



How to Motivate Students

Have you ever had a student who just sits in his/her seat when there is work to do? Do you have a student who will only do work when you, the teacher, are hovering over him/her? Why do some students appear to lack motivation while most other students are eager to learn?

Students, especially students with disabilities are often accused of creating their own problems. Sometimes teachers believe that a student is not giving his/her full effort in class or on assignments. Have you ever said, "If only Susie would try harder, she would do better?" If you have ever thought that a student was being lazy, disinterested, or unmotivated you are not alone! However, Richard Lavoie, expert and advocate for students with special needs, would say we lack a fundamental understanding of what motivation is if we believe students are not motivated. Mr. Lavoie states, "all human behavior is motivated. With the exception of anatomical processes (e.g. heart beating, breathing, etc.) every human behavior is motivated." The problem is what is the student motivated to do? Is the student working as hard as he/she can on an assignment or is he/she working as hard as they can to avoid completing the assignment?

Each student has a unique pattern of motivators. As educators, we often make the mistake of trying to motivate a student with what motivates us, rather than finding out what is the unique motivator for a given student.

It can be difficult to find the right "carrot" to motivate a student. You may consider having a student complete a **Student Reinforcer Survey** (available on-line at no cost) or ask the student's parents for ideas.

Strategies for Motivating Students

Share your passion for the content you teach!

Deliver your instruction with energy and enthusiasm. Your passion for your content will motivate your students.

Get to know your students.

The better you know your students, the easier it will be to tailor your instruction to your students' interests and background. Your personal interest in your students will inspire loyalty and motivation. Share your interest and your faith in your students' abilities.

Use examples freely.

Many students are visual learners. They may need to see samples and examples to understand how to meet your expectations.

Differentiate your instruction.

Engage your students by providing a variety of learning activities that allow for discovery and problem solving. Use cooperative learning to provide positive social interaction and instructional support.

Give students as much control over their own education as possible.

Let students choose paper and project topics that interest them. Assess students in a variety of ways (e.g. presentations, projects, papers) to give students more control over how they show their understanding to you.

Additional strategies to consider for individual students:

- Allow the student to have a special responsibility in the classroom (e.g. teacher aide, peer tutor, group leaders).
- Provide the student with as many academic and social successes as possible.
- Write a contract with the student specifying what behavior is expected and what reinforcement will be made available when the terms of the contract have been met.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the assigned task to determine: a) if the task is too difficult and b) if the length of time scheduled to complete the task is appropriate.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

**This is not to be considered an endorsement of these in-services, merely a listing of upcoming in-service opportunities.*

Down Syndrome 101 for Educators

February 20, 2014

Down Syndrome Guild Conference Center

5960 Dearborn St., Suite 100

Mission, KS 66202

FREE- breakfast is provided

RSVP to info@kcdsg.org or 913-384-4848

Using Self-Monitoring Strategies to Improve Academic Performance

March 12, 2-14

Alvamar Country Club

1809 Crossgate Dr.

Lawrence, KS 66047

FREE

For more information go to www.ksdetasn.org

Preventing the Escalation of Problem Behaviors in School Settings

March 26, 2014

KCK School District

2010 N. 59th Street

Kansas City, KS

8:30 am - 11:00 am

Register at www.ksdetasn.org

Guided Math

April 4, 2014

Tiffany Greens Golf Resort

6100 NW Tiffany Springs Parkway

Kansas City, MO 64154

Registration- \$229

To register call 1-800-735-3503 or on-line at

www.ber.org

Down Syndrome Specific Curriculum Supports

April 17, 2014

Down Syndrome Guild Conference Center

5960 Dearborn St., Suite 100

Mission, KS 66202

FREE - breakfast is provided

RSVP to info@kcdsg.org or 913-384-4848

US Autism and Asperger Association World Conference

September 4-7, 2014

Kansas City, MO

For more information go to www.usautism.org

God , our Master,
you are the supreme teacher, who illuminates
human beings with truth.
Blessed be the work of love.

God, our Father,
make me an echo, and allow me to sow truth
and goodness.
Blessed be your attitude, so full of understanding.

God, our Master,
let me be passionate about beauty and truth,
and warm my heart with your
commandments.
Blessed be your light of truth, filled with
blessings for us.

Grant me the gift of conveying, teaching,
correcting, and indicating your ways, your
shining, glorious kindness.

God, our Master,
direct my mind to your truth, my hands to
kind acts.
I am small and frail in your light, but allow
me to fulfill my difficult mission.

Blessed by your mercy, which teaches us so
much.

Amen

Hugo Schlesinger and Humberto Porto

Transition Reminder

- Maintain and document communication that may occur with public school special education professionals with whom you may be working (resource teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists and physical therapists).
- Maintain (and document) communication with parents regarding student's progress. Document any new accommodations and modifications and their effectiveness.