

Success-oriented students are serious learners who want to perform well, and they usually do. They are predisposed toward engagement, as they enjoy learning for learning's sake. They find personal satisfaction in challenging assignments because they are accustomed to success and are able to preserve their perceptions of self-worth even in the event of an occasional failure.

Overstrivers are also successful students and will take on challenging tasks, but they are not entirely confident in their ability and consequently worry constantly about their grades and performance. Anxious that each new learning task will be the one that exposes the lower level of ability that they have so far been able to conceal, they compensate by expending a great deal of effort to ensure that they do succeed.

Failure-avoiders also suffer anxiety, but because they have not always been successful in school, they are afraid that if they fail at a specific learning activity, they will prove to themselves and others that they lack the ability to succeed. In order to preserve their sense of self-worth, they avoid tasks that are too challenging.

Failure-accepting students have become so accustomed and resigned to academic failure that they feel hopeless. They respond to learning tasks with indifference (school is irrelevant and unworthy of their efforts) or even antagonism, and they are neither satisfied with success nor dissatisfied with failure. In short, they have disengaged from the learning process.

Covington, M. V. (1993). A motivational analysis of academic life in college. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*, Vol. 9. New York: Agathon Press.