

# ENHANCING STUDENT MOTIVATION AND CREATIVITY THROUGH **CINEMATIC EDUCATION WORKSHOPS**

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**Abstract:** Cinematic art, as one of the most diverse art forms, underscores the importance of integrating motivation and creativity into the educational process. Since the absence of motivation can complicate even the simplest tasks, understanding how to effectively apply motivation within the educational environment is essential. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are not necessarily in conflict; they can coexist and interact, producing favourable outcomes in the teaching and learning process. Recognizing these facts, it becomes crucial to incorporate game-based and playful elements into cinematic educational workshops to stimulate student's creativity. Practical exercises including such initiatives play a significant role in enhancing children's imagination. Therefore, this study explores the realm of film pedagogy, with a specific emphasis on the power of fostering creativity and motivation.

**Keywords:** cinematic educational workshops, motivation, creativity, cinema, film pedagogy.

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## Introduction

The cinematic art represents one of the most diversified arts, revealing the motivation and creativity and taking a position of interdependence with the freedom of speech. Since ancient times, the film producers have needed a significant period to become aware that their activity is actually an artistic manifestation. The product of Hugo Munsterberg "The Photoplay: A Psychological Study" (1916) marked out the first attempt of including the film in the category of art (Gaut, 2002).

First of all, the cinematography offers a wide landscape of unique experiences that may nourish the creativity of pupils and extend the thinking horizon. From educational perspective, the seventh art may be expressed by a pure singularity with motivation and creativity, since films fundamentally represent a source of creative inspiration and explore heterogeneous experiences. Therefore, the motivation symbolises a key factor in the film pedagogy and represents a primordial component, closely related to the efficiency of the teaching methods and teaching process.

With a view to acquire motivation and, implicitly, creativity, it is necessary a thorough understanding of the key issues of such essential components related to learning process. Since the motivation of pupils represents a fundamental need positioned on base of the current education system, it is essential to discover the factors that motivate or discourage the pupils in the learning process (Șerbănescu et al, p. 120).

***From Theory to Practice: Understanding and Applying Motivation***

In discussions of motivation, it is typically associated with a strong and unwavering enthusiasm that drives the execution of envisioned actions. The motivation derives from the existence of some eloquent stimuli that determine the individual to express interest and perseverance in achieving the objective, to provide them with the motivation necessary to successfully progress through the stages associated with the attainment of such objectives. In this context, when we discuss about the motivation of pupils, we implicitly allude to the establishment of goals as well. Considering this, the initiation of the process is characterized by the shaping of the objective, followed by the establishment of a conducive psychological state to facilitate the attainment of the target.

The etymology of the notion of “motivation” may be identified by derivation from Latin of the verb “movere”, meaning “to move”. Consequently, the motivation makes us “move” and to “direct” in a particular direction. Briefly, we may define this powerful force as an inner initiative to successfully achieve our pre-established targets. Brophy defines the motivation as “a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour” (Brophy, 1998, p. 3).

In the classroom context, considering the aforementioned issues, it becomes evident that the motivation of pupils constitutes a crucial element that should be centred in the teaching process. In this respect, it is noticed that motivation supports the pupils in focusing on specific objectives. From this perspective, distraction becomes more difficult if the pupils set a tangible target. Considering this example, integrating motivation on a subconscious level involves behaviours aimed at executing plans and results in enthusiasm, initiative, curiosity, determination, and appreciation for one’s efforts. Elliott, Hufton, Willis and Illushin (2005) present an intriguing perspective on motivation and closely associate it with attribution theory. More specifically, the attribution theory was studied by other several researchers, analysing thoroughly the studies related to educational performance and represents a fundamental method practiced by several individuals who are constantly trying to understand both their environment and themselves. In this context, the individuals are trying to find an explanation to every small thing that happen to them and to each action undertaken. An example in this respect may include failing an exam that may be correlated to the incapacity of a pupil to learn, the lack of luck or the incapacity of the teacher to adjust its curriculum. On the other side of the spectrum, in case of a favourable event, such as obtaining an excellent result to an exam, the same attribution theory will be applied to explain success (Elliott et al, 2005, p. 17). We therefore notice how the motivation process

of pupils represented and represents further on a sinuous road that needs an exhaustive debate in the complex academic context.

Besides the foregoing, the researches have demonstrated that there is no strategy of solid and functional motivation applicable to all typologies of pupils. Nevertheless, it is noticed the presence of some functional strategies, however, it does not certify their long-term success. Moreover, it is fundamental to notice that every pupil has individual scopes, particular needs and distinct preoccupations, as well as variable levels of empathy towards different contexts and situations. Consequently, it denotes that every pupil is unique and, consequently, it may be motivated by distinct methods (Fluke et al, 2015). In the light of such issues, how may we motivate the pupils in order to maintain a proper level of involvement and perseverance? How can we emphasize the power of cinematic education workshops so as to obtain satisfying results? Which are the key ingredients that may be included in the paradigm of film pedagogy?

When the teachers are motivating the pupils during the classes, the pupils are immersed in an environment specific to their own personal development and creativity, by applicative exercises or debates. Therefore, they are supported to acquire different motivational behaviours including collaboration and teamwork, development of curiosity and building realistic objectives, increase of the interest level, behavioural modifications, as well as the development of some general or specific skills:

In the classroom context, the concept of student motivation is used to explain the degree to which students invest attention and effort in various pursuits, which may or may not be the ones desired by their teachers. Student motivation is reflected in the motives and goals they strive to achieve, and is rooted in their subjective experiences, especially those connected to their willingness to engage in learning activities and their reasons for doing so. (Wentzel et al, 2014, p. 3)

Building upon the aforementioned points, it becomes evident that the professor plays a pivotal role in shaping the development of the students from the early stages of their academic formation. Under the guidance of the teacher, the children may develop their own behaviour, acquiring new interests and skills or they may improve the existing skills. It is vital to encourage the pupil during all learning stages since they learn the power of their own dreams and may develop a behaviour governed by optimism and ambition. As an example, we notice that contemporary society is creating pupils liable to abandon their own dreams too early, as a consequence of not being encouraged enough by parents or even by

the teacher. The pupil may develop its own skills during cinematic workshops, however, the absence of motivation and confidence offered by the teacher may contribute to an easy waste of a potential talent. Therefore, discouragement interferes as an element on which the absence of motivation relies.

Yair (2000) has analysed in time the experiences of dozens of students from several schools in United States of America. He investigates in his studies, on empiric level, the consequences of authentic teaching on pupils in the USA schools. One of the areas investigated is the authentic teaching that generates the ambition of pupil and the development of some skills that lead to the pupil autonomy. With respect to the study results, we notice that, when the teacher has properly educated the pupil and relied on teaching based on options and challenging from the perspective of skills, the pupils recorded more satisfying results. When such factors are not introduced in the teaching process, the study reveals depressive and disinterested pupils (Yair, 2000, p. 191-210).

Based on such findings, the teacher must support the pupils and encourage them to enjoy their own potential, to challenge them, to determine them to experience the power of subconsciousness and consciousness. Hence, we encounter motivation once more, which plays a significant role in the people's development from the early stages of their academic journey. When we deal with an unmotivated pupil, it is often noticed a lack of enthusiasm and the absence of a specific objective. In this context, it may be noticed the occurrence of an improper behaviour as well that may generate challenges both for the teacher, for the pupil itself and for the other pupils. Considering the foregoing, as well as the results of Yair's research (2000), we notice how structuring the instruction of teacher influences the learning experiences of pupils:

The findings suggest that the structures of instruction that disaffect students are overwhelmingly represented in students' daily school life; those that spark their hearts are not frequent enough to motivate students. They also imply that students do not have a general tendency to be emotionally depressed in school; rather, they perceive their experiences to be highly influenced by specific structural characteristics of instruction. (Yair, 2000)

From the didactic, it is noticed a high degree of difficulty in generating the motivation of pupils, as well as in structuring a training favourable for the stimulation of ambition. The studies of Dweck (2003) have a strong foundation that emphasizes the cultivation of a growth mindset. The researcher views education as a path to evolution and continuous learning, rather than as a linear process. This

contributes to the development of thinking process and, concurrently, facilitates the restructuring of previous knowledge, leading to heightened awareness. In the light of such issues, the pupils will no longer experience feelings related to disappointment in the academic environment and will turn the challenges into beneficial experiences, by stimulating the optimistic mindset. More specifically, the pupils will manage to consider critically their own actions and to turn them into experiences beneficial for their own personal development. Dweck (2003) offers an interesting perspective about the challenges that may be applied in the wide academic context:

People in a growth mindset don't just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch. And nowhere can it be seen more clearly than in the world of sports. You can just watch people stretch and grow. (Dweck, 2003, p. 11)

Nonetheless, it is still noticed the presence of pupils with rigid mindset, characterised by a lack of orientation towards deviation from conventional. This typology of pupils finds it difficult to accept an educational failure and focus mainly on immediate and implicit acknowledgement, on immediate visible results. In order to illustrate this phenomenon, it is important to mention a study of literature, namely *The Marshmallow Test*, that may represent a potential subject of debate in the classroom, to instil in the mind of pupils the importance of motivation and to prove them the role of delayed gratification. In this context, we refer to the prestigious study led by the psychologist Walter Mischel, professor at the University of Stanford, in 1970, that analyses the power of delayed gratification. In this paper, it is demonstrated that such children that have resisted temptation and did not seek only for immediate results, have experienced more generous results during their lives:

From the age of antiquity, to the Enlightenment, to Freud, to the present day, young children have been characterized as impulsive, helpless, unable to delay gratification, and seeking only immediate satisfaction. With those naive expectations, I was surprised as I watched each of my three closely spaced daughters, Judith, Rebecca, and Linda, change in their first few years of life. They quickly morphed from mostly gurgling or screaming, to learning in exquisite detail to annoy one another and enchant their parents, to becoming people with whom one could have fascinating, thoughtful conversations. (Walter, 2014)

We often notice how children find it difficult to observe the norms of adults. In this context, it is incontestable that this situation also applies to the didactic process and the prestigious study *The Marshmallow Test* illustrates a marshmallow put in front of some children who were told that they could receive another marshmallow if they waited 15 minutes. The test represented a useful tool in analysing the mind of children and how they use their cognitive tools to resist temptation. Consequently, after 15 minutes, it was noticed that some children did not resist the temptation at all and ate the marshmallow whereas others tried to hide that they have taken a bite of it. On the other hand, those who resisted temptation received gratifications. The study demonstrates that those children who passed the test, obtained more satisfying results in life. We therefore notice the importance of proper training of children, of teaching them what waiting and patience mean to acquire subsequently a more developed self-controlling skill and to discover the benefits of delayed gratification.

Therefore, returning to our study, it is necessary to contribute to the restructuration of pupil's mindset and prove them that such fixed mindset focused on rejection of failure and immediate results, is not beneficial. In order to avoid being vulnerable to the above-mentioned behaviours, it is necessary that the pupils enjoy appreciation and be guided to the development of thinking process, in order to become more cooperative and resistant. The encouragement and appreciation represent vital components in the learning process and increase the critical mindset and certain connections and modifications occur on brain level (as it may be noticed in the practical activities carried out during the cinematic educational workshops like: analysis of a silent movie, study of character or storyboarding technique). Despite the external factors (material situation or home environment), the encouragement, ambition and understanding capacity of pupils increase cooperation and the challenges will be faced in a much more open manner. Nevertheless, the curriculum of the teacher as well as the attractive learning materials represent a significant factor in the learning process:

Teaching engaging lessons is a „baseline reward” expectation of students. Boring lessons will not help students to develop their intrinsic motivation to learn. That does not mean, however, that teachers have to put on costumes and become entertainers. It can, however, suggest that teachers consider keeping lecturing to a minimum and, instead, use many of the teaching strategies that have been found to be more effective for student learning. (Ferland, 2011)

### ***The Intersection of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation***

Moreover, the teachers are generally dealing with pupils that experience two kinds of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. For the sake of illustration, the intrinsic motivation exists within a person. On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation comes often from external sources. As for the pattern of intrinsic motivation, this motivation typology often appears on early age, when the child develops a natural curiosity. We notice, for instance, a pupil with intrinsic motivation when, during a cinematic educational workshop, it is motivated and evolves, the teacher not needing to apply stimulants or punishments. The future activities will be exclusively carried out to intensify its satisfaction and pleasure during the activity process. In this respect, the motivation becomes a toll of pupil's work and not of a person or its decisions (National Guide, 2023). Consequently, more relevant behaviours will be observed among pupils with intrinsic motivation, leading to more favourable study results.

In the context of extrinsic motivation, according to several studies, it may be reached easier than the intrinsic motivation. However, the extrinsic methods are frequently used by the teachers to stimulate the intrinsic motivation. For the sake of illustration, when a teacher organises, during a cinematic educational workshop, a creative activity (e.g. character study), it will be noticed that the majority of pupils are motivated only by the gratifications acquired after the end of the exercise or by certain prizes. A representative didactic activity could include the selection of a movie character and scenario rewriting to turn the selected character into a protagonist. The active participation of pupils to the cinematic educational workshops is often determined as well by the interest in the topic of each workshop. Due to the general framework of the previously mentioned exercise, the pupils will have the opportunity to understand the development of characters, the construction of storyline, the primordial elements of cinematic language. Moreover, if the teachers include in the teaching methods strong tools (enthusiasm, relevant and organised materials, actual examples, verified and easy to understand, proper difficulty level, construction of a strong relation between the teacher and pupils, diversified learning duties), the chances to increase the motivation of participants to the course are higher (Coman, 2021).

In the past, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were considered opposed concepts. When extrinsic factors were identified (such as external gratifications to encourage the accomplishment of duties), for the stimulation of certain duties, it is noticed a trend of reduction of intrinsic motivation of the individual to complete such duties. Nevertheless, the recent searches suggest that these two



kinds of motivation may coexist independently. In other words, an individual may simultaneously possess high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, have low levels of both, or exhibit high motivation in one action while being less motivated in another. Such notion is supported by a wide meta-analysis of four decades of research on motivation. According to such analysis, stimulants like strong extrinsic motivators, if properly managed, do not have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation (Fluke et al., 2015, p. 3).

Under such circumstances, it is necessary that every teacher reveals both the factors related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in order to encourage and improve the results of pupils. In the context of delayed gratification previously analysed, we may come with an argument related to gratification, offered by Professor Frédéric Guay, specialist in motivation from Laval University of Quebec. The researcher considers vital that the professors focus mainly on the quality of their relationship with pupils and not only on gratification. Despite the fact that there may be an apparent lack of empathy comparatively to the previously mentioned pattern, the pupils keen on knowledge will register the same favourable effects as those with a marked intrinsic motivation. Consequently, it is necessary that the professors support the pupils in the communication process and respect their freedom to speech.

### ***Motivation and Creativity: A Symbiotic Partnership***

First of all, there is a strong relationship between creativity and motivation and the two components represent a significant vector in the educational process. Since the factors previously mentioned are positioned in interdependence, it is noticed that they have a high degree of mutual influence. For the sake of illustration, we may analyse the intrinsic motivation. We will notice that, as this motivation becomes more visible among the pupils, their creativity will be more marked. On the other hand, we have the extrinsic motivation that often relies on gratification or punishment. This kind of motivation involves a low creativity degree. Therefore, we face a wide range of perspectives that may improve or slow down the educational process of pupils.

Starko (2022) discusses, in his recent study, the three factors of creativity in an educational context. The first factor involves establishing an environment conducive to the development of skills and attitudes. The other two crucial factors encompass incorporating creative approaches into the curriculum and cultivating a conducive and creative atmosphere in the classroom (Starko, 2022):

Both approach motivation and optimism are associated with challenge appraisals, cognitive flexibility, excitement, and intrinsic motivation,

which are conducive to high levels of creativity. Intuitively, we may therefore expect the combination of approach motivation and optimism to be optimal for creativity. (Ickson et al, 2007-2015)

In addition, creativity has been studied since antiquity by researchers, within a wide range of fields. Depending on the typology of creativity acts, it is necessary to acquire certain experience in heterogenous specialisation fields. Consequently, despite that an individual may be creative in a field, this is not a guarantee of the same creativity degree in another field (Griffith et al, p. 137). For instance, if a pupil is extremely skilful in conceiving short film scenarios, this does not mean that it will be equally creative in conceiving marketing strategies for a product.

Creativity is often acquired by games also representing a strong tool of motivation of pupils. James (2019) considers that both the notion of “play” and “game” are often used interchangeably, despite that, from grammar perspective, these two words are not synonyms. James (2019) perceives games like activities mainly based on strict rules. On the other hand, the researcher considers the game a means of expression, freedom and openness and builds a visible connection between game and creativity:

Similarly, play and creativity are often conflated, and yet they are not identical in meaning; play is not necessarily creative, not is creativity always playful. They have much in common, being experiences all can enjoy, being stimulating, energising and freeing; one which can take you beyond yourself. (James, 2019, p. 7)

In the light of such facts, it is essential to introduce the game and play in the cinematic educational workshops in order to arise the pupils' creativity. The practical exercises involved in such initiatives contribute to fostering children's imagination. Therefore, by applicative exercises (execution of a short film or video), the pupils have the opportunity to creatively express themselves and to develop a unique style. Consequently, we witness a process of stimulation of love for art and a potential future focused on creative industries. The creative mindset may be developed, taught and learned during the cinema workshops through co-curriculum. Bill & Spencer (2019) analyse in a study of creative mindset the 5 dimensions of creative mindset: *imaginative, inquisitive, persistent, disciplined, collaborative*. Such dimensions offer a wide perspective on creativity and are applicable to several activities and fields (Bill, Spencer, 2017).

## ***Educational Cinema Workshops: Shaping the Future of Film and Education***

The cinematic education represents a significant vector in the education of pupils and necessary to the contemporary education system. For the sake of illustration, the skills and knowledge acquired have a mutual relation with the development of creativity and motivation, vital elements in the cinematographic universe. The film pedagogy is characterised by the application of theoretical knowledge in the practical exercises and entails the collaboration and team work, indispensable in the process of development of creative thinking capacity. It is necessary for the subjects of the current education system to place greater emphasis on practical exercises and collaboration. In this regard, the pupils will experience high creativity and engage in projects with a higher degree of complexity. In order to understand the need of practice in schools through cinema educational workshops, the teacher may organise a range of applicative exercises that may intensify the motivation and creativity of pupils.

Therefore, it is vital to understand the utility of practical exercises in the learning process, since they contribute to the application of theoretical knowledge studied and contribute to a more efficient and durable assimilation of it. Furthermore, through exercise, one can identify the types of skills that characterise pupils: technical or creative. In this context, the teacher may organise a range of exercises to support the pupils: watching a silent movie and analysing it, writing a scenario, creating sound effects, film analysis, character study, storyboarding techniques, acting techniques, photo-video workshops, montage workshops or film critics. The teacher may also provide a theoretical foundation to present career opportunities in the cinema industry, adaptations of books or dramas, and elements of cinema history.

The cinematic education may arise motivation even when it is not interactive. Consequently, the teacher may establish few means of understanding better the emotions of pupils and develop their technical skills, creativity and team work skill by: role play, debates, group discussions, games, creative projects, trips. Through such techniques, the pupils will understand the process of producing a cinema product, as well as the fact that the execution of such product involves a wide human resource. Therefore, *collaboration* may be learned by role play. The children may learn to communicate efficiently, to share ideas and delegate duties. Through the techniques mentioned earlier, the pupils will develop their skills and effectively communicate their unique vision in their projects. In this respect, they may create an original style of approaching the cinema product. Through teamwork, pupils have the opportunity to engage with different perspectives and

techniques. In a competitive cinematic environment, nurturing originality is a crucial skill that should be fostered right from the outset of their projects.

In addition, the exposure of pupils to different cinema products worldwide (films produced by different cultures) may contribute to the development of a consistent cultural understanding and intensification of their empathy. Consequently, through the educational cinema workshops, the teacher may contribute to the development of a more inclusive and more tolerant society. Another essential aspect involves building of self-confidence through practical exercises. Self-confidence enhances creativity and reduces the fear of failure among pupils. Through regular practical exercises, the teacher can foster an environment conducive to the development of skills relevant to a professional setting, thereby providing pupils with the opportunity to become familiar with an authentic work environment.

Consequently, pursuant to analysing the foregoing, it becomes evident that practice is crucial in cinema education. It offers the pupils the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, develop their skills, foster creativity and innovation, build self-confidence and present their own work. Schools must provide pupils with the resources and opportunities necessary for practice and for experiencing different techniques, preparing them for the challenges of the industry. Through regular practice, pupils may develop the skills and habits necessary to thrive in the competitive world of cinema, media and entertainment.

## ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, the cinema educational workshops represent a moving universe that metamorphoses the classical practices of pedagogy. Cinematography represents the opportune environment for the development of creativity and motivation of pupils and provides a wide landscape of unique experiences that may nourish the creativity of pupils and extend their mindset horizon.

Through the studies presented, we notice that the development of pupils is complex and the *Marshmallow* test may represent a significant tool to interpret the behaviour of children in the adult life. Although this psychological examination does not completely represent an indicator of success or failure, the test may provide a valuable perspective related to delayed gratification and an element of reference in the educational environment.

In the light of the arguments presented in the study, we notice that the pupils are immersed in an environment that prioritizes their personal development, motivation and creativity, through practical projects, role-playing, and debates. Within this context, the pupils are guided in developing a range of

motivating skills that demonstrate the power, influence, and practicality of these exercises in the field of film pedagogy. In summary, the introduction of interactive elements makes the teaching-learning process more engaging and fosters a deep appreciation for cinematic arts. Finally, by aligning teaching methods with the framework presented by Yair (2000), the teaching process may become more authentic, characterized by choices, challenges and efficiency.

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