

Motivation

What moves students to learn?

Strong, positive work ethics are imperative for success. Achievement, potential wealth, and recognition are just a few of many motivating factors that drive people to put forth an effort in life. Students make conscious decisions regarding the amount of effort they wish to exert in school. Specific factors contribute to the decision-making process involved with determining levels of motivation.

There are external and internal forces that motivate a student's level of effort. Externally, teachers, parents, and consequences predominantly inspire students. Internally, they are propelled to learn by personal desires, feelings of competency, and attainment of knowledge.

Externally, teachers motivate students by demonstrating enthusiasm and an interest in

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the subject. Students recognize and embrace when a teacher enjoys sharing knowledge. They want to learn when teachers are excited about educating their students. The energy exerted by the teacher transforms into a student's determination and perseverance for success.

Using a variety of methods, techniques and assignments expands a student's desire to learn. Students appreciate room for creativity, adequate time to complete work and clear presentations of material. Being educated in a positive learning atmosphere that presents mind-boggling challenges makes learning fun. Students gain a greater sense of confidence when they perform well under high expectations and standards.

Mutual respect between teachers and students also promotes increased levels of motivation. Knowing a teacher cares

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makes students more apt to perform to their fullest potential. Furthermore, students want their improvements and achievements acknowledged by both their teachers and parents.

Positive parental influence is one of the most significant motivational factors. Students who receive support from their parents often find more reasons to strive toward academic success. Some students put forth an

effort with the hopes of making their parents proud. Other students are driven by the possibility of rewards or consequences provided if expectations are met or appear inadequate. There are students who are motivated by their parents' own achievements. They want what their parents have or are in search of a better future. Home life is also an important component. Overall, when parents care about their children's education, students demonstrate higher levels of motivation.

Fears of being grounded and punished is what compels some students to learn. If they don't try their best, privileges, freedoms, and rewards might be removed, resulting in unwanted sadness and frustration. Therefore, these students learn in an attempt to avoid failure. Striving for success with the potential of positive rewards and prizes is the key that starts their

engine of motivation.

Internally, students learn because they have goals to achieve. Many students want to graduate high school, attend college, and become someone of importance. They want a career or job that will make them happy, wealthy, and fulfilled. Some want to prove their ability to succeed, especially if they didn't initially think it was possible. Students want to live a good life and believe a strong education will enable them to do so.

Recognizing the value of school, gaining knowledge, and having the ability to participate in an intelligent conversation are other reasons motivating students to learn. Students feel satisfied when work gets completed and good grades are earned. They want to be considered smart and intelligent. Self-esteem and confidence stem from knowing they have the ability and aptitude to learn, whether they figured it out on their own or were influenced by positive people.

Motivating students to learn can be challenging at times. Students lacking the internal desire to learn benefit from external forces that ultimately awaken the initiative of taking responsibility for their own education. Once motivated, students can achieve all of their goals.

**This information was provided by a sample of students in grades 7-12 during the 2003-04 school year.*

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