsic motivation (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Radel et al. (2010) examined whether motivation can be spread from teachers to students, and, subsequently, from students to their peers. This was studied through exposing high school students to one of two guest physical education teachers; the students were told that either their teacher was a highly motivated volunteer, or that their guest teacher did not want to participate and even requested a large sum of money to come (Radel et al., 2010). The motivated volunteer teacher encouraged intrinsic motivation in the students while the reluctant teacher fostered extrinsic motivation in the students (Radel et al., 2010). Additionally, when the students of the motivated volunteer were instructed to teach this same lesson to their peers, they encouraged intrinsic motivation and fuller participation among peers, whereas the students of the reluctant teacher promoted extrinsic motivation (Radel et al., 2010). Thus, teachers can influence their students' motivation by revealing the quality of their own motivation toward the learning activity.

Another beneficial quality of autonomy supportive communication is that it can be paired with praise to enhance intrinsic motivation, rather than diminish it, like other forms of behavioral rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Praise is most effective when delivered immediately after the behavior, frequently, enthusiastically, with eye contact, while describing the positive behavior to the student, and with

varied words (Rhode, Jenson & Reavis, 1992). The key components that differentiate praise as a normal behavioral reinforcer (that promotes extrinsic motivation), and praise delivered in an autonomy supportive way (that may promote intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation), are the descriptive and relationship-focused aspects (eye contact and enthusiasm). It is important that, while delivering the praise, the teacher explains to students that they are being praised for their mastery of the material, progress, use of creativity to solve a problem, or their willingness to take a risk (all autonomous qualities) and not their just their compliance, completion of work, or achievement of a good grade. In this way, the praise conveys information to the student about their level of competence, which satisfies their psychological need for competency (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Furthermore, enthusiastic praise coupled with eye contact, as opposed to praise that is delivered with a monotone voice and without eye contact, may help meet students' need for relatedness. Importantly, implementing autonomy supportive communication in the classroom doesn't require a complete overhaul of what the teacher has been doing previously (e.g., behavioral classroom management techniques). Rather, a strategic adjustment in the way teachers deliver praise can help students transform from feeling controlled, to being given positive, useful information which satisfies their psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This is important because there is the potential for a motivational synergy, in which both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels are high (Hayenga & Corpus, 2010) via effectively delivered praise.

One large-scale intervention that emphasizes autonomy supportive communication is the Child Development Project now called the Caring School Community (CSC). The CSC is a prevention program that has been implemented in 321 schools across America and has followed the participating students for 7 years. The program was developed based on the self-determination theory position that students learn best when their three basic needs of competency, relatedness and autonomy are met, and training is provided to show teachers how to create a school environment which fosters these needs. For example, teachers were taught how to hold class meeting lessons, where students are given the chance to voice their opinion and work together as a team to come up with a solution for a problem affecting everyone (i.e., lack of focus during lessons). This activity clearly fosters autonomy because the teacher is allowing the students to contribute to the discussion in a creative way as well as empowering students to help solve their own classroom issues. After implementing classroom meeting lessons and other components of the program (e.g., reading books that promote altruism and discussing readings at home with parents, thereby meeting the need for relatedness) for a couple of years, the research team evaluated several measures of student well-being in both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group showed significantly more improvement in intrinsic motivation to learn, prosocial intrinsic motivation, peer relationships, and perception that they are part of a school community. Furthermore, students that received the program also exhibited less drug abuse and aggressive behavior than peers in the comparison group (Battistich, 2003). The U.S. Department of Education's (USDE) Institute of Education Sciences (IES) lists the CSC as a research-based prevention program within the What Works Clearinghouse (USDE, IES, 2007); and the tools and training used in the CSC could be readily implemented by school psychologists.

School psychologists can also train parents to be autonomy supportive in the home. In a seven-week study, parents met with a school psychologist for 30 minutes a week and were taught how to be autonomy supportive (Froiland, 2011a). The school psychologist used social-cognitive techniques such as persuasion, modeling, role-play, practice and feedback to illustrate autonomy supportive techniques to the parents. These included, but were not limited to: explaining to the children why learning the material is important and suggesting how their homework is preparation for making the world a better place; helping the parents to be considerate of the child's struggles with homework and to make suggestions like a consultant, without doing the work for them or losing patience with them; highlighting the interesting aspects of homework topics; emphasizing that the process of studying enhances one's cognitive development, much like physical exercise promotes physical fitness; acknowledging students feelings; practicing the art of warmly listening to their children talk about what they learned at school; emphasizing what students learned over the grade they received on a test. After seven weeks, parents in

the treatment group reported that their children were more intrinsically motivated to do their schoolwork, and children reported feeling more positive emotions about doing homework (Froiland, 2011a). It is possible for school psychologists, with relatively little time and resources, to promote positive change in the home learning environment through autonomy supportive communication.

Intrinsic Goal Setting

In addition to consulting with parents and teachers, school psychologists can also foster intrinsic motivation in students by counseling them to set intrinsic goals. Husman and Lens (1999) proposed that student motivation is in part determined by how the student integrates the future into the present through motivational goal setting. This is also known as a future time perspective (FTP). Students with a long FTP (they can set goals far into the future) are more persistent in working toward a goal and find more satisfaction in their goal-oriented behaviors than students with a short FTP and future goals are negatively affected by extrinsic rewards and regulation (Husman & Lens, 1999). To encourage intrinsically motivated behaviors, students need to understand how their present academic goals will relate to their future life goals (Husman & Lens, 1999); for instance, a school psychologist helped a high school student see that learning everything she could in her science class would prepare her to help more people as a physical therapist. This motivational epiphany about how her science class was connected to her long term aspirations led to drastic improvements in her intrinsic motivation, quality of studying and grades (Reiss, 2011).

Extrinsic goals are contingent on some type of reward or praise from others (e.g. wealth, grades, looking good) while intrinsic goals promote self-actualization (e.g., personal growth, becoming healthier or helping others; Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Vansteenkiste, Soenes, Verstuf & Lens, 2009). Intrinsic goals are positively related to well-being and are negatively related to distress, whereas extrinsic goals have the opposite effect (Kasser & Ryan, 1996). Extrinsic goal framing distracts a student from specific academic tasks while intrinsic goal framing causes the student to focus on the task at hand (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). A study done by Vansteenkiste, Simmons, Lens, Sheldon and Deci (2004) illustrated that children are more likely to master the material if they set an intrinsically based goal for leaning such as, "Learning this will increase my personal growth," vs. an extrinsically based one like "If I learn this I will earn money." Additionally extrinsic goals direct students to focus on their performance in comparison to their peers rather than learning for the sake of learning (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009) and children who learn to set intrinsic goals for homework are more likely to develop positive emotions toward homework (Froiland, 2011a). School psychologists could teach students how to set intrinsic goals during counseling sessions and thereby empower students to mobilize their own intrinsic motivation.

CONCLUSIONS

Maintaining and enhancing intrinsic motivation among students requires autonomy supportive home and school environments (Froiland, 2011a; Froiland, 2010; Froiland et al., 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When students are intrinsically motivated to learn they learn more, exhibit better behavior, are happier and aspire to contribute to the betterment of society. Intrinsically motivated learners have a greater sense of well-being and are more engaged in the classroom because they understand the inherent benefit of education (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When children are intrinsically motivated to make the most of their learning opportunities and treat others well, they are truly preparing to contribute to the betterment of society.

In order to promote intrinsic motivation to learn among students, school psychologists could consider the Caring School Community as a potential prevention program for their districts (see USDE, IES, 2007). Furthermore, for reading in particular the CORI program is worthy of considering (Swan, 2003). School psychologists could also become familiar with the facets of teacher autonomy support so that they can recommend specific teacher autonomy supportive techniques during either behavioral or instructional consultation (e.g., Reeve & Jang, 2006). School psychology trainers could also further

research parental autonomy support interventions (e.g., Froiland, 2011a) because there is the potential to synergistically promote intrinsic motivation to learn at both home and school (Froiland et al., 2012). School psychologists who consult with parents can look for opportunities to ameliorate controlling parental practices because they are associated with lower intrinsic motivation (Froiland, 2011a), perfectionism and depression among children (Kenny-Benson & Pomerantz, 2005).

Praise is the positive reinforcer that has the potential to elevate both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Thus, we encourage school psychologists to emphasize autonomy supportive praise which includes enthusiastically describing how the student is progressing toward academic or interpersonal mastery, showing pizzazz, diligence, using good strategies or exhibiting personal expressiveness. Although tangible rewards may be necessary to help some amotivated students develop extrinsic regulation of positive activities, warm and descriptive praise is a more viable positive reinforcement than tangible rewards because of the potential synergy with intrinsic motivation.

Due to the long-term benefits associated with fostering intrinsic motivation, school psychologists would be wise to utilize interventions that develop intrinsic motivation. Motivation problems are among the most frequent reasons for referrals (Cleary, 2009), and it behooves us as psychologists to add insight from intrinsic motivational theories and research to our arsenal of motivational understanding and interventions. Because psychologists in the schools are trained to promote mental health and academic success (e.g., Froiland, 2011b; Froiland & Smith, 2012), it is time for us to diligently promote intrinsic motivation to learn in the schools, for it is the nexus between psychological well-being and academic success.

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