

What is Competition?

Introduction: Competition is defined in the dictionary as “a striving or vying with another or others for profit, prize, position, or the necessities of life; rivalry.” There has long been disagreement as to whether competition is a learned or a genetic component of human behavior. Perhaps what first comes to mind when we think of competition is athletics. It would be a mistake, however, not to recognize the effect competition has in other areas of life, including work, academics, etc. It has often been suggested that the American capitalist-driven society thrives because of the spirit of competition.

Some of the external (outside) incentives that motivate people to win are money, an opportunity for advancement, recognition for accomplishment, etc. Internal (inside) incentives include a feeling of accomplishment, a feeling of power, status, loyalty, etc.

Healthy Competition

Healthy competition can be used to make a fun learning environment; it can challenge, motivate and stimulate high quality performance. Competition can be destructive, however, when competition pits team members against one another, creates suspicion, or divides the team into a mixture of jealous or mistrustful individuals. One of the problems with competition is the perception that when someone wins, the other person or persons lose. The truth is that anyone who competes wins something, such as increased knowledge, confidence, etc. Competition, of course, does not always mean competing with another person. We all compete with ourselves at various times, i.e., mow the lawn faster, get a better grade next semester, etc.

“It is not true that you must be number 1 - or in the top 10 - or you haven’t made it at all. Young people need to know that there is sufficient reward in life for succeeding simply at the level of doing one’s best. The truth is, you are not a failure if you don’t make the top spot. Anyone may REACH for the brass ring, but only one may have it, so the joy of most of us is simply being on the carousel.” -Norman Lear

Participation in the competition offered by your Career Association will better help prepare you to become a “winner” in the working world--whether the “prize” is a job, a promotion, a raise, additional benefits, or a personal goal.

Competition Goal

What personal competition goal would you like to accomplish during this school year?

What are the pros and cons of competition?

What is healthy competition?

If you could write a definition for “competition” in the dictionary, how would you define it?