Fall 2017 Helena District Writing Assessment, 9-12

“Motivation” Prompt

Sample Score Point 5

Today, society depends largely on extrinsic motivators to get tasks completed and persuade individuals to try their best to succeed. Intrinsic motivation is usually left on the back burner and only applied if one is told to find it. Though tangible rewards are useful in motivating people, society should shift its focus to intrinsic motivators.

By honing in on intrinsic motivators, society will also be focusing on fulfillment and enjoyment, rather than disposable rewards. For example, in soccer, one runs an average of 3 miles per game. In order to complete this, along with fancy footwork and ball handling skills, one must have the want to do so. If their motivation is intrinsic, if they love the game and how it makes them feel, they are likely to play again, regardless of the outcome. However, sometimes intrinsic motivation paired with extrinsic motivation is beneficial. If after winning a soccer game, one receives a trophy, they will be even more motivated to put forth the effort to win again. But if the only motivation is the trophy and there is no internal yearn to do well, the individual will suffer greatly after a loss, and not have the enjoyment of the game to fall back on.

While some extrinsic motivators may be permenant, their affect won’t be. It isn't a mystery that schools give students grades based on their work, and that these grades stay with them on their transcript years after they were initially given. While the grades are important, the want to learn and become intelligent is more important. By encouraging students to recognize their full potential for themselves and to immerse themselves in subjects that they are passionate about, they will want to do well in school despite an occasional bad grade. An "A" on a report card can be motivational by reminding students of the hard work they put in to earn it, but only if coupled by intrinsic motivation. If the "A" is the lone thing driving students to succeed, their grades will slowly drop after receiving a poor grade or being content with passing grades like low "Bs" and "Cs."

Despite being important, some extrinsic motivators will never add up to the intrinsic ones. The phrase "money can't buy happiness" rings true when referring to employment. Many people choose their occupations based on salary, a large extrinsic motivators. However, no matter how well a job pays, one won't be satisfied without intrinsic motivation. If working seems like work and one is not fulfilled by their job, they will seek another opportunity. Of course, a well-paying job is optimal, but once the economy fails and pay cuts are made, one needs to fall back on the love of their job, not just the plundering salary. A teacher with a love of children will be happier than a CEO with a hatred of big businesses.

To complete any sport, education program or job, motivation is neccessary. Extrinsic motivators can temporarily be successful, but society needs to focus on intrinsic motivators to create a happier, more fulfilled life where people realize their own potential and reasons for success.

Annotation: This essay presents an effective argument for the need for intrinsic motivation with specific examples of soccer, grades, and employment. While acknowledging that extrinsic motivators are ever present, the writer counters the effectiveness of such motivators well. Word choice is generally precise. There are some usage and spelling errors, but they are not frequent enough to impede understanding.