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Classroom Management

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**CMP Section 8: Motivating Students to Learn (Chapter 7 & Class Notes)**

Write a minimum of 1 cogent and thorough paragraph addressing **each** of the following:

1. **What strategies will you use to encourage both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for individual students? Give an example of a fictional student and the strategies you would use to motivate this student.**

To intrinsically motivate an individual student, I would use positive feedback. This allows students to see that I have noticed their hard work and am proud of their effort. It also boosts their self-esteem, thus making them feel like they are successful, which in turn motivates them to keep working well.

Extrinsically motivating ninth graders is a difficult beast to tackle since the teacher has the job of motivating students without leaving new teenagers feeling patronized. Part of extrinsic motivation in my class will relate back to the newsletter idea I mentioned in an earlier CMP. A portion of this newsletter will go to a monthly student spotlight. Students who do an exceptional job on an assignment or have been a fabulous helper in class, will be spotlighted for their friends and families to see. This motivates students since they can work towards earning a place in the spotlight.

I would also be likely to use my own enthusiasm and modeling to motivate, and I argue that this counts as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It is intrinsic because enthusiasm is contagious, and this makes students enjoy a certain activity as they mimic my energy. It is also extrinsic because they can see me staying enthusiastic, or perhaps becoming more enthusiastic as they get involved in the lesson. This makes them enjoy the lesson more and benefit from a happy teacher.

Let’s say that I have a student who is consistently turning in assignments late or half completed for my American History class. I would take this student aside and talk this over with him. In talking with him, I find that he is struggling with memorizing the dates for the major events of the American Revolution, leading him to defeatism behavior, including the above. To motivate him to try harder, turn in assignments on time, and realize that he is not a failure, I would adapt his assignments to align with his knowledge level and recommend that he access the tutoring systems available through the school system. Then, as he works through assignments that are built with his skill level in mind, and as he brings his grade up through different questions formats, I will praise him for such hard work. Eventually, he should be back up on par with the other students, but when a student is struggling like this, I believe it is imperative that you allow them to take a step back and begin enjoying learning again, instead of worrying about the test grades. On top of realigning assignments and offering positive feedback, I think it would be good to offer an extrinsic motivator such as a small reward when he gets a certain number of questions correct in a row on his homework for a certain amount of time.

1. **What approach(es) would you use to motivate your entire class? These generally focus on external motivation. You may find it helpful to describe your fictional class since this will generally determine what approach would be most appropriate and effective.**

Ideally, I would like to use intrinsic forms of motivation in my classroom. I think this can be accomplished by creating a positive learning atmosphere where students feel safe enough to ask for help and express a lack of interest or great interest. I think this can be accomplished through modeling, and by stressing verbally, consistently, and constantly, that we are in a space where I expect civil engagement and hard work. I can also reinforce verbally that everyone needs help from time to time, and that is perfectly acceptable—normal even!

However, in a ninth-grade classroom with thirty students, this atmosphere of group motivation is likely going to need a little push in the right direction. To accomplish this, I would create a mixed model system, based in intrinsic and extrinsic factors to build motivation. I think it is possible to create a system for motivating that includes both, since intrinsic motivation is important for a student to develop in preparation for the real world. I would put in place a rewards system that hinged on set goals that once achieved, lead to a reward. Being “contingent on mastery” (Burden, 2013, p. 135) can be intrinsically rewarding, because students can realize that their hard work has led to a reward that they desired. It also however works as an extrinsic factor since they can work towards a tangible goal and consequence outside of their own feelings of accomplishment. As students worked towards these goals and subsequent rewards, I would offer positive feedback, pointing out how far they have come so far, how well they have improved, etc.

1. **What approach(es) would you use during instruction to increase motivation?**

I already have a great deal of experience in increasing motivation during instruction, since I have been teaching French, both in person and online for the last five years and teach educational programs at Sergeant Alvin C. York State Historic Park every summer. To increase motivation in these settings, I like to 1) “assign moderately difficult tasks that can be completed with reasonable effort (Burden, 2013, p. 122),” 2) “occasionally do the unexpected (Burden, 2013, p. 119), and 3),” “adapt instruction to students’ knowledge, understanding, and personal experiences (Burden, 2013, p. 118).”

In teaching French, it can become easy to get entrenched in the same schedule of conjugating new verbs, reviewing material covered the week before, learning new grammar and then trying it out. This can lead to student boredom and a lack of motivation. I like to keep students on their toes by rearranging class periods, or adding a fun element, such as saving verbs until the end, tackling new vocabulary, or starting class with a French idiom or tongue twister. For review, I have used Jeopardy style games, or given students wacky sentences to translate into French. These elements all break up the same monotonous formula and give students the chance to use their brains afresh. When it comes to trying out new grammar elements in class, I start out with simple sentences, then gradually make the sentences harder as they master the elements of the topic we have covered, to allow students to work themselves up to more and more challenging work.

At Sergeant Alvin C. York State Historic Park, I like to build my programs loosely and come prepared with lots of extra information, so that I can cater a program to guests’ previous experiences, knowledge, or interest. This means that these guests are more interested in the program and will be interested in learning more. This might look like asking as we walk into the York home for a tour what kids can tell me about World War One. Then, based on what they have shared, I can point out different aspects of Sgt. York’s life that line up with their knowledge, and perhaps take it a little farther. Perhaps a child knows that Germany occupied France during WWI. I can then tell them that Sgt. York was in Paris, which is in France, and it was here that he discovered electricity and decided that he wanted it in his own home (since he did not have any). From their knowledge, I have now added new information.