

# LEARNING MATTERS

Stretch, Support, Share, Innovate

Newsletter: *Motivation*

## **INNOVATE Motivation**

### Motivating the 21st Century Learner

Motivated students aspire to be - and understand how to be - successful through learning. They demonstrate a hunger to learn and to be inspired.



21st

### Century Learners

- They like to be in control
- They like choice
- They are group orientated
- They have their own digital language
- They are generally inclusive
- They are often spoon fed for quick fixes

So, if we want to motivate our learners, we need to make changes to traditional models of teaching. Practical strategies include:

- Students as teachers, and peer to peer feedback
- Use Freedom phrases: You choose. You decide. I trust your judgement.
- Group analysis and feedback: interaction is a powerful motivator so create a learning community

- Use Flip learning/podcasts/mobile devices
- Give a grade with no reasons why: students work it out using structured criteria
- Try a silent debate: propose a motion, brainstorm both sides, silent students in pairs pass paper back and forth proposing and counteracting each other's arguments
- All students possess positive attributes: find them and praise them

Three Motivational Musts: **well-structured content; be enthusiastic about material and about teaching; show that you care**

## **STRETCH Motivation**

Research has shown that offering a reward - using traditional carrot and stick extrinsic motivators - does not have a beneficial effect on people's ability to perform tasks beyond the simple mechanical. In a meta-study of more than 51 pieces of research, Dr Bernd Irlenbusch, LSE, concluded: "We find that financial incentives... can result in a negative impact on overall performance".

Which is great as we aren't planning to pay our students but it does have an impact on whether offering merits or prizes for work would reduce creativity and cognitive processing.

Dan Pink in his TED talk on the 'puzzle of motivation' outlines how **intrinsic motivators** can be targeted to help achieve the desired outcomes. He categorises three aspects to these intrinsic motivators.

**AUTONOMY:** desire to control our own lives

**MASTERY:** desire to get better and better at something that matters

**PURPOSE:** the desire to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

If these desires are fulfilled, people are motivated to complete more work and overcome greater difficulties than they are by the prospect of rewards or punishments.



## How can we meet this?

Our ability to offer autonomy to the extent that Pink outlines in his talk is limited but the ownership principles explored in our previous *Learning Matters* can help to meet this. As teachers, however, we can give students a sense of purpose and mastery. In her article for TED, Jessica Gross highlights some interesting research outcomes as to what motivates people when completing tasks and here are ideas on how these could be (and are) applied in the classroom.

1. **Seeing the fruits of our labour may make us more productive.** Displaying students' work in the classroom.
2. **The less appreciated we feel our work is, the more money we want to do it.** Research showed even a cursory examination of a piece of work motivated people to continue working, even if it is not possible to give

detailed feedback on work acknowledging the effort will help motivate students.

3. **The harder a project is, the prouder we feel of it.** This is most pertinent to the extended learning. Make tasks difficult so students have to strive to complete it. Overly simple facile work deprives a task of meaning.
4. **Positive reinforcement about our abilities may increase performance.** Smiling and nodding at students when they are feeling pressured reduces the threat response to stress and they will be more able to cope with challenges.
5. **Images that trigger positive emotions may actually help us focus.** Here is a picture of a kitten.



## Useful Links

<http://ideas.ted.com/what-motivates-us-at-work-7-fascinating-studies-that-give-insights/>

[http://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_pink\\_on\\_motivation](http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation)

## SUPPORTING Motivation

**KEY:** Whoever the student, the attitude must be 'I CAN DO'.

To motivate do the following five:

1. Make things fun
2. Discuss goals
3. Allow feedback to you
4. Reassure

Praise and encourage independence – whatever the learning style

