

## ***SUGGESTIONS FOR MOTIVATING STUDENTS***

### **. Level of Concern**

- . Assign practice papers of a reasonable length. More practice does not necessarily make a perfect.
- . When angry or frustrated, directly describe your feelings by using "I" messages rather than insulting/abusing the personality(ies) involved.
- . Use active participation devices when teaching new material or when holding discussions so that students are not allowed to be mere passive listeners.
- . When students seem to be apathetic, use statements such as the following: "You'll need this for the competency exams," "You'll need this for your college work," "You'll need to understand this if you want to be successful in the business world," "I'll call on someone for an answer in one minute," "This paper will be graded."
- . Be alert to boredom and restlessness in students and relieve the causes producing it.
- . State your expectations (which should be fair and reasonable) at the beginning of each term.

### **Feeling Tone**

- . Make a concerted effort to learn individual students' interests and activities. Discuss these with them.
- . Have values clarification lessons occasionally, instead of the usual academic lessons. Excellent examples of such exercises can be found in the values clarification books by Sidney Simon.
- . Allow students to have some input as to what they will learn and how they will learn it.
- . Listen to/discuss legitimate student problems/complaints.
- . Be animated and enthusiastic.
- . Interview students individually to learn their interests and points of view about learning; present material in this context whenever possible.
- . In instances of misunderstanding and conflict, paraphrase students' message to facilitate communication and understanding.

### **Interest**

- . Bring in guest speakers.
- . Change the room arrangement periodically.

- . Alternate your visuals (i.e. chalkboard, charts, overhead projector, butcher paper, colored paper).
- . Feature a joke/cartoon of the week.
- . Have students use different colored felt pens at times for novelty.
- . Vary the class routine from day to day. This helps eliminate the potential for boredom.
- . Do two or three different activities during one class period whenever possible. Doing the same activity for a long period of time can easily become dull.
- . Use large sheets of butcher paper on the walls. Have teacher/student write items relevant to the lesson on the sheets with colored felt pens.
- . Incorporate into your lessons student interests (sports, TV, pop music, motorbikes, part-time jobs, etc.), school activities, places and events that are familiar to students.
- . Use novelty/gimmicks for dramatic impact.
- . Allow students to make as many choices as possible.
- . Use student contracts when applicable for certain units of study.
- . Display photographs that have to do with students and class/school activities.
- . Be spontaneous and unpredictable at times.

### **Success**

- . Divide the class into more than one group for teaching certain basic skills/concepts when it is apparent that there is a wide range of student competence.
- . Have students work with partners on practice papers, reports, review, etc.
- . Present one small segment of content at a time.
- . Keep a record of which students do assigned practice papers, but don't grade the papers.
- . State the purpose/objective of each lesson, and relate the content to the students' lives whenever possible.
- . Be organized and efficient; establish a routine that students can rely on.
- . Provide adequate practice before testing.
- . Make special provisions for students who cannot read the textbook:
  - provide several different texts
  - have students listen to tape recordings of the text (good readers can make the tapes)

work with a partner

use the SQ3R system (skim, question, read, review, recite)

Avoid just "covering" material. A few things learned well are more helpful than many things learned in cursory fashion.

- . Individualize the questions you use, both oral and written (i.e. use high level questions for students who need to be challenged, low level questions for students with less sophisticated skills). All questions are discussed at the same time, so all students benefit from all questions.
- . Make the first experience with the subject matter as positive as possible.
- . Make sure students understand the academic expectancies and criteria for evaluation on any test or unit of learning.
- . Make the first few questions/problems on any test so easy that everyone can get them correct.
- . Distribute an outline to students before a major unit of study.

### **Knowledge of Results**

- . Post an answer key for practice papers.
- . Assign short written papers that can be checked and returned promptly.
- . Make specific comments on student papers, in addition to letter grades.
- . When students are working independently, monitor carefully and give specific feedback.
- . Have students keep a record/log of their learning progress.
- . Discuss with and involve your students in the grading procedure you intend to employ.

### **Reward**

- . Write personal notes to students when they have done something particularly thoughtful or diligent.
- . Have free-choice-time occasionally, especially when students have been working well.
- . Shorten or eliminate a homework assignment occasionally as a surprise or treat.
- . Find out what students really like/want, and use that as a reward (when appropriate).
- . Send notes home to parents when students have done something particularly well, have been extremely thoughtful or helpful, or have "gone the extra mile".