WAYS IN WHICH A TEACHER CAN MOTIVATE STUDENTS

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Motivation is a fundamental factor for good academic performance. Ron Renchler of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management notes that students view the process of education as chronically boring. While it is impossible to eradicate all the boredom from learning, teachers who find ways to make education more interesting and fun will be helpful in helping students improve their academic performance.

Sense of Purpose and Relevance

According to university English professor Robert Harris, students who do not understand the importance of what they are learning tend to perform more poorly than those who see the bigger picture. Instilling a sense of purpose and relevance includes having students learn the subject matter by engaging in projects, or "learning by doing." For instance, showing them the relevance of economics in their everyday lives can be as simple as having them manage lemonade stands, which will teach them basic principles of supply, demand and operating costs. Demonstrating the relevance of a class may not only instill a deeper interest in the subject, but also the pursuit of further practical applications; in the case of economics, for example, this technique can inspire a student to entrepreneurial pursuits.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

The traditional method of rewards involves extrinsic motivation, which encourages students to excel in order to pursue rewards and avoid punishment. Typically this means recognizing a student for their superior academic performance by giving them verbal praise or prizes. However, students may grow dependent upon these extrinsic motivations, and become unable to motivate themselves. While extrinsic motivation can never become completely obsolete in the educational...
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Process, intrinsic motivation instills into a student an actual love of learning and a personal drive to achieve. One example of intrinsic motivation is giving students the chance to tutor others when they have achieved a certain level of proficiency.

Entertainment

Edutainment, or the use of entertainment as a medium of education, is an important tool teachers can use to motivate students. While traditional methods of education such as lecturing, rote memorization and repetitive classroom exercises are an unavoidable fact of schooling, it is also occasionally possible to make education fun. Examples of educational entertainment range from the use of television shows and documentaries to educational video games. For instance, National Geographic has online video games that teach children about geography.

Valuing Effort

Columbia University professor Carol S. Dweck suggests that students need to be encouraged to relish challenges and to recognize the value of working hard and working smart. Teachers looking to motivate their students should praise them not on their intelligence but rather their problem-solving strategies and how much effort they put into finishing their assignments. Students are better motivated to learn when they receive advice and constructive criticism about how to improve their performance; when their proficiency is measured as much by their actual mastery of the subject, their grades will naturally improve.

References:

How to Improve Student Achievement and Motivation By: Karen Hollowell