

The Desire to Know: Arnold's Contribution to a Psychological Conceptualization of Academic Motivation

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Abstract : Arnold's redefinition of human motives can sustain a psychology of education which emphasizes the beauty of knowledge and the exercise of intellectual functions. Thus, education instead of focusing on skills and learning by doing would be centered on "the widest reaches of the human spirit". One way to attain it is by developing children's inherent interest. Arnold takes into account the fact that the desire to know is the inherent interest which leads students to explore and learn. She also emphasizes the need of exercising human functions as thinking, judging and reasoning. According to Arnold, the influence of psychological theories of motivation in education has derived in considering that all learning and school tasks should derive from children's needs and impulses. The desire to know and the curiosity have not been considered as basic and active as any instinctive drive or basic need, so there has been an attempt to justify and understand how biological drives guide student's learning. However, understanding motives and motivation not as a drive, an instinct or an impulse guided by our basic needs, but as a want that leads to action can help to understand, from a psychological perspective, how teachers can motivate students to learn, strengthening their desire and interest to reason and discover the whole new world of knowledge.

Keywords : academic motivation, interests, desire to know, educational psychology, intellectual functions

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