

Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation (ILMC) Theory of Change

10BH's theory of change, Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation, has been bringing a new approach to learning since 2012. This document overviews Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation, how it works, and its effects.

What is Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation (ILMC)?

Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation is about searching for, revealing, and continuously learning about what a person senses is worth spending their time on for no other purpose or reason than to just learn.

When asked why he spent all his waking hours on a ramp attempting tricks with his BMX bike, famed BMX rider, inventor, and entrepreneur Mat Hoffman said he did it simply because he loved riding BMX bikes.

When a person learns what she loves, her motivation to learn is not driven by external stimuli, such as a parent's praise, good grades, competition among peers, a raise or promotion at work, or fear of having something taken away.

When asked about why Hoffman was so devoted to BMX riding, pro motocross racer Travis Pastrana said, "He's never doing it for the money or doing it for any other reason than he just truly enjoys what he does."

The drive to learn what one loves stems from a unique mental state that aims to develop specific types of skills, knowledge, understanding, information, etc. simply for the pleasure that increasing those agencies brings. **10BH calls this type of learning, intrinsic learning motivations (ILMs).**

When Hoffman was asked what made him build a ramp twice the height of any known ramp, he said, "Curiosity. Trying to go to sleep at night and having this thing appear in your head."

Intrinsic learning motivation has a **reinforcing effect**, meaning that as a person learns about what she is uniquely interested in, her appetite to learn continually grows. This increasing value for learning results in her spending more time acquiring skills, knowledge, abilities, etc. that she finds worthwhile. If a person continually spends time learning about what interests her, the outcomes usually far exceed the starting point.

What started as a childhood intrinsic motivation resulted in Hoffman pushing the boundaries of engineering by designing a ramp bigger than anyone had imagined, pushing the boundaries of physical ability by inventing tricks people thought were impossible, and starting businesses that helped to solidify the profession of BMX riding as an internationally recognized sport.

How does Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation work?

A learning program developed to cultivate a person's intrinsic learning motivations is structured fundamentally different from most educational approaches. Two fundamental differences are:

1. **Curriculum continuously emerges.** Curriculum is not based on predetermined learning expectations (e.g. reading and math standards, literacy skills, or interest in books). Instead, curriculum continuously emerges as the teacher learns more about and introduces material based on what intrinsically motivates the Learner.
2. **Learners drive lessons.** At any moment, a Learner may diverge from plans, rules, norms, or common pathways. The teacher uses specific skills to continuously create learning opportunities in response to where the Learner's interests guide her throughout a lesson.

In 10BH's learning program, the teacher has two main jobs:

1. Discover what the Learner is intrinsically motivated to learn about (ILMs).
2. Present opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge, abilities related to those ILMs.

The intrinsically motivated Learner will pick up where the teacher leaves off at the end of every lesson by continuing to **independently learn** in between lessons. 10BH named this process, "Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation", because when Learners are left with material they intrinsically value they will continue to engage with it and learn from it.

Put plainly, Learners who are continually given the opportunity to learn about what they love will eagerly spend so much time learning that they will acquire the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to succeed in school (and, life).

Is Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation producing the results it predicts?

As it concerns preschoolers, the age group 10BH has specialized in serving since 2012, there have been two main consequences of 10BH's Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation model:

1. Learners spend hundreds of hours learning about what they love
2. Learners develop many of the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to thrive in a classroom

Even after graduating 10BH, former Learners fly high in grade school:

1. As a group, they have **performed at or above grade level** in 12 subject areas measured by classroom teachers. This is in contrast to the fact that 80% of students in their school community are below grade level.
2. More spectacularly, **90% of 10BH graduates are English Language Learners.** More than 90% of English Language Learners in their community are below grade level, and throughout California, 80% of English Language Learners are below grade level.

To put a cherry on top, **10BH Learners live in high poverty school communities,** where poverty and school failure are higher and more systemic than any other type of school community in the US. From 2000-2013, the percentage of US students living in high poverty school communities doubled from 12 to 24 percent. (US Dept. of Education) Unconscionably, nearly 1 million high poverty students start kindergarten annually. (Ibid.) 10BH will end high poverty with its Intrinsic Learning Motivation Cultivation model.