

Coping with frustrated students: main strategies and their interpretation

Frustrated students often feel that they are in a helpless situation. Often they are already overloaded or frustrated by other problems in their studies (and personal) environment. Confronting new assignments and challenges with the associated pressures, conflicts, without resolving the existing issues, is a common source of negative attitudes, burnout and injury. When students are overloaded, it is difficult to accomplish goals without frustration and overwork, which will eventually cause harm if the individual does not take action to prevent injury. Repetitive strain injuries are a reality and the tissue damage resulting from them is permanent.

Biological scientist Hans Selye points out that repeatedly performing undesired work functions can promote harmful stress. An individual can avoid this emotional stress by selecting a work environment "which is in line with your innate preferences—to find an activity he likes and respects." He goes on to say, "Only thus the person can eliminate the need for frustrating constant readaptation that is the major cause of stress."

We will be providing analysis of coping with frustrated students on the basis of forming their frustration tolerance and effective interaction with them, but first, we would like to discuss a definition of frustration and frustration tolerance.

Frustration is an important phenomenon dealing with never ending human adjustment process. In the modern age, everybody is trying to supersede the other in education, position, prestige, money and so on. In the opinion of scientist Dollard, the fulfillment of a greater number of needs would require greater efforts and ability which will cause more barriers; consequently more frustration. Frustration is that condition which exists when a goal response suffers interference.

Frustration is the blocking of goal directed behavior. Personal frustration is produced by some personal characteristics of an individual; often a discrepancy between a person's level of aspirations and his or her capacity to perform. Environmental frustrations produced by something physical or by other people who prevent us from achieving our goals. Investigator Malavia stated that frustration

behavior lacks goal orientation, induces feeling of intensive deprivation, and has a different set of behavior mechanism which appears more or less senseless due to compulsive nature.

Karen & Weitz stated that frustrations have always been inevitable in human life. Its inevitability also consists in the fact that frustration is closely related with the problem of adjustment and can change personality development or growth.

Frustration is a never ending process of dealing with human adjustments. In other words, because of organic growth and changing external conditions, frustration is an integral part of life and therefore inevitable for all human beings. The efforts made to meet the needs would cause barriers and would produce frustration.

Frustration is an important phenomenon because it is closely related with the understanding of normal and abnormal behavior. Many psychologists like Freud, Wright, Alexander, Karen & Weitz; Sanford, Krech and Crutchfield and many others have focused the importance of frustration towards constructive side. Whether frustration plays both constructive and destructive role in life, depends upon the way an individual reacts to frustrating situation. The term constructive and destructive refer to adaptive and maladaptive reactions to frustration.

Considering the phenomenon of frustration, we can state that the individual who can stand a great deal of severe frustration without breaking down under the stressed conditions are said to have high frustration-tolerance. The term "breaking down" 'when goes into pieces' indicates maladaptive reactions to frustration. Different individuals show marked differences in the degree to which they are able to tolerate frustrating circumstances and wide variations also appear in the same individual at different times and under different kinds of stress. Speaking about factors influencing frustration thresholds we can point out health, level of distress, desperation and physical environment. We would analyze all of them individually below. There is a level of tension which the person can think rationally and act effectively. When tension increases above this point, efficiency breaks down, irrational thinking and expressive behaviour take the place of rational thinking and effective action. This point on the tension continuum is called the frustration

threshold. It varies from person to person and within the same person different times. Health: Optimum physical health produces a high frustration threshold. A sick or exhausted person has less energy to cope with tension and is more frustrated than one who is fit.

Distress. Frustration involved in conflict situation, is experienced as distress. The distress may take many specific forms. Their common ingredient is an unpleasant quality that the individual would like to terminate. In a situation where another individual is readily perceived as a deliberate agent of frustration. The predominant experience may be that of anger. The loss of a loved one is more likely to lead to an experience of grief condition that tend to undermine the sense of self-esteem or the favorable image that others have for one may elicit experiences that one can characterize as shame or embarrassment.

Desperations: Desperation refers to a state of lowered moral, diminished zest in living, and sense of hopelessness that lowers one's resistance to infection by genes, bacteria and viruses.

The Physical Environment blocks lie in restrictions imposed by external environment. Physical environment frustrates drastically, through difficult circumstances.

The Social Environment : According to Krech, Crutchfield&Ballachey the society sets up norms and social barriers which may serve to block the satisfaction of the individual wants. Indeed, a society may set goals whose attainments blocked by the very culture patterns and institutionalized ways characteristic of that society. Another way a society may present obstacles or making contradictory demands of its members.

Psychological Factor: Along with his many simultaneously active wants, man is remarkably complex. The wants of things often conflict, and the satisfaction of one may necessarily mean the blockage of other.

In the opinion of Krech and Cruthchfield the nature of the situation is such that the satisfaction of one need or demand may mean the disruption of others. The maladaptive reactions to frustration are of greatest importance to an understanding of

social. Especially the reactions to frustration are aggression, regression, withdrawal, repression, sublimation, rationalisation, artism and identification.

Analyzing the nature of frustration it has become clear that it is important for individuals (teachers) to form a high level of frustration tolerance on the basis of rational emotive and behavioral therapy and communicate their concerns and frustrations to management, and for management to be sensitive to, and aware of, employees' stress levels.

Frustrated students can develop coping strategies by training themselves to tolerate and master their frustrations. Frustration tolerance training derives from a common-sense observation. People have greater tolerance for frustration when they think of themselves as effective and efficient in facing and resolving frustration problems. In effect, frustration tolerance training involves learning people to clearly define frustrations, setting a course to manage or master them, then following that course. Stoically tolerating frustration has limited value, however, unless coupled with learning ways to master frustrations. People can live with a certain degree of unresolved frustrations, ambiguities, and inconveniences in their lives, so they don't have to face and resolve every frustration they experience. However, they should learn to recognize and deal with the relevant ones. To head into the waves of life students can use a frustration tolerance training process that involves:

1. Recognition of the frustration
2. Analysis of the frustration
3. Development of frustration management skills
4. Application of frustration management concepts
5. Utilization of feedback to improve coping skills

In this process students learn an awareness of the scope of their frustration problems; the implications of their actions; personal competencies that they use to deal with the frustration; the coordination between how they think, feel, and behave; self-inquiry; delaying gratification; and adding fresh ideas to their frustration management skills.

They need to get specific if they intend to problem-solve. A well-articulated question often sets the stage for that specificity. A well-defined problem allows them to decide the probable success of a proposed solution. But articulating a question that provides direction for a solution may prove mercurial and frustrating—most people do not train themselves to specify questions that clarify problems and provide a structure for their problem-solving efforts.

Once the problem gets pinned down, then a whole universe of problem-solving alternatives opens up. This planning included spelling out his objectives. Goals and objectives differ.

Goals define the end point against which you direct your efforts. Objectives represent the steps leading to the attainment of the goal. Each objective constitutes a minor end point that provides the platform for the next end point.

So far we considered preparing for change by identifying, clarifying, and defining problems. We considered how to generate problem-solving hypotheses, analyze the options, create plans, and organize for action. Next comes implementing and controlling this change process.

Implementing and controlling refer to putting the plan into action and monitoring progress. This stage involves some risk: The individual's plan may prove inadequate; as he commits much time to the undertaking; he exposes his wishes and desires; he allows himself to experience frustration; he has no guarantee that he will improve his conditions; and, he faces the possibility that his situation will get worse despite his best efforts. However, when he considers the alternative of inaction, implementation and risk-taking may seem like the preferred direction.

Knaus summarizes the following approach by introducing individuals several - points plan.

1. State the problem in general form.
2. Complete a SWLO analysis of the problem.
3. Use a variation of brainstorming to generate alternative ideas.
4. Present the problem in the form of a question.

5. Specify the meaning of the terms in your question to assure that you have a clear definition of key elements of the problem.

6. Avoid diluting your efforts by trying to solve more than one problem at a time—stick to your one main problem issue before going on to the next.

7. Describe how you will organize your problem-solving efforts by prioritizing your alternatives.

8. Be as empathetic as possible and relate to their anger.

9. Suspend all judgment

10. Genuinely strive to look at the situation through the other's eyes

11. Don't defend yourself. If it involves your actions, apologize sincerely and wait for the other person to calm down.

12. Listen, question, and paraphrase until another person indicates that you've understood their viewpoint.

13. With serious anger and/or repeated situations, refuse to deal with the angry person until the air has cleared. Come back when you and the other person are more calm and in the mood for rational discussion about the problem.

It is also highly recommended the usage of proper body language in dealing with frustrated students. You should relax your body and sit or stand side-by-side rather than across from the frustrated person, taking a similar stance (e.g., if they are sitting, you should sit; if they are standing, you should stand, lean forward, keep your voice low and your speech slow and evenly paced, make eye contact, nod, smile, and respond verbally to what they are saying so that they know you are listening. One more advice is a guide the discussion or dialogue.

As for this point in the list of recommendations it is important to determine the scope of the problem. Isaacs discusses the importance of distinguishing between discussion and dialogue. Discussion decomposes issues in order to make a decision. Dialogue is best used when considering new options, evaluating assumptions, and choosing alternatives. Dialogue is important when problems are large in scope, whereas discussion is generally adequate for resolving smaller individual problems.

As for developing a plan to handle problems in the future to this John Gray suggests that the words and interaction style you should use to empathize with male students is very different from those you should use with female ones at the university. Women tend to communicate on a personal level first and become impersonal when things become very heated, whereas men tend to communicate on an impersonal level first and become personal after they are angry.

In addition, Gray points out that male students tend to state the frustration or problem and want to move directly into a solution. Discussing their emotions about the frustration is generally not only peculiar to them, but also unnecessary in solving the problem. Female students may state their emotion about the problem first and expect questioning and discussion about the complexities of the problem before exploring the potential solutions. So, to alleviate a frustrating situation with female students, make sure she has finished defining the problem before discussing a solution.

In conclusion, we would like to mention that dealing with frustrated students is challenging for students and the management of higher educational establishments. This process can be successful under the conditions of implementing the mentioned interventions for increasing the level of frustration tolerance.

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