Achievement Goal Orientations

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 meaningfulness

Authority
- Allow students choices guided by interest.
- Allow students to have a voice in establishing priorities in task completion, 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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Compiled by Kristi Bright, Ngan Tran, Jati Ariati, and Lina Beatriz Barrero-Molina