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**ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND AVOIDANCE BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOL:
DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS**

Theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence in the field of achievement motivation attempt to describe and explain why students wish (or do not wish) to learn, acquire knowledge and skills and succeed in academic settings. However, students sometimes may wish to learn and achieve but avoid purposefully engaging in the learning process or move away from activities that produce knowledge and skills. These avoidance behaviors constitute maladaptive learning behaviors and reflect student motivation to avoid some perceived threat in the learning context such as failure and the fear of appearing academically incompetent to teachers, parents, peers and maybe to one's own self. This keynote will focus on achievement motivation in different age groups and on avoidance behaviors in the school context such as avoidance of academic help seeking and academic self-handicapping. Based on the international literature and the speaker's own research, different aspects of achievement motivation will be discussed in relation to cognitive, emotional and behavioral patterns of learning, and associations with avoidance behaviors will be pointed out. Protective and risk factors in the contexts of the school and the family will also be discussed in order to identify the multiple pathways that support student achievement motivation and facilitate engagement in school, reduce avoidance behaviors and purposeful maladaptive behaviors, and generally contribute to the development of positive learning environments.

