MOTIVATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by:
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As a high school teacher, one of the most challenging tasks is to motivate students. In reality, there are students who are not just struggling but unmotivated as well. McFarlane (2010) stated that there are two categories of students that are of particular concern: those who are unmotivated because they lack any motivation or inclination at all to learn and because they seem not to want to learn; and those who are under-motivated because they value learning and want to learn, but do not apply themselves and display minimal drive or effort.

The problem become more challenging to educators when the student perceived characteristics of both behaviors. He lacks overall drive towards schooling and not motivated enough to develop the competencies despite the efforts of his teachers. With this, dealing with an unmotivated student can take up more time and effort. If not given attention, this might lead to a disruptive behavior.

Without proper attention, these students (both unmotivated and under-motivated) may feel helpless. They might consider themselves failures and will not try to improve or excel. However, educators can make a difference. There are certain ways to motivate high school students.

Based on experience and from the insights I gained from my colleagues, a teacher may use motivational techniques to reach all of his pupils. First, praises matter not just in the elementary level but even in the secondary. Any recognition or status for effort and improvement may improve the self-esteem of the students. Building positive and meaningful relationships with the students are the key to inspire them to be at their best.
Teachers should see to it that students do not just attend the school for the compliance of formal schooling. Students must be given opportunities to show their talents and skills.

Moreover, teachers should not label students. Calling them lazy, headache, etc. will demoralize them. If a student gets low test scores or achievements, talking to him privately would be more helpful rather than dropping the names of those who failed the exams.

More importantly, intrinsic motivation should be prioritized. Teachers must provide opportunities for the students to learn in the way they are more interested to be in. Inspiring the students to complete a task because they are more interested in the final results of their efforts is far better than giving them extrinsic rewards. Performing an action because of enjoyment brings lasting motivation for real.

References: