

## MOTIVATE ONE POINT STUDENTS TO AIM HIGHER

Judy Dobkins

### **Different Levels of Blaming Each Other for What has Happened...**

The college professor who said such wrong in the student is a shame,  
Lack of preparation in high school is to blame.  
Said the high school teacher, good heavens that boy is a fool,  
The fault of course is with the middle school.  
The middle school teacher said, from such simplicity may I be spared,  
They sent him up to me so unprepared.  
The primary teacher said, the kindergarten blockheads all,  
They call it preparation, why it's worse than none at all.  
The kindergarten teacher said, such lack of training never did I see  
What kind of mother must that woman be.  
The mother said, poor helpless child – he's not to blame,  
His father's folks are all the same.  
Said the father at the end of the line,  
I doubt the rascal is even mine!

### **ROD ELLIS' DEFINITION OF MOTIVATION**

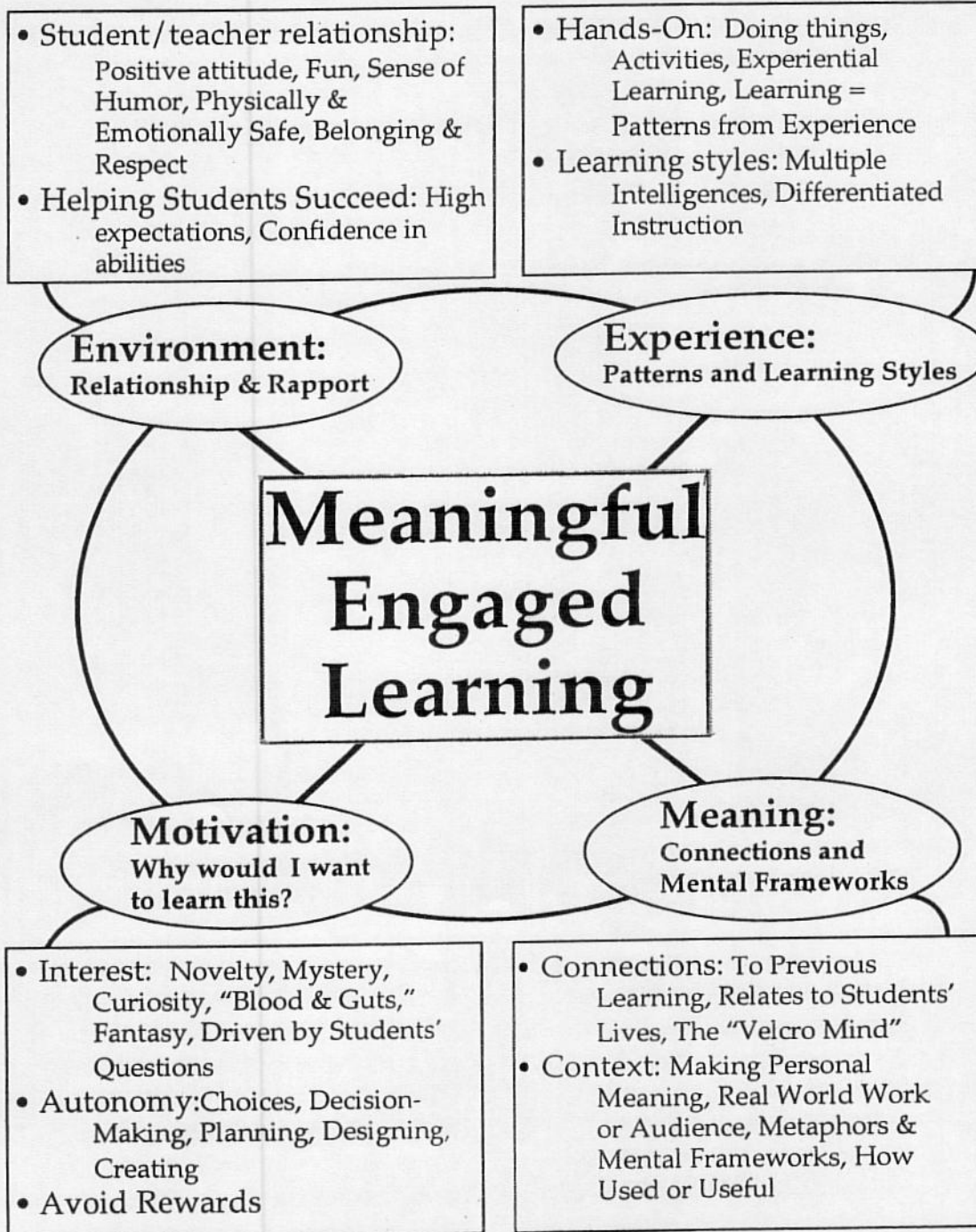
"the efforts which learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn." [1995]

### **What gets in the way of learning?**

- Attitude
- Lack of home support
- Learning disability
- Learning styles
- Apathy
- Lack of preparation
- Defiance
- Low self esteem
- Lack of sleep
- Lazy
- Peer pressure
- How the teacher teaches
- Normal distractions
- Substance abuse

# Motivating all Learners

(including the "Hard to Teach" kids)



**Mike Muir**

University of Maine at Farmington

Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning  
<http://www.mcmel.org/>

## **EIGHT WAYS TO MOTIVATE YOUR STUDENTS**

"I won't learn from a teacher who doesn't like me!"  
Don't judge your students too quickly! They might surprise you.

- 1      **BUILD QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR STUDENTS**  
Students like to feel that teachers are involved in their lives. Take time to get to know them individually.
- 2      **VARY THE DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**  
Students are used to being stimulated by video games, computers, reading and peer-to-peer interaction. These same methods can be applied to the learning process. Incorporate diverse learning styles in the classroom.
- 3      **MAKE LEARNING VISUAL**  
Many students learn better with visual stimuli. Use pictures, charts, computer research and activities to stir student interest.
- 4      **BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND ENERGETIC**  
Deliver lessons with energy. Students are more apt to respond to a lesson delivered with power and will retain the information more readily. The *Velcro* brain versus the *Teflon* brain.
- 5      **HAVE STUDENTS PARTICIPATE**  
Get students involved in classroom activities. Have them work in pairs and groups. Team academically weak students with academically strong students so that everyone, in some way, enjoys a feeling of accomplishment and success. Students learn from each other.
- 6      **HOLD REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR STUDENTS**  
Make your instructions relevant and clear. Use L1 if necessary – this removes the margin of error and builds confidence. Setting expectations allows students to focus on the assignment and gets rid of stress. At the same time make students take responsibility for their work and behavior.
- 7      **PROVIDE POSITIVE FEEDBACK**  
Evaluate student work as soon as possible after completion. Be sure the feedback is clear and constructive.
- 8      **REWARD EFFORT – NOT ONLY SUCCESS**  
Praise builds self-confidence and esteem. Recognize students' efforts even if the end product isn't outstanding. Recognize appropriate behavior and reward it on a continuing basis.

## **SUGGESTIONS, TIPS AND IDEAS**

### **Ask yourself these questions:**

- Is the topic suited to age, level, interests and / or experiences of the students?
- Did the student understand the instructions?
- Am I challenging the student and expanding his / her horizons?
- Does the student have the aids he / she needs to do the exercise e.g. glossary / dictionary?

### **General**

- Use all the visual clues on the page – not only the pictures. Look at the type of genre, layout...etc.
- Give rules and tips in L1.
- Give choice – less to read and fewer questions.
- Give clues or sentence stems to help e.g. I agree / disagree with ...
- Use the topics as a springboard to enrich the student's background knowledge and encourage further research.
- Filling in charts – help students fill in part of the chart - this enables them to complete the exercise, using what you have done as an example.

### **Reading comprehension tips:**

- Read aloud to the students or have them listen to a recording while they follow the text.
- Paced reading: assign a few lines at a time. [see Activities for Less-advanced Students]
- Students read the questions before tackling the text – this focuses attention on the topic.
- Opinions and questions that require an answer to Why? Why not? can be answered in L1.
- Allow for open discussions in L1.
- Have students answer orally.

### Listening comprehension tips:

- Exploit all the visuals on the page.
- Read the questions before listening.
- When there are open-ended questions – allow students to write their answers in L1. Teacher then writes the correct answer on the board. Students can copy the corresponding answer into their notebooks in English.
- Allow for open discussions in L1.

### Tests, Tasks and projects:

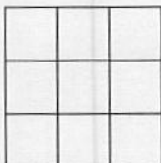
- Test in small 'chunks' – don't rely on end-of- term tests. Weak students need to know how they are getting on, as frequently as possible.
- Don't always give the answer – send students back to check for themselves.
- Promote tasks at different levels with multiple outcomes and different ways of presentation.
- Have students work in pairs or small groups. Pair a weaker student with a more-advanced student – cooperative learning [less-advanced student may remember the words in L1 which the more-advanced student then translates.]
- Vocabulary – when students test each other, they become responsible for each other. [see Activities for Less-advanced Students]

## SUCCESS-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES FOR LESS-ADVANCED STUDENTS

Taken from *Essential Links* Teacher's Guide – Eric Cohen Books

### VOCABULARY BINGO

Play Bingo. Write the 15 new words and / or expressions on the board. Make sure the students know their meanings. Hand out Bingo sheets. You can prepare a Bingo sheet that can be used many times when new words are learned. (Make your own versions of this example and photocopy them to be used as fillers-in at ends of lessons, etc.)



Have students copy 9 out of the 15 words from the board. Explain to them that you might choose any of the 15 words when you call out the words so they shouldn't just choose the first 9 or the shortest words. Then begin to play.

Give clues to the word you are referring to – it could be a translation, a definition in English or a sentence in which the word is missing. For example, if the word you are referring to is alarm clock you could give its translation in their own language.

Give them a definition in English (*It wakes you up in the morning.*) or give them a sentence in which the words are missing (*When I want to wake up early I remember to set my SOMETHING. When it rings I wake up. What is the SOMETHING?*). Use a mixture of these clues to make the game more interesting. When a word has been said or referred to, circle it on the board.

### PACED READING

This is an excellent activity for **the less-advanced students**. Assign a number of lines to be read, such as lines 1 to 4, and ask questions (either orally, on the board or as a question-strip flashcard) such as the following:

- *Where .....*?
- *Who .....*?

Students then read the story quietly and they find the answer to the question. Ask the question again, elicit the answer from one of the students and then assign the next short reading section with its question.

The process is continued with short reading sections and questions until all the text has been covered in this "paced" way.

### WORD TESTING

In pairs, students could test each other on new words using translation. Each student is responsible for his / her partner. Each time they test each other, the "tester" should write down the words that the student being tested still doesn't know on a piece of paper which is entitled, *The words I still don't know are:* and give it to the other student.

The students should then look at their lists and take some minutes to learn the remaining words. Students can then test each other again, this time using the reduced lists until all words have been learned. You may want to change the pairs so that it doesn't become tedious. The lists of words not yet learned should become shorter and shorter until all the vocabulary is mastered.

### 'RUBBISH PAPER' ACTIVITIES

Read aloud to your **less-advanced students**, explaining difficult words, constructions, etc. as you go along. Stop every so often to ask them questions

about what you have just read to check their comprehension. Have them answer in the following way.

Give each student a blank piece of paper. Have them fold the paper three times so as to get eight parts as shown here. Have them number each section and tear off or cut each piece of paper.

1	5
2	6
3	7
4	8

These eight pieces of paper will be used by your students as a place for answering questions that you ask during the reading.

When you ask a question, have them write their answer and hold it up for you to see. That way they will be active participants, even though it is you who is reading to them. Make sure that your questions require very short answers. Once the question has been answered, continue reading.

Again ask a comprehension question and check their responses as they hold up their pieces of paper. Walk around and look at their responses encouraging them as you read them. You can use words like *Yes, You're right!, You've got it, Absolutely correct!, etc.*

For those who have wrong answers you could say *Think again!, Not exactly!, etc.* Students will get used to this kind of interactive activity which requires very little preparation by you. Be sure that all pieces of paper are thrown out by students at the end of the activity.

### SENTENCE STEMS

For the **less-advanced students** it is important to give them clues about how to answer the questions. In order to elicit different you may wish to give them the following sentence stems:

- *I learned ... about myself.*
- *I agree / disagree with ...*
- *My favorite subjects are ...*
- *My hobbies are ...*
- *I would like to study ...*
- *The careers that interest me are ... etc.*

## CONCLUSION

- Make sure students start with success before moving on to more challenging work.
- Work from student strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses.
- Give them a second chance.
- Create an environment where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities.

### Your attitude

Attitude is the key word when it comes to dealing with your students. It refers to everything you do or say in class. It can also have some influence over motivating your students.

Examine your approach, your feelings, your sensibility, your awareness, your alertness and your understanding.

### Bibliography

- Ames, R. & Ames, C.** "Motivation and Effective Teaching"
- Ellis, Rod** "Principles of Instructed Language Learning"
- Gross Davis, Barbara** "Tools for Teaching" 1993
- Harris, Robert** "Some Ideas for Motivating Students"
- Muir, Mike** "What do Underachieving Middle School Students Believe Motivates them to Learn?"  
Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning
- Sasson, Dorit** "How to Motivate Students"  
Teacher Support for Managing the Learning Process
- "Motivating Students"  
Learn Center - School of Graduate Studies & Continuing Education  
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater