

A Theory of Motivation and Ontological  
Enhancement: The role of disability  
policy in student empowerment and  
institutional change

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### **Abstract**

*As debate continues around the nature and values of education, it is important to ask the question of what factors motivate a student to engage with the ends of an educational institution. In this paper, a broad, holistic view of learner motivation, derived from Aristotelian ethics, is used to provide a model to drive institutional change.*

*Focussing on the approach of one Higher Education institution to the particular accommodations required for students with disabilities, the paper identifies three factors which motivate students, a failure to engage with the aims and ends of the educational project, a failure to see that a particular learning aim is worth attaining, and a simple lack of will-power to attain it. To each of these failures a social cause is identified, and a change in both the institutional culture and the individual learner's approach to their education is suggested.*

Keywords: higher education, philosophy, ontology, disability, university, Aristotle

To have character is to know that I move in a history I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences none the less for my choices and conduct.

—Michael Sandel

All men are the same except for their belief in their own selves, regardless of what others may think of them.

—Miyamoto Musashi

### **Introduction**

Motivating students to learn involves valuing the experiences they bring as learners to the educational project. In this paper, I aim to unpick some of the philosophical complexities surrounding motivation. Learner motivation is situated within the wider discourse of moral philosophy, being concerned with our deliberative capacities.

What follows is not purely a theoretical account of motivation, but an attempt to show that institutional structures and aims need to reflect those of their learners in order to motivate individuals to engage with them. Although the research here presented draws on disability policy, its consequences are further reaching, having implications for the engagement of a broad range of traditionally under-engaged student groups, and recommending a radical student-centred ethos in the articulation of Higher Education institutions' aims and objectives.

In his paper on *Disability and the Education of Persons*

, Peter Isaacs criticizes educational practice based upon 'the impoverished medical deficit model of special education with its limited ontology of personhood and its exaggerated legitimation of the "normal" '.

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He calls instead for the adoption of a fuller account of persons, acknowledging aspiration, social factors enhancing or constraining human flourishing, adopting ‘an ethical framework, rather than a medical one’

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for the enactment of a student centred educational provision for students with special needs and disabilities. It is precisely such an ethical framework which I intend to propose in the following essay, using it to evaluate the provision of disability services in UK Higher Education. The practical pay-off of such a model is nothing less than the empowerment of students and the exploration of new perspectives for teachers and institutions.

The effect of students’ attitudes to learning on their ability as learners is a key issue in any evaluation of students’ success as learners. I intend in the following paper to look at two particular factors as they impact upon students’ success as learners, firstly to advance a philosophically rich understanding of motivation as a guide to human action, and particularly to learning. Secondly, I plan to look at the issue of disability and motivation, exploring the ways in which disability provisions made by universities can help or hinder student motivation and student learning. Firstly, however, a brief overview of theories of student motivation will be required. I will examine in depth two theories, one derived from the philosophy of mind advanced by the Naturalist school, beginning with Aristotle, and explore some of the criticisms and refinements advanced to such a philosophy, the other a social view of motivation, derived from the social theories of Michael Apple, among others. These views are by no means an attempt to understand the psychological processes by which learners engage with the learning process, but instead represent an attempt to apply concepts in the philosophy of mind and sociology of learning to the issue of student motivation. At the close of the first section, I will also explore a recently advanced idea— *Ontological Enhancement* —and its implications for refining and revising our assumptions on the operation of learner motivation.

The argument may be presented by some that success and achievement are the result of ‘intelligence’ as an innate and immutable factor. Whether such a factor exists or functions upon student success is not a question that I plan to address in the following account. Suffice to say that motivation for learning will impact upon all students, regardless of their intelligence, though it may of course impact upon them differently.

### **1. Towards a Theory of Educational Motivation**

An incisive introduction to the factors that influence human motivation can be found in Aristotle’s account of choice and willpower in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

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In this account, Aristotle first posits a view of choice [*prohairesis*] as a ‘deliberative desire of what is in our power’ [1113a10], and states that deliberation is of means, not of ends. Consequently, for Aristotle, choice, understood as a motivating force, not merely an intellectual act, ‘is thought to be most closely bound up with virtue and to discriminate characters better than actions do’ [1111b5]. This is so for three

key reasons, our choices demonstrate the end of our desires, the efficacy of our ‘practical wisdom’ [*phronesis*] and the strength of our will. Aristotle further explains that we may err in deliberation either in selecting the true good end, or in applying the good end to identify a particular good action [1142a20].

David Wiggins elaborates and explicates this theory to the effect that Aristotle attempts to make an analogy between practical wisdom and technical judgments, such as the skills of craftsmen.

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Are the choices made by our students a separate craft, or an aspect of the craft of effective study? If so, should we not do more to teach them how to choose wisely, and to choose in such a way that they help themselves to increase their motivation to learn? This is problematic in that descriptions of the good or ethical life [*eudaimonia*—literally ‘a good relationship with the gods’, often translated as ‘good life’ or ‘human flourishing’, a wider conception than ‘morality’] are often vague. ‘[T]he problem is not to see what will be causally efficacious in bringing this [*eudaimonia*] about but to see what really *qualifies* as an adequate and practically realizable specification of what would satisfy’.

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Practical wisdom cannot be applied as mathematical logic is applied, Wiggins argues, for three primary reasons; firstly, it is not necessarily true that he who wills the end must will the means, that is to say, moral propositions arrived at by practical wisdom are still non-verdictive upon action; secondly, free will requires that reasons do not determine our actions in a rigid way; finally, practical rationality requires that we sometimes make decisions based on an incomplete range of options or information

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. Aristotle identifies four possible states of will (see figure 1), the first three of which are set upon virtuous action, and the last three relate to different forms of weakness of the will, which we will address in more detail as they relate to motivation.

**Figure 1:** States of the will

Taking Aristotle’s assertion that deliberation is of means not ends, we can see that this leads him to a form of objectivism, that is, to posit that there is in fact an objective good, for which ‘that which is *in truth* an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man, while any chance thing may be so to the bad man’ [113b20]. One reason for this is that ‘practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object ... of perception’ [1142a27] we may ask in what way the objects of perception impact upon our deliberative processes? This is a concern that evokes deep philosophical concern—are our deliberative processes connected to the world in a rationally causal manner? If not, how can we be responsible for the choice of ends that motivate our actions?

One key aspect of this concern to the moral discourse is the question of whether moral statements (i.e. the conclusions of moral deliberation) are conceptually verdictive—that is to say, does the content of a moral proposition change in some motivationally significant way in its assertion? This is a point elaborated on by John McDowell’s account of the relation between *Mind and World*

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In treating of experience, McDowell opposes the idea that a merely causal relationship between events in the world and human reasons, as opposed to a rational relationship, will suffice for human agents to exercise powers of judgment meaningfully. Thought as an agent for moral judgment requires notions of rational justification ‘that function in their own logical space, which is alien to the structure of the realm of law’.

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This leaves us with a conundrum, in that the world itself, the realm of the laws of natural science, untouched by conceptual content, must impact upon our thoughts for those thoughts to have any value in the world, and that impact must be in some way rationally connected to the properties of events in the world, not merely causally connected in the way that a spider reacts to being touched on one side by moving to the opposite side, yet the world cannot act upon us except through experience—consequently, McDowell’s account of objects of perception makes them subject to conceptual content prior to deliberation. Applying this theory to Aristotle’s statement about the object of practical wisdom, it is not ‘objects of pure ostension, uncontaminated by conceptualization’

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that are the subject of practical wisdom, but the concepts derived from those objects’ impact upon the agent’s experience. In short, we cannot infer an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’—the situation of any given set of particulars, no matter how obviously they may present themselves to the moral agent, does not conclusively act upon the agent verdictively, only adding weight to a particular possibility in the agent’s available choices. One consequence of this is that ‘truths’ do not present themselves objectively to the moral agent, but are inevitably subject to the agent’s own conceptual framework, values and experiences. Consequently for the learner, the perception of available choice is as important as the reality when it comes to motivation.

Taking such an account of deliberation, which reasons from the good to particulars, how do we move from deliberation to motivation? This opens up perhaps the most difficult question on a philosophical level. The problem encountered by the teacher in engaging with the demotivated student may be likened to the problem of inferring an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ in the following way:

P1: Actions of type  $x$  are conducive to the good.

P2: Action  $A$  is an action of type  $x$ .

⇔

P3: Action  $A$  is conducive to the good.

Thus far, the argument is logically sound, however, there is no *verdictive* proposition  $P\phi$  such that it follows necessarily that for any given agent  $\alpha$ ,

P4:  $\alpha$  ought to do  $A$ .

Prospective candidates for  $P\phi$ , such as ‘If  $x$  is conducive to the good, then you ought to do  $x$ ’ prove either circular or trivial. The agent who fails to grasp P3 from P1 and P2 is failing in the faculty of practical wisdom in the same way that the mathematician fails who fails to grasp that  $x = 2$  given that  $3x = 6$ . The agent who fails to grasp P4 from P3, however, fails in a different way, either a defect of willpower, willing the end but not the means, or a difference (some might say a

defect) in the end to which her deliberations are directed. I will refer to these categories as ill-informed, weak-willed and intrinsically demotivated students respectively. This will have significance in later sections.

Turning now to an account of the social factors enhancing or constraining motivation, I plan to explore briefly the concept of 'cultural capital' and its impact in the production of the values, skills and inequalities, which affect learner motivation. In his paper on *Cultural Politics and Education*, Michael Apple posits a theory that states that motivation and achievement in the curriculum is driven by relations of supply and demand in the skills deemed useful to the wider socio-economic culture.

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In saying this, he asserts a concept of 'cultural capital' that acts as a force aimed at accumulating high status, economically productive knowledge for the state, not at distributing it among individuals.

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Apple considers it inevitable that such a situation will de-motivate students. Returning to our earlier discussions, one of the most obvious reasons for this, if we are to take Apple at his word, is that the *ends* of the individual student and the ends of the educational system are incongruent. Furthermore, the means by which the education system intends to create 'equality', by providing 'The "same treatment" by sex, race and ethnicity, or class [and, by extension, disability] is not the same at all'

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and is inadequate for the attainment of the ends of equality. 'A democratic curriculum and pedagogy must begin with the recognition of "the different ... cultural repertoires in the classrooms".'

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Apple, this analysis is purely contingent on the aims of the state to accumulate high status knowledge rather than distribute it, and does not imply in any sense a 'conspiracy' to deprive any of an education. Some Marxist critics have gone further, however, to assert the impossibility of really educating the vast majority of the population if they are to be integrated into capitalist social relations.

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What are the solutions to this problem? It would not be reasonable to expect students to accept the values of the educational system under Apple's analysis and remain motivated. Indeed, Bourdieu states that those who are successful within such a system are those who are so socially conditioned as to accept the 'negation' that the

educational system can only function by pretending not to do what it in fact does.

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Evidence from psychological analyses illustrates that animals subject to 'noncontingent' punishments and rewards quickly develop the characteristics of learned helplessness.

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Can student perceptions as they impact on motivation be isolated from such inequalities and values? Or are some students' perceptions already isolated from

educationally motivating factors by the effects of cultural capital? This is a point to which we will return in our consideration of the effects of disability policy on learner self-concept. In terms of the motivation of learners in general, however, it can be seen that the education system is 'productive' not primarily of educated persons but of high status knowledge. This only functions by negation, thus the persons within the system are imbued, at times with knowledge and skills, but more significantly, with values which lead them to accept the inequalities inherent in the system. An important criticism may here be raised around the question of how we move from the theoretical imperative—what the successful learner *ought* to do, to the particular student. In short, does any of this theoretical underpinning have an impact on pedagogy? Aristotelian naturalism, by asserting that [1112b8] deliberation is of means, not of ends, does not provide us with a means of discerning the correct end of education. Likewise, the cultural analysis approach to motivation, by proposing a comprehensive redistribution of cultural capital, either through the demand that the cultures of disadvantaged classes be given equal status with the culture transmitted within the education system,

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or through the socio-political structures accepting a structure concerned first and foremost not with the accumulation but the distribution of educational capital,

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does not provide us with any coherent agenda for improving students' success as motivated learners from *within* the curriculum. Ultimately, the problem stems from the fact that both moral philosophy and cultural analysis start from the assumption that the ends are predefined, and that only the means to those ends are matters for deliberation. An exploration of how one may extend the concept of deliberation from the theoretical approaches to motivation to real practical considerations of student choice and motivation is provided by David Gems in his analysis of the concept of ontological enhancement.

In his recent paper *Plus Ultra! Or: To enhance or not to enhance?* the bio-ethicist David Gems attempts to address an issue which may plug the 'gap' left by Aristotle's account of deliberation—Gems poses the question:

Life is simple enough when one has desires, and possible means to achieve them. But in their absence, as we sit on the bed and stare at the floor, the question of what to desire and what to aspire to can be hard.

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In response, Gems posits a kind of enhancement, 'ontological enhancement', which differs from other enhancements in three key ways—'superfluity, directionality and identity transformation'.

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Ontological enhancements appear unnecessary before a person undergoes them, but become an integral and directive part of that person's motivational framework after they have undergone the enhancement. In some sense, all educative activity is therefore ontological enhancement. There are again two kinds of ontological enhancement, what I shall call incremental and arational— the former consists of the kind of enhancements wherein a music lover would like to learn to appreciate a kind of music that doesn't presently appeal to them, in that this is an extension of an

existing character trait, though it would still exhibit the three properties discussed above. The latter type, of suddenly gaining an appreciation for some factor one has never even intended to want, such as a new sexual identity, creates further problems. How does one acquire the desire to acquire such a desire? Gems is largely concerned with biological and medical forms of enhancement, so does not address such issues directly, however, I will attempt to make some headway on the issue.

The incremental form of ontological enhancement seems to present the fewest problems, and is perhaps most useful in considering the ill-informed demotivated student, the student not yet convinced that the learning aims presented to her are, in her deliberations, worth learning. The teacher's duty in this case is to present some form of argument to the effect that, although the student may not now wish to benefit from the learning experience, having experienced it, they will be glad to have benefited from it. The intrinsically demotivated student, by contrast, needs to be influenced towards the learning by some factor outside of the formal educational process. Again, ontological enhancement, by offering a 'process of individual reflection about what one should aspire to'

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offers the hope of engaging, by the power of directionality, even the intrinsically demotivated student. The case of the weakwilled student opens up a further factor in moral philosophy, the question of whether 'ought' implies 'can'. Space precludes a deeper analysis of this concept, but suffice it to say that the weak-willed student's difficulty lies somewhere between ill-informed and intrinsic reasons for lack of motivation, and will in part be mitigated through *genuine* (as opposed to contrived) relations between effort and success.

To conclude this theoretical underpinning to motivation, we have seen, through an eclectic survey of philosophical and cultural conceptions of learner motivation, a series of problems, and solutions posed to them. These problems and solutions fall into 3 broad categories: those concerned with the ends of the learning endeavour—to learn or not to learn, acting at the level of desire; those concerned with the skills required to engage successfully with the learning process, acting at the level of choice; and those concerned with acting upon a desire to learn (figure 2). A narrow view of

**Figure 2:** Five sets of interlocking conceptual triplicates

motivation could describe only the last of these categories as concerned specifically with motivation. I have, however, chosen to view the motivation to choose learning as an end, and the motivation to acquire the skills of judgment necessary to select and benefit from useful learning experiences as equally important and constitutive of a holistic picture of motivation as the will to put one's choices about learning into action. As we shall see in the following section, this holistic picture will help us to anticipate learners' needs in a more comprehensive and student-centred way.

## **2. Disability Policy in HE, Engaging Intrinsically with Students**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 places two key requirements on Higher Education providers:

Not to treat disabled students 'less favourably than it treats or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply' [28S:1(a)].

Not to place disabled students 'at a substantial disadvantage in

comparison with persons who are not disabled' [28T:1(a)].

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A reasonable adjustment to comply with the act might be any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage. It might involve:

- Changing standard institutional procedures.
- Adapting the curriculum, electronic or other materials, or modifying the delivery of teaching.
- Providing additional services, such as a sign language interpreter or materials in Braille.
- Training staff to work with disabled people and to provide appropriate adjustments.
- Altering the physical environment.

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It is also essential that institutions anticipate need, and create an environment that positively encourages the disclosure of disabilities.

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In practice, these concerns have been addressed in a number of ways. I will go on to outline a particular set of measures approved for implementation at one 1994 Group University in London, comprising around 7,000 students across 15 departments, using the theoretical framework set out above to assess the potential impact of such measures upon the motivation of disabled students.

The SENDA legislation applies to all the activities and facilities institutions provide wholly or mainly for students, not only to academic provision. For this reason, the holistic picture of motivation will need to be applied to these measures, as a holistic approach to the student experience is required. Initially, the institution in our study produced a framework outlining particular areas for consideration, identifying the standard to be met, suggesting ways to attain it, and identifying particular individuals and departments with responsibility for meeting and reporting on targets.

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Following this, a number of actions were undertaken, including the publication of an Accessible Learning & Teaching Strategy,

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for dissemination to all

staff involved in the learning and teaching process. This strategy focuses on a number of important issues, and will form the central focus of the following analysis.

Given that perception is an important aspect of practical judgments, and those judgments are essential to motivation both towards means and ends, how do students' perceptions of themselves as learners affect their motivations? Carol Dweck attempts to shed some light on this topic by stating that 'the hallmark of successful individuals is that they love learning, they seek challenges, they value effort, and they persist in the face of obstacles'.

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A number of criticisms can be levelled at Dweck's account of self-esteem. Firstly, Dweck's assertion that these qualities are constitutive of successful *individuals*



not merely successful learners, implying an acceptance that 'merit, as measured by school performance tends to become indicative of personal merit in a far wider sense'.

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Secondly, much of the evidence Dweck produces for her assertions is founded on her own research (38 references to her own work as against 10 references to others in Chapter 1 alone). Nonetheless, Dweck's analysis gives us cause to re-evaluate many common sense assumptions about the relation between success and self-esteem. Most significant for our analysis are the denial of the direct relationship between success and mastery-oriented behaviour, the denial of the belief that students' confidence in their intelligence is key to mastery-oriented behaviour,

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and the observation that students exhibiting helpless oriented behaviour tend to try to call attention to successes in other realms or to change the rules of the task.

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As we shall see, much of the literature on the positive effects of the social model of disability, by distancing outcome from blame in the way which Dweck identifies as a hallmark of mastery oriented students,

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suggests that social factors are key to building a student selfconcept which encourages mastery-oriented behaviour, as opposed to fostering an artificial sense of confidence. Dweck also propounds an integrative view of personality and intelligence (figure 3)

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which fits closely with the framework I have proposed earlier in this paper. The social model of disability, which views 'disability' as society's construct functioning in a social and procedural way to regulate the distribution of certain goods in such a way that impairment is presumed to be present,

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can be seen as the inverse aspect of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital, treating a social difficulty as a natural one. The medical model on which most intuitive understandings of disability are based has three key effects in the educational system: On the level

**Figure 3:** Dweck's integrative model of personality and intelligence

of values, it places excessive reliance on the authority and influence of the medical and ancillary professions

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as the arbiters of the ends towards which others' lives and learning ought to be directed; on the level of skills, it proposes a model which views the 'disabled' person as a less capable social being, employing the same means as the non-disabled person but not attaining the same ends to the same extent, therefore, less successfully; on the level of inequalities, 'disability' has been used to shore up a favourable distribution of resources,

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often under the description of 'enabling' the disabled person to achieve the ends defined by the medical 'experts' through the most similar means possible to a

'normal' person. Consequently, the medicalisation of disability adjustments, and attempts to 'normalise' the disabled student through compensatory approaches such as ignoring weakness or allocating extra marks for mitigation serves to de-motivate students on all three levels. Many analyses which have relied upon the social model of disability to critique medical and educational practice have been avowedly opposed to natural science approaches in their methodology

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though this is by no means a necessary condition of the acceptance of the social model.

In the case of the approaches recommended by the ALTS at the institution in our study, the application of Universal Design for Learning—the concept that what is in the interests of disabled students is generally in the interests of all students—seeks to adopt a social, strengths-based approach rather than a compensatory medical approach. Such an approach acknowledges that students learn in a variety of ways, and was constructed with the aim of moving away from a one-size-fits-all 'transmission' model of learning and teaching.

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The specific guidance around dyslexia, for example, avoids the kind of goal-shifting warned against by Dweck as pandering to helpless-oriented behaviours, warning explicitly that 'Students with dyslexia may struggle to organise their time effectively, while support should be given, extensions to course-work deadlines are counter-productive and should not be offered on the grounds of dyslexia alone'. Likewise the use of false praise is warned against, particularly in the guidance for marking exam scripts for dyslexic students, which, following good practice guidelines,

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argues for a focus on areas of performance unaffected by dyslexia, as opposed to an artificial compensatory inflation of grades.

It is clear that the individual's self-concept is formed in negotiation as she receives feedback from others.

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The moral life is not lived in isolation, and our earlier analysis of the social model of disability throws up three possible models of inter-relation, that of dependence, an isolated form of independence on integrative terms and 'one of interdependence rather than isolated independence'.

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This last conception requires negotiation, and underpins any notion of a student-centred curriculum. Linking this with the discussions of helpless and mastery oriented behaviour above, it is clear that a view of social justice based on integrative, compensatory independence for disabled students on the grounds of 'compassion' for those seen socially as 'less fortunate',

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will not generate an institutional culture that promotes individual mastery, but quite the opposite.

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In the case in question, how, if at all, does the institution foresee its policies, procedures and ethos acting to empower the individual? By making it a requirement

upon departments and the institution as a whole to create an environment which encourages sensitive disclosure (Requirements 22 & 23), seeking regular student feedback (Recommendation 26)<sup>43</sup> and training all academic and support staff in the relevant issues (Recommendation 11), the institution presents a view of disability which emphasises negotiation and attempts to mould the institution around the needs of its students in an interdependent fashion, rather than focussing excessively on integrating students with divergent needs into the institution's structures.

How would such an institution go about altering its cultural approach to disability without compromising its own academic values? Here, the concept of ontological enhancement may be of benefit.

According to the ontological enhancement theory, we can view those who have not yet—whether through divergent ends, inability to see the means to the end in question, or inability to attain to that means—progressed to acquisition of a particular learning aim as 'simultaneously equal to and less than'<sup>44</sup> those who have been more successful as learners. This goes some way to allaying our fears about the counter-intuitive nature of some aspects of the social model, without returning us to cultural chauvinism. Bringing ontological enhancement to bear upon Higher Education, which, in itself, bears many of the life-changing hallmarks described in Gems' paper, I would like to posit a Janus-faced approach to the operation of ontological enhancement on disability policy in an institution—one part shaping the individual, the other part shaping the institution. This dialectical form of enhancement helps us to surmount the problem of initial motivation that Gems himself admits frustrates his theory.<sup>45</sup> On the level of the institution, by considering accessible issues in the curriculum, themselves superfluous to the mission of the institution prior to their consideration, the institution is directed to adopt a set of values which are student-centred, and this transforms the institution by requiring a new skill-set among its teaching staff, as exemplified by the ALTS. In consequence, the institution is in a better position to offer a motivating and empowering culture to its students, and this flattens out some of the inequalities caused by a mismatch between a rigid cultural viewpoint upheld by the institution and the differing perceptions held by its students. Instead, disabled students entering this culture find themselves encouraged and supported to make a choice of ends which may have been superfluous to their previous desires and motivations, whereas previously such choices may have been, or been perceived to be, constrained by an impairment-centred, medical model of the 'right' ends for them. This directs them to question the means by which they intend to achieve their ends, the choice of means being part of the negotiation between the student and the institution, mediated by flexible learning, individual education plans, assistive technology, etc. This in turn transforms their identity in the sense that, by eliminating inequalities at the level of personal motivation (i.e. what the disabled student ought to, and therefore feels able, to aspire to) the relationship between motivation and action, between desire, will-power and achievement, is allowed to flow and flourish much more easily, eliminating the kinds of systematic frustrations which have been shown empirically to lead to weak-willed demotivation.<sup>46</sup>

**Conclusions**

Our initial assessment of motivation identified three potential difficulties—the illinformed student, lacking the reasoning ability to identify worthwhile means to attain her ends, the weak-willed student, lacking the power to will the means to her chosen end, and the intrinsically demotivated student, for whom the end of learning is non-directive. Applying an analysis of the prevailing educational culture, we identified that the culture's ends were mismatched with the ends of the individual student, that the means proposed to attain its ends, particularly the end of 'equality' were insufficient (if not counter-productive) to some students, and that outcomes were often perceived by students to be non-contingent on effort. Use was made of the concept of ontological enhancement to address the problem of motivating

a student who does not aim to become motivated. Due to the non-verdictive nature of moral statements, however, any talk of what one ought to want will inevitably lead to an infinite regress—one has to want to want what one ought before any statement to the effect that one ought to want x will be of any motivational meaning.

Then followed a particular analysis of a number of concepts in disability equality and their application at a particular Higher Education institution. Analysis of students' self-concept led to the conclusions that success needs to be real, confidence needs to be relevant to the individual's skills and ends, and that it is extremely dangerous to equate success as a learner with value as a person. Analysis of the social model of disability led to the conclusions that it is necessary to value an individual's skills over the value of medical 'expert' advice, to negotiate needs rather than assuming that all disabled students aspire to the same goals by the same means as non-disabled students, and that a student centred approach to learning aims was favourable to a compensatory approach. Finally, by combining the findings above with the analysis of ontological enhancement, it was possible to posit a two-sided approach.

Institutions

need to add to their existing academic values the value of encouraging individual students to flourish on their own terms, this in turn frees up the individual to adopt and

benefit from the entire value-set of the institution. This will lead to the development of new skills within the institution, which the individual can make use of to attain their chosen ends. This leads to a negotiated curriculum in which learners are motivated

by a clear sense of real, valued success toward shared goals by effective means. In practical terms, this may involve a new approach to academic advice, focussing on giving students a choice of aims and ends, and a more negotiated curriculum. It involves the recognition by institutions that students' overall life goals in undertaking Higher Education study are their own, and that the institution exists to facilitate, while at the same time aiming to maximise the students' horizons, exposing them to as complete a set of possible learning aims as possible, neither the top-down 'transmission' model nor the bottom-up 'producer/consumer' model often presented as a false dichotomy in discussions on the philosophy of education.

**Notes**

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21. David Gems, individual correspondence on the educational implications of his ontological enhancement paper, 8th Sept 2005.

22. HMSO, 2001.

23. Disability Rights Commission, 2002, p. 3.

24. SWANDS, 2002.

25. This is included as Appendix A.

26. A draft of this is included as Appendix B.

27. Dweck, 2000, p. 1.

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30. Ibid., p. 8.

31. Ibid., p. 9.

32. Chiu, Hong & Dweck, 1994, p. 112.

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39. Lawrence, 1996, p. 4.

40. Isaacs, 1996, p. 37.

41. The 'personal tragedy' model of disability. See Troyna & Vincent, 1996, p. 132.

42. Lipsky & Gartner, 1996, p. 152.
43. Goldsmiths College (2002) *Guidelines for Tutors*.
44. Gems, 2005, p. 6.
45. Ibid., pp. 1, 3.
46. See Smith & Moore, 1966, pp. 130-131; Lawrence, 1996, p. 5.

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