

7 Ways to motivate your students to succeed

By Liz Dunoon



If only 40% of a student's academic achievement comes from intellect*, then where does the other 60% come from?

Quite simply it comes from a student's motivation to learn and to do well at school. How motivated are your students?

Here are 7 ways to inspire your students to get motivated to learn and excel in your classroom.

- 1. Encourage your students to set realistic and easily achievable goals** for their learning outcomes; make them small and measurable. This will put them in the driver's seat and will ensure they experience learning success over time.
- 2. There is no such thing as a lazy student.** A student's failure to complete work is just an indicator that there is something else going on. Ask yourself why is that student doing that, not what is that student doing when it comes to poor performance at school.
- 3. Trying to control your student's work output and academic outcomes won't work.** You may get a few students who comply, but the majority will start a rebellion and maybe even a mutiny.
- 4. Students will have a red hot go** when they know there are support structures in place to stop them free falling into failure. The support structures will ensure they take more risks to deepen their understanding to set them up to succeed.
- 5. Storytelling** is a great way to connect new concepts you are teaching to previously learnt material. It all about connecting the dots for your students. Teaching in isolation is like being lost in a shopping mall; your student won't know which way to go and they won't care. Connect the learning with a story and a hook to previously learnt material and you will see the nods of understanding as you go.

6. Rewards, punishments, incentives, and threats create finishers, not learners. This reminds us of a time in history where the use of the strap and physical punishment in schools was commonplace. In some countries, it still is a feature of a student's school day. At the other end of the scale, we have a pizza party or the chocolate frog reward for the student who is the fastest finisher. If we want students to learn we need to get them into momentum, to be engaged with what they are learning and to understand why they are learning it.

7. Every day, students ask themselves; does the teacher see me and how do they see me? You are a significant other in the lives of your students. What you say and what you do impacts on them greatly. The quality of the relationship you have with your students is vital to their motivation to learn and to do well. **Be firm, be fair and above all be great to be around.**



"Ask any student what their favourite subject at school is, and they will give you a random selection of subjects. Then ask them why they chose that subject and the answer will always be – because of the teacher.

Try it. I bet you can't prove me wrong."

Liz Dunoon

**Bob Burden*

Source: The Learning Differences Handbook (2019)