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Motivational Strategies for Students Who Attend Title I Schools

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MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS

WHO ATTEND TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

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A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

Motivational Strategies for Students Who Attend Title I Schools

This project was prepared to provide elementary teachers in Title I schools with useful, practical information to help motivate their students to achieve academic success. The author reviews high school drop out rates and the societal consequences of students who do not graduate high school. The author examines the challenges of students who attend Title I schools, then offers several specific strategies that educators can implement in their classroom to increase student motivation. The purpose of this project is to help teachers engage students in learning by means of culturally relevant curriculum and strong teacher/student relationships. A PowerPoint presentation was developed as a tool to assist educators in understanding these concepts and to provide them with strategies for implementation in their own classrooms.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A human's highest motivation is to make meaning out of his or her life.

According to Ginsberg (2005), it is the "natural human capacity to direct energy in the

pursuit of a goal, an underlying assumption is that human beings are purposeful. We

direct our energy through attention, concentration and imagination to make sense of our

world" (p. 218). Educators, especially those who work in low socioeconomic Title I

schools, are highly cognizant that the motivation of students is a high priority to keep

students in school, and they need to use many strategies to help them accomplish this

task.

Background of the Problem

There are many risk factors that contribute to students who drop out of high

school. The more risk factors students are exposed to, the higher the likelihood that

students will experience learning or behavior problems (Luster & McAdoo, 1994, as cited

in Somers & Pilliawsky, 2004). According to the staff of the Alliance for Excellent

Education (2009), students who drop out of high school will earn $260,000 less than high

school graduates. Students who dropped out of the class of 2008 will cost the United

States more than $319,000 in lost wages and productivity over their lifetime. Students

who dropped out of the class of 2006 will cost Medicare more than $17 billion in

uninsured health care over their lifetime. Also, the Alliance for Excellent Education staff

reported that, if the educators of U.S. high schools and colleges could raise the graduation

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rates of Native, African, and Hispanic American students to the rates of Anglo American students by 2020, the potential income would add more than $310 billion to the U.S. economy. Finally, by an increase of the graduation rate of male students by only 5%, the U.S. would save almost $8 billion in crime related costs every year.

Currently, approximately 1.2 million students drop out of high school annually in the U.S., a national drop out rate of about 29%, yet nearly one half of all African and Hispanic American students do not graduate with their peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). Some of the highest risk factors include: (a) living in poverty, (b) large family size, (c) lower levels of support from family, (d) low levels of parental education, and (e) low maternal self-esteem.

In order to counteract these findings, educators must establish a positive influence to encourage students, especially minority students and those in low socioeconomic situations, to graduate and go on to college. What can teachers do to motivate students, even in elementary schools, to excel in academics and be successful in school?

<center>Statement of the Problem</center>

An essential goal for educators is to motivate students to achieve academic success (Uguroglu & Walberg, 1979, as cited in Ginsberg, 2005). These researchers demonstrated that motivation is positively and notably related to educational achievement. Many factors influence student motivation, and educators need to equip themselves with multiple strategies in order to provide intrinsic motivation for their students to succeed in the school setting and beyond.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to present elementary school educators with strategies to motivate students to achieve academic success in Title I schools. Students who attend Title I schools present a distinct set of challenges for classroom teachers, which include cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors. Teachers are provided with current research findings on motivation as well as best practice strategies for multicultural students through a PowerPoint presentation given at a staff development meeting or through a teacher induction program.

Chapter Summary

The high school dropout rate in the U.S. negatively affects the economy (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). Students who do not graduate from high school cost the U.S. billions of dollars per year. Minority and low socioeconomic families have the greatest obstacles in graduating from high school. Teachers can be the mediators between a continued life of poverty or a life of financial security.

Many teachers are faced with daily challenges to balance curriculum, high stakes tests, and behavior problems in the classroom. In addition, students come to schools from varied backgrounds, which include poverty, language deficits, and low parental involvement. Teachers can be pivotal players who motivate and inspire students to reach beyond what they thought they could do and achieve academic and personal goals. However, how do teachers reach out to their students to provide that inspiration which will develop persistent and intrinsic motivation for all their students? In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, this author analyzes the latest motivational research strategies that teachers can use to encourage students to achieve academic success in school.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

High school student dropout is problematic, not only for educators, but also for society as a whole. As reported by Martin, Tobin, and Sugai (2002, as cited in Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007), students who drop out are more likely to engage in criminal conduct, have health issues, and depend on government programs than their graduate counterparts. The effects of poverty on school children can be overwhelming when the students do not come to school prepared to learn due to language deficits and cultural differences (Vail, 2004). Teachers need strategies to motivate students from Title I schools (i.e., schools with at least a 40% or higher population of lower socioeconomic families) not only to stay in school, but to succeed in school. The purpose of this project was to compile a current list of motivational strategies to present to elementary school educators at Title I schools that help teachers motivate their students to see the value in education and motivate them to attain academic success.

Motivation

Motivation is derived from the Latin root "to move," and it is defined as a desire that urges one to do something (Charles & Senter, 1995, as cited in Cheng & Yeh, 2009). In the Oxford American Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus, several synonyms are used for motivation, such as "activate, inspire, excite" (p. 540). As Wentzel and Wigfield (2007) stated, "when individuals are more strongly motivated they can become more deeply engaged in different activities, behaviorally, cognitively, and affectively" (p. 262).

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Johnson and Johnson (1997, as cited in Janes, Koutsopanagos, Mason & Villaranda, 2000) maintained that students become successful in life when they achieve self-motivation and learn how to become the very best they can be. Motivation to learn may become an issue for students at Title I schools due to their diverse backgrounds. Yet, as Ginsberg (2005) stated, "Across cultural groups, all students are motivated, even when they are not motivated to learn what a teacher has to offer" (p. 219). Educators must learn how to engage all students in learning and self-motivation.

Motivation is a foundation for academic success. Some students come to school highly motivated and enthusiastic about learning, and some students are what Sanacore (2008) termed, "reluctant learners" (p. 40). Teachers try various strategies to motivate their students with varying degrees of success. Giving rewards to students for good behavior or performance can be effective in the short term, but it does not last. Rather, teachers should try to develop intrinsic, or internal, motivators in their students.

Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivators

Motivation may be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation can be thought of as meaningful motivation that comes from within the individual. Ginsberg (2005) defined intrinsic motivation as "participation in learning experiences that, even in the absence of extrinsic rewards or sanctions, are of interest and value to students" (p. 220). Watts, Cashwell, and Schweiger (2004) cited Bates (1979) and Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991), who defined intrinsic motivation as "the desire to engage in an activity purely for the sake of participating in and completing a task" (p. 16). Constructivist and Multiple Intelligence models use this type of motivation as their basis. Another description of intrinsic motivation by Ryan and Cooper (2007, as cited in Sanacore,

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2008) affirmed that "intrinsic rewards of an occupation are the internal psychic or spiritual satisfactions one receives from one's work, such as a personal sense of accomplishment or an enjoyment of the work itself" (p. 41). Gottfried and Gottfried (1996, as cited in Watts, Cashwell, & Schweiger, 2004) observed that intrinsic motivation predicts how well children maximize and reach their full potential.

In contrast, Watts et al. (2004) defined extrinsic, or external motivation, as "any behavior that is motivated by external forces, such as the receiving of a tangible reward or the pleasing of another person" (p. 16). Examples of this type of motivation include the use of carrot and stick, incentive, reward, and punishment strategies. The use of external motivators can impede learning. According to Erwin (2003), if students hear the message, "If you do this, then you get that" (p. 20), they think that the activity itself is not worth doing. Cheng and Yeh (2009) purported that, although extrinsic motivation can initially promote productive and successful learning, students "exert minimal effort to perform a task and may stop an activity when reinforcement discontinues" (p. 599).

Erwin (2003) asserted that the use of extrinsic motivators could actually damage the relationship between teacher and student. A student's level of trust diminishes when he or she feels that the teacher manipulates them. Erwin stated, "If we want to manage students in ways that develop and maintain trusting relationships, relying on external motivation is self-defeating" (p. 20).

Therefore, intrinsic motivation is the preferred and most effective type of motivation in education. As Ginsberg (2005) asserted, "When people can see that what they are learning makes sense and is important according to their values and perspectives,

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their motivation emerges" (p. 221). People are intrinsically motivated by what is important to them.

Socioeconomic Factors

Children born into low socioeconomic situations "are as bright as anyone and their apparent struggles to retain and apply content and ideas have nothing to do with their cognitive or intellectual ability" (Pogrow, 2009, pp. 409-410). Yet, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are considered at the highest risk for dropping out of school (Caldwell & Ginter, 1996, as cited in Milne & Plourde, 2006). Gorski (2008) suggested that the reason for this is that poorer families have to deal with lack of access to health care, affordable housing, and living wage jobs, which creates conditions that limit their child's ability to enter school ready to learn.

According to Pogrow (2009), students of low socioeconomic status (SES) struggle in school, at least partly due to lack of conversation in their home, which is critical for language as well as cognitive development. In more affluent families, the parents tend to: (a) have more daily conversations with their children, (b) challenge their children, (c) ask them questions, and (d) explain logical or alternative ways to do things. Vail (2004) agreed that "children from high-poverty environments enter school less ready to learn, and they lag behind their more-affluent classmates in their ability to use language to solve problems" (p. 13).

Gorski (2008) stated that "Regardless of how much students in poverty value education, they must overcome tremendous inequities to learn" (p. 35). Students born into poverty do not have as many opportunities to develop school related skills as do middle class students. School reforms that address the development of these school

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related skills benefit advantaged students the most and tend to widen the achievement gap even more (Pogrow, 2009).

<div align="center">Parental Involvement</div>

Students are more academically motivated when they see their parents take an interest in their education. Students whose parents are emotionally supportive and who are involved in their school have higher grade point averages and are less likely to drop out of school (Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005). Milne and Plourde (2006) conducted a study to determine which factors influence students of low SES to achieve above grade level success. Not surprisingly, they found a high correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. Education was given top priority in all the homes. Parents spent much time talking with their child, and the child was exposed to adult language and higher order thinking.

Educators have long known that parental involvement increases student achievement even when parents have not necessarily been successful at school themselves. Milne and Plourde (2006) concluded that there is a need to educate parents in low income households about the strategies they can provide to help their children succeed in school. They stated, "It shows that if these homes can have the right factors in place, their children will be able to succeed in school. Therefore, we need to be educating those parents who are in low-SES situations" (p. 191). Clearly, parents are the primary educators for their children and the presence of parental involvement at home leads to success in the classroom.

Understanding Culture

The numbers of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) are growing in the U.S. (Kaylor & Flores, 2007). However, many students who do not belong to the dominant culture or share the dominant language have lower graduation rates than dominant culture students (Kaylor & Flores, 2007). According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995), the use of culturally responsive teaching (i.e., teaching that takes into account race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and family) stimulates student involvement and thus makes the classroom more productive. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg purported that motivation is inseparable from culture, and "the response a student has to a learning activity reflects his or her culture" (p. 17). These authors questioned the label of at-risk students as motivationally dysfunctional and suggested that, since humans are curious by nature, people are wired to make meaning out of their experiences, and to be effective at things they see as valuable. This curiosity exists across all cultures and is the basis for intrinsic motivation. "We can influence the motivation of students by coming to know their perspective, by drawing forth who they naturally and culturally are, and by seeing them as unique and active" (p. 18). Teachers' acknowledgement that there are different cultures in the classroom allows them to successfully differentiate their instruction to fit the needs of their students (Ginsberg, 2005).

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) provided an intrinsic motivational framework, which is respectful of different cultures and creates its own classroom culture. This framework is made up of four conditions that the teacher establishes in his or her classroom.

1. Inclusion: create a classroom culture where students and teachers are connected and respect each other.

2. Attitude: create positive attitudes in class by offering choices and making learning personally relevant to the students.

3. Meaning: offer learning experiences that are challenging, thoughtful and meaningful and include student values and perspectives.

4. Competence: Meaningful assessments show how students have effectively learned something they value.

The use of these conditions are effective with all students, but especially for students with culturally different backgrounds. These conditions honor student input as well as make learning personally meaningful which, in turn, motivates students to do well in school.

Cognitive Strategies

Students from low SES families are four times more likely to drop out of high school than those from more affluent families (NCES, 2004, as cited in Kaylor & Flores, 2007). Johannessen (2004) reported that many reluctant learners come disproportionately from low socioeconomic, linguistic, and ethnic minority families. Johannessen explained that the traditional intervention strategy for reluctant or disadvantaged learners is to provide them with more basic skill instruction that is heavy on practice, low on interest, and completely boring for both student and teacher. Means and Knapp (1991, as cited in Johannessen) critiqued this basic skill teaching and found that it: (a) underestimates student abilities; (b) puts off interesting and challenging work for far to long, if ever; and (c) never offers students motivational or meaningful work where they can apply the skills that are being taught.

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Johannessen (2004) identified eight cognitive strategies for teachers that replace remedial instruction for struggling students; these include:

1. focus on complex questions for students and engage student curiosity. Tasks need to remain at high levels to give authenticity and transparency to work being explored;

2. embed basic skills within more global assignments, especially reading and comprehension skills;

3. allow students to make solid connections with their world and culture;

4. model powerful thinking strategies through class discussion. Work through difficult passages together before students are asked to work independently;

5. have students share different approaches to solving problems so all students can learn from each other;

6. provide sufficient scaffolding for student success. Model preassignment skills to clarify what is being asked of the students;

7. discuss and model the lesson clearly. Allow for plenty of dialogue between students and teacher; and

8. utilize comprehension strategies that help students internalize the questions that good students ask in order to interpret what they read.

The use of these cognitive approaches allows students to make meaning of their learning so that they can use high level thinking skills to discuss and internalize the content in the classroom. This approach uses authentic classroom interaction to allow students to succeed. By capitalizing on what students already bring into the classroom, teachers can

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empower students to learn through authentic work that promotes motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

In addition, Pogrow (2009) believes that students, especially those from low income backgrounds, need to be challenged in school. Those students who struggle in school, especially fourth and fifth grade students, do not need remedial skills re-taught to them; instead, they need to be taught thinking skills. Fourth grade is the cut off when remedial teaching loses its effectiveness because the curriculum shifts to comprehension of the content rather than learning to read and write. Students are asked to handle more cognitive tasks such as to create ideas and generalize and synthesize information. Because children of poverty lack many language skills, due to minimal conversations at home, they are unable to make as many connections as students from more privileged backgrounds, and in effect, cannot retain as much information.

Pogrow (2009) reported that the best ways to overcome the deficit in thinking skills is through intense Socratic discussions like the ones he developed in his Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) program. Through this program, Pogrow trains teachers to teach students to develop higher order thinking skills through intense, small group Socratic discussions. Teachers constantly question student ideas and request alternative ideas via the use of more sophisticated language. Pogrow maintained that the time is better spent on Socratic discussion, rather than direct instruction, to develop a sense of understanding. Pogrow encourages meaningful, creative, authentic, real world work as students develop their own style and tastes. "Presenting existing content objectives in a way that is meaningful in terms of how students view the world and their role in it generally requires a curricular strategy that incorporates fantasy, adventure, suspense,

fun, and drama" (p. 411). By use of these higher order thinking strategies, teachers can

provide a rich base for students to understand content as relevant to their lives.

<center>*Metacognitive Study*</center>

Other cognitive instructional strategies include teaching metacognitive strategies

to students to improve their academic skills, especially literacy skills like comprehension

and vocabulary. Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, and Joshi (2007) cited Kuhn

(2000) and defined metacognition as "awareness of what one believes and how one

knows" (p. 71). Boulware-Gooden et al. stated, "In addition to decoding skills, students

need vocabulary knowledge and metacognitive skills so they can monitor their

understanding and reflect on what has been read. Competent readers learn these

components simultaneously and fluently" (p. 71). Boulware-Gooden et al. contended

that, unlike speech acquisition, reading and writing skills need to be formally taught.

Learning to read does not end in decoding, but carries on to the understanding of what is

read. These skills are aided by metacognition.

Boulware-Gooden et al. (2007) conducted a study of third grade students to

determine if direct teaching of metacognitive skills would improve these students'

comprehension. The students were taught how to actively engage in their own reading

process. They were taught specifically what to think about while they read. They were

then encouraged to think out loud and ask themselves comprehension questions such as

what is the main idea and supporting details. The authors reported a 40% gain in

vocabulary skills and a 20% gain in comprehension skills in comparison to the control

group of students who did not receive direct metacognitive instruction. These positive

correlations show that systemic instruction of metacognitive strategies was effective in improving academic success for third grade students.

<div align="center">Motivational Strategies for Reluctant Learners</div>

Reluctant learners have several things in common: they do not complete tasks, they avoid challenges, and they are satisfied with putting forth minimal effort in school (Protheroe, 2004, as cited in Sanacore, 2008). Often, these students are highly capable, but lack motivation to do well in school. Sanacore stated, "If teachers expect students to value learning, they should help them grow beyond token rewards and give them opportunities to respond to learning in personal ways" (p. 41). Sanacore suggested several strategies teachers could use to help reluctant learners become intrinsically motivated.

According to Sanacore (2008), the first of these strategies is to create positive environments that challenge and encourage students to learn. These positive environments would include both praise and challenge from teachers. Teachers should remember that the use of high level questioning stimulates interest in students of all backgrounds.

Another strategy for teachers to use is to provide students with several learning choices (Sanacore, 2008). When given choices that are relevant to their lives, students tend to flourish.

Sanacore (2008) reported that teachers need to increase student participation in the classroom. Some suggestions to increase participation include: (a) respect comfort zones, (b) prioritize learning, and (c) allow for choices and preferences. When students

are provided with meaningful and relevant activities, enthusiasm is encouraged which enriches self-efficacy and self-esteem.

A final strategy for teachers is that they should encourage a love for learning (Sanacore, 2008). Teachers should provide students with fun options for learning to increase their motivation. This includes finding student strengths, comforts, and passions. This promotes a lifelong love of learning. Teachers must provide opportunities for students to be successful.

<center>Motivation for Inspiration</center>

Sanacore (2008) stated, "Transforming reluctant learners into more inspired learners requires deliberate effort. When teachers support this transformation, they not only help less motivated students but also prevent others from becoming reluctant" (p. 43). Bowman (2007) asserted that motivation is not the crucial component of teaching, but inspiration is. "Great teachers understand the fundamental difference between motivation and inspiration: motivation is self-focused and inspiration is other focused. Exceptional teachers guide students to greatness by inspiring them to discover where their talents and passions intersect" (p. 81).

Bowman (2007) defined inspiration as something that is the direct result of a caring, trusting, mentoring relationship, and that it is something people live, rather than do. He noted that the challenge to move from being an effective teacher to being a great teacher is to "discover one's own voice and to inspire others to find their's" (p. 81). Schlechty (2002, as cited in Bowman) stated that the function of teachers is to "inspire others to do things that they might otherwise not do and encourage others to go in directions they might not otherwise pursue" (p. 81). Teachers must help to channel

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student energy toward their passions and strengths, which will lead to increased performance.

Bowman (2007) stated, "The art of good teaching, therefore, lies in designing systems and incentives in such a way that students will naturally do the right thing for themselves and for the common good." (p. 84). Bowman identified eight ways for teachers to build student motivation with the use of both intrinsic and extrinsic methods in complementary ways in a successful classroom.

1. Say thank you to students. It shows compassion, care, and respect to students for their work. This provides encouragement and deepens the trust between teacher and student. Also, this is a way to build intrinsic motivation.

2. Recognize what students do to attain their goal. This helps students understand how to achieve higher goals. Publicly acknowledging what students do well models for others that their work will also be noticed and appreciated.

3. Have positive expectations for students, which allow them to set their own goals beyond what they thought they could do. Teachers must help students to build confidence and overcome doubts about themselves.

4. Provide purposeful feedback to students as recognition for their work. Feedback done in a timely manner has been found to be very effective, and encouragement helps students continue to put forth effort. Correction and compliments need to be balanced. Compliments should never be seen as merely a prelude to criticism.

5.   Empower students to find meaning in their work. Teachers need to show

         students why the work must be done. Self-motivated students strive to do

         their best possible work, yet still need the purpose clarified for them to be

         enthusiastic about the task.

6.   Tell stories in the classroom. This enables students to see the

         achievements of others and inspires them to achieve goals themselves.

         Stories make facts easier to remember. They can deepen the meaning of

         what is being learned for students.

7.   Model values as the anchor for self-motivation. To be intrinsically

         motivated is to tap into one's own beliefs. Showing students how to

         recognize their own values for the common good helps focus positive

         energy on their behavior.

8.   Provide alternative cultural perspectives for diversity in the classroom.

         This prepares students for the challenges of a diverse world and all the

         opportunities that world will present.

Bowman concluded that teachers need to set high standards and expectations for their

students. Also, he acknowledged that a human's highest motivation is to make meaning

of his or her life.

<center>Teacher/Student Relationships</center>

Erwin (2003) stated that the three unwritten rules of the classroom are

"Relationships! Relationships! Relationships!" (p. 19). Baker, Grant, and Morlock,

(2008) cited Pianta (1999) and stated that "Positive student/teacher relationships provide

children with the emotional security necessary to engage fully in learning activities and

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scaffold the development of social, behavioral, and self-regulatory competencies needed in the school environment" (p. 4). Also, this relationship is predictive of future success. Baker et al. cited Hamre and Pianta (2001) who showed that the relationship between a kindergarten student and his or her teacher can predict standardized test scores through the fourth grade. Also, Erwin asserted that it is the relationships between teacher and student that intrinsically motivate students to do high quality work, behave responsibly, and learn well.

According to Glasser's Choice Theory (1998, as cited in Erwin, 2003), it was established that there are five basic needs that guide human behavior, namely: (a) survival, (b) love and belonging, (c) power, (d) freedom, and (e) fun. Erwin maintained that teachers need to understand these basic needs and incorporate them into the classroom. When teachers build warm, trusting relationships with their students, they can have a profound positive effect on their academic achievement.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

Students who are born into poverty and attend Title I schools have a higher risk for dropping out of high school than their middle class counterparts. As demonstrated in this review of literature, teachers must first understand the factors in low SES students that create reluctant learners and then use classroom strategies to motivate these students to achieve academic success, and thus stay in school. In Chapter 3, this researcher describes the method used to develop a PowerPoint presentation designed to provide elementary school educators who work in Title I schools with current motivational strategies to use in their classrooms.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this project was to bring current research information on motivational strategies to classroom teachers of Title I schools so that the educators can: (a) go back to their classrooms and implement these strategies, and (b) start to see a change in their students' behaviors right away.

It is difficult for many educators to motivate students who attend Title I schools. Teachers spend long hours to align their curriculum to state and national standards. Teachers work to find effective approaches to literacy and content subjects, as they try to find creative ways to transform their lessons into attractive instruction. Teachers utilize their time to come up with ways to connect with their students and show they care in a variety of ways. Even though teachers try hard to bring academic success to their students, often, they are met with resistance and even reluctant attitudes from their students about their learning. Teachers need specific strategies to motivate their students to achieve success in school.

Target Audience

Educators of students in Title I schools have the unique responsibility to teach children who come to school with language, cultural, and SES differences and challenges. This places a higher demand on teachers to learn and use best practices with their students. It is crucial that these teachers receive the latest research ideas to help them motivate their students to attain academic success and graduate high school. This

project is focused exclusively on the needs of educators who teach in Title I schools.

Organization of the Project

Often, educators who teach in Title I schools are asked to review current best practices on: (a) curriculum alignment, (b) special education policies, and (c) discipline programs. Yet, daily, motivation problems are present in classrooms throughout the U.S. Without motivation, students tune the teacher out and refuse to do class work or homework. Teachers need simple, clear, strategies that they can take into their classrooms and implement. This PowerPoint presentation is organized to present to teachers in Title I schools the purpose for motivating students to graduate from high school, and current motivational strategies to improve: (a) cultural awareness, (b) remedial instruction and (c) teacher/student relationships.

In Chapter 4, the author provides a PowerPoint presentation to be presented to educators of Title I schools via staff development meetings. Strategies are offered and discussed in regard to specific problems within the classroom. The goal of this presentation is to give teachers training and support, not only on how to motivate their students to perform well in class, but also how to inspire them to accomplish goals beyond what they considered possible.

Peer Assessment Plan

Upon completion of the PowerPoint slides, this author asked two practicing educators to review the content and provide informal assessment of the planned presentation. One assessor was a fourth grade teacher, and one was an Instructional Coach; both work at a Title I school. Their feedback was used to add, change, and/or

delete any material to ensure that it is current and relevant. The specifics of their feedback are discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

Motivation is present in all aspects of human life. People are motivated to accomplish tasks that have meaning for them. People naturally strive to achieve success in whatever activities they perceive as valuable. This is no different in the lives of children and young adults. The challenge is to convince students that learning has great purpose and value.

This researcher stated the importance of helping students to graduate from high school and compiled a comprehensive list of student motivational strategies to present to the faculty of a Title I school. These findings can then be taken back to the classroom and implemented in the form of: (a) culturally responsive teaching, (b) alternatives to remedial instruction, (c) student motivational strategies, and (d) improved teacher/students relationships.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

It is crucial for educators to be experts at motivating their students to accomplish goals that they think they can not accomplish. Many students from Title I schools do not aspire to graduate from high school. Teachers can be the catalysts for improving the lives of many students from Title I schools. The purpose of this project is to inspire teachers to motivate their students and to arm them with current best practice teaching skills and motivational strategies in order to give students opportunities to overcome cultural, linguistic and SES challenges.

by
Michele Heckman

A Research Project Presented to
the Staff at Fitzmorris Elementary
Title I School

A human's highest motivation is to make meaning of his or her life.

It is critical for students to be motivated to graduate from high school.

According to the staff of the Alliance for Excellent Education, students who drop out of high school:

- earn $260,000 less than high school graduates
- will cost the U.S. more than $319,000 in lost wages and productivity over their lifetime
- will cost Medicare more than $17 billion in uninsured health care over their lifetime

If educators in U.S. high schools could raise the graduation rates of Native, African, and Hispanic American students to the rate of Anglo American students by 2020, the potential income would add more than $310 billion to the U.S. economy.

An increase in the graduation rates of male students by only 5% would save the U.S. almost $8 million in crime related costs every year.

What can teachers do, starting in
kindergarten, to motivate students
to excel in academics
and be successful in school?

Motivate!

Activate!

Excite!

Inspire!

Motivation...

...is a foundation for success.

Students become successful in life when they achieve self-motivation and learn how to become the very best they can be!

" *Across cultural groups, all students are motivated, even when they are not motivated to learn what the teacher has to offer"* (Ginsberg, 2005, p. 219).

Two Types of Motivation:

Intrinsic Motivation

- *meaningful motivation, coming from within the individual*
- *individual engages in activity for the sake of participating and completing the task without reward*
- *receives psychic or spiritual satisfaction from work*
- *personal sense of accomplishment*

Extrinsic Motivation

- *external motivation*
- *individual receives tangible rewards or punishments*
- *carrot and stick style incentive*
- *to please someone else*
- *individual tends to exert minimal effort*
- *effort may end when reinforcement discontinues*

Intrinsic motivation is the preferred and most effective type of motivation in education.

- People are intrinsically motivated by what is important to them.

- When people see that what they are learning makes sense to them, according to their values and perspectives, then motivation emerges.

Best Teacher Practices

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Teaching that takes into account race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion and family.

- Students are naturally curious and are wired to make sense of their experiences.
- Curiosity exists across all cultures and is the basis for intrinsic motivation.

"We can influence the motivation of students by coming to know their perspective, by drawing forth who they naturally and culturally are, and by seeing them as unique and active" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 18).

Intrinsic Motivational Framework for Multicultural Classrooms

1. *Inclusion*: create a classroom culture where students and teachers are connected and respect each other.
2. *Attitude*: create positive attitudes in class by offering choices and making learning personally relevant to the students.
3. *Meaning*: offer learning experiences that are challenging, thoughtful and meaningful and include student values and perspectives.
4. *Competence*: meaningful assessment show how students have effectively learned something they value.

Culturally responsive teaching means honoring student input, which motivates students to do well in school.

Eliminate Remedial Strategies

Traditional intervention strategies focus on basic remedial skill instruction that is heavy on practice, low on interest, and completely boring for student and teacher.

These strategies:
- underestimate student abilities
- put off interesting and challenging work for too long
- never offers students motivational or meaningful work where they can apply the skills that are being taught

Eight Cognitive Strategies to Replace Remedial Instruction

1. Focus on *complex questions* for students and engage student curiosity. Tasks need to be at high levels to give authenticity and transparency to work being explored.

2. Embed *basic skills* within more global assignments, especially reading and comprehension skills.

3. Allow students to make *solid connections* with their world and culture.

Eight Cognitive Strategies
to Replace Remedial Instruction

4. Model *powerful thinking* strategies through class discussion. Work through difficult passages together before students are asked to work independently.

5. Have students *share* different approaches to solving problems so all students can learn from each other.

6. Provide *sufficient scaffolding* for students. Model preassignment skills to clarify what is being asked of the students.

Eight Cognitive Strategies
to Replace Remedial Instruction

7. *Discuss and model the lesson clearly*. Allow for plenty of dialogue between students and teacher.

8. Utilize *comprehension strategies* that help students internalize the questions that successful students ask in order to interpret what they read.

The use of these cognitive approaches allows students to make meaning of their learning so they can use high level thinking skills to discuss and internalize the content in the classroom.

By capitalizing on what students already bring into the classroom, teachers empower students to learn through authentic work that promotes motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Identify Reluctant Learners

Reluctant learners have several things in common:

- they do not complete tasks
- they avoid challenges
- they are satisfied with putting forth
  minimal effort

Usually these students are capable but lack
  motivation to do well in school.

Motivational Strategies for Reluctant Learners

1. Create positive environments that challenge and encourage students to learn, which include both praise and challenge from the teacher. High level questioning stimulates interest in students of all backgrounds.

2. Provide students with learning choices that are *relevant* to their lives.

Motivational Strategies for Reluctant Learners

3. Increase student participation in the classroom:
   - (a) respect comfort zones
   - (b) prioritize learning
   - (c) allow for preferences

4. Encourage a love of learning by providing fun options. This includes finding students' strengths and passions.

Eight Ways to Build Student Motivation: The Art of Good Teaching

1. Say *thank you to students*. It shows compassion, care and respect to students for their work. This provides encouragement and deepens the trust between teacher and student.

2. *Recognize what students do to attain their goal*. This helps students understand how to achieve higher goals. Publicly acknowledging what students do well models for others that their work will also be noticed and appreciated.

3. Have *positive expectations* for students, which allow them to set their own goals beyond what they thought they could do. Teachers must help students build confidence and overcome doubts about themselves.

4. *Provide purposeful feedback* to students as recognition for their work. Feedback done in a timely manner has been found to be very effective and encouragement helps students continue to put forth effort. Corrections and compliments need to be balanced and compliments should never be seen as merely a prelude to criticism.

Eight Ways to Build Student Motivation:
The Art of Good Teaching

5. ***Empower students to find meaning in their work***.
Teachers need to show students why the work must
be done. Self-motivated students strive to do their
best possible work, yet still need the purpose clarified
for them to be enthusiastic about their work.

6. ***Tell stories*** in the classroom. This enables students to
see the achievements of others and inspires them to
achieve goals themselves. Stories make facts easier
to remember and can deepen the meaning of what is
being learned.

Eight Ways to Build Student Motivation:
The Art of Good Teaching

7. ***Model values*** as the anchor for self-motivation. To be
intrinsically motivated is to tap into one's own beliefs.
Showing students how to recognize their own values
for the common good helps focus positive energy on
their behavior.

8. ***Provide alternative cultural perspectives*** in the
classroom. This prepares students for the challenges
of a diverse world and all its opportunities.

Three unwritten rules of the classroom:

Relationships!
Relationships!
Relationships!

"*Positive student/teacher relationships provide children with the emotional security necessary to engage fully in learning activities and scaffold the development of social, behavioral, and self-regulatory competencies needed in the school environment*" (Pianta, 1999, as quoted in Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008, p. 4).
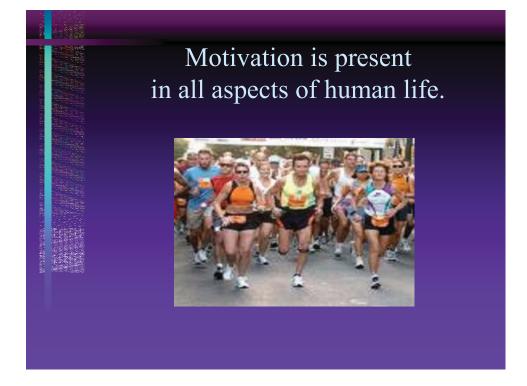
Inspiration:
the final element of motivation

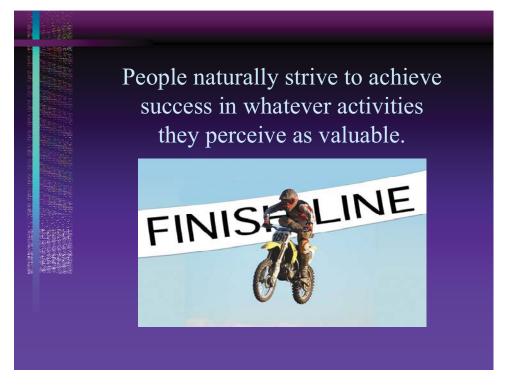*"Exceptional teachers guide students to greatness
by inspiring them to discover where their
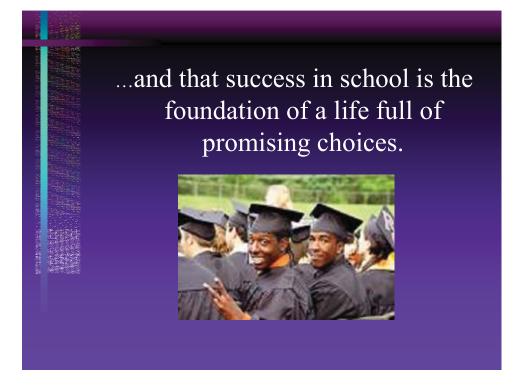talents and passions intersect"* (Bowman, 2007, p. 81).

Inspiration is the direct result of a caring, trusting, mentoring relationship.

The challenge to move from being an
effective teacher to being a great teacher is
to "*discover one's own voice and to inspire
others to find their's*" (Bowman, 2007, p. 81).

Motivation is present
in all aspects of human life.

People naturally strive to achieve
success in whatever activities
they perceive as valuable.

The challenge in the field of
education is to convince students
that learning has great
purpose and value...

...and that success in school is the
foundation of a life full of
promising choices.

Chapter Summary

This PowerPoint presentation was prepared to give teachers in Title I schools useful, practical information that will help them motivate their students to achieve academic success and increase high school graduation rates. By using these strategies to recognize cultural, linguistic, and SES differences, teachers can differentiate their instruction in order to provide optimal learning for their students. This in turn makes it possible for students in Title I schools to feel more honored, less stigmatized, and willing to do what it takes to overcome adversities in order to be successful. In Chapter 5, the researcher discusses the completed project.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

This project advances the need for teachers to understand the importance of motivation in the classrooms of Title I schools, and it offers strategies to aid in that endeavor. By focusing on student needs and backgrounds, educators can connect with students so as to make learning relevant and fun and thereby naturally increase student motivation.

Contribution of this Project

The author of this project desires to focus on the importance of motivation in Title I classrooms. As the demographics in this country change, it will become more and more important for teachers to connect with students of diverse backgrounds. It is imperative that teachers learn to motivate their students to stay in school. This work provides various hands-on strategies for teachers to use in their classroom in order to honor individual students, make learning relevant to the students, and inspire students to accomplish goals they may have thought unattainable.

Limitations

The limitations of this project include a lack of a one size fits all strategy to enhance motivation in classrooms. Although the author was able to assemble several diverse strategies for classroom teachers, no one strategy will be effective for every student. Teachers will need to experiment with the proposed suggestions and tailor them for individual students. Perhaps by focusing on a few strategies, teachers will

be able to see which of their instructional practices they may want to eliminate and new ones they may like to try.

<div align="center">Peer Assessment Results</div>

The PowerPoint presentation was given to two teachers for review. One assessor was a fourth grade teacher, and one was an Instructional Coach; both work at a Title I school. They provided valuable feedback, which this author integrated to create a more concise presentation.

One assessor suggested eliminating slides that did not focus on the topic of teachers providing the motivation for students. This teacher suggested that jumping to the "Best Teacher Practices" slide was more powerful than providing additional background demographics of students and families who attend Title I schools. The other assessor asked valuable questions leading the author to use more precise wording.

Both assessors felt that the purpose of this project was candid and necessary information for teachers. A suggestion was made that this project may fit well into a teacher orientation or induction program. One assessor suggested the author share this presentation with the staff at a Title I school. She thought it would reinforce the ideas that they had been trying to implement in their school over the past 5 years.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Development</div>

This PowerPoint presentation could be enhanced by adding video clips of master teachers using these strategies in the classroom to demonstrate various motivational techniques. If used for a Teacher Induction Program or New Teacher Orientation, the addition of video segments would provide new teachers with modeling of best practices.

Project Summary

Certain cultures value education differently than others, yet it has been shown in this country that education can help overcome many issues that hold people back from living full, happy lives. It was this author's intent to inspire teachers to motivate their students to be successful in school. Educators can accomplish this by honoring students and their backgrounds and affirming that whatever challenges students from Title I schools face, given enough support from caring teachers, these students can be academically successful and attain the dream of a life full of promising choices.

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