

Motivating Students

New GTA Orientation
08/14/2023

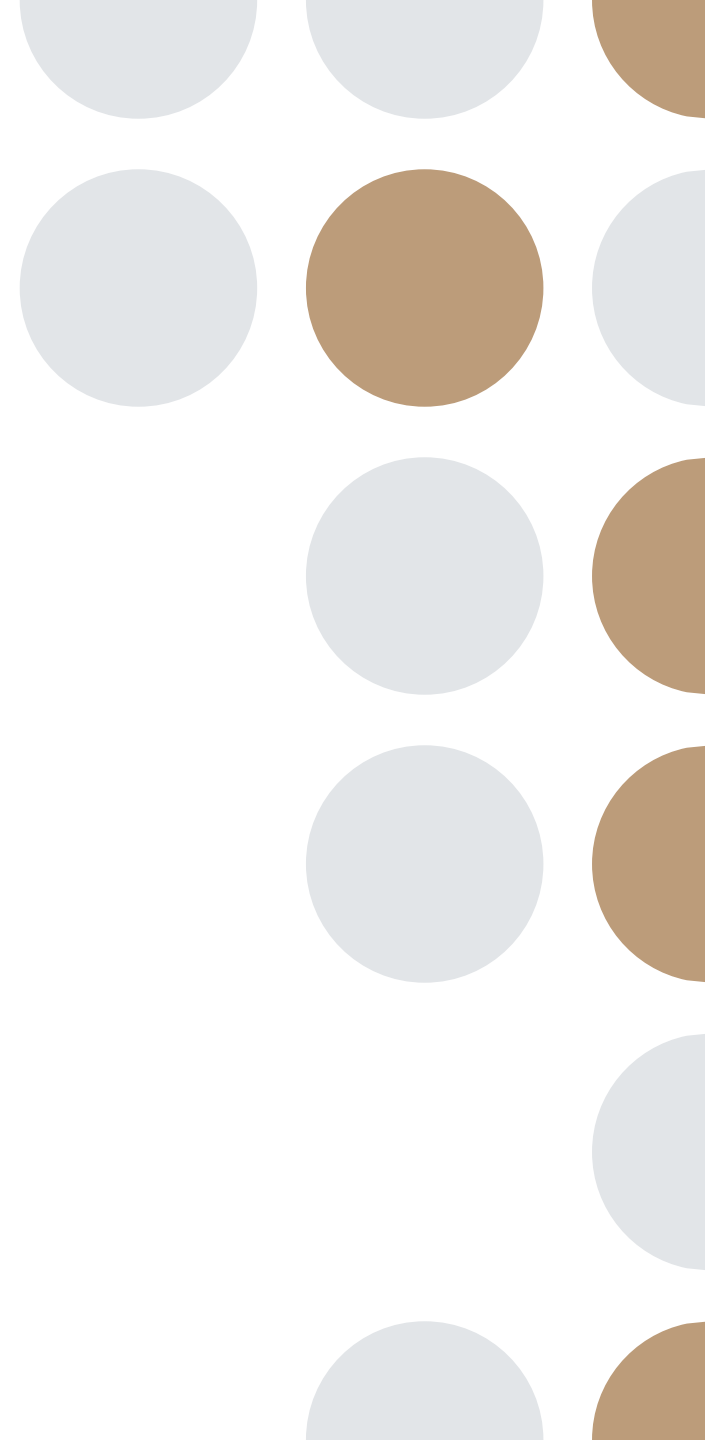
Shannon Walker
PhD Candidate
Biology Dept.

(credits to Saleh Khanjar, Mahmud
Parvez, Sumit Paul)

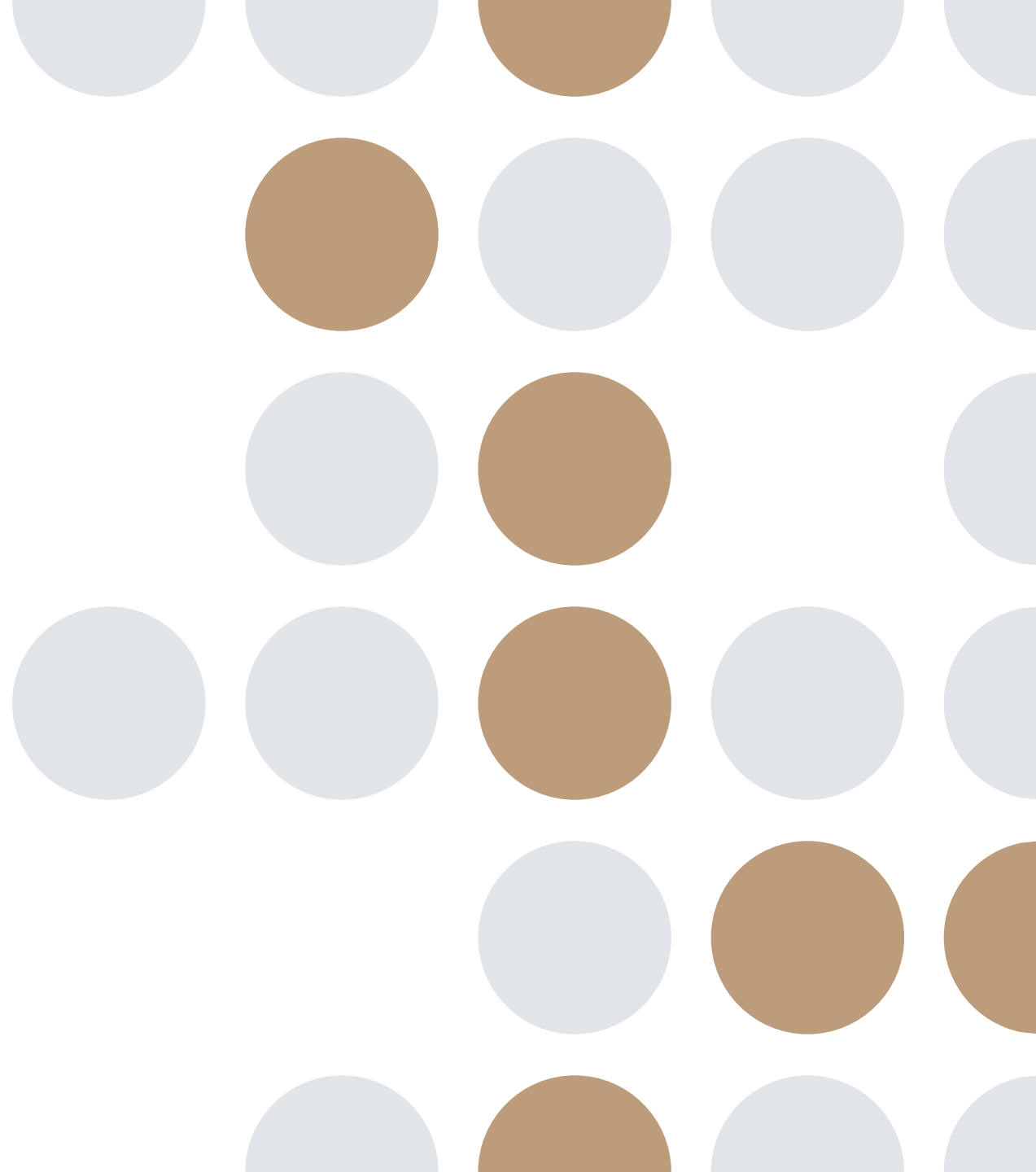
Overview

1. Introduction to motivation
2. Drivers of student motivation
3. Motivational tools and course design
4. Q&A session
5. Resources

Be ready for active participation!



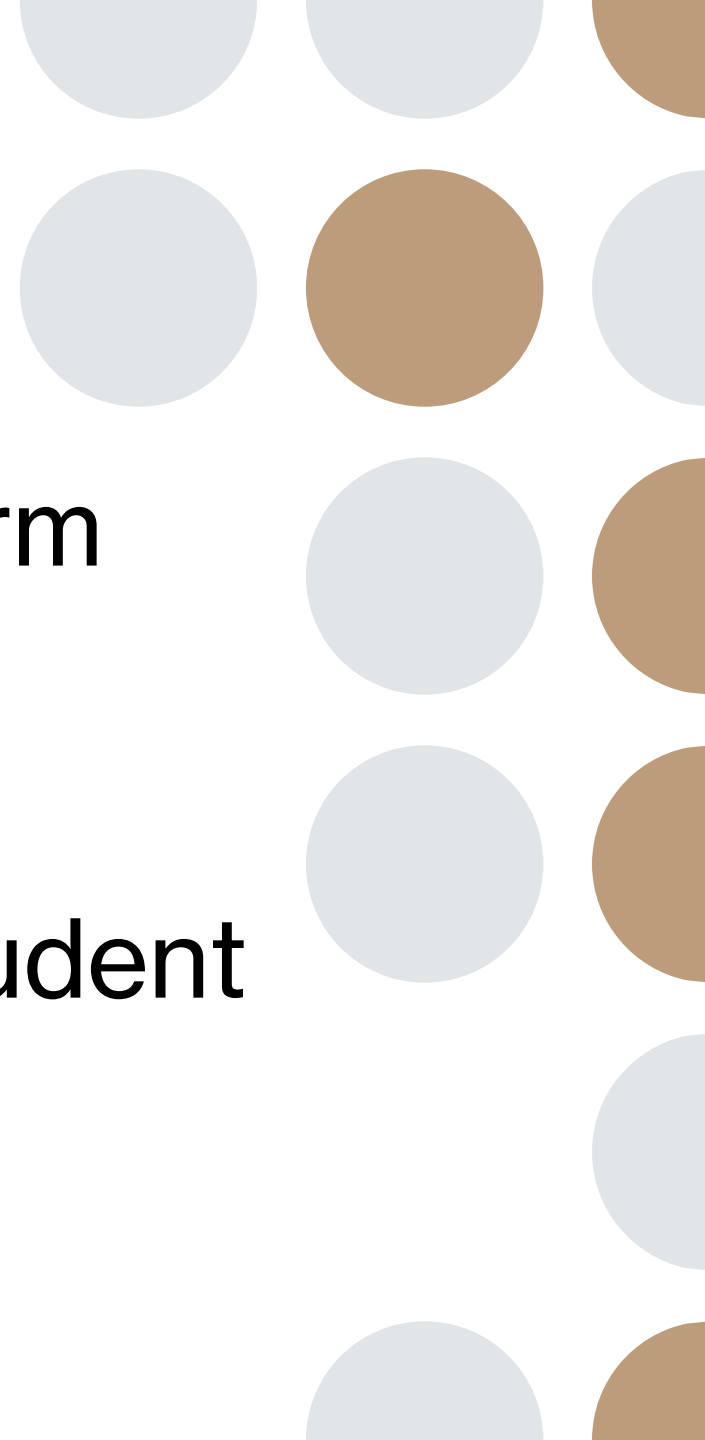
Part I: Intro to Motivation



Motivation

The drive to fulfill long- or short-term objectives.

TAs have a lot of influence over student motivation!





Improves
Student
Well-being

Enhances
Deep
Learning

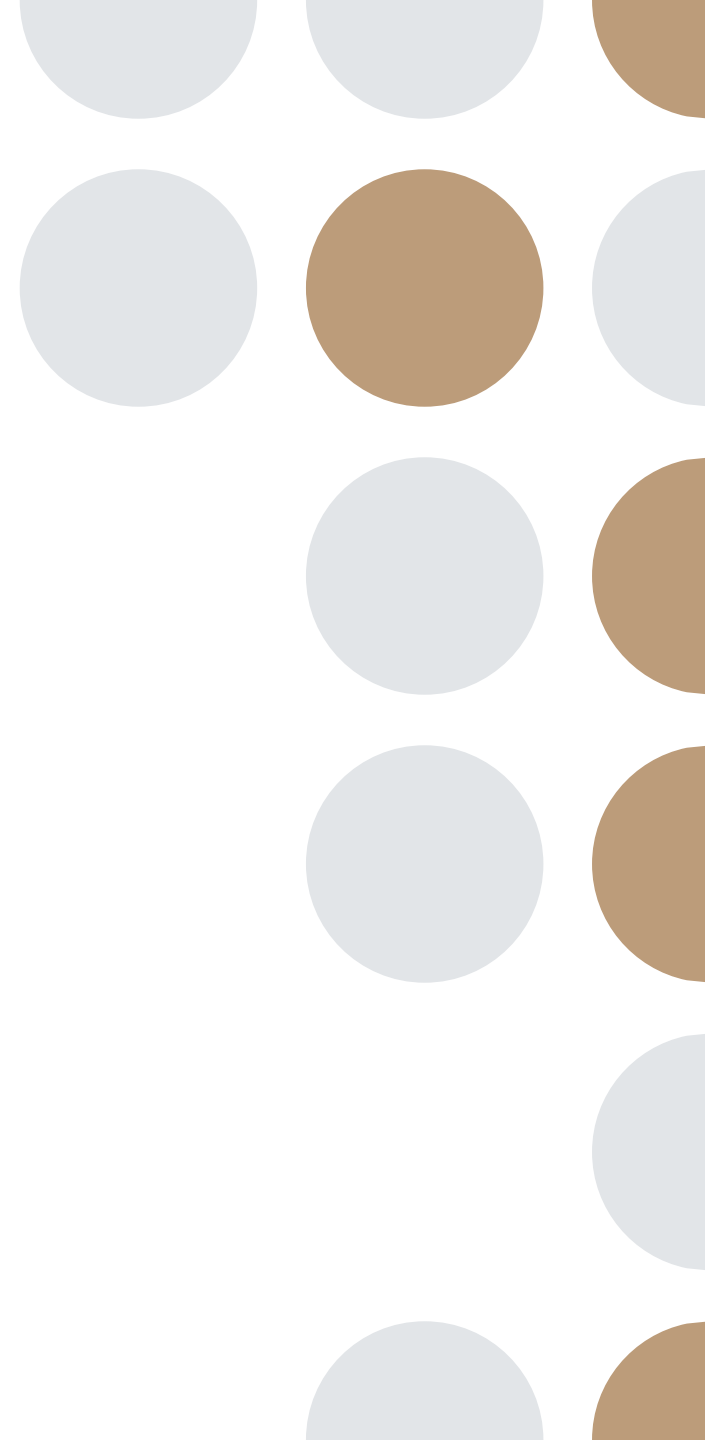
Promotes
Positive
Behavior

Increases
Student
Retention

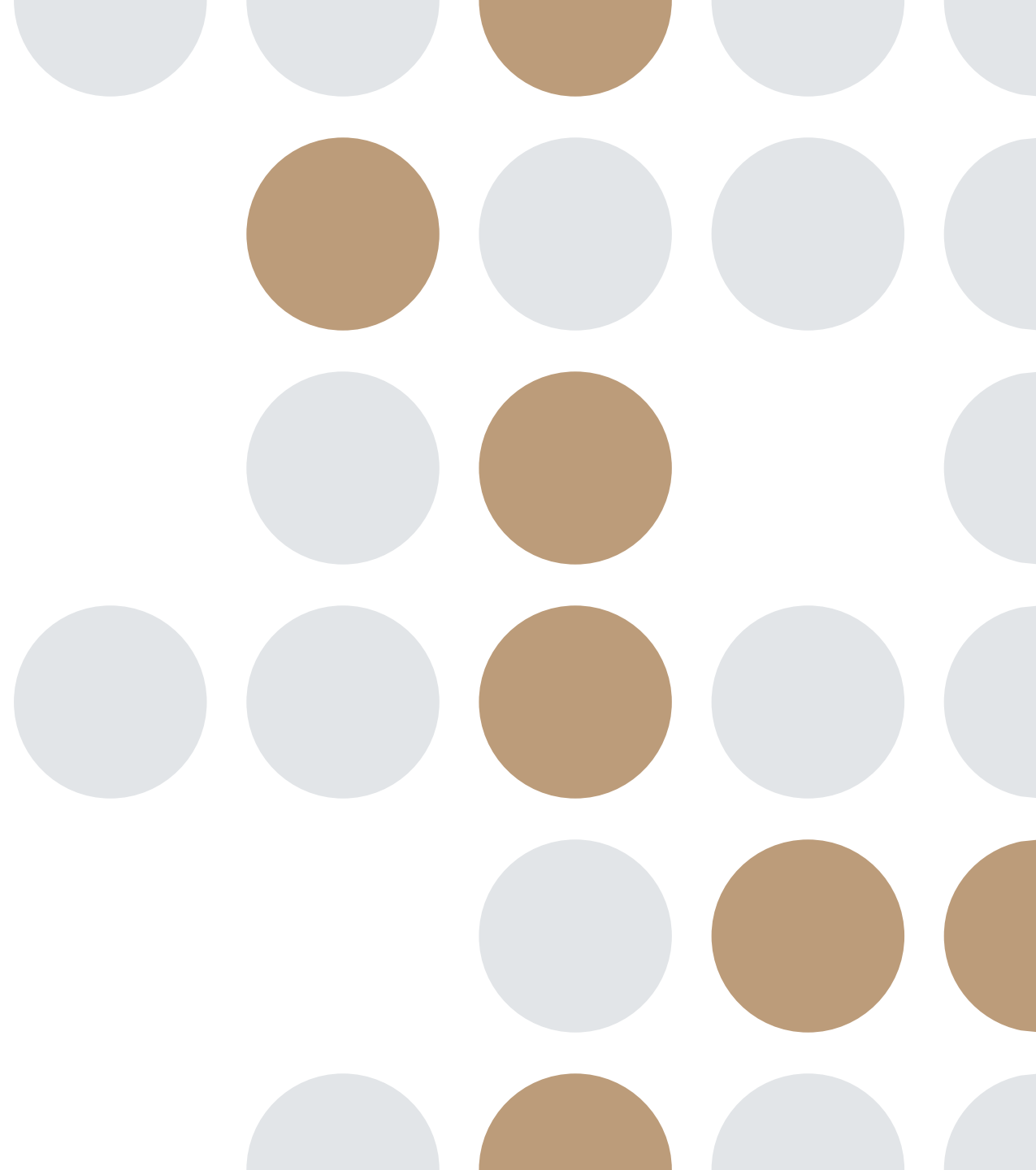
Why is motivation important?

Activity (5 minutes)

1. Think of a time that someone motivated you to learn or do something. (30 seconds)
 1. What characteristics of that person/conversation helped to motivate you?
 2. Were there other factors that motivated you to learn (e.g. necessity, interest, competitiveness)?
 2. Discuss with your nearest neighbor/group of neighbors. (3 mins)
 3. Be ready to share with the group! (1-2 mins)
-



Part II: Drivers of Student Motivation





1. Belief in their ability

- *Adaptive self-efficacy and competence perceptions motivate students*
- Motivated by **confidence in their own ability to complete a task well**



2. Belief that they control their own success

- *Adaptive attributions and control beliefs motivate students*
- Students are motivated when they feel that they are the **directors of their own success**
 - i.e. they have control over the outcome of their learning



3. Intrinsic (personal) interest and motivation

- *Intrinsic motivation and high levels of interest motivate students*
- Some students are personally motivated by a **deep interest or curiosity** about a subject

4. Importance of topic/task

- *Higher levels of value motivate students*
- Students are more motivated to learn when they feel that a topic is **important**
- Personally, socially, societally, ethically, career, etc.



5. Clear goals, expectations, organization, and outcomes

- *Goals motivate and direct students*
- **Goals foster responsibility** among students and **set clear expectations**
- **Organization** helps keep everyone on-track and **avoid uncertainty**



Activity (5 minutes)

Imagine you are assigned a GTA position teaching a course/lab or grading for **first-year, non-majors' course**.

1) Create a **Venn diagram** of **your motivations** and your **students' motivations** both as it relates to this course and outside of this course.

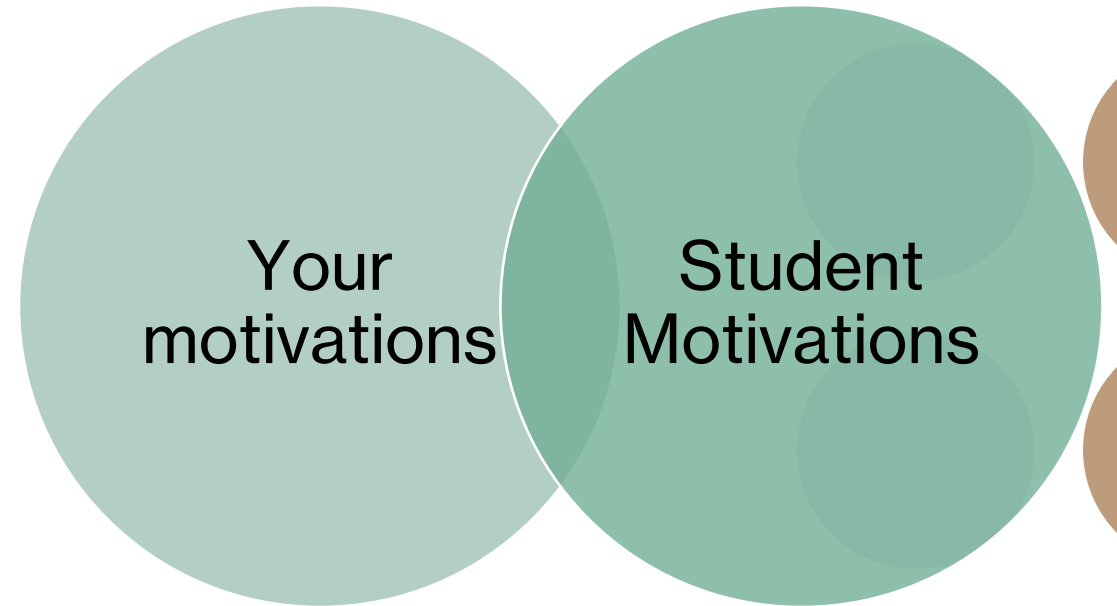
(Remember that both you and students bring motivations *other* than academic motivations to the classroom!)

2) What motivations do you both **share**? What motivations are **not shared**?

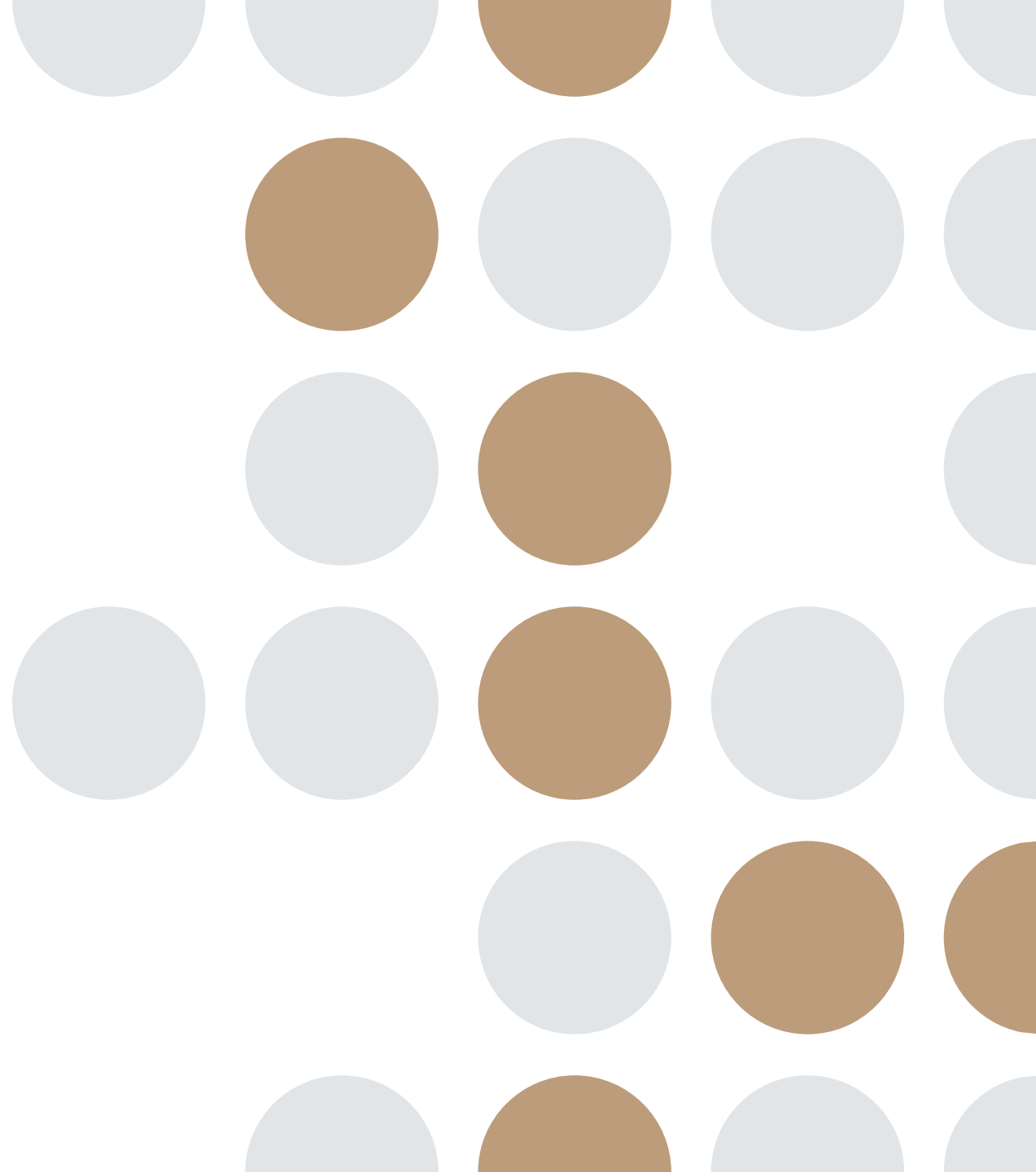
3) Write 1-3 of your answers on the Venn diagram at the front of the room!

Can be done in small groups or on your own!

(we will return to this later!)



Part III: Motivational Tools and Designs



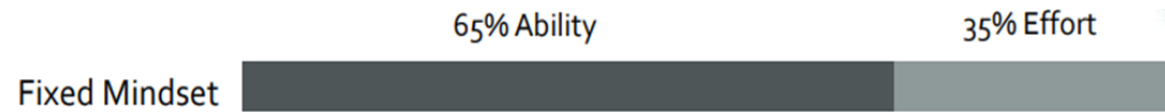
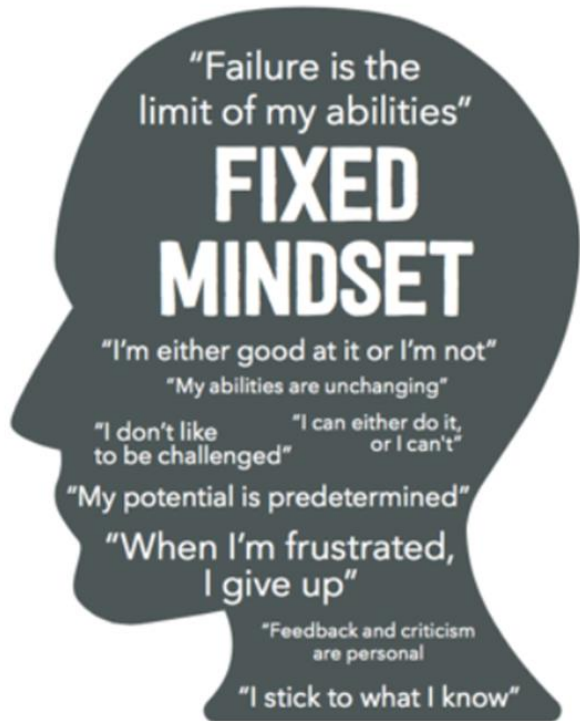
A quick note

As GTAs, you may not have complete control over the learning environment

Remember that you often have the most direct interactions with students, and these are motivational opportunities

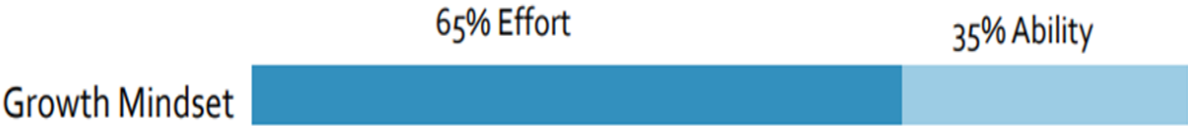
You have a greater impact than you think!

Kinds of Mindsets



X, Y, Z is a fixed trait. You can't change it.

Kinds of Mindsets



Motivational Tools and Designs

1. Belief in ability

1. Provide **clear and accurate feedback**
2. Focus feedback on **improving skills and competence**
 1. Remember to highlight good work!
3. Make tasks **challenging, but not overwhelming**





Motivational Tools and Designs

2. They control their own success

1. Remind students that **learning is a process**
2. Highlight that **effort often counts more than innate ability** (growth mindset)
3. **Offer strategies** to help students learn difficult concepts or develop skills
4. Give students **opportunities to choose/control learning**
5. Encourage **engagement** with other students

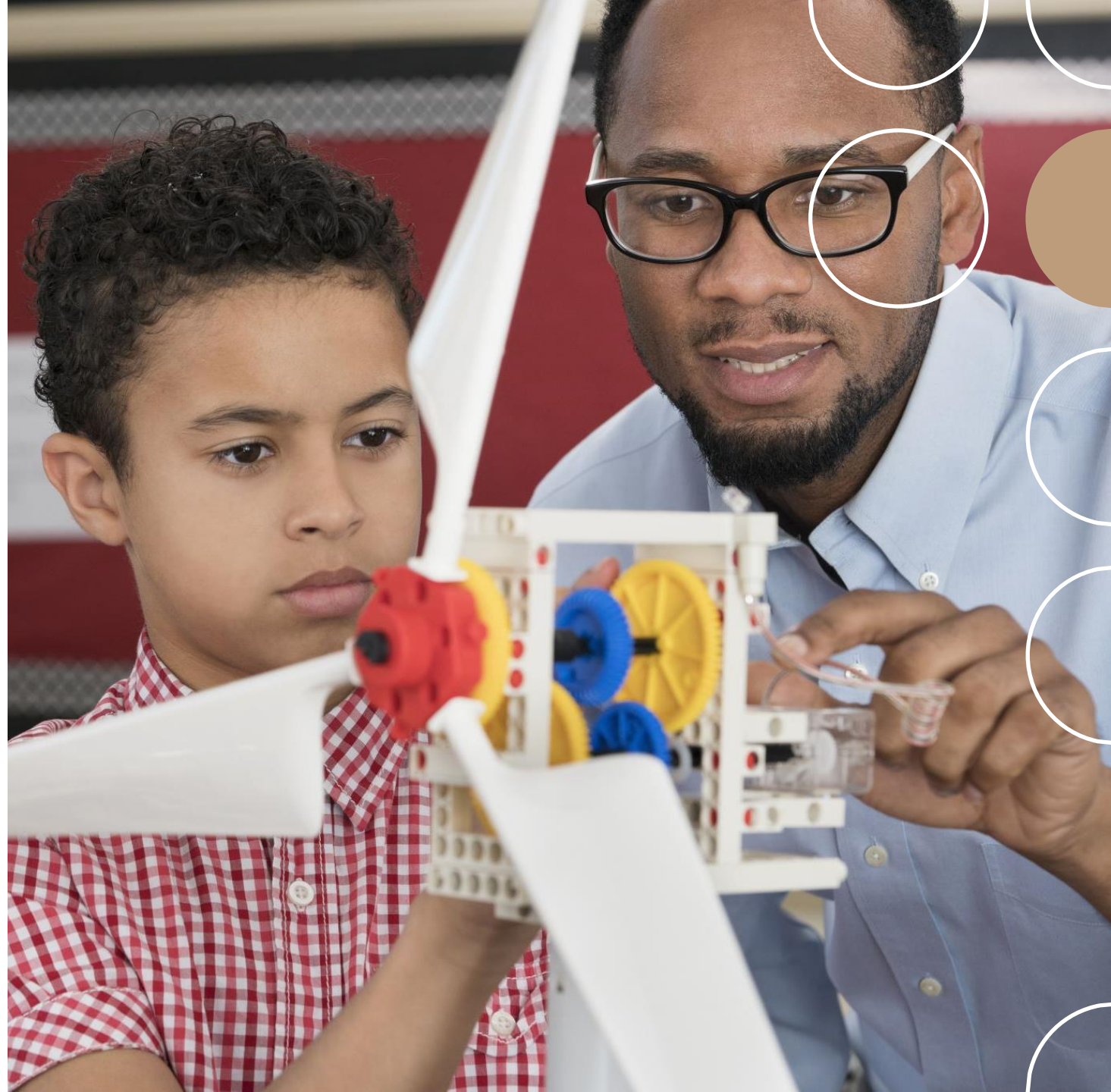
Pintrich, 2003

Motivational Tools and Designs

3. Intrinsic interest

1. Make tasks **interesting and novel**
2. Connect material to **personally meaningful** ideas
 1. Need to know your students!
3. Make sure you're also interested in the topic!

Pintrich, 2003





Motivational Tools and Designs

4. Importance of topic/task

1. Focus discussions on **importance and usefulness**
2. Provide **real-world tasks**/implementation when possible

Motivational Tools and Designs

5. Clear goals, expectations, organization, and outcomes

1. Organization and classroom management provide a **safe and predictable environment**
2. Encourages **personal and social responsibility**
3. Use **structures** within tasks, rewards, and evaluations that **promote learning, increase standards, and decrease focus on social comparisons**
4. Expectations create **classroom culture**
 1. Inclusivity, openness, respect
 2. Get to know your students
 3. *You* set the tone!



Activity (5 minutes)

Return to your Venn diagram of motivation.

- 1) What were the areas in which you and your students overlapped?
 - 2) What tools/approaches can you use to leverage these areas of overlap?
 - 3) What areas were unique to student motivations? What tools/approaches can you use to appeal to some of those motivations?
-

Activity (3 minutes)

Now, think about *your* motivations.

How might these affect your teaching (both positively and negatively)?

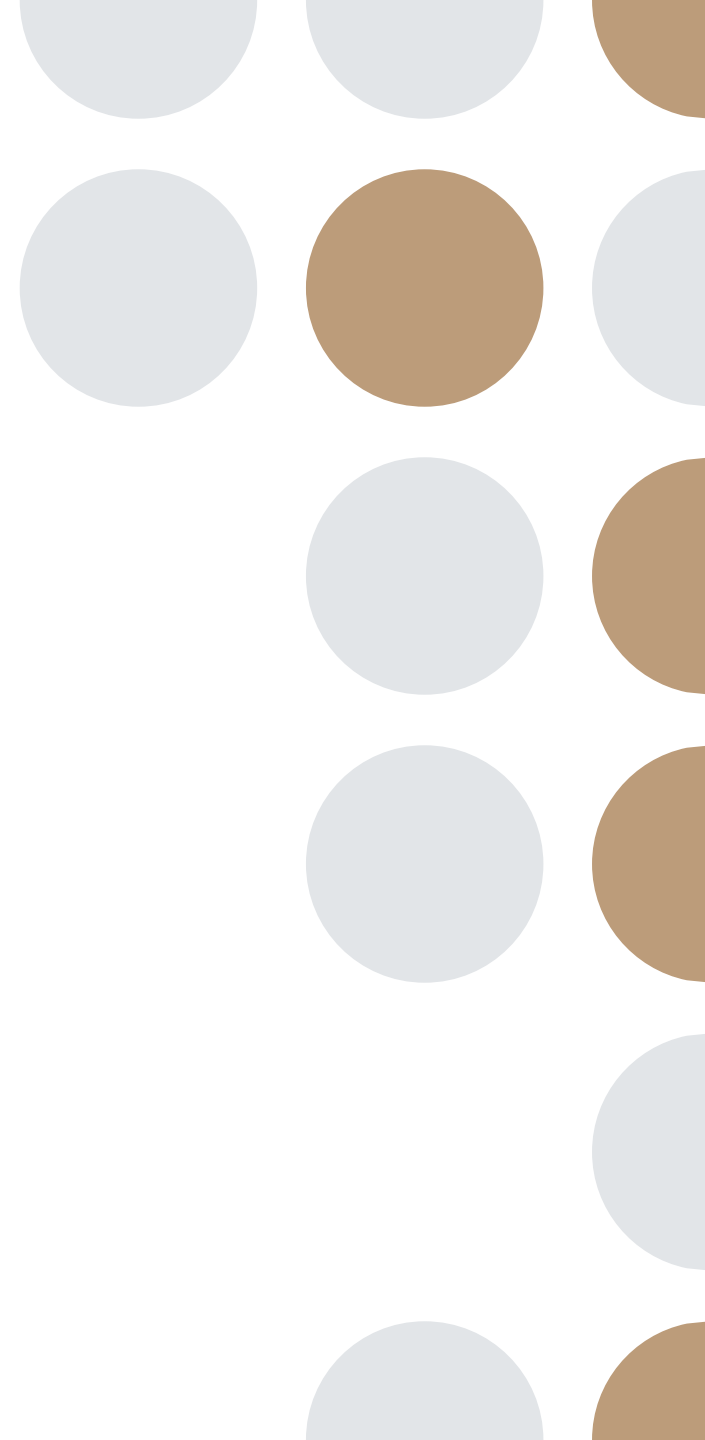
Can you think of how you might balance conflicting motivations to facilitate positive outcomes for both you and your students?



Summary

- GTAs have a lot of influence over student motivation!
- Student motivation influences classroom experiences and learning outcomes
- Both you and students bring shared and unshared motivations to the classroom setting
- We discussed the following 5 factors of student motivation and strategies:
 1. Belief in ability
 2. Belief that they control their own success
 3. Intrinsic motivation
 4. Importance of topic
 5. Clear goals, expectations, organization, and outcomes

Q&A/Discussion Time



Resources

Ambrose SA, Bridges MW, Lovett MC, Dipietro M, Norma MK. 2010. *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*.

Dweck, C. S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. *Educational Leadership*, 65(2), 34–39.

Pintrich, P. R. (2003). A Motivational Science Perspective on the Role of Student Motivation in Learning and Teaching Contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(4), 667–686.

Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (2002). *Motivation in Education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Skinner EA. A guide to constructs of control. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 1996 Sep;71(3):549-70. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.71.3.549. PMID: 8831161.

Weiner, B. (1986) *An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion*. Springer-Verlag, New York. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-4948-1>
