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Graduate Program: \_\_\_\_\_

**You have 90 minutes to read the articles and then answer the essay question about the topic. Be prepared to use information from the articles as support.**

**Article 1:** “How to Nudge Students to Succeed” written by David L. Kirp and published on October 30, 2016 in the newspaper *New York Times* on page 2 of section L

When I was in high school, I earned A's in all my math classes—until I took calculus. In algebra and geometry, I could coast on memorizing formulas, but now I had to think for myself. It was disastrous, culminating in my getting a charity "C," and I barely passed my college calculus class. The reason, I was convinced, was that I didn't have a math mind. I have avoided the subject ever since. It turns out that I got it wrong. While it's unlikely that I could have become a math whiz, it wasn't my aptitude for math that was an impediment; it was my belief that I had the impediment to begin with.

In several studies, social psychologists have demonstrated that students' beliefs about their intelligence strongly influence their academic performance. For students who believe that intelligence is a gift that some students have and other students don't have, performance results tend to remain steady. On the other hand, if students believe that intelligence is flexible, they tended to work harder and their results improved. Consider this example from a recent study. A group of sixth-grade students was struggling in math and their scores were declining. Half of these students were taught that intelligence is changeable, not fixed. They were told that the brain is a muscle that grows stronger with effort. In subsequent assignments, their math grades rose. The other half of the students were taught math study habits and they continued to do poorly in on their assignments.

Innovative social-psychological thinking is at work here. Research shows that kids should be taught how to make sense of themselves and their environment because their beliefs translate into motivation and performance. There are three strategies represented in the examples above. Stanford social psychology professor Carol Dweck aims to change students' mind-sets by showing them that their intelligence can grow through deliberate work. The goal is to build up students' resilience and prepare them for adversity. Students who come to see themselves as the masters of their own destiny can take advantage of opportunities to learn, but they might need guidance in understanding the power they hold in determining their own fate.

**Article 2:** “Factors Influencing College Students' Motivation” written by Ibtesam Halawah and published in 2011 in the journal *Education* on pp. 379-380 in volume 132, issue 2

Researchers typically ask how best to motivate students from an instructor's perspective in order to develop new methods that might increase students' motivation. However, this study focuses on the student's perspective. Students generally wish that instructors understood that a particular college course is just one part of a student's life (Luce, 1990). They are taking other courses, making friends, participating in activities, and even taking care of families. Given the multi-faceted nature of their lives, motivating students to do well in their studies should be a fundamental goal of every instructor. Therefore, by considering student motivation from the student's own perspective, we can identify what they believe to be the most important factors in inspiring students to take ownership in their own learning endeavors.

Results show that three main factors account for more than 50% of the variance between highly-motivated students and their less-motivated peers. This study found that a teacher's personal qualities were the most important factor in motivating students. According to Brewer & Burgess (2005),

college teachers should maintain a positive attitude toward students. Teachers who were open-minded, friendly, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable about students' names and interests demonstrated several of the personal qualities that motivated students the most. The second most important factor was methodology. We found that students tuned out instructors who relied solely on lecturing. Using a variety of methods in the classroom pushed students to participate more actively in their learning. Effective materials and activities cited by the participants included case studies, role plays, experiments, and focus groups. Classroom management and organizational skills were found to be the third most important factor in motivating students. Participants suggested that an instructor should create a safe and open learning environment in the classroom to facilitate learning. Establishing a climate of understanding and acceptance among students satisfies learners' psychological needs and allows them to freely share ideas and creatively solve problems (Boekaerts, 2002). Plus, students reported that learned from instructors that were organized. The students were more likely to be prepared for class and work harder toward their goals if their instructors exhibited the same behavior.

Teachers often believe they know what is best for their students, and they are often right. But in the extreme, this attitude can be harmful. By seeing the classroom from a student's view, educators can be more responsive to their students' various learning styles and motivate them to be more successful learners.

### **Essay Question**

Educators often cannot understand why some students perform below their abilities. Why do some students lack motivation and underperform? What strategies can teachers implement to motivate students to work harder and perform better in their classes? Write a multi-paragraph essay of approximately 400-500 words defending your position. Use evidence from the articles as support and to demonstrate your ability to cite sources. You may also incorporate general knowledge and your personal experience to support your thesis. Use the publication details at the top of each article and the APA style guide provided to cite the sources properly and create a references list at the end. Do not skip lines.

*Seeking strategies for better education has been an interesting issue in education field. In order to increase students' motivation and achievement, several strategies have been suggested through various researches. I argue that positive feedback, various methods for learning, and comfortable class atmosphere can contribute to increase students' motivation.*

*Kirp (2016) claimed that students' positive attitudes can affect both students' motivation and academic performance. To promote students' interest on learning, Kirp (2016) suggested three strategies developed by other researchers. The three strategies were related to the importance of changing students' beliefs towards their own ability and value. Through two examples which are introduced by Kirp (2016), we can recognize how teachers' positive comments are important for students' motivation. However, Kirp (2016) emphasized that "students who come to see themselves as the masters of their own destiny can take*

advantage of opportunities to learn, but only if those opportunities exist" (p. 2).

The other researcher Halawah (2011) asserted that knowing influential factors that can increase students' motivation is important. Especially, Halawah (2011) emphasized that viewing those factors as "students' perspective" (pp. 379-380) is important. According to Erickson's (1978) research, teacher's ability was identified as most influential factor for students. Based on other studies, Halawah (2011) introduced three strategies for increasing academic interest of students. Halawah (2011) noted that teacher's positive comments, variety of teaching methods, and building cozy environment are necessary for students.

In my opinion, giving helpful feedback, using several teaching methods, and making comfortable class atmosphere can occur positive mind from students. Therefore, I believe this positive mind set can stimulate students' interest towards learning, students can develop their own idea and opinion during the process of getting feedback. Also, they can be encouraged positively via teachers' helpful direction. In addition, when students learn difficult context in their class, they can more concentrate on their work with interest when variety of methods were using in class.

In conclusion, students motivation can be stimulated by several ways. However, the most important thing is students and teachers are cooperating each other to make better outcomes.

### References

Kirp, D.L. (2016, October 30). How to nudge students to succeed. *New York Times*, p. 2L

Halawah, I. (2011) Factors influencing college students' motivation to learn from students' perspective. *The Journal of Education*, 132 (32), 379-380.