



Making the Grade: A Self-Worth Perspective on Motivation and School Reform

Martin V. Covington

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Achievement behavior in schools can be understood best in terms of students' attempts to maintain a positive self-image. For many students, expending effort is frightening because a combination of effort and failure implies low ability. They have a variety of techniques for avoiding failure, ranging from cheating to setting goals that are so easily achieved that no risk is involved. Although teachers usually reward achievement and punish lack of effort, for many students risking the sense of defeat that comes from trying hard and not succeeding is too daunting. In *Making the Grade*, Martin Covington extracts powerful educational implications from self-worth theory and other contemporary views that will be useful for educators, parents, and all people concerned with the educational dilemmas we face.

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