

## Achievement = Motivation x Ability

It's difficult to do a lot about ability quickly, but we can do a lot about **motivation**

Good lessons **meet student's needs** and motivate kids

Your **creativity and imagination** are precious! If you are feeling a little depleted in this area at the moment, remember, you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Network with other teachers and/or refer to resources. Some useful websites are attached in this pack.

Four key motivators are as follows:

**1. Student centred** – We have learning objectives to assist us in seeing things from being in the student's moccasins. Particularly in the intro you need to hook them. Apart from selecting appropriate curriculum materials and breaking the complex into the right size simple pieces some things that are helpful to lessons are:

★ *Relevance* – link your lesson to current affairs, the television, mobile phones, football, famous people or events anything people their age maybe interested in.

If you can't think of anything then try to create relevance eg if you want to teach pie graphs then do a quick social survey on how many kids in the class support various football teams or watch a particularly TV shows etc then use these figures to construct the pie graph.

★ *Fun* – make it a game, puzzle or a mystery eg. If teaching thin line chromatography let kids be forensic detectives identifying which suspect's pen signed the X on the murder note.

★ *Appealing to their sense of curiosity* - think of a question or problem that can spark their interest in the lesson or even possibly use as simple unrelated starter (read the metro or a get set of brainteasers) to capture interest eg. Why do we weigh less on Mt Everest and more at the Dead Sea? Why does grass grow faster in the summer? Why are all tortoiseshell cats female? How many times would you need to fold a piece of paper to reach the moon?

★ *Appealing to their innate interests?* - With blood, pus, gore, life (on earth and other places), birth, death, ghosts, time travel, and where/when did the universe start when it will finish and so on..

★ *Including a variety of activities* - kids need routine but too much in the lessons kills motivation eg working from "the book again" or "another worksheet". Vary resources used eg a video, ICT or library or the environment eg get into the playground, the library, the IT suite or a school trip. Vary the activity eg. use role play for anything from a person in history to an electron or vary the group eg ability groups / mixed ability groups paired or individuals working etc. Nb avoid activities that are just busy activities that are keeping students occupied but not moving the ball forward regarding learning eg use word searches, colouring in and cutting and pasting sparingly.

**2. Activity based** - research and experience indicates kids learn more and are more motivated by doing things. It's much better than the old fashioned situation of teacher = Jug and the student = Mug and spending large chunks of time pouring the info in the kid's heads. Being a facilitator of the student's activities also means you are free to deal with the main job of achieving the learning objectives and also leaves you free to deal with students individually and behaviour management issues more effectively. See variety of activities above.

**3. Differentiated** - Challenge is one of the most potent motivators to us and young people are no exception. This only works if the challenge is appropriate not too hard and not too easy. Differentiation is about making the challenge appropriate to students across the ability spectrum. It helps if you can do this without making a student "feel they are thick as 10 short planks" or "a nerd." It is said that "an individual's potential is a direct derivative of self – esteem therefore differentiating the work in ways that meet the student's needs and yet not pointing a neon light on their varied learning needs in advantageous.

A few possible differentiation strategies for lesson are:

★ *Mixed ability groups* – Using students data to make the best matches of the able and the less able students including SEN and EAL. Obviously care should be taken regarding the behaviour dynamics of the group Avoid placing Romeo with Juliet or Cheech with Chong. Likewise it isn't always helpful to

sit Young Einstein with his or hers' opposite as the contrast can sometimes leave the less able feeling inferior and young Einstein a little frustrated.

What's in it for the less able?

Greater accessibility as there is only one teacher for the whole class more neighbours.

- ★ More approachable as it is easier to ask for assistance from your neighbour or be lifted by the group than to publicly put your hand up and call the teacher over to solve every problem.
- ★ A lot of empathy as the more able student may have jumped the same hurdles not so long ago.

What's in it for the more able?

★ The best way to learn is to teach. Often a student seems to understand something but the true depth and texture to the concept comes when they have the challenge of teaching it to another. How many times has a little penny fallen in your head when have been teaching something to the students that you have known for years.

What's in it for you?

- ★ Students' needs are met more effectively = when they learn more and are better behaved.
- ★ Greater leverage as students take care of basic and lower process problems again allowing you to be more of a facilitator and focus the main job of achieving the lesson's learning objectives and also leaves you free to deal with students individually and behaviour management issues more effectively. A handful of needy kids directly dependent on you can burn up half you lesson and they may still feel like you never help them enough when they put their hand up. Students working collaboratively can also assist in improving their social skills.

★ *Differentiation by Task*- Start off with easier tasks which the more students which form the scaffolding to more challenging tasks. If you set the finish line at a point say that the upper middle able kids reach then the less able are more likely to find they are not constantly miles from the finish no matter how hard they try.

The students who get to then end can then be given extension activities that are higher process and not just more of the same. The greater challenge these tasks offer can be motivating.

- ★ *Differentiation by resource*
- ★ *Differentiation by outcome*

**4. Recognition of Success** - It is said that human potential is a direct derivative of self esteem. Many students you will meet will have a good number self esteem issues. These may stem from a multitude of reasons eg experiencing limited success at school , difficulties at home and/ or the host of challenges all young people face in growing up Just like us, students respond positively to genuine recognition of a worthwhile contribution or an improvement they make. It boosts self esteem and studies show this can boost student behaviour and performance.

Often we think we are better at recognising success than in fact we are. Some teachers feel that there is no point in recognising work or behaviour that is below the high expectations we have for our students. High expectations are a must but it doesn't mean that the smaller steps towards these expectations should not be reinforced.

*Carrots and Sticks – a rewards system can involve*

- ★ *Verbal praise*
- ★ *Certificates*
- ★ *Calls or letters home*
- ★ *Evidence of student's work or success on display – on the classroom walls, around school, assemblies, newsletter home*
- ★ Recognise the efforts of the students who are generally doing something right.
- ★ We focus on what stands out and the majority of the class is generally ignored.
- ★ Look to give out ten carrots to a stick.
- ★ If you achieve four you will have done well and you will reap the rewards