

Motivation

Motivation in the classroom is a two way street.

A teacher is only as good as his or her pupils think he/she is.

A pupil will only achieve at a level that he/she believes that they are capable of achieving. Thus teaching, whilst involving technical skill, really has more to do with the more important aspect of raising the children's level of expectation.

Children learn best in a friendly warm environment that is free from distraction and where the group goal is success.

Very few children reach their full potential when taught by a teacher that they don't respect or else one whom they profoundly dislike.

Children are very perceptive-they can decipher teacher moods and likes sometimes as easily as reading a book. Before entering a classroom convince yourself that you are about to start on a pleasurable interlude. Convince yourself that you love everyone in that room.

Have a "lesson plan" or strategy firmly fixed in your mind but prepared to abandon that plan if more favourable alternatives eventuate in the lesson. Occasionally ask students to nominate areas of work where weakness is perceived. Test these areas and in fact use testing not to grade students but as a diagnosis to your teaching success.

Find opportunities to offer genuine praise to students and to the class. Even a parting comment of "thanks for the lesson 8F, I've enjoyed myself immensely and I am delighted with your work today. I would especially like to mention....."

Try giving praise to someone who least deserves it, and you'll be surprised how often he/she will deserve praise in future years.

The factors that motivate a teacher are the same ones that motivate a pupil or in fact anyone.

Success and praise are the twin spurs that drive a teacher to his/her best efforts. Success comes from knowing that you have taught well, that the pupils have responded positively to you as a teacher. Praise comes from others recognising your talents. Praise given by pupils is often non-verbal but shows in the way that they respect you and respond to your lessons.

The problem student

A problem student is the bane of every teacher. The reasons for the child's angst could be well away from the school situation. A teacher must in the first instance dialogue with the student in a one to one situation in a non-hostile manner. Whilst negotiating, try and ascertain the cause of the problem before any solutions can be attempted. Head teachers, leading teachers and school counselors all can be consulted when a child proves retractable. The first concern however is to remove such a child from the classroom situation before any of his/her rebellious attitude carries over to the rest of the class.

When a whole group of students don't respond then you have a problem class. Winning the respect of a problem class is a long and patient exercise that will only bear fruit when the whole class appreciates that you, the teacher, respects them and that you are acting in their best interests. There are many strategies that achieve this outcome and each individual teacher must decide which method best suits their personality. The philosophies outlined above are good guidelines for whatever strategy that you choose.

Finally, remember, in order to be a motivated, you have to be motivated and enthusiastic, and then real pleasure and satisfaction are your rewards