Schopenhauer stated already in the 19th century: “For the happiness of man it is necessary that he is doing something, undertake activities, or merely learn something”. And for happy and lifelong learning motivation is crucial. There are several theoretical concepts on motivation. For instance there is the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, in the Self Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan[1] and the distinction between the performance and mastery goal approach, in the Goal Theory of Pintrich[2]. Extrinsic motivation and performance approach both are fostered by external stimuli, while intrinsic motivation and mastery approach can be seen more as personal traits. The learning and working environment can foster both motivation aspects, but also can have a negative effect on motivation.

Four important aspects can foster the motivation in higher education:

- It has to be totally clear that the content of the curriculum (and of the content of courses in professional life) is **relevant** for the whole study and the later profession.
- The curriculum (and postgraduate education) has to be in a didactic format that optimally stimulates **active learning** (of student or teacher).
- In line with the former point the curriculum has to an **individual** approach of the learner, with a focus on **personal development**. Individualisation will lead to a high level of **responsibility** for the learner for its own learning process.
- All former point will only result in the fostering of motivation when **feedback** is structurally integrated in the curriculum.

These four topics are described by Ronald Harden[3] as the acronym FAIR: Feedback / Active / Individualisation / Relevance.

What are prerequisites to operationalize these topics in an educational programme? To make the educational programme relevant it is necessary to describe the competencies for future professional life, and thus to be the base for a relevant programme. As an example the VetPro competency profile of Utrecht vet school, developed by qualitative and quantitative research, contains seven competency domains (scholarship, communication, collaboration, entrepreneurship, health and welfare, veterinary expertise and personal development) with 18 competencies under these domains (Bok et al.[4]). Detailed from this competency profile the more detailed program outcomes and learning objectives for the separate courses can be developed. To use and address permanently the (relevant) goals of each course and of the curriculum motivates students for learning.
To implement active learning and individualisation an evidence based didactic concept of the curriculum focused on active learning is recommended, like the problem-based or team-based learning concept. Active learning can be fostered not only in the theoretical courses, but most of all in the (clinical) workplace. The more active the learner has to be and the more responsibility the learner gets, the more possibilities there are to give and receive relevant and actual feedback. Feedback is a real prerequisite to develop a reflective mind and to learn. In order to achieve these prerequisites for intrinsic motivation it is wise to describe within your organisation an evidence-based education philosophy, which give the direction of concept and content of your programme.

The absence of these four aspects will influence the level of the (intrinsic) motivation in a negative way.

Continuous attention for the competencies Communication, Collaboration and Personal development in the daily life of the learning process is necessary, not only for students, but for teachers as well. In most curricula attention for these competencies is relatively new, so most teachers are not trained in these competencies. Examples of how to do this will be given, for instance the introduction of a tutor for each student throughout the curriculum, and introduction of a peer feedback system. A safe learning environment is a condition for the successful implementation of the described topics, especially for the opportunities to get and receive frequent and rich feedback. It is interesting to investigate the culture of the organisation and the willingness of an educational or professional organisation to learn and to change.

Medicine and veterinary medicine are professions in which the high quality of care and the evidence-based approach is central. The operationalization of the competency Scholarship fosters the attitude of evidence-based learning and working. Peer feedback groups cannot only focus on peer feedback about topics like communication and entrepreneurship, but also on a critical reflection on the evidence-based approach. When this attitude of helping each other in peer feedback groups in a critical way starts already in the educational programme, it is likely that graduates continue this during professional life (depending on the safety of the future work environment). To structure these discussions the theory of critical reflective work behaviour can be used. (de Groot et al.[5])

To stay engaged in a stressful (first) position in the professional field, the safe learning and working environment is crucial. Investigating this topic using the job-demands-job-resources model revealed that topics like support from colleagues and from the supervisor, possibilities for lifelong learning, feedback and autonomy are important issues, while in the domain of the personal resources (the personal development) reflective and proactive behaviour, optimism and self-efficacy do contribute to the work engagement of the professional (Mastenbroek et a.[6]). By addressing and fostering these topics in the educational programme, more resilient graduates will enter the professional field. These attributes will contribute to the continuous motivation in professional life.
Finally, one cannot expect from teachers that they are able to contribute adequately to the above-discussed traits, tasks and competencies. Additional faculty development programmes are a prerequisite to develop these competencies in teachers. To motivate teachers for faculty development programmes incentives, stimulating extrinsic motivation, are necessary.

But a final conclusion may be that learning, to stay curious, to stay in the attitude of striving for quality are things that make persons happy. Motivation stimulates learning, but feeling the joy of learning also stimulates motivation.

References: