Why Motivation is not Enough: Lessons on Self-Efficacy and Student Success

NACADA Presenter: Cynthia Wong, Ed.D, Tatiana Leavitt, Brigham Young University
TennACADA Presenter: Jake Roberts

“Self-efficacy is defined as the levels of confidence individuals have in their ability to execute courses of action in regards to initiating behavior, how much effort will be applied to attain an outcome, and the level of persistence applied to the task in the face of difficulties and setbacks.” (Lane and Lane, 2001)

Internal Factor, sociocultural factors and environmental factors all lead to motivated behaviors.

How do you measure motivation?
Actions speak louder than words
Best indicator is action.

-Choice of behavior
-Level of activity and involvement
-Persistence and management of effort

“One’s sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges.”

4 factor influencing self-efficacy
1) Affective feelings
2) Vicarious experiences
3) Performance feedback
4) Mastery experience (success with previous tasks)

1) Provide Students with clear knowledge of the task at hand.

- Help students figure out the exact GPA needed to improve academic standing.
- Help students prioritize and plan by analyzing the course syllabi, assignment descriptions, and class schedules schedule.
- Conduct a mid-semester assessment to determine specific areas of improvement in each of the graded categories for the course.
2) Establish specific, short-term goals that will challenge the students, yet are still viewed as attainable.

- Help students develop micro-goals that are based on specific behaviors (class attendance, how many hours they plan to spend on campus, how many review sessions/TA sessions they want to attend rather than performance-based goals ("I want to get an A in the class")

3) Encourage students to observe other people’s success and experience. If possible, introduce them to others who have succeeded before.

- Encourage students to join peer groups/pair up with successful students, work with peers who have taken the course before.
- “What would the ideal student do?” “What separates your performance from the ideal student?”

4) Help students develop a network of people who will support them and offer encouragement.

5) Have students show evidence of work they have passed before.

- Reflect on students’ most successful habits or best practices that they’ve incorporated that semester.

- Have the student “show and tell” something they have been successful at and break down the steps to see if they can use the same formula in other situations.

6) Help students lay out a specific learning strategy and have them verbalize a plan. As students proceed through the task, ask students to note their progress and verbalize the next steps.

- After developing a plan with students, discuss: “What do you plan on doing from here?” “Walk me through the next steps.” “Show me how you would do it.”