Motivating All Learners

Mini Grant

September 2013

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Rationale

In my years as a teacher, it always confounds me to see how some students are able to go the distance and meet their goals, and then there are other students who start out with the "eye of the tiger", but then due to other circumstances, they stop out. Sometimes the stop out is for a short time, and at other times it is permanent and I never see the student again. What makes a student stay motivated? What makes a student stay the course? What makes a student come class after class, juggling life commitments, work commitments and school commitments? What is it about those individuals that allow them to set goals and then meet them? Is it intrinsic to the individual? The program? The family circumstance? The support system? The employment situation?

It always amazes me that when the class begins, our students are all there for a common purpose, which would be to meet their educational goals, yet each student is unique to what they bring to the class through their learning experience. Some students find the course work useful, some have a general desire to succeed, some have self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, some are motivated by themselves or by others, and some are motivated because they have been able to overcome a particular academic challenge.

It is hard to accept that so many of our students would choose to avoid activities that they deem beyond their capabilities before even trying. Students who are unmotivated typically are so for a reason, and it is up to us to gently guide them to learning and in the process help them protect their self-worth that they do possess. We never want our students to try to do something and then fail because we did not support them.

According to a study conducted by Carnegie Melon University, students are not motivated in class because:

- ✓ they cannot articulate their learning goals
- ✓ they cannot see the relevance to their academic, personal and professional lives
- ✓ they cannot see how what they are learning in class has direct connections to the "real world"
- ✓ they are disinterested in the material
- ✓ they feel that they have no choice in what they learn
- ✓ and finally, they feel that their teacher doesn't care because they have no enthusiasm about the material that they are teaching.

It is my hope that through my research that some of these questions as to why some students are motivated and others are not will be answered as well as give you some tips and strategies to help your students stay motivated and stay the course.

When we succeed with our students we all succeed. There is nothing more encouraging than seeing your student stay motivated and meets their goals. It is a rewarding experience that can be compared to nothing else.

According to Allen Mendler, teachers are becoming more and more frustrated in the classroom because our students are no longer of the mindset of "work and earn", but of "fast and easy". He continues that students often feel as they though they should be entertained, and that feeling good has become more valued than working hard. Our students have "expectations of entitlement" because oftentimes our culture values what we have rather than who we are. Students who are unmotivated many times are at a loss of who they are and where they are going and what purpose their life will have.

Our mission as teachers in adult education is to challenge our students, give them choice, offer them course work of significance, offer corrective feedback in a timely fashion, and competence in our role as teacher. This is all a daunting task, but well worth the effort when we see our students succeed.

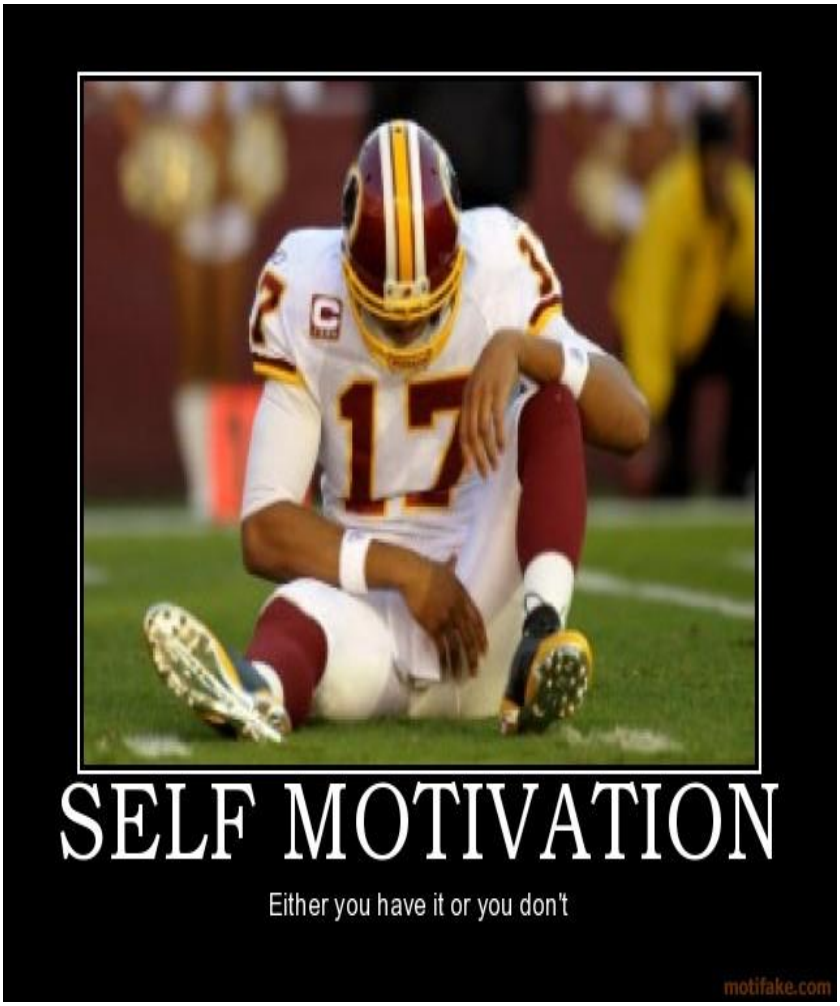


Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Is Your Class Like a Video Game?

Is your class like a video game? What do you mean by that? Is my class like a video game is a ridiculous question to ask! My classroom is much more engaging, challenging and beneficial than any video game could ever be! Really? Are you sure, because that is NOT what research says. Can you believe that researchers are now comparing highly engaging, highly motivating, and highly successful classrooms to those that are like video games?

Researchers asked educators how they can create a classroom that is like a video game in terms of having the experience of learning in the classroom be "motivating, stimulating, collaborative and rewarding". (Gee) When I first read the article, I was intrigued. How could any classroom that was going to be successful be likened to a video game? Well, here are the answers: video games MAKE users want to learn. It gives them a sense of ownership, agency, and control by creating a "cycle of mastery" "that always pushes them to the next level of competence." (Gee)

According to Gee, good video games are long, complex, and difficult. Good video games recruit learning as a form of pleasure. Good video games teach users not only how to play, but how to learn. And then, most importantly, how to keep learning.

In the classroom, students need to learn complex things in deep ways. Learning cannot just be superficial. Learning has to be embedded in their life and in making connections between the classroom and their life. In classrooms, learning is not just about the topic being taught but in life skills that are being learned that are necessary to lifelong learners. Students have to learn the skills of improvisations, innovation and challenging themselves. Our classrooms have to be places in which students learn how to

develop concepts, skills and relationships that will allow them to explore new worlds, and experience learning as a way to learn about themselves as well as their place in the world.

To continue with the research of James Paul Gee, good video games begin with offering players strong identities. Video game designers create characters that demonstrate that learning and identity are interrelated. Learning a new domain makes the players learn the world in novel ways. Game designers let players be producers, not just consumers. In a video game, players are allowed to create their worlds, their characters, and the scenarios in which they need to play through. Some video games even allow players to modify or create entire new levels in which they have to problem solve and create solutions to the problems that they have created in these new scenarios. In doing this, each new game is new, fresh, inventive and engaging.

In good video games, players can customize their games to fit their ability and learning style. Many video games allow players to choose their ability level: beginner, experienced, or advanced. By doing this, each player can choose the level of play in which they are comfortable. By being able to choose their own ability, they are able to use their skills to meet with mastery, as well as challenge themselves and develop a new skill set.

"Features like these encourage players to take risks, explore, and try new things. If they fail, consequences are minimal-they can start over from the last saved game. All these factors give players a real sense of agency, ownership, and control. It's their game". (Gee)

Research has shown that when learners are given a complex problem and are given freedom to solve it, the learners tend to come up with creative solutions to the problem. In good video games, problems are well ordered. One problem comes up, a

solution is reached, another problem comes up, and a solution is reached. The process is endless until you "beat the game!" By having problems come up in an ordered process, game players are able to find solutions to them that allow them to come up with solutions to the next problem. Game players are not aware of this fact and they are not aware that the learning that they use from one problem to anther is allowing them to form hypotheses as to how to solve problems. This process allows them to "routinize their mastery". (Gee) This process is formalized through the repetition and challenge of solving increasingly more difficult problems. The new problems that are to be solved are increasing in difficulty, but still "doable". (Gee). Psychologists call this a "flow state", which puts players in a "pleasantly frustrating" state. (Gee) Players can learn as they play, rather than having to learn huge sets of knowledge to even be able to begin the game.

Researchers have shown that students learn best when they are able to learn in context. When students can relate words, concepts, skills, or strategies to prior knowledge, they are learning deeply and richly. Researchers have shown that students are often alienated from learning because they are required to learn so much information that is not connected to their life, and after they have mastered the learning, if they desire to even do so, they cannot do anything with it since it makes no connections to their life.

"Video games are simulations of new experiences and new worlds, yet they engage players with languages and ways of thinking with which they have no prior experience. Players encounter new words and techniques in the context of play, not as abstract definitions or sets of rules. This holds their interest and spurs them on to develop new skills, vocabularies, relationships, and attitudes." (Gee)

Good video games nurture higher order thinking skills. Good video games require that players develop relationships between their

learning, explore their options, and reconceive their goals when needed.

Good video games require that players become flexible, adaptive and learners of new skills. Good video games make learning motivating, stimulating, collaborative, and most importantly, rewarding. Playing video games is actually a real way to learn 21st century skills. Our classrooms have to have the same level of engagement. Our classrooms, like video games, have to teach critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, oral communication, creativity, self-direction, leadership, adaptability, and responsibility.

In reading about good video game design and how players interact with them, is your classroom like that? Does your classroom allow for lifelong learning? Does your classroom engage and motivate? Does your classroom allow for critical thinking, developing relationships, and challenging students to rethink their learning? Does your classroom challenge your students to change their attitude about a topic? Does your classroom allow students to pick the level at which they want to "play"? Does your classroom allow for students to fail, but then start right over again for mastery and success?

The Rules of the Game

Challenging, fun, well-designed video games incorporate important principles of learning that are solidly supported by recent research. Here is the question: why can't we base our classrooms on video games? How does your classroom measure up, or should I say, does your classroom "level up"?

Here are the rules of the game. See how you do…

- Create motivation for extended learning.
- Create and honor preparation for future learning.
- Create and honor "horizontal" learning experiences, which means letting students try out and consolidate their skills in different contexts at the same level, rather than hurrying them from one level to the next.
- Let learners assess their own previous knowledge and learning styles.
- Build in choices from the beginning.
- Banish the word "remedial".
- Teach skills in a simplified context so learners can see how the skills fit together and how to apply them.
- Give information in multiple modes at once (print, visual, oral).

- Provide information “just in time” or “on demand”.
- Let learners customize what you are offering.
- Minimize the distinction between learning and playing.
- Use developmental, not evaluative, tests that allow learners to discover the outer edge of their competence and help them operate just inside that edge.
- Allow learners to practice their skills, and then challenge them to develop new ones. Repeat.
- Ensure that learns at every level have access to knowledge that is distributed and dispersed among people, places, sites, texts, tools, and techniques.
- Create an affinity space where learners can interact with peers and masters around a shared interest.

(The Classroom of Popular Culture, Harvard Education Spotlight Series, No.5, James Paul Gee, page 91.)

Chapter 2: Why Are Our Students Unmotivated?

According to research, students are unmotivated for a variety of reasons. In simple, general terms, students are unmotivated because they cannot do the assigned work, the "response effort" to complete the assigned work seems too great, the classroom instruction does not engage, the student fails to see an adequate pay-off to doing the assigned work, the student has low self-efficacy, or the lack of confidence that they can do the work, and lastly they lack a positive relationship with the teacher.

As educators, regardless of what you teach, we all have a responsibility to our students to figure out which of these reasons, or how many of these reasons cause our students to "give up". A student cannot be expected to be motivated or to be successful when they cannot navigate the class and the content. We have to teach them explicitly what it is that they need to know, and most importantly, why. Our job is not an easy one, but one that can bring great results when we figure out what it is that our students need to be successful.

For a classroom to be effective, we need to give our students frequent, early, positive feedback that supports students' beliefs that thy can do well. We need to ensure opportunities for students' success by assigning tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult. We need to help students find personal meaning and value in material. We need to create an atmosphere that is open and positive. And lastly, we need to help students feel that they are valued members of a learning community. (Davis)

"Our students will become more engaged and will learn better when they are challenged, when they can exercise choice, when they can feel significant, when they can receive accurate and timely feedback, and when they know that they are competent." (Shore).

According to Harry K. Wong, it is not the role of the educator to motivate, but to uncover the reasons why our students are demotivated.

Harry K. Wong writes, it is very common to hear teachers say, "What can I do to motivate them to work?" He continues, "These teachers believe they must extrinsically motivate their students. So they spend their time trying to find fun things to do. Consequently, the class becomes a setting where the teacher is performing and school degenerates into fun time."

"People should not need to be motivated any more than the heart needs to be reminded to pump blood. Students are automatically motivated to do well until factors come along to demotivate them." (Wong)

Put quite simply, students are demotivated when they do not know what to do, and what to learn.

Students need to know that they:

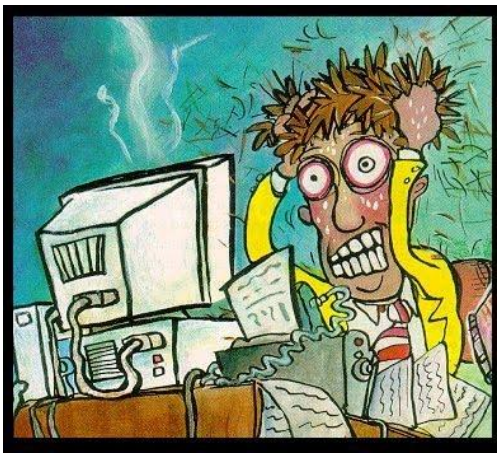
- have a sense of control over their lives
- have a classroom that is organized and that they know what to do
- feel secure in an organized environment that they can trust
- know how to help others in accomplishing things
- have objectives and purpose to the lesson
- tests that align to the objectives
- have the power to earn grades based on prior knowledge of the lesson criteria. (Wong)

What Educators Can Do: Six Key Processes That Motivate

1. **All students are capable of learning when they have the academic and personal tools to be successful.**
2. **Students are inherently motivated to learn but learn to be unmotivated when they repeatedly fail.**
3. **Learning requires risk taking, so classrooms need to be safe places physically and psychologically.**
4. **All students have basic needs to belong, to be competent, and to influence what happens to them. Motivation to learn most often occurs when these basic needs are met.**
5. **High self-esteem should not be a goal, but rather a result that comes with the mastery of challenging tasks.**
6. **High motivation for learning in school most often occurs when adults treat students with respect and dignity.**

Taken from **Motivating Students Who Don't Care by** Allen N. Mendler

Chapter 3: I Don't Know This Stuff!



When a student cannot do the work, what do they do? In my experience, they disrupt the class, put their head down, or stop doing the work completely whether it is for the remainder of the class time, and quite possibly for weeks to come. In essence, they just "shut down".

So many teachers do not realize that stopping to do the work is easier than pushing ahead in work that is difficult. How can we expect our learners to be motivated when they do not understand what is being asked of them? According to Jim Wright, a student has a certain profile when they are unmotivated due to their lack of skills. A student lacks essential skills required to do the task, and they may have deficits in the areas of basic academic skills, cognitive strategies, and academic-enabler skills.

A deficit in basic academic skills is defined as: having straightforward criteria for correct performance. For example, a student can give the definition of a word, spell a word, and solve a simple math problem. These simple tasks comprise the "basic building blocks of more complex academic tasks". (Wright). The instructional goal in basic skills is for students to become automatic in the skill or skills being taught.

A deficit in cognitive strategies is defined as: students employ specific cognitive strategies as "guiding procedure" to complete more complex academic tasks such as reading comprehension or writing. (Wright). Cognitive strategies are "intentional and deliberate procedures" that are under conscious control of the student. The instructional goals are to train students to use specific cognitive instructional strategies, to reliable identify the conditions under which they should employ these strategies, and to actually use them correctly and consistently. (Wright). An example of cognitive strategy would be question generation. A student is taught this technique which is used to promote reading comprehension. In this strategy, a student is "trained" to locate the main ideas and supporting details within a passage. Once the main ideas are found, then students write them on note cards with questions that they have about the main idea.

A deficit in academic-enabling skills is defined as: skills that are not tied to specific academic knowledge but rather aid student learning across a wide range of settings and tasks. Such skills would include organizing work materials, time management, making and then sticking to a work plan. In this, the instructional goal is to train students to acquire these academic-support skills and to generalize their use to become efficient, self-managing learners.

When our students stop doing the work, or in some cases, never even started the work, we need to approach our classroom in a direct instruction format. In using direct instruction format, the teacher must:

- ✓ Ensure that the lesson content is appropriately matched to student abilities.
- ✓ Opens the lesson with a brief review of concepts or material that was previously presented.
- ✓ State the goals of the current class lesson.

- ✓ Break new material into small, manageable increments, or steps.
- ✓ Throughout the lesson, provide adequate explanations and detailed instructions for all concepts and materials being taught. When doing this, the teacher can employ "talk aloud" which is a process in which the teacher describes and explains each step, and also "think aloud" which is a process in which the teacher applies a particular strategy to a problem or task and verbalizes the steps in the process.
- ✓ Regularly check in with students for student understanding by posing frequent questions and eliciting group responses.
- ✓ Verify that students are experiencing sufficient success in the lesson content to share their learning in the desired direction and to maintain student motivation and engagement.
- ✓ Provide timely and regular performance feedback and corrections throughout the lesson as needed to guide student learning.
- ✓ Allow students the chance to engage in practice activities distributed throughout the lesson.
- ✓ Ensure that students have adequate support to be successful during independent seatwork practice activities.
- ✓ Capitalize on students' existing needs. What is the purpose of them taking the class? Find out and incorporate that into the lesson.
- ✓ Hold high but realistic expectations for your students. The teacher is to act as though you expect your students to be motivated, to be hard working, and to be interested in the class. If you do that, they are more likely to do so. To develop the drive to succeed, students need to see that achievement is possible.

Teachers have to provide opportunities for this to happen by:

- ✓ Helping students set achievable goals for themselves. Failure to attain unrealistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students. Encourage students to focus on their continued improvement, not just on a grade or test.
- ✓ Telling students what they need to do to succeed in your class. Do not let your students struggle to figure out what is expected of them. Reassure students that they can do well and tell them exactly what it is that they need to do to succeed.
- ✓ Working from student strengths and interests.
- ✓ When possible, let students have some say in choosing what they will study.
- ✓ Increasing the level of difficulty of work as the course progresses.
- ✓ When a student makes a mistake, tell the students that a class review will happen. Share with them that a review will take place at the next class to clarify the points that were not covered well so that students can learn from their mistakes.
- ✓ Teaching your student how to learn. Model strategies, note-taking, reviewing/studying for a test, and completing work in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Remembering the 3 "R"'s: rigor, relevance and relationships. Students are to participate in challenging curriculum that prepares them for college or work. Coursework and projects are clearly relevant to their lives and goals. Students have a support network, relationships, that will look out for them and push them to succeed.
- ✓ Encourage internal motivation.
- ✓ Prepare students to learn.
- ✓ Hand out questions in advance so students can take a few minutes to prepare answers or look them up.

- ✓ Utilize choice or either/or question format. For example, would you use addition or subtraction to solve this word problem?
- ✓ Practice skills and teach students how to integrate them to other classes and life situations.
- ✓ Create realistic goals that are attainable and unique to each individual in class.
- ✓ Be aware of student needs. Be prepared to give some students additional support, attention or information.
- ✓ Remove the risk of failure.
- ✓ Enhance the attractions and minimize the dangers of learning. Help your students overcome their fears of failure and emphasize their success.
- ✓ Organize. Reduce the clutter and distractions so students will be "forced" to pay attention.
- ✓ Confront the beliefs, expectations, and assumptions underlying negative attitudes.
- ✓ Get students to focus on the "why" they are there.
- ✓ Don't make it all about the grades. Don't make grades the ultimate markers of success. The goal is learning.
- ✓ Make learning the reward.

Chapter 4: This is Way Too Much Work!

How can we expect our students to succeed in class and do all that is required, when they look at us, or use body language, or tell us flat out that they will not do the work because it is "too hard"? How do we keep going back class after class when we are going to be bombarded with visual and verbal cues that our students will not do the work because it is "too hard"? Researchers have studied this, and have come up with two reasons as to why students feel this way. To begin, when students feel that the perceived effort to complete an academic task or other behaviors INCREASES, students are LESS likely to engage in that behavior. On the other hand, when an effort to complete a task or behavior DECREASES, students are MORE likely to engage in it. (Wright)

To quickly stop this negative reaction in the class, the teacher has to assess if the student does have the requisite skills to do the task or behavior to meet with academic success. Then the teacher has to find evidence that supports the student's behavior when they do not want to try a task or behavior. The teacher needs to be an investigator at this point; the teacher needs to see what types of circumstances or situations a student perceives effort to be too great, so they opt out instead of trying and completing.

Teachers need to provide clear expectations of the work as well as what is expected of their performance and behavior in class. Teachers have the extra job of keeping students updated regularly on information and assignments, missing work, and standing in the class. If the teacher can constantly be updating a student on their performance and where they are at and where they are in relation to achieving their goals, the students are at less of a risk of falling behind and becoming at risk for underperformance or failure of the course.

Clear signs that a student is unmotivated to complete a task are: procrastination, verbal complaining, frequently seeking teacher help, and other types of avoidant behavior that is demonstrated in the classroom repeatedly.

Some techniques to improve motivation by reducing the response effort are:

- ✓ Start assigned readings in class. Whenever reading is assigned for out of class, start it in class together. Have the teacher begin reading the assigned pages to "hook" the student. Leave off in an exciting part that will want the students to go back for more.
- ✓ Begin challenging homework assignments in class. Have students pair off or divide into groups and give a small amount

of class time to begin the homework, or to develop a plan to complete the homework, or formulate questions about the homework, or lastly, to engage in other activities that will create necessary momentum to motivate students to complete the work independently.

- ✓ Chunk assignments. Have the teacher decide, or the student, or the class, a way to divide the assignment into smaller, more manageable chunks. When this is done, it is critical for the teacher to give feedback and praise for each competed chunk of the work.
- ✓ Organization is key. Be sure that all of your students are organized and prepared to begin an in class assignment or a take home assignment. Have material ready and have a certain time limit set for each part of the task. By being organized, it helps to show the student concretely the exact parts that need to be completed, when they need to be completed, and how.
- ✓ Provide a formal work plan. In advance of a multi-step project, give the students an outline of a work plan for completing the assignments, with specific dates. The large project is then concretely broken down into sub-steps. For each sub-step, the plan provides for: 1. an estimate of the minimum amount of seat time required completing it, and 2. sets a calendar date deadline for completion. Once this plan is set, the teacher checks in weekly, or more often if able, to ensure that the student is staying current with the work plan. Once the student gets familiar with this process, the goal is for the teacher to transfer responsibility for generating work plans onto the student.
- ✓ Prepare a course syllabus. The syllabus will provide the student with a comprehensive map of all of the work that needs to be done in the course. The syllabus has to provide a clear

understanding of the grading process including weight of tests, quizzes and so on. Additionally, the syllabus is to point out the penalties, if any, for late work.

- ✓ Hold teacher-student mini-conferences. In the mini-conferences, the teacher reviews with the student their performance to date, notes missing work, and gets the student to commit to a plan in which they will complete work.
- ✓ Avoid creating intense competition among students. Competition produces anxiety, which can interfere with learning. Reduce student's tendencies to compare themselves to anyone but themselves. Refrain from public criticism.
- ✓ Avoid giving in to student requests for the answer on homework or other assignments. When you simply give struggling learners the answer, you rob them of the opportunity to think for them.
- ✓ Use social proof and similarity. The first step of this process is to catch students acting or achieving appropriately. The next step is to get them to attribute their success to the skills they already possess. It is empowering and effective when students realize that they already have what it takes to be successful and that all they have to do is more of the same.
- ✓ Make sure students know what to expect at all times, provided that they understand that flexibility has to be figured in.
- ✓ Don't allow for excuses. The faster your students see that they are the "captains of their own ship" the quicker they will see that they control the outcomes of the class.
- ✓ Provide closure with a positive ending. When your lesson is done, make sure to provide students with a feeling of closure and positivity. Students will be less likely to be excited about the next lesson if they feel that the prior one ended poorly.

Some additional techniques and suggestions for students who are "under water" in regards to late and missing assignments are:

- ✓ Inventory all missing work. The teacher and student meet and discuss the work that is missing and how the student is going to complete the work and when.
- ✓ Negotiate a plan to complete missing work. The teacher and student create a log of all of the missing work with entries for when the work will be completed. The entries include a description of the missing work so the student is clear as to what they need to do. Students need to develop realistic due dates for the missing work. The teacher and student may work out a penalty for each of the missing work.
- ✓ Periodic check-ins for the missing work.

On the following page, you will find a template for student planning for late work. Many times our students become so overwhelmed with what they need to do to "get their head above water" that they just stop trying.

This template offers a student a clear and concise plan to get them to see what is missing and the plan that they will employ to complete it.

Student Late Work Planning Form

Teacher: _____ Course: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____/_____/_____

Directions: At a teacher-student conference, use this form to create a plan for the student to complete and submit missing or late work.

Assignment	Target Date for Completion	Notes

What penalty, if any, will be imposed for late assignment?

_____

_____

_____ _____

Student Signature Teacher Signature

Contract for Increasing Commitment

1. What can you do to be more successful in this class?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What is your plan for making more of an effort to be more successful?_____

   _____

   _____

3. What obstacles or difficulties might keep you from making your plan a success?

   _____

   _____

   _____

4. What are some ways you can stay away from these obstacles or overcome them if they occur?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. How can I or other people here at this learning center help you be successful with your plan?

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. What are some fair consequences that you should face if your plan does not work?

_____

_____

_____

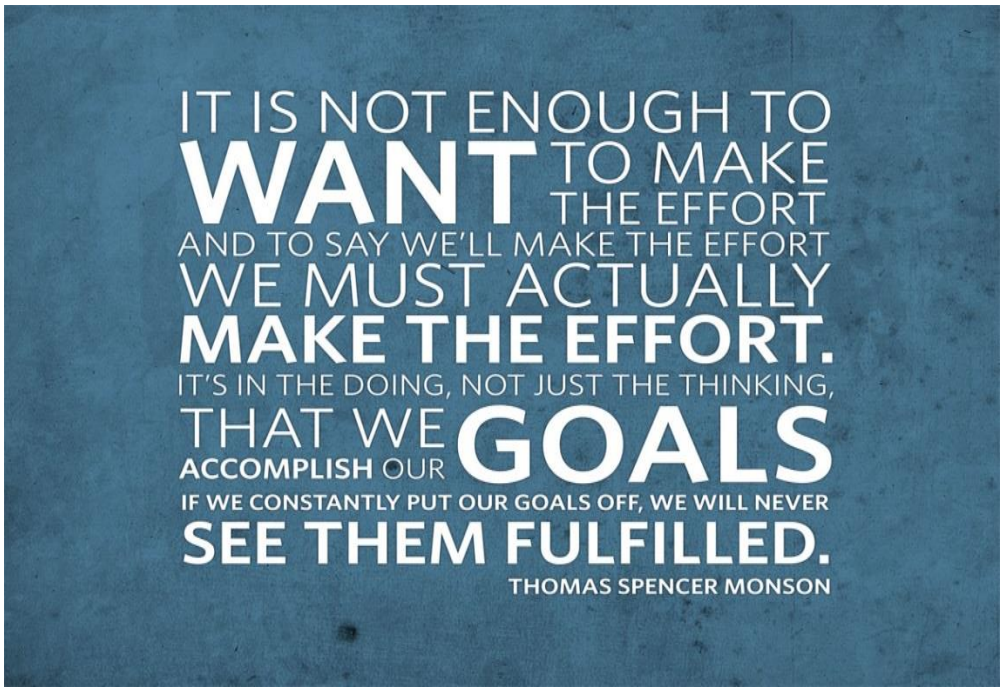
Student Signature _____

Date _____

Teacher Signature _____

Date _____

Focus on the Learning Process



According to Allen Mendler, when information is shared in brain friendly ways, more learning occurs. Teaching processes that affect motivation can be guided by our understanding of multiple intelligences, learning styles, and preferred learning activities.

Questions to ask students to ensure engagement are:

- Think about something you do or have done in which you are successful?
- What was it about the situation that helped you succeed? Did other people help you? What did they do?
- What does it take for you to succeed?
- What kinds of rules or procedures do you need to help you succeed?

Chapter 5: This is So Boring!

Has the above ever happened in your class? Do students say the words, "I'm bored"? Do they let you know that what you are teaching is so boring? If so, then you are not alone. Researchers have studied why students are distracted or off-task because class instruction and learning activities are not sufficiently reinforcing to hold their attention. Researchers have found that in a classroom setting, students can choose to respond to a variety of "enforcing events", which can include, watching the teacher, interacting with peers, looking out the window, looking at their cell phone, and so many other situations and behaviors that we are familiar with. According to research, the fact of the matter is that teachers are always competing for student attention. Teachers can increase attention of students by DECREASING the reinforcing power of competing, or distracting, stimuli, and/or INCREASING the reinforcing academic activities.

To help with this process of increasing academic activities, teachers have to reduce the reinforcing power of the non-instruction activities and increase the power of the instructional activities.

Some techniques to improve student engagement are:

- ✓ Use preferential seating. All teachers have an "action zone" which is a part of the room where they tend to focus most of their instruction. This is the preferential seating zone. The ideal location of a seat in the action zone will need to be determined based on the unique qualities of the student.
- ✓ Create low distraction work areas.
- ✓ Restrict student access to electronic devices and other potentially distracting objects. The teacher may completely ban these devices, but in this day and age, it is easier and wiser to allow the use of the devices at set times in the class and for a set purpose.
- ✓ Use "bell ringer" activities. This is a routine to begin immediately. When students enter class, they have a bell ringer activity that will capture their attention at the outset as well as review and reinforce topics taught from the previous class. These bell ringer activities have a direct tie-in to the day's lesson.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for choice. One efficient way to promote choice within the classroom is to create a "master menu" of options that students can select from in various learning situations. Student choice becomes integrated seamlessly into the classroom routine and it reduces behavior problems. We best engage students when we seek diversity rather than copying and mindless repetition.
- ✓ Explain the purpose behind assignments.
- ✓ Explore the connections between lessons. This allows students to see how they "fit" together and that learning is not compartmentalized.
- ✓ Structure lessons around high-interest or functional-learning goals. According to research, a student is more likely to be engaged when academic lessons are based on "high interest"

topics that interest the student, or that have a "functional learning" pay-off. A functional learning lesson might incorporate job interview skills and money management skills. When a lesson directly connects to the student's life, there is engagement.

- ✓ Incorporate cooperative learning activities into instruction. When students can interact with other students, the level of motivation increases. Cooperative learning tasks have the added advantages of promoting active student engagement and allowing the instructor to get real-time feedback through direct observation about the abilities and learning of individual students.
- ✓ Maintain a brisk pace of instruction. Never have "dead time", which is described as interruptions of instruction when students may get off task and be difficult to redirect back to academic tasks.
- ✓ Make students active participants in learning. Students learn by doing, making, writing, designing, creating, solving. Passivity dampens students' motivation and curiosity. Pose questions. Do not just tell students information, make them uncover it. Don't just tell them everything, let them ask you. Encourage students to suggest approaches to a problem or to guess the results of an experiment.
- ✓ Be enthusiastic about your subject. A teacher's enthusiasm about a topic is a critical factor in student motivation. If you become bored or apathetic about your topic, students will too. A teacher's enthusiasm comes from confidence, excitement about the content and genuine pleasure in teaching.
- ✓ Vary your teaching methods. Variety reawakens your students' involvement in the material and their motivating. Break your routine by incorporating a variety of teaching activities and methods in your course. Use role play, debates, brainstorming

activities, discussion, demonstrations, case studies, technology, guest speakers, and small group work.

- ✓ Present material logically.
- ✓ Summarize
- ✓ Don't over teach. Too much information can be overwhelming. Let students ask you for more.
- ✓ Make a direct connection between the curriculum and what is being taught to their life, as well as how they can apply it directly.
- ✓ Focus on the importance of the subject.
- ✓ Get students directly involved in class. Make student reaction and involvement essential parts of the learning process.
- ✓ Thank the student for compliance in class immediately.
- ✓ Ask students for their opinion and then use their suggestions to shape the class.
- ✓ Ask rhetorical questions.
- ✓ Use quotes.
- ✓ Ask questions that will engage.
- ✓ Encourage curiosity.
- ✓ Take field trips.
- ✓ Do labs and experiments.
- ✓ Make learning interactive.
- ✓ Invite students to teach a class in a manner that would be motivating to other students.
- ✓ Use humor in your class. Keep things light.
- ✓ Use a high interest activity to begin the class, continue with the "mundane" part of the class, and then end with a "bang" so they want to come back and learn more.
- ✓ Use instructional practices that will develop higher order thinking skills, authentic tasks, and quality feedback.
- ✓ Use group cooperative goals to maximize student involvement and sharing.

Students are more likely to be motivated to learn when their teacher listens to their feedback and makes appropriate accommodations. This process is to be done in a confident manner by inviting and valuing your students' perceptions, as well as being open to hearing what students think they need in order to succeed.

Here are a few questions to ask your students when looking for honest feedback.

1. What can I do to be a better teacher for you?

2. How can I help you be successful?

3. Two things I say or do that you think I should continue doing are:_____
   _____
   _____

4. Two things I say or do that you wish I would do less of are:
   _____
   _____
   _____

Showing the Students the Appeal of a Subject

Appeal	Examples of Cues
Novelty	I think that is neat. I haven't seen anything quite the same.
Utility	This next topic is something that we'll use again and again. It contains valuable ideas that we will use throughout the latter part of the course.
Applicability	As you work through the next section, I think that you will be pleasantly surprised at how relevant it is.
Anticipation	As you read through, ask yourself what this section of work is hinting at as the next logical step.
Surprise	We have used x in a lot of different ways. If you thought you had seen them all, just wait until the next assignment.
Challenge	Who is up for a challenge? I think that you will find the next piece of work very interesting.
Feedback	When you try this, you will find out whether you really understood yesterday's lesson.
Closure	A lot of you have asked me about x. Well, finally we are going to find out why that is so.

Source: http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/interactions/motivating-students/

Chapter 6: Why Do I Need to Know This Stuff?!?

When a student does not see the "pay off" for coming to class and doing the work, what is a teacher to do? Students need praise. They also need access to rewards or other reinforcers in the short term as a temporary "pay off" to encourage them to apply greater effort.

"The use of external rewards, reinforcers, can serve as a temporary strategy to encourage a reluctant student to become invested in completing school work and demonstrating appropriate behaviors." (Wright)

It is expected that as students put increase effort into academics and behavior to earn teacher-administered reinforcers, the student will in turn begin to experience such positive NATURAL reinforcers as improved grades, increased peer acceptance, a greater sense of self-efficacy in course content, and higher rates of teacher approval. As the student enjoys the benefits of these natural

reinforcers, the teacher can then fade and perhaps fully eliminate the use of programmed reinforcers or rewards. (Wright)

There are two recommendations when using reward programs.

1. Do NOT use reward programs with students who are already demonstrating acceptable academic effort or general classroom conduct. Reward programs are not likely to benefit a student who is already making an adequate effort to perform in school.
2. Adjust rewards to match a student's developing academic skills. During initial acquisition of a skill, provide reinforcement, whether that is praise, tokens, etc., contingent upon on-task behavior. This process avoids penalizing students for slow performance. As the student moves into the fluency-building stage of learning, change to reinforcement based on rate of performance, which includes reinforcing both accuracy and fluency in the skill. This approach explicitly reinforces high response rates.

Some techniques to increase student involvement in class by increasing the "pay off" are:

- ✓ Define the target behavior.
    - ➢ Establish criteria for success.
    - ➢ Choose student incentives.
    - ➢ Decide how the reward is to be delivered.
- ✓ Strengthen students' self-motivation. Avoid messages that reinforce your power as an instructor or that emphasizes extrinsic rewards. Stress to the students: "I will be interested in your reaction", "I think you will find" and so on. Do not say, "I require", "you must", "you should", or "you will".
- ✓ Give students feedback as soon as possible. Give students concrete examples on ways in which they can improve.
- ✓ Reward success. Students are affected by positive feedback. Praise builds students self-confidence, competence and self-esteem. Recognize sincere efforts even if the product is less than stellar. If a students' performance is weak, let them know

that you believe in them and that they can succeed over time with sustained effort.

- ✓ Be specific when giving negative feedback. Negative feedback is powerful and can lead to a negative class atmosphere. Whenever you identify a student's weakness, make it clear that your comments relate to a particular task or performance, not to the student as a person. Try to cushion negative comments with a compliment about aspects of the task in which the student was successful.
- ✓ Avoid demeaning comments. Some suggestions are: Yes, that's right. OK. Yes, that is what I wanted. Correct. Yes, thank you. No, the correct answer is_____. You had the first part right, but the last part was incorrect. Thank you for taking a risk to answer that, even though it was the wrong answer.
- ✓ Be sensitive as to how you phrase your comments and avoid off-handed remarks that might poke at feelings of inadequacy.
- ✓ Always give students another chance. Allow them to redo, retake or revise. Work with them at success rather than setting up roadblocks to their success.
- ✓ After having a conference with a student in which negative actions, behaviors, work, needed to be addressed, send the student a note or email of thanks. Suggestions are: "I appreciate your hearing my feedback today and giving some thought to what we discussed. If you would like to talk further, let me know. Thanks."
- ✓ When students make mistakes, be empathetic. Some suggestions are: I might make that mistake. Lots of us feel that way. I can see how you would do that. I understand why you would say that.
- ✓ Give genuine compliments, which are to be done privately. Some suggestions are: I like it when _____, some days it takes a lot of effort just to show up. Thanks for pushing yourself to come. It helps when you _____. Even though this is not your favorite class, you found a way to _____.

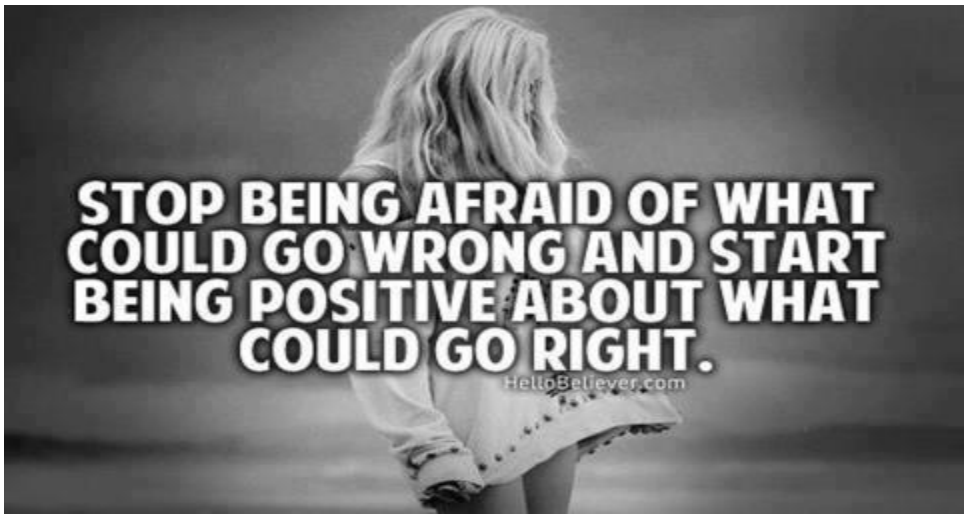
- ✓ Give students a challenge. When met with a challenge, people want to win. Instead of telling students to write an essay, challenge them to get published. Instead of solving 20 math problems, have students solve 5 in as many different ways as they can.
- ✓ Down play setbacks.
- ✓ Give students an opportunity for significance. Students crave responsibility and meaning. They need to have purpose in their life. Allowing lessons to provide them this meaning is critical.
- ✓ Utilize contract teaching. In this method, students can determine their own grading scale, due dates, and assignments.
- ✓ Have students seek out role models and mentors that can show them concretely how what they are learning in class has a direct correlation to school and life.
- ✓ Point out to students that for every missed opportunity in school there is a direct correlation to a missed opportunity in the work place. Every skill not acquired in school is a skill set not in possession of the student for their future employment outlook.

6 Specific Steps for Students to Develop Effective Goals

1. Decide on a goal that you want to reach.
2. Decide on a plan to attain this goal. What are the steps you need to take and in which order should they be taken?
3. Decide on a reward that you will give yourself when you achieve your goal. You can also give yourself smaller rewards after you achieve one or a few steps in your plan.
4. Check your plan with your support network.
5. Do each step in your plan, one at a time.
6. Reward yourself when you have reached your goal.

Taken from: **Motivating Students Who Don't Care** by Allen N. Mendler

Chapter 7: I Can't Do This!



What do you do when your students come to you beaten down and lacking the "fight" necessary to achieve their goals? What do you do when your students have lost the "eye of the tiger"? What do you do when your students have low self-efficacy in a subject area, activity or academic task and the lack of confidence reduces the student's motivation to apply his or her best effort?

What is self-efficacy? Self-efficacy is defined as" the student's view of his or her own abilities specific to a particular academic area." Self-efficacy is not to be confused with self-esteem which is defined as "the student's global view of his or her own self-worth."

Research has shown that a student's belief that they are able to complete a particular academic task do better and have higher levels of motivation.

Teachers can collect data on student self-efficacy by:

- Talking about perceived strengths and weaknesses as learners in particular subject areas of interest.

- Give examples, with as much detail as possible, about specific successes and failures they have experienced on academic assignments.
- Discuss how they complete a range of common academic tasks.
- Disclose their routine for preparing for tests and quizzes.

Some tips to improve student self-efficacy are:

- ✓ Challenge faulty student attributions about ability.
- ✓ Decide if a student attributes their success on internal or external attributes. An internal attribute is tied directly to the students' personality, abilities or other personal factors. An external attribute is linked to factors other than the student, such as teacher behavior, school policies, and curriculum.
- ✓ Decide if a student's situation is stable or unstable. If the condition is stable, students see that this is likely to last a long time. If the condition is unstable, the student sees that the condition is likely to change soon. The teacher has to evaluate if the student is realistic in estimating the stability of the situation.
- ✓ Decide if the student's situation is controllable or uncontrollable. Discuss with the student if they see themselves as in control of the situation or not. Academic control needs to be in possession of the student, not as viewed as beyond their direct control.
- ✓ Emphasize mastery and learning rather than grades.
- ✓ Design tests that encourage the kind of learning that you want your students to achieve. Tests are to be created that stress the synthesis of knowledge rather than the regurgitation of facts.
- ✓ Avoid using grades as threats. The threat of low grades may prompt some students to work harder, but other students may resort to academic dishonesty, excuses for late work, and other counterproductive behavior.

- ✓ Never take student behavior or actions personally. Teachers must maintain professionalism at all times. Taking what students say and do is a great way to help them identify their needs and highlight how teachers will assist them in meeting their goals.

- ✓ Display a positive attitude to your students. Let them know that they are important to you. Some phrases to use are: I was so impressed today when _____. This is really challenging stuff we did today, and I especially appreciate that you _____. I feel like such a lucky teacher to have a class that _____.
- ✓ Establish a sense of belonging with the class. Create an atmosphere in which the students feel connected and related to each other. Create a classroom of openness and warmth.
- ✓ Show honest appreciation. Here are some suggestions of honest appreciation: I appreciate that. I like the way you said that. Thank you very much for that. I sure like that you are taking a risk.
- ✓ Ensure students are aware of their responsibility.
- ✓ Encourage additional study outside of class.
- ✓ Avoid negativity.
- ✓ Create familiarity. Get to know your students' names.
- ✓ Help relieve student anxiety by using appropriate praise.
- ✓ Build students' confidence and self-esteem. Use feedback and conversations to build up self-esteem and self-worth.
- ✓ Encourage them to try new things.

Encourage and Support Positive Affirmations

Much research points to the connection between how we think of ourselves and how we behave. School is difficult for most students, so a positive attitude supported by positive affirmations can give students the mental edge that they need to be specific. When doing this, feel free to use illustrations, sayings and specific sentences to demonstrate to your students how to be positive.

Examples are:

"I am concentrating and achieving."

"I am my own person, and I make my own decisions."

"I can ask questions when I have them because I am confident and smart."

"I am becoming smarter and smarter."

"I am making good decisions."

"I can smile and feel good whenever I want."

Taken from **Motivating Students Who Don't Care** by Allen N. Mendler

Chapter 8: You Don't Care About Me!

What do you do when your student arrives to class and is bristling with hostility? What do you do when your student arrives to class with an air of indifference? What do you do when a student apathetically completes work because they "just don't care"?

Research based on relationships post that because humans are social creatures, polite relationships with teachers can be a powerful motivator for students. Students require positive interactions with teachers to be successful. Teachers and students have to be careful not to fall into a "negative reinforcing trap". A negative reinforcement trap is an activity that actively undercuts positive relationships. (Wright). An example would be that a teacher asks a student to leave class because they are being disruptive since they

are not doing the work that has been assigned. Both the teacher and student are reinforced by the situation. The teacher is negatively reinforced by having a difficult student removed from class and the student is negatively reinforced by being allowed to escape the challenging classwork. This type of situation is reinforcing to both parties, it is very likely to be repeated with increasing frequency unless the teacher breaks the negative cycle.

When a student does not talk to the teacher, does not make eye contact, is sarcastic, is defiant, has a pattern of defiant or non-complaint behaviors, the teacher is dealing with a student who has a negative relationship with them.

Teachers have a great responsibility to interrupt the cycle of failure. Our students who are unmotivated are often demoralized. It is the goal of the teacher to raise up the students morale and show the student concrete ways in which they are capable of doing the work and completing the work successfully.

When students are meeting with setback, we have to teach them that is ok, and that it is more than likely to happen. Reminders to the student about what they have done well and how far they have come can do much to improve motivation. Setbacks and mistakes are a normal part of life, and if teachers can demonstrate to students that this is part and parcel of life, then confidence will grow.

Techniques to improve student-teacher relationships are:

- ✓ Strive for a high ratio of positive interactions with students. A good rule of thumb is for a teacher to have three positive interactions with a student for every one negative, or disciplinary, interaction.
- ✓ Commit to a short series of positive "micro-conversations". To do this, the teacher selects a student for whom they want to build a positive relationship with. The teacher commits to

spending 2 minutes per class in building a relationship with that student. The two minutes are spent in positive conversation in which behavior problems are not brought up.

- ✓ Emphasize the positive teacher requests. The teacher states in positive ways, rather than negative. When a request has a positive "spin" on it, the teacher is less likely to engage in a power struggle and more likely to gain student compliance.
- ✓ Strive for at least one daily positive verbal interaction. The teacher needs to actively make it a point to engage in one positive interaction with the student, and this happens best at the beginning of class. In all interactions, whether it is positive or negative, the teacher maintains a polite, respectful tone.
- ✓ Get to know your students. Know their name. Greet them at the start of class. Ask questions about them.
- ✓ Never label a student.

10 Commandment's for Motivating Learners

1. **Set a personal example with your own behavior.**
2. **Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.**
3. **Present tasks properly.**
4. **Develop a good relationship with learners.**
5. **Increase the learner's self-efficacy.**
6. **Make the classes interesting.**
7. **Promote learner autonomy.**
8. **Personalize the learning process.**
9. **Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.**
10. **Familiarize learners with the course content and what they specifically need to do to be successful.**

(Adapted from Motivating Language Learners: Final Version, by Zoltan Dornyei and Kata Csizer)

Self-Reflection

Please read the following questions to self-evaluate yourself to see how you make connections with your students and the class as a whole.

- How often do you ask a question?
- When do you ask questions?
- How long do you wait between questions?
- Do you give student wait time?
- Do you encourage reflection before a response?
- Do you let students talk to one another to find an answer to a question?
- Do you allow students to jot down answer on paper before answering orally?
- Do you let students pause for reflection before answering questions?
- Do you move in class?
- Do you set up a barrier between you and the class?
- Do you cross the threshold between "your space" and your students' space?
- Do you make direct eye contact with your students?
- Is the eye contact threatening?
- Do you smile?
- Are you relaxed?
- How intently do you listen?
- What are you doing when a student speaks?
- Do you look at the student who is speaking?
- Are you listening to what the student is saying, or are you thinking about your response?
- Are you an "attentive listener"? Do you acknowledge the student and rephrase what they just said to you?
- Do you show that you value your students' contributions?

- Do you value comments by writing them down on the board, the overhead projector, the SMART board?
- How often do you solicit feedback from students about your interaction/performance?
- If so, what have you learned about yourself?

Chapter 9: What We Can Do to Help Our Students Get Motivated

Motivation has to begin with the students, but we can guide them in the right direction to succeed. Without motivation, we are lost.

The 5 Fundamentals of Motivation

Motivation is a psychological factor that is undeniable in any feat or performance. The winners in life would never have been there if they hadn't taken inspiration from something and been motivated enough to achieve. Life is hard in society and achievements are even harder to succeed with. If you cannot control your actions and direct them in the right channels, you'll never get things done successfully.

1 – The Power of 'You'

Remember that 'You' are the most important aspect of your success. Without your own power of self-motivation, you cannot achieve anything. You are your biggest inspiration and your determination is your biggest asset. Whenever you feel alone and incapable, look into 'You' for assistance before looking towards friends, colleagues, or family – only then will success find you.

 # 2 – Believe in your Goals

Goals are set by ourselves, for ourselves. Your company or employer may set your objectives, but the scope of 'goals' is much wider than merely 'objectives'. These goals are markers you set out to achieve which will act as guiding lights in your path towards success. Follow them with diligence, and you will never stray from a path that will eventually give you success.

 # 3 – Failure is Good

OK, don't judge this one without hearing it out completely. Repeated failure is never positive, but failing itself is one of the 5 fundamentals of motivation. Without failing, you will never be able to gather enough experience to succeed. No achievement in human history was a one shot deal – everything had a slow start and a gradual or sudden success. In between, it was the trials, errors, and failures that led to victory.

 # 4 – Commitment is Virtue Beyond All Else

If you don't have the heart to completely immerse yourself into a task, don't expect success. Motivation comes when you have worked towards a goal and find the zeal to stick to it within yourself. Commitment is a promise to yourself, so the only person you fail when you aren't committed is yourself. Grit your teeth, dig in hard and give it everything you have – results may vary, but satisfaction is guaranteed.

 # 5 – Success is Relative

This is perhaps the most important of the 5 fundamentals of motivation. Never get de-motivated if your results aren't equal to or better than others'. Remember, all that matters is whether you are happy with your achievements. There is always a second try, but never lose faith.

http://blog.dougdvorak.com/?p=70, Posted on February 25, 2013

Chapter 10: Strategies to Use in Your Classroom

The Jigsaw Technique

Have you struggled with group work in class due to lack of participation? The jigsaw technique can be a useful, well-structured template for carrying out effective in-class group work. The class is divided into several teams, with each team preparing separate but related assignments. When all team members are prepared, the class is re-divided into mixed groups, with one member from each team in each group. Each person in the group teaches the rest of the group what he/she knows, and the group then tackles an assignment together that pulls all of the pieces together to form the full picture, hence the name "jigsaw".

http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/coursedesign/tutorial/strategies.html

Gallery Walk

Gallery Walk gets students out of their chairs and actively involves them in synthesizing important concepts, in consensus building, in writing, and in public speaking. In Gallery Walk teams rotate around the classroom, composing answers to questions as well as reflecting upon the answers given by other groups. Questions are posted on charts or just pieces of paper located in different parts of the classroom. Each chart or "station" has its own question that relates to an important class concept. The technique closes with an oral presentation or "report out" in which each group synthesizes comments to a particular question.

Gallery Walk is flexible and has many benefits. Gallery Walk can be organized for a simple fifteen minute ice breaker or for a week long project involving graded oral and written reports. The technique encourages students to speak and write the language of earth science rather than just hearing it from the instructor. In addition to addressing a variety of cognitive skills involving analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, Gallery Walk has the additional advantage of promoting cooperation, listening skills, and team building.

Gallery Walk Continued

In Gallery Walk student teams rotate to provide bulleted answers to questions posted on charts arranged around the classroom. After three to five minutes at a chart or "station" the team rotates to the next question. Gallery Walk works best with open ended questions, that is, when a problem, concept, issue, or debate can be analyzed from several different perspectives. In this section find a variety of instructional resources such as preparing students for this technique, a step by step guide for using Gallery Walk, evaluation rubrics, and challenges in implementing the technique.

http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/index.html

Carousel Brainstorming

Purpose: To activate students' prior knowledge of a topic or topics through movement and conversation.

Description: While Carousel Brainstorming, students will rotate around the classroom in small groups, stopping at various stations for a designated amount of time. While at each station, students will activate their prior knowledge of different topics or different aspects of a single topic through conversation with peers. Ideas shared will be posted at each station for all groups to read. Through movement and conversation, prior knowledge will be activated, providing scaffolding for new information to be learned in the proceeding lesson activity.

Carousel Brainstorming Continued

Procedure:

1. Generate X number of questions for your topic of study and write each question on a separate piece of poster board or chart paper. (Note: The number of questions should reflect the number of groups you intend to use during this activity.) Post questions sheets around your classroom.

2. Divide your students into groups of 5 or less. For example, in a classroom of 30 students, you would divide your class into 6 groups of five that will rotate around the room during this activity.

3. Direct each group to stand in front of a home base question station. Give each group a colored marker for writing their ideas at the question stations. It is advisable to use a different color for tracking each group.

4. Inform groups that they will have X number of minutes to brainstorm and write ideas at each question station. Usually 2-3 minutes is sufficient. When time is called, groups will rotate to the next station in clockwise order. Numbering the stations will make this easy for students to track. Group 1 would rotate to question station 2; Group 2 would rotate to question station 3 and so on.

5. Using a stopwatch or other timer, begin the group rotation. Continue until each group reaches their last question station.

6. Before leaving the final question station, have each group select the top 3 ideas from their station to share with the entire class.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (1998). Patterns and practices in the learning-focused classroom. Guilford, Vermont: Pathways Publishing.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/carousel_brainstorming.htm

Two Minute Talks

Purpose: To activate prior knowledge and focus student learning on the topic about to be addressed.

Description: During Two Minute Talks, students will share with a partner by brainstorming everything they already know (prior knowledge) about a skill, topic, or concept. In doing so, they are establishing a foundation of knowledge in preparation for learning new information about the skill, topic, or concept.

Procedure:

1. Group students into pairs.

2. Inform students that they will each be talking about topic X for two minutes. They will need to select which student will begin first. An easy way to do this is to say something like: "Find out whose birthday comes first in a calendar year." Then tell students that, "That person gets to go second!"

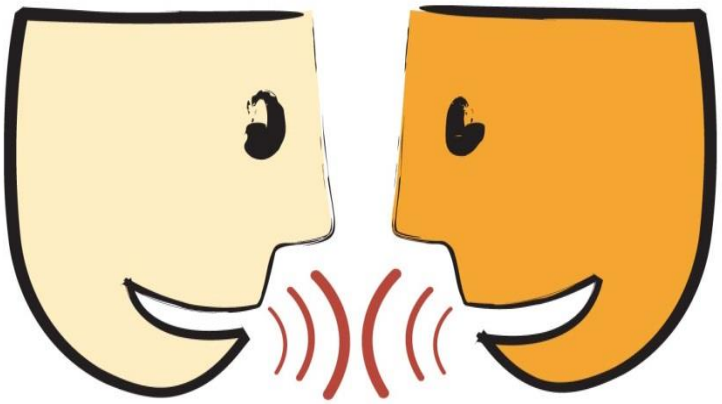
3. Using a stop watch or other timing device, tell students to begin talking.

4. At two minutes, instruct students to switch. At this point, the other partner begins talking. It is okay for the second person to repeat some of the things the first person said. However, they are encouraged to try and think of new information to share.

5. Have a few groups share some of their responses with the entire class when the activity is done.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/two_minute_talks.htm

Talking Drawings



Purpose: To activate and evaluate student knowledge of a topic.

Description: In this activity, students will activate prior knowledge by creating a graphic representation of a topic before the lesson. After engaging in learning about that topic, students will re-evaluate their prior knowledge by drawing a second depiction of their topic. They will then summarize what the different drawings say to them about what they learned.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and think about topic X. Using the Talking Drawings worksheet, have students draw a picture of what they saw while they were thinking about topic X.

2. Teach cognitive portion of your lesson.

3. At the end of the lesson, ask students to elaborate upon their initial drawing by creating a new drawing that incorporates what they learned about topic X during the lesson.

4. Have students share their before and after drawings with a partner. Students should discuss the differences between the two depictions of topic X.

Talking Drawings Continued

5. Finally, have students respond in writing at the bottom of their Talking Drawings worksheet. What do the two drawings tell them about what they learned during the lesson?

Wood, K. (2001). Literacy strategies across the subject areas. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/talking_drawings.htm

Possible Sentences

Purpose: To activate and evaluate student knowledge of a topic.

Description: Possible Sentences takes what students know of a topic and their familiarity with the English language sentence structure to activate prior knowledge of a topic. After new information is introduced through the use of cognitive teaching strategies, possible sentences are re-evaluated for accuracy.

Procedure:

1. Generate a list of 10 words related to your lesson. These words should represent concepts that are both familiar and unfamiliar to students.

2. Have students create 5 possible sentences by using two words in each sentence until all words are gone.

3. Teach your lesson on the topic.

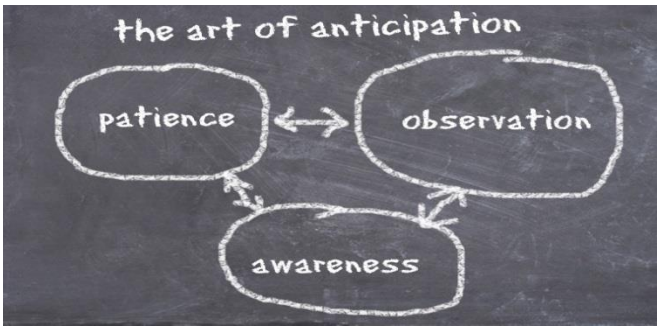
4. After the main instruction is over, have students go back and evaluate the accuracy of their possible sentences by placing a **+** (for correct), **-** (for incorrect), or a **?** (for cannot determine) beside each sentence.

Possible Sentences Continued

5. For sentences marked incorrect, students should write a corrected sentence. Sentences whose accuracy cannot be determined can be researched by utilizing outside resources.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/possible_sentences.htm

Anticipation/Reaction Guide



Purpose: Activate and evaluate prior knowledge

Description: Using the Anticipation/Reaction Guide, students will make predictions based upon prior knowledge and evaluate those predictions after exposure to new information.

Procedure:

1. Generate a list of 8-10 statements related to your topic of study. Place these on an Anticipation/Reaction Guide.

2. Pass out a copy of your guide to each student.

3. Prior to introducing new information, engage students by having them write whether or not they AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements listed on the guide.

4. Teach your lesson content.

5. After the new content has been taught, have students react to the new information by responding again to the statements on the Anticipation/Reaction Guide.

6. Discuss why their before and after answers are different. What did students learn that caused them to change their answers?

Buehl, D. (2001). Classroom strategies for interactive learning. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/anticipation_reaction.htm

The First Word

Purpose: To activate students' prior knowledge of a concept, idea, or skill.

Description: The First Word is a variation on traditional acronyms. By going through the process of analyzing words and creating related sentences, students will gain a deeper understanding of the meaning.

Procedure:

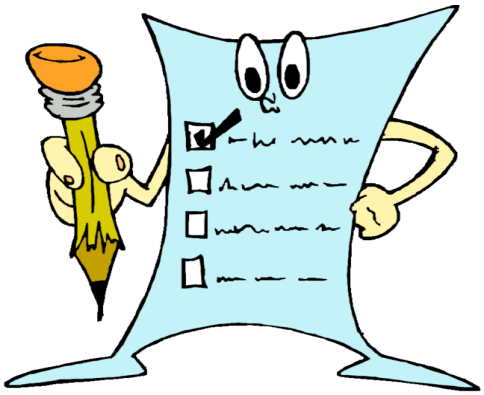
1. Assign students the name of an object, a topic, or key concept to write vertically down the side of a page.

2. Working in small groups or on their own, students should generate a short phrase or sentence that begins with each letter of the vertical work and offers important information or key characteristics about the topic.

3. Students can illustrate their "First Words" for posting around the classroom. Sharing "First Words" will allow students to identify important concepts that may have been left out of their own work.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/first_word.htm

Walk Around Survey



Purpose: To activate students' prior knowledge through conversation and movement

Description: Walk Around Survey can be used as an activating or summarizing strategy. In this activity, students are given a topic of study and asked to move around the room for the purpose of conversing with other students. During these conversations, students will share what they know of the topic and discover what others have learned.

Procedure:

1. Assign a topic for the Walk Around Survey.

2. Pass out a survey form to each student in the class.

3. Allow students an allotted amount of time to survey three classmates (informers) on the given topic.

4. When students are completing the survey form, the soliciting student should write the name of the informer on his/her worksheet in the left-hand column. He/she will then record three facts from the student informer on the worksheet in the three empty blocks. He/she will then move on to find a second and third informing student to complete the survey worksheet.

Walk Around Survey Continued

5. Have students return to their seats and complete the Survey Summary.

Hint: This activity can be used as either an activating or summarizing strategy. It can be done in the classroom or, even better, outside on a nice day.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/walk_around_survey.htm

Three Step Interview

Purpose: To engage students in conversation for the purpose of analyzing and synthesizing new information.

Description: The Three Step Interview is a cooperative structure that helps students personalize their learning and listen to and appreciate the ideas and thinking of others. Active listening and paraphrasing by the interviewer develops understanding and empathy for the thinking of the interviewee.

Procedure:

1. Students work in pairs. One is the interviewer, the other is the interviewee. The interviewer listens actively to the comments and thoughts of the interviewee, paraphrasing key points and significant details.

2. Student pairs reverse roles, repeating the interview process.

3. Each pair then joins another pair to form groups of four. Students introduce their pair partner and share what the partner had to say about the topic at hand.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/three_step_interview.htm

RAFT

Purpose: To engage student learning through analysis and synthesis of information

Description: Using this strategy, students will take on the role of someone or something related to the topic of study. They will then generate a product for a designated audience. This activity requires students to both analyze and synthesize information previously introduced. The creative thinking required for completion of this product addresses many of the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning.

Procedure:

1. Introduce this activity by explaining the RAFT acronym:

   R- Role of the writer

   A- Audience to whom the product is being directed

   F- Format of the product being created

   T- Topic of the product

   Example: Pretend that you are an ant trying to convince a young boy not to step on you. (R- ant, A- young boy, F- verbal plea, T- convincing the boy not to step on you)

RAFT Continued

2. Pass out a sheet of possible roles, audiences, and formats.

3. Assign students to create a RAFT for a given topic related to your unit of study.

4. Allow students to share their RAFTs with the class in the form of short presentations.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/raft.htm

Dump and Clump

Purpose: To provide a step by step process for organizing thinking and facilitating learning of new and difficult material.

Description: This is a great strategy to use when the students are faced with learning new and difficult information. It provides students with a process for organizing their prior knowledge and making projections. Depending on the subject matter, this strategy could utilize up to a full class period.

Procedure:

1. Group students into small groups of 2-3
2. "Dump"- Have students develop a list of words, items, or new information related to the topic of study.
3. "Clump"- Using the "dump" word list, students should then group words on the list into categories and assign labels.
4. Have students write a descriptive summary sentence for each category of words in their list.
5. Upon completion, these should be posted around the room or shared in some manner with the entire class.

Rogers, S., Ludington, J., & Graham, S. (1999). Motivation and learning. Evergreen, CO: Peak Learning Systems.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/dump_clump.htm

CLVG

Collaborative Listening and Viewing Guide

Purpose: To help students learn from visual information.

Description: The collaborative listening and viewing guide is a lesson framework to help students learn from information observed and/or heard. It can be used to manage and organize content learned from experiments, demonstrations, lectures, information on field trips or videotapes.

Procedure:

1. Preview/review information. In this introductory phase, give an overview of the topic, pre-teach significant terms if needed and/or elicit the students' background knowledge on the topic. This information can be organized on the board in the form of a semantic map.
2. Record individually. Instruct the class to write down significant ideas, concepts, phrases, etc. on the left-hand side of their paper. Students should be instructed to be brief and use abbreviations as needed. Notes should be recorded in sequential order.

CLVG Continued

3. Elaborate in small groups. After viewing the video, have the students get into groups to elaborate on their individual notes. Here, they can recall details, extend ideas, add personal anecdotes, etc. Then they record this information on the right hand side of their forms.
4. Synthesize with Whole Class. Tell the students to contribute what they learned from their group recollections and then record their responses on the board, chart paper, or transparency. This information can then be reorganized as a map, chart, or in outline form if appropriate.

Wood, K.D. (1994) Practical strategies for improving instruction. Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/CLVG.htm

3 X 3 Vocabulary

Purpose: To promote the development of complete sentences as well as the identification of relationships between concepts

Description: In this activity, students will take related words, ideas, and concepts and combine them together in sentences. The sentences should illustrate the relationship among the words, ideas, and concepts. This can be used as a form of alternative assessment as well as a cognitive teaching strategy.

Procedure:

1. Pass out a 3x3 Vocabulary sheet to each student.
2. The sheet can be filled out in one of two ways: (1) Assign specific words to their blocks, or (2) allow students to choose from a word list, placing words in the blocks they choose.
3. Once the sheet is filled out, students should write six sentences which illustrate the relationships between the words in column 1 down, 2 down, 3 down, and rows 1 across, 2 across, and 3 across.

3X3 Vocabulary Continued

Variation: Spence Rogers uses a variation of the 3x3 Vocabulary activity. In his activity, Mix and Match, related word, ideas, and concepts are written on individual index cards. All cards are put into a basket. In round robin fashion, cards are drawn two at a time. The student then must generate a sentence using those two words which describes their relationship to each other.

3 x 3 Vocabulary

Column 1 Down:_____

_____

Column 2 Down:_____

_____

Column 3 Down:_____

_____

Column 1 Across:_____

_____

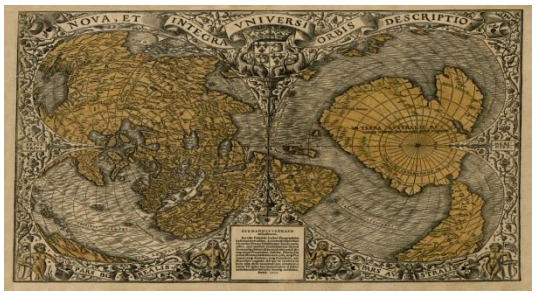
Column 2 Across:_____

_____

Column 3 Across:_____

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/3x3_Voc.htm

Concept Mapping



Purpose: To activate and engage students during all stages of the learning process.

Description: Using concept mapping, students construct a model for organizing and integrating the information that they are learning. Concept mapping can be used prior to an assignment as a brainstorming activity, during an assignment as an organizing strategy, or as a post-assessment activity.

Procedure:

1. Choose a key word or topic related to a unit of study.
2. Write the word on an overhead transparency or on a sheet of chart paper.
3. Ask students to think of as many words and ideas as they can that relate to the focal word.
4. Write the words on a map in clusters or categories.
5. Have the students suggest labels for the categories and write them on the map.
6. If there are any key vocabulary words that are important to the comprehension of a reading assignment and students do not mention them, add them to the map with a red marker or pen.
7. Discussion of the concept map is the most important part of the lesson. This helps students become aware of their current thinking and helps them to see relationships between words and ideas.

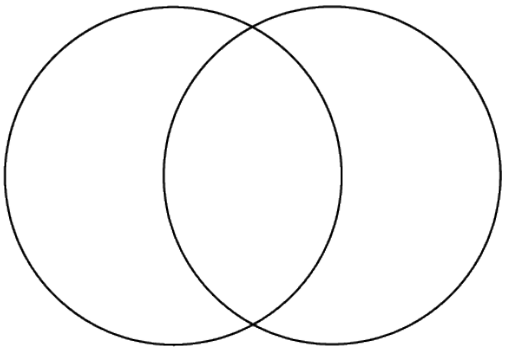
Concept Mapping Continued

8. After the reading assignment, or as the unit progresses, new words and categories can be added to the map. Use different colors of ink to show that this information was not known prior to the reading or unit of study.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (1998). Patterns and practices in the learning-focused classroom. Guilford, Vermont: Pathways Publishing.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/concept_map.htm

Venn Diagram



Purpose: To compare and contrast concepts.

Description: The Venn Diagram is one of the most basic graphic organizers currently used by teachers. Using the Venn Diagram form, students are able to compare and contrast characteristics of two concepts, ideas, or words. They provide a visual display of similar and different attributes that can be used to launch discussion, writing, or further research.

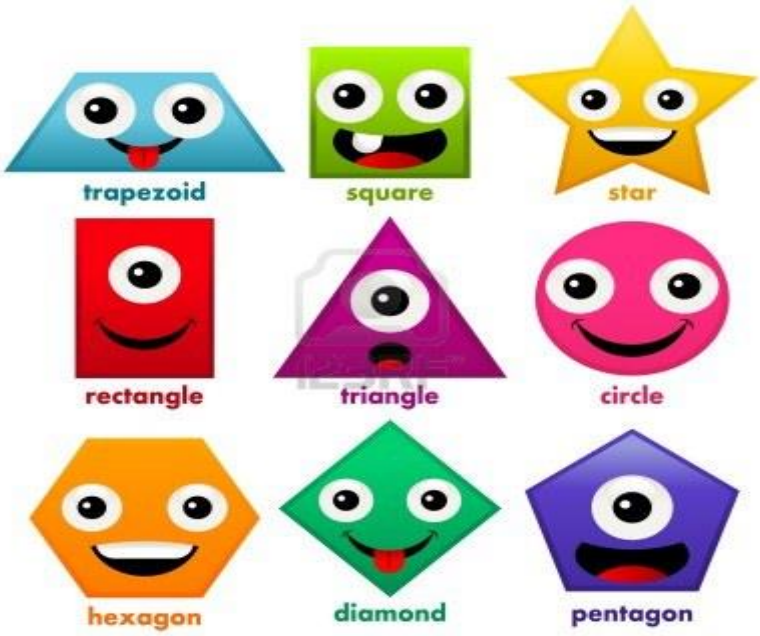
Procedure:

1. Draw two overlapping circles on an overhead transparency or chart paper.
2. Label each side with the name of one of the things you are comparing.
3. Fill in one side with attributes belonging to that item.
4. Fill in the other side with attributes belonging to that item.
5. Now fill in the center area where the two items share attributes.

Hint: Venn Diagrams can be used to compare more than two items by adding additional circles. However, students will need to become comfortable with using a basic Venn before you introduce multiple concepts in the same diagram.

Lipton, L., & Wellman, B. (1998). Patterns and practices in the learning-focused classroom. Guilford, Vermont: Pathways Publishing.

Shaping Up Review



Purpose: To engage students in synthesizing major concepts in this summary strategy.

Description: Using the Shaping Up Review, students will synthesize major concepts from the lesson using four different shapes. By varying the manner in which students visually summarize their learning, retention of the information learned is increased.

Procedure:

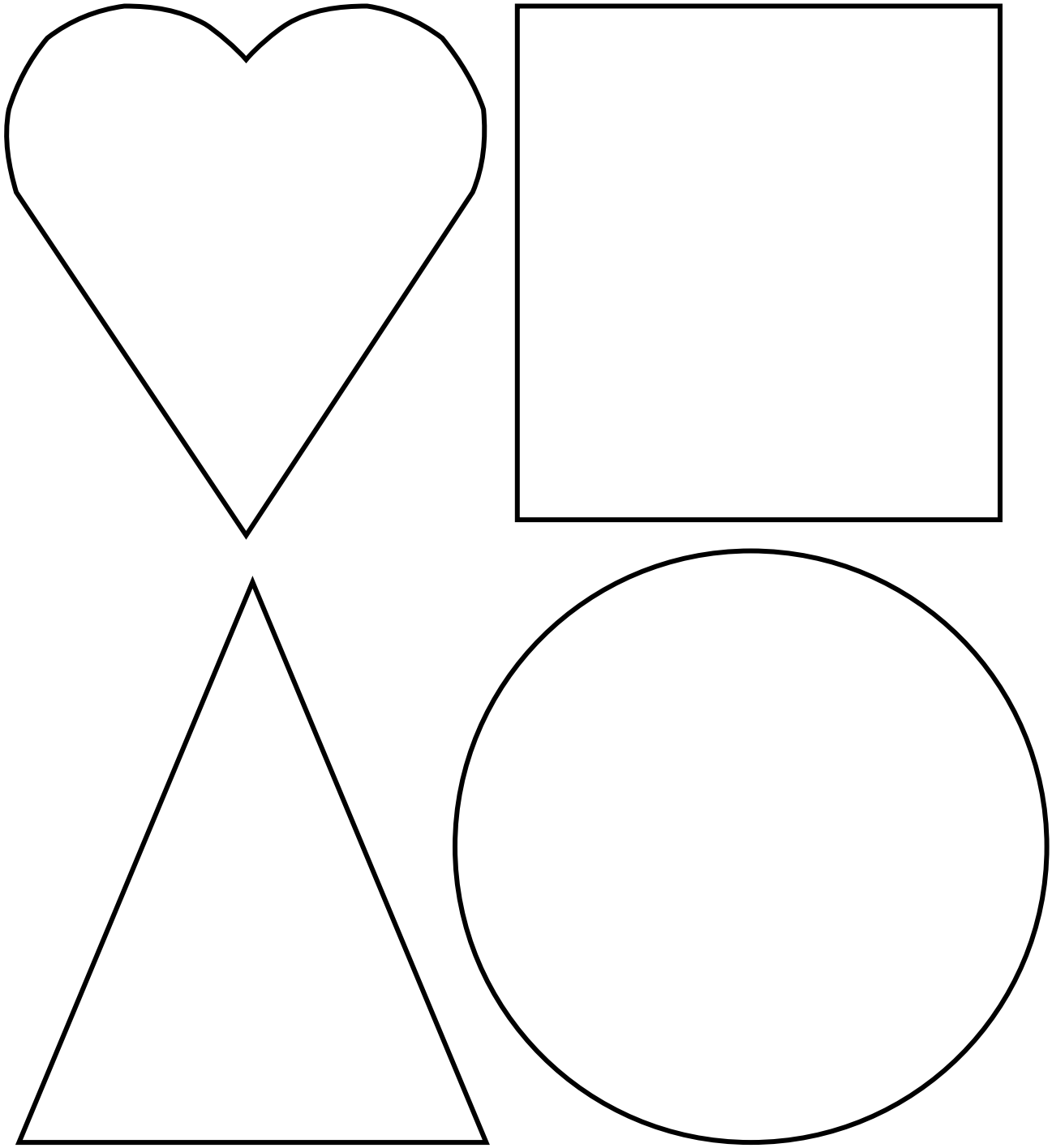
1. Pass out the Shaping Up Review worksheet.
2. In the upper left-hand corner, "The Heart," have students write one thing that they loved learning about in the lesson being reviewed.
3. In the upper right-hand corner, "The Square," have students write four things that they feel are important concepts from the lesson being reviewed. One concept should be placed in each corner.

Shaping UP Review Continued

4. In the lower left-hand corner, "The Triangle," have students write the three most important facts they learned from lesson being reviewed. One fact should go in each corner.
5. In the lower right-hand corner, "The Circle," have students write one, all-encompassing (global- like the circle) statement that summarizes all of the important concepts and facts learned in the lesson being reviewed.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/Shaping_up.htm

Shaping Up Review



Final Countdown

Purpose: To engage students in reflecting, evaluating, and integrating their learning.

Description: This activity emphasized the important role that reflection plays in the learning process. Final Countdown provides learners with a framework for reflection, evaluation, and integration of new knowledge into previously learned material.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to individually reflect over what they have learned about the topic being reviewed.
2. Using the Final Countdown worksheet, have students write the three most important things they learned about the topic.
3. On the second tier of the Final Countdown, have students write two questions they still have about the topic. These should be questions that they expect to get answers to; likewise, questions they will get answers to.

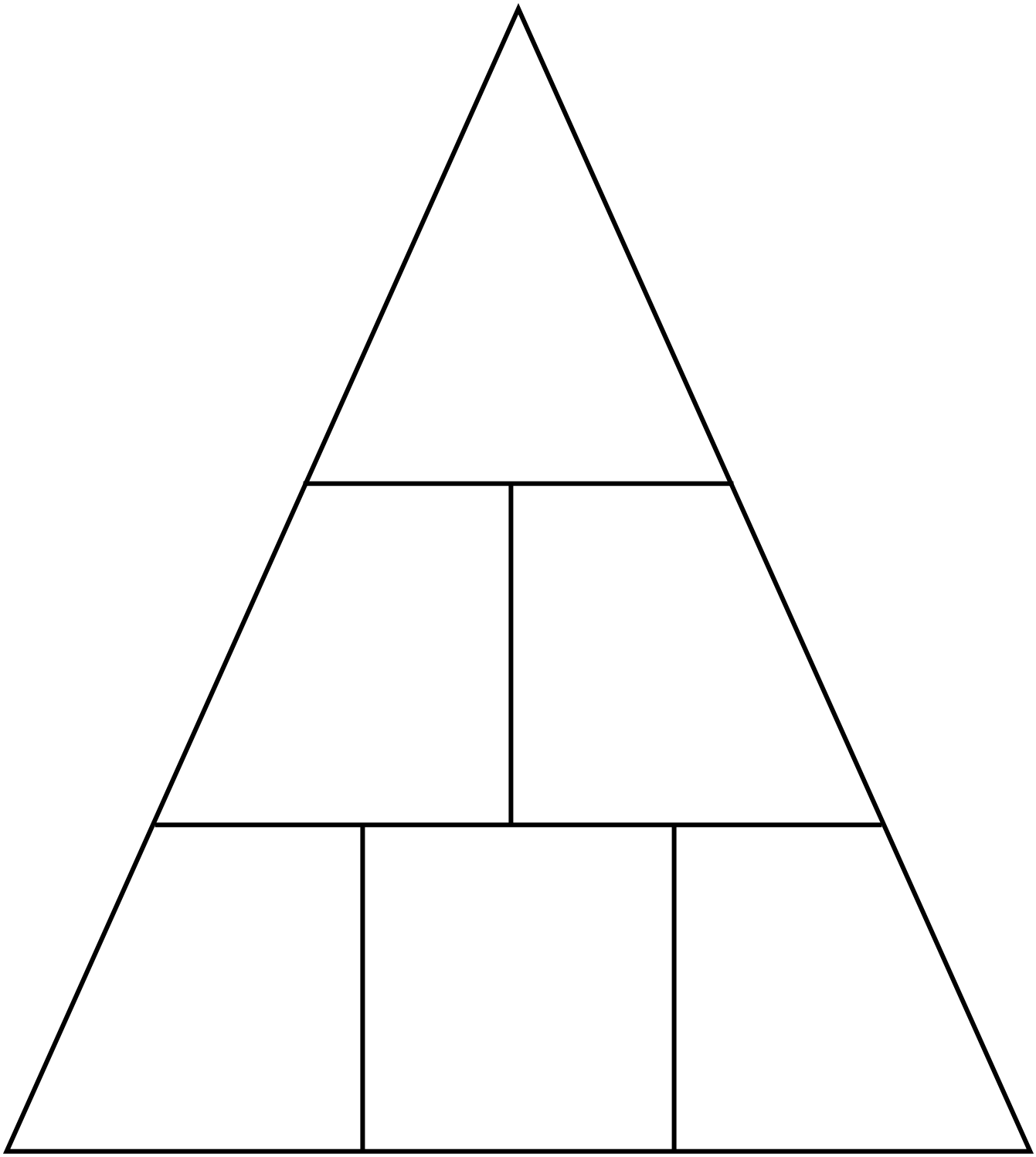
Final Countdown Continued

4. Finally, on the top tier of the Final Countdown, have students write one way in which what they have learned relates or connects to material previously learned.

Rogers, S., Ludington, J., & Graham, S. (1999). Motivation and learning: A teacher's guide to building excitement for learning and igniting the drive for quality. Evergreen, CO: Peak Learning Systems.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/Final_countdown.htm

Final Countdown



Challenge Envelopes

Purpose: To facilitate review and/or higher level processing of a topic or concept.

Description: This activity is designed to provide students with opportunities to formulate challenging questions regarding a topic or concept and to be challenged by the questions of others.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into small groups.
2. Give each group of students an envelope.
3. Have each group write a challenge question on the front of the envelope. Encourage higher level questions that have prompts like:

- What might be…?
- What could be…?
- What if…?

1. Have each group generate the answer or criteria for a response and include a sample response. These should all be placed inside the envelope.

Challenge Envelopes Continued

2. Scramble the envelopes and have the groups rotate the envelopes through the class. When a group receives an envelope, the question is to be addressed and then checked against the answer or criteria inside the envelope.
3. Have each group put their own response to the question inside the envelope when they are done. They should then send the envelope back into circulation.
4. As the envelopes begin to fill with responses, the groups are to compare their responses to the others that are in the envelopes.

Rogers, S., Ludington, J., & Graham, S. (1999). Motivation and learning: A teacher's guide to building excitement for learning and igniting the drive for quality. Evergreen, CO: Peak Learning Systems.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/Challenge_Env.htm

Vanity Plates

Purpose: To activate student learning through creative thinking.

Description: In this activity, students will take on the role of the topic to be studied for the purpose of creating a vanity plate. While in this role, students will need to think creatively about their topic in order to share their vanity plate.

Procedure:

1. Assign a topic of study (for example, "The Internet")
2. Have students take on the role of the topic by telling them, "Pretend you are X."
3. Students will then create a vanity plate related to the topic of study. In many states, license plates may have up to 8 characters. However, you may use as many characters as you feel necessary.
4. Have students share their vanity plates by lining up in parallel lines, student facing student.

Vanity Plates Continued

5. Rotate one line of students so that each student has the opportunity to view all vanity places in the facing line.
6. This motivating strategy will increase students' desire to learn more about a topic while also increasing their knowledge of a topic.

http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/act/strategies/vanity_plates.htm

Resources

5 Ways to Motivate Unmotivated Students. Talarczyk-Marx, JoAnna. www.insidetheschool.com

Carnegie Melon Home Page: http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/solveproblem/strat-lackmotivation/lackmotivation-01.html

Dr. Ken Shore's Classroom Problem Solver: Lack of Motivation. http://www.ascd.org

How to Motivate Your Students. Wong, Harry K. www.EffectiveTeaching.com

Encouraging Student Participation: Why It Pays to Sweat the Small Stuff. Weimer, Maryellen. https://mail.google.com/mail?tab=wm#inbox/1413134bb1650ae4

Helping Students Become Motivated Learners. Barb Adams. www.ndted.org

Intervention Central. RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools. Six Reasons Why Students are Unmotivated (and What Teachers Can Do). Jim Wright, Presenter. March 15, 2012. Technical Assistance Meeting for CSE Chairpersons. Lake Placid, NY. Article can be found at: http://www.interventioncentral.org/ccse

Learning Styles Inventory can be found at:
http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

Motivating Students. Davis, Barbara Gross. (September 1, 1999). From, Tools for Teaching, copyright Jossey-Bass.

Motivating Students Who Don't Care. Mendler, Allen N.(2000). Solution Tree Press. Bloomington, IN.

Spotlight on Student Engagement, Motivation, and Achievement. No. 5 in the Harvard Education Letter Spotlight Series. (2009). Harvard Education Press, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

- Foreword
- Chapter 2: Answers and Questions. (Laura Poppano)
- Chapter 3: Teaching 21st Century Skills (Nancy Walser)
- Chapter 9: The Classroom of Popular Culture. What Video Games are Teaching Us. (James Paul Gee)