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Promoting Lifelong Learning by Building Autonomous Learners

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In this era of relentless change, education in the twenty-first century must strive to develop learners to be self-directed so that they have the drive to create their own future. In light of this, schools need to create learning environments that encourage self-determination and lifelong learning. The commitment to student engagement should be encouraged as the "know-how" that is central to the development of autonomous and lifelong learners. Lifelong learning can be simply defined as learning throughout the span of life. The realization of lifelong learning or the continued "learning to learn" mindset depends to a large degree on an individual's capacity and motivation for learning.

The title of this book, *Building Autonomous Learners: Perspectives from Research and Practice Using Self-Determination Theory*, reflects the intent of lifelong learning and how to prepare lifelong learners of the twenty-first century. This book was conceptualized as an effort to translate motivational theories into classroom strategies to promote lifelong learning and develop autonomous learners. The chapters of this book provide both theoretical and practical perspectives on motivation and issues in education across global contexts.

This book focuses on how to promote student motivation and it is divided into four main areas: self-determination theory (SDT), SDT-based research, dualistic model of passion, and achievement goal theory framework. Essentially, the chapters of this book help us understand that lifelong learning is a dynamic concept as it encompasses motivation, passion, and mindset. This book argues that teachers, parents, as well as school leaders need to communicate and collaborate effectively to assist students develop into autonomous learners.

Chapter 1 of the book provides an overview of the contents. Chapters 2 advances the theory of self-determination and why it is the key framework for human motivation. It highlights two main aspects: autonomous motivation and basic psychological needs satisfaction in the field of education. Schools are important loci for nurturing students' autonomous learning and supporting students' basic psychological needs. Autonomous approaches (e.g., autonomy-supportive teaching) are advantageous over the controlling approaches for educational outcomes. Finally, policymakers and administrators should support teachers putting SDT approach into classroom practice.

Chapter 3 introduces the concept of passion and its relevance to the field of education. This chapter conceptualizes passion as a dualistic model (i.e., obsessive and harmonious) and how teachers and principals can promote passion in schools. Teachers can help students engage in classroom learning by developing their harmonious passion. This chapter also stresses the role that principals play in developing their teachers' passion so that teachers will be passionate about their subject teaching. As such, teachers can greatly influence their students to develop their passion in school subjects and experience the joy of mastery that is inherent to lifelong learning.

Chapters 4 to 8 illustrate teachers' motivational behaviours and their autonomy-supportive teaching to promote autonomous motivation in students. These five chapters provide pedagogical and educational practices in order to help students feel autonomous and embrace a mindset for

lifelong learning. The strength of this book lies in Chapter 7 whereby six empirically validated autonomy-supportive instructional behaviours are stated. They are: (1) taking students' perspective, (2) vitalizing inner motivational resources, (3) providing explanatory rationales, (4) acknowledging and accepting negative affect, (5) using informational, non-pressuring language, and (6) displaying patience support optimal classroom conditions to foster student autonomous learning.

Chapters 9 and 10 illustrate the importance of parental involvement and influence on student learning and development outcomes. Based on SDT framework, parents play a key role in facilitating children's motivation and their school success. Parents who empower their children to learn tend to create a welcoming environment that supports their children's learning and nurtures their intrinsic resources.

Chapters 11 and 12 address how autonomy-supportive environments can enhance positive learning for students and improve students' performance. Regardless of classroom contexts, an autonomy-supportive environment facilitates the attitudes and motivation in students to make informed choices and sustain their learning outside the school. It is, therefore, essential for students to experience active and autonomous learning, which are precedent of lifelong learning.

Chapter 13 shares findings of a research study on how SDT is associated with Information and Communications Technology integration in schools. The application of Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, e-portfolios, and YouTube has improved students' self-determined motivation and self-regulated learning. However, teachers need to create a safe learning environment within the provision of Web 2.0 tools to promote students' autonomous learning. Lastly, Chapters 14 and 15 address how achievement goal theory can promote student motivation and mastery for learning. Mastery goals, which refer to the development of personal competence, have adaptive roles in student learning outcomes such as engagement and affect. Performance goals focus on personal accomplishment relative to others and are maladaptive with student learning outcomes. As a result, teachers should encourage students to endorse mastery goals towards learning.

Theoretically and practically, this book is a great addition to the literature of motivation and lifelong learning in many aspects. First, it approaches the concept of self-determination theory from both teaching and learning perspectives; the essence of motivation and the contributions to autonomous learning. Practical teaching strategies are included to help learners develop their mastery goals and passion in learning. Second, teacher professional development is also important and basic principles for building this aspect in terms of teaching strategies and teacher skills are included. Third, arguments and empirical findings in the book contents are academically significant, presenting in-depth reflections from researchers and educators which serve as a bridge between research and practice. Fourth, the book provides future directions for the field of education and lifelong learning.

Based on a pragmatic and philosophical inquiry, "Why do we need to promote lifelong learning in schools?" The answer to this question is, lifelong learning is essential to individual cognitive learning and incremental development. Building autonomous learners and embracing the mindset for lifelong learning are vital to the unforeseen challenges in this fast-paced global economy. It is, therefore, important to highlight the responsibility of educators and parents to cultivate lifelong learning and build autonomous learners. Last but not least, as much as we hope to nurture our students as lifelong learners, we need to empower our teachers to be lifelong learners first.