Motivation Theory Reflection

<u>Personal Narrative: Why I want to be a teacher.</u> ("Welcome" statement in my portfolio)

My life story begins in Merrillville Indiana; however, in 2005, my family and I moved to Valparaiso, Indiana. I graduated from Washington Township High School with a class of only seventy-four. When I came to Ball State, I was very overwhelmed with the amount of people. It took some getting used to, but with the help classmates and my teachers, Ball State became my new home. I never truly knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, but I had somewhat of an idea when four boys came into my life.

In 2006, my aunt and uncle adopted four boys ages six, five, three, and one. Three of them have a disability. Over the years, I have watched my cousins grow academically, mentally, and socially. They have become who they are today because of how dedicated my aunt and uncle are to them and their amazing teachers. Being around the boys helped me realize how much I love being around children, but I did not know where I wanted to go from there.

During my senior year of high school, I was a cadet teacher. This was my first real experience with children who I did not know through family or friends. I taught science and social studies to five fourth graders with special needs. Each day I would walk over to the elementary school and go over vocabulary words with them and try to help them understand the concept behind them. Throughout the year, I realized those five children were the reason I woke up in the morning to go to school. I watched them grow not just academically, but also socially and behaviorally.

The first day I met them, none of them would look at me or talk to me. At the beginning, the one girl would always give me a death stare. She hated me and I never knew why. However, after half way through the school year, all of the children would talk my ear off and would also want my attention. The girl that hated me changed the most. She would always be the first one to hug me when I got into the classroom and the last one when I had to leave. Another big accomplishment was they would always try and impress me with the words they learned. We played this game where each child would ask another child a vocabulary word and try and stump the other person. This game allowed them not only to remember the word itself, but also the definition because they would have to tell me if the other person was correct or not.

On the last day of school when I was giving my hugs goodbye and fighting back tears, I knew I helped them grow academically, socially, and behaviorally. I knew that was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. My decision was finally made and I knew with a hundred and ten percent, I wanted to be a teacher to make a difference in children's lives.

Throughout my immersive learning opportunity, volunteering, and time teaching in the classrooms, I can say with confidence that I still feel the same way. My experiences have shaped who I am as a person and who I will be as a future teacher. There is still a lot I have to learn and I know some nights will be hard, but I know I am up for the challenge. I know that those challenges will only make a better teacher. Lastly, I know that I cannot wait to have my own classroom and make a difference every day.

<u>Theoretical Analysis</u>

Within my personal narrative of why I want to be a teacher, I used various motivation theories, including attribution, expectancy value, growth mindset, and goal orientation theory. Attribution theory is an explanation of how one believes he or she succeeded or failed. There are four types of attributions, including task difficulty, luck, effort, and ability. These attributions are then placed on three continuums. The continuums are locus, controllability, and stability. In my narrative, I showed attribution theory when I stated, "On the last day of school when I was giving my hugs goodbye and fighting back tears, I knew I helped them grow academically, socially, and behaviorally". This shows attribution theory because I knew that I was in control of my success through my efforts and ability.

Another theory I demonstrated was expectancy value theory. Expectancy value theory determines how much someone wants to achieve his or her goal. The overall value of the goal is decided upon the utility value and the attainment value minus the cost. The level of motivation a person has for their goal is determined by the overall value times the expectation for success. For example, if someone has a low value and low expectancy, then he or she will have low motivation. In my narrative, I demonstrated expectancy value theory when I stated, "My experiences have shaped who I am as a person and who I will be as a future teacher. There is still a lot I have to learn and I know some nights will be hard, but I know I am up for the challenge". My attainment value is how important it is for me to be a good teacher, my utility value is that teaching will be worth it, and the cost is having some hard nights of studying to become a better teacher. I also have high values and high expectations; therefore my motivation is high.

Additionally, I used growth mindset theory. Growth mindset theory is when a person knows that something is going to be challenging and he or she will have to put a lot of effort into it, but still wants to accomplish the task. In my narrative, I showed growth mindset theory when I stated, "I know that those challenges will only make a better teacher". This statement relates to growth mindset theory because I know that becoming a teacher is going to a challenge and I know that I will have to put effort into my work, but I still want to be a teacher.

Lastly, I demonstrated goal orientation theory in my narrative. Goal orientation theory is determining why someone is completing a goal. This theory is divided into three categories, including mastery, performance approach, and performance avoidance goals. A mastery goal is doing something to improve, a performance approach goal is doing something to look good, and a performance avoidance goal is doing something to avoid looking dumb. The best category that everyone wants to try and achieve is a mastery goal. In my narrative, I demonstrated goal orientation theory when I stated, "Lastly, I know that I cannot wait to have my own classroom and make a difference every day". This relates to goal orientation theory as a mastery goal because I want to help my future students learn more and make a difference every day.