Dear Colleagues

**Inspiring self-motivation in order to shoot with great skill**

**The Problem:**shooters who are inspired by coaches to become self-motivated, to learn to shoot at the highest level, need to be taught with a carefully designed program. It is the same for student children, who also need to be inspired to become self-motivated. Both shooters and students need to be taught by a teacher who knows how to enhance self-esteem and sense of self-direction (i.e. internal locus of control). For students, this encourages them to want to study and be accepted by a university and in turn, inspired to work toward the degree needed for entry to a particular profession.

Sadly, the vast majority of shooting coaches and school teachers, have little understanding how a person becomes self-motivated. Such skilled coaches and teachers are known, but few  people understand how they achieve their objectives. Teachers’ unions have for many years not understood what they do, but are still convinced that there is too much work in this for a single teacher. These unions appear to be unaware that failure to fulfil super-teachers’ objectives, condemns 90 percent of students to employment and income well below their true capability. In nearly all countries this wastes an enormous number of young people’s lives.

The writer and a small number of shooters were fortunate to be taught by highly-skilled coaches in the early 1950s. They quickly rose to a standard of shooting which led them to win multiple Queen’s Prizes in Australia and overseas countries. As well, they were often selected in the Australian Rifle Team and Commonwealth Games Shooting Team. Some of these shooters were also taught by super-teachers, who inspired them to become self-motivated and gain entry to a university, graduate with a degree and enter a profession. Super-teacher is a journalist’s description of a highly-skilled teacher, whose students cannot help but pass the subjects required for acceptance by a university to study for a degree.

This article describes how highly-skilled shooting coaches and teachers inspire self-motivation, enhancing self-esteem and sense of self-direction in learner shooters and students. If shooters are taught in this way, then many might regard the coaching of shooters as a much-needed activity of rifle clubs.

**Discussion:** inspiring self-motivation is commonly thought of as enhancing a person’s self-esteem and self-direction in a particular field. Two fields are considered here: rifle shooting and educational learning. They are far different from each other. Yet, the same principles are utilised for the inspiration of learners in both fields and many others.

When enhancing a learner it is widely agreed among specialists, that a shooting coach or educational teacher needs to first devise a program of work, which leads to an understanding that a learner is:

* personally responsible for the outcomes of his/her own efforts (hence, luck and heredity having little to do with it)
* accepted and belongs among those who seek to become skilled in a particular field
* acknowledged by others as having self-efficacy, i.e. competence.

As a result, programs of coaching and teaching are planned and used by a coach or teacher, which enable individuals to acquire enhanced self-esteem and sense of self-direction (or internal locus of control). These are key components in the self-motivation of a learner.

**Practical:** in rifle shooting, each shooter usually has two shoots on a weekend. Each of the shooter’s electronically-scored groups are transmitted to the coach, as a photograph or a record in an Australia-wide database. The coach examines each shooter’s group, identifying the technique difficulties experienced, then suggests a cure. The next weekend, the shooter follows the cure procedure and quickly overcomes each difficulty. The difficulties commonly include: change of the natural point of aim, splitting of a group into two or more sub-groups (above one another or side by side), a wide group, a group with odd shots above and below the centre, a group surrounded by a circle of bullseyes or inners and diagonal groups due to the absorption of recoil by the thumb or palm muscles. Such programs of learning have been undertaken at rifle clubs across Australia, in both Target Rifle and F Class disciplines.

After 4 years of coaching in this way, a well-known rifle club in 2019 received a 30 percent increase in new shooters. Each new member commenced using the club’s F Class rifles, some later branching into TR shooting. Within 3 months of joining, new members were found to be generally capable of scoring 10 shots within the 1.0 MOA 6-ring used in F Class. At another rifle club specializing in TR, about 70 percent of 18-year old shooters, were found within 3 months to be capable of grouping 10 shots within the 2.0 MOA bullseye.

Educational students inspired by a super-teacher to become self-motivated while studying physics, achieved at a significantly higher level than at the vast majority of schools of most countries. Each year, 90 students aged 18 years, were enrolled to study physics (also chemistry, mathematics and English, taught by other teachers). They undertook this course of study in order to gain entry to universities around the world. The students studied the physics syllabus for the South Australia Matriculation certificate. Each year, from 60 to 80 percent (averaged over five annual intakes) of students achieved an ATAR (Australian Tertiary Acceptance Rating) score of 90 or more. Students at most successful schools in Australia achieve ATAR 70 to 80 in most subjects.

For the study of physics, the super-teacher of interest structured the annual intake of 90 students into three classes of 30. Each student was provided with a textbook that described the complete syllabus for physics. At the end of each chapter, questions and problems were given for the student to work through, with answers provided at the end of the book. In class, the skilled teacher used the blackboard to illustrate the pathways of satellites around a planetary centre, atomic nuclear structures, force fields, magnetic fields and electrical circuits. In class, each topic was introduced and discussed, with students helped to understand the problems they were to work through. Each week, students submitted their exercise books containing detailed calculations for problems. As well, a private study notebook was handed in each week for same-day review and comment by the teacher. At the end of each topic, taught over a period of a month, formative and summative examinations were conducted one week apart. The teacher marked these examinations quickly, so that through the formative test, students would immediately understand how they were progressing. This enabled both the teacher and students to see where there was a need to re-teach particular topics. This was particularly necessary for students for whom English was their second language. Likewise, this was needed by students who had never studied physics at high school. Students progressed well as a result of the teacher working with individual students, both in class and at other times.

In this self-motivation program it was found unnecessary for parents to be advised by teachers that their children were plodders and hence, unlikely to be accepted at a university to study for the degree required to enter a professional career. Instead, these students were found to be on a path of continuing development. At the end of the year, students were often unrecognizable, having undergone a noticeable change in their ability to learn.

**Conclusion:**  the above program, to enable learner shooters and students to become self-motivated, was found to quickly result in a high level of success. The rifle shooting program was particularly valuable, because it enabled shooters to systematically master all the techniques needed to rise to the highest levels of this sport. Both learner shooters and education students were found by the end of the first year, to have changed markedly in their learning ability. After the first year, both shooters and students could themselves see the changes they had gone through and were ready to continue undergoing change under such a coach or teacher. It was clearly apparent that a rifle club that operated such a learning program would automatically build its membership, because this fundamental need enabled members to continue to advance, rather than stagnate after the first year or two.

Best regards

Geoff