Achievement Goal Orientations

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How can I model achievement goals in the classroom?

Achievement goal orientations refer to students' general tendencies for approaching, engaging in, and evaluating their academic progress and performance in achievement contexts.

The two common achievement goal orientations are **Mastery goals**, which are learning goals that focus on mastering new skills and gaining increased understanding, and **Performance goals**, which focus on doing better than others and demonstrating competence. The two goal orientations are further distinguished as **approach** and **avoidance** tendencies.

	MASTERY	PERFORMANCE
APPROACH	Focus on mastering a task *(Eddy wants to understand how a machine works.)*	Focus on outperforming others *(Taylor wants to impress others with his presentation.)*
AVOIDANCE		Focus on avoiding looking incompetent or worse than others *(Austin stays quiet for fear that asking questions makes him appear dumb in front of his classmates.)*
	Self or task-reference	**Other-referenced**

Note* *Italics indicate example of the goal type*

➤ **Mastery** and **performance goals** are not mutually exclusive, and students may have more than one simultaneous goal.

➤ **Mastery goals** generally foster positive emotions, help develop interest and motivation for learning, encourage cooperative learning, and allow for deeper cognition. In an environment that promotes mastery, students with low self-efficacy are less likely to be left behind. **Performance-approach goals** can lead to pride, whereas **performance-avoidance goals** tend to be related to negative outcomes, such as anxiety, shame, and hopelessness. As such, teachers could structure classroom environments that promote **mastery goals**.

Structuring Classroom Environments That Promote Mastery Goals: The TARGET Approach

➤ The **TARGET** approach was developed by Carole Ames (1992). It suggests that teachers can organize structures within learning environments so as to promote mastery goals and benefit student learning and development.

Tasks
- Design tasks that involve variety and diversity.
- Ensure that tasks are interesting and challenging
- Emphasize personal relevance and meaninfulness

Authority
- Allow students choices guided by interest.
- Allow students to have a voice in establishing priorities in task completeion, method of learning, or pace of learning.
- Support students in developing independent thinking and self-regulation.

Recognition
- Recognize students' progress and accomplishments, especially for low-confident students.
- Give positive feedback that focuses on personal improvement & showcase how to grow from this.
- Give equal opportunity to receive rewards that focus on efforts, progress, and meaninful aspects of performance.

Grouping
- Allow students to work in cooperative learning groups.
- Make grouping flexible and heterogeneous

Evaluation
- Evaluate students based on personal progress and individual mastery.
- Give students opportunitieis to regain points by correcting mistakes.
- Keep evaluations informative and private between teacher, student, and guardian(s)

Time
- Accommodate students' time needs to learning tasks.
- Allow students to schedule timeframes for their improvement.

Resources

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