

Motivational Strategies

1. Be animated, enthusiastic, and motivated yourself. Enthusiasm is contagious and your students will become motivated by your enthusiasm.
2. Arouse the students' curiosity. Vary teaching strategies so that students will be eager to see what you will do next. Example: Tired of presenting new spelling words each week in the same old manner? If you're tired of it, think how the students must feel! Try having a puppet introduce spelling words one week; tape a hidden spelling word under each student desk or chair and call on students alphabetically to retrieve and read their hidden spelling word; have students search through magazines to find pictures of the spelling words assigned to them; create a song or rhyme using spelling words and sing the song or say the rhyme and then teach it to students; have students create a rap song using spelling words, etc.
3. Vary the types of activities you conduct during the day. Follow a quiet activity with a physical activity. Example: After taking a math test, have students act out their reading vocabulary words or the action verbs that they are studying in language arts.
4. Keep records of progress made by students, books reviewed, or tasks completed. Create large charts so that students can see what they have accomplished in the classroom. Past accomplishments motivate students to strive to obtain more goals.
5. Create failure-proof situations for poorly motivated students and offer challenging situations for highly motivated learners.
6. Use audio-visual media, concrete objects, and educational games to create interest.
7. Write brief messages of praise or encouragement on students' papers rather than just a score or a grade. Use a color other than red to mark papers and put the number of correct answers rather than the number wrong.
8. Videotape a special presentation, debate, panel discussion, or activity and schedule a "movie premiere" with popcorn for the students to critique their "performance." (Be sure you have permission from the school, parents/guardians, and students to do this activity.)
9. Set up a classroom mailbox, communications bulletin board, or journals so that you and your students can exchange messages.
10. Use a popular song (Choose carefully!) as a basis for a lesson in language arts. Look for new vocabulary words, synonyms, antonyms, rhyming words, alliterations, etc.
11. Instead of the textbook, teach from a newspaper. It can be used for most content areas and just about any grade level.
12. Compute averages, figure percentages, and make graphs in math class from the data that students collect. Sample topics include: height of students, size of rooms, students on the honor roll, male and female faculty members, etc.
13. In social studies class, assign different groups of students to present daily news broadcasts each day. Give points for creativity, involvement of all members of the group, importance of data shared, etc.
14. Use magazine and newspaper articles, excerpts from a book, or poetry to create interest and provide background information for a topic of study.
15. Dress in character for the period of time of a unit of study. Examples: FDR in a wheelchair for fireside chats, a colonial settler, soldier, woodsman, fireman, doctor, nurse, veterinarian, etc.
16. Create an environment to reflect what you teach. Examples: Use a tee-pee to teach about Native Americans, use a covered wagon to travel West, use a space ship to introduce a solar system unit; make the room a jungle, zoo, store, factory; set learning centers in trees, cages, caves, etc.