

Student Motivation: Inspiring the Future

One of the most important aspects of a teacher's job is to motivate students. In order for a student to be motivated, he or she must possess a desire to learn and be willing to aim this desire toward achieving academic goals. For successful student motivation to occur, a student must want to participate in the learning process.

This is not a simple task for teachers to accomplish; but when done correctly, student motivation can have great results. A high school student who has little or no interest in attending college can be motivated enough to change his or her mind. It only takes one teacher, and sometimes the guidance of parents - but it certainly can be done.

There are several factors that have a direct effect upon student motivation. Among them are:

- Academic challenges
- Parental involvement in a student's academic life
- The building of a student's self-esteem

Let us take a more in-depth look at each one of these factors.

Academic challenges:

Praise, enthusiasm, positive feedback, rewards, and a positive environment are just a few ways a teacher can help stimulate student motivation. Praising a student for positive efforts he or she makes in the classroom encourages learning. Through praise, a student will understand that he or she is on the right path. More often than not, praise will make the student continue to do a good job.

Rewards also work well for student motivation. Students love getting a piece of candy from the teacher's candy jar, or even a day of no homework because of good classroom behavior. Student motivation can be achieved simply when the teacher puts a gold star on an A+ exam.

While praise and rewards promote high levels of student motivation, positive feedback from the teacher is also key. A teacher commending a student for a job well done or sending a letter to the student's parents expressing how well their child is doing in school can greatly motivate a student. By giving positive feedback, a teacher can let a student know that they are doing well and can also suggest how a student can improve on any weaknesses. Through feedback, a student will understand what the teacher expects.

Students also benefit when a teacher is motivated to teach. Teacher enthusiasm increases student motivation. When a teacher shows excitement about a subject, he or she can motivate students to learn.

Parental involvement:

Student motivation begins when the toddler is at home learning the basic functions of life, such as walking. When the toddler is just about to take his or her first step, the parent is providing support so that the child does not fall. Every time positive recognition is received, the child is motivated to achieve more goals. This is why it is vital for parents to show support and enthusiasm during these experiences.

Another helpful way to start a young child on the right path to learning is providing educational toys and books for the child. A parent can also view educational television shows with the child. A simple toy can help a child learn ABC's and 1, 2, 3's. This helps build future student motivation. Coloring books, magnetic letters, building blocks, and television shows like Sesame Street are all great motivational devices. A parent should encourage a child to ask questions about such games, books, and shows. Once a child is old enough to be a student, he or she will then understand that there is nothing wrong with asking the teacher for help. After a child becomes a student, responsibility lies with the parents to become involved in his or her academic life.

Student self-esteem:

Student self-esteem comes from within the student. It can fluctuate depending on daily experiences. Students who do not receive a grade they were hoping for can experience low self-esteem. However, when a student answers a question correctly in class and gets recognized for a job well done, his or her self-esteem will be raised. A student's self-esteem can also rise by participating in extracurricular activities. A student will feel accomplished when he or she is able to perform in a play, win a key club competition, or score a point for the basketball team.

Student motivation comes from within the student. However, there are many factors and people who can help the student remain motivated. With the

will to learn and the enthusiasm of others, students will be inspired to do well in school.

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