Annotated Bibliography:

Improving Elementary Student Motivation

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**Introduction**

As an elementary school teacher, I will try and make my classroom an exciting place to learn new concepts, work together to explore new ideas and build important life skills. It’s important to make learning fun and exciting for young students, so that they recognize the importance of school and continue their education in the future. Some students will be naturally motivated to learn in school, while others will struggle to see the value or excitement in learning. It will be my job as a teacher to motivate these disengaged students and give them a positive perspective of education. The following six scholarly articles discuss the various ways to motivate elementary students in the classroom. The strategies vary from building strong connections with students, integrating physical education into the classroom, and project-based activities.

**Articles**


The researchers were interested in exploring the most effective ways to motivate students in high school. They observed and interviewed a sampled of over 2000 high school students who would help identify high school teachers that were perceived as motivating and supportive to their learning. This allowed researchers to study the teacher’s practices and conclude that the most motivating teachers followed the following three themes; supporting understanding, building and maintaining rapport with students, and strong classroom management. They also discussed the specific traits of the teacher that improve the student’s perception, such as use of humor and communication outside of the classroom.
The findings in this article are valuable for teachers because it outlines for teachers what they should be conscientious of in the classroom. Teachers should always keep the best interest of the students in mind when making lesson plans because this will show students that teachers want them to succeed and truly understand the material. It’s also important to make connections with students and have a good relationship with them. This will make it easier for students to communicate with the teacher and become involved with the material. Students will also be more eager and ready to learn from a teacher who has control over the classroom.


The researchers in this study were interested in observing and interviewing disengaged and reluctant learners; essentially they were students in an urban setting who didn’t feel motivated and were not succeeding in school. By talking to these students about their school experiences, this study would be able to show teachers how to motivate them and change the way they view learning. The researches concluded that building strong relationships with teachers, being interested in the school assignments, being praised for their successes and talents, and feeling competent and valued in the classroom are all essential for students to feel motivated to learn.

This article would be helpful for teachers because it addresses the serious issues of students being disengaged in school, dropping out, or not continuing their education after high school. All of these problems occur because the students were
not motivated earlier on in their education. This emphasizes the importance of primary and secondary teachers to truly engage students and motivate them to learn. If teachers can connect with these disengaged students and make learning fun and interesting for them, then these students will want to start participating in school and their education can turn around. If a student feels like they are being heard, then they will be more likely to listen and learn.


The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of physical activity integrated with academic lessons compared to traditional lessons on children's academic motivation. Their sample was 147 students, from 15 different classes in grade 4 to 6. For evaluating motivation among participating students, they were given a questionnaire after the lesson, which would rate their interest/enjoyment, competence, effort, and value. Their results showed that interest/enjoyment, competence, and effort were all significantly higher after integrated lessons, while their perceived value of the class did not decline after integrated lessons. These results show that teachers who incorporate physical activity into their teaching can positively impact their student's motivation.

This was a very interesting article from a teacher’s perspective because it proves that you can kill two birds with one stone. If you incorporate physical activity into everyday lessons, not only will you be helping the children become physically
active and healthy, but you will also be increasing their motivation to learn as well. It would be a very simple way to motivate students because you could just ask them to stand up and stretch, move around the classroom, or do interactive activities on their feet during the lesson.


To understand why student motivation declines in primary and secondary school, these researchers wanted to find out what happens during primary school to cause the decline. By giving questionnaires to a sample of 722 third grade students, they were able to identify the factors that could cause them to disengage in school. Results showed that girls showed a stronger decline in their self-efficacy around fourth and fifth grade compared to boys. This indicates that around age ten, girls may experience a vulnerable phase with regard to their sense of efficacy, which can affect their learning. They also found that task-orientation declined for ethnic majority students during the second half of primary school. The researches believe that task-orientation did not decline for ethnic minority children because their parents taught them to value school more and to have higher expectations for school success compared to non-immigrant families. Lastly, school investment developed less favorably for boys, ethnic minority students, and students with less educated parents.
The findings in this study were very interesting, but also helpful when thinking about teaching practices. It’s important to consider what is going on in the child’s life because there are many factors that can impede and negatively affect their learning. If you are able to take into consideration, for example, that a girl is less confident in her abilities at the end of primary school, then you might want to give her a boost in confidence while your teaching. You could praise her accomplishments and build off of her skills so that she doesn’t become unmotivated to learn due to her low self-efficacy.


These researchers were interested in investigating the effects of instructional games on students' academic performance and motivation levels. They were specifically interested in elementary Science learners, because not a lot of research has focused on this sample of students. Tests and questionnaires were given to 16 students in the study to assess their performance and motivation after participating in lessons with integrated games. Results of the study revealed that using instructional games that are relevant to the Science lesson plan significantly increases student motivation, specifically for older grades than younger. They also found that the teachers found this teaching practice to be “highly effective” in helping their students to understand the science concepts and material.

While this article may have not been extremely surprising, it was still valuable to know that there is actual research to support their findings. It’s no surprise that using instructional games to help teach Science would help motivate students
because it makes learning fun and exciting. Students will be more likely to listen and pay attention to a student if they are challenged with a board game or trivia question. This type of challenge pushes the student to try and win the game and in turn, they will be learning the material.


Project-based learning is a teaching strategy where students actively work together on a project to deepen their understanding and involvement. The researchers in this study wanted to find out if project-based learning can help motivate students at the elementary level. They narrowed their focus on project-based learning more closely to digital storytelling, where the class would use web-based programs such as Photo Story or iMovie to develop movies based on the subject matter. The class would take pictures, analyze the data, develop a story, produce the film and present it. To assess it’s effect on motivation, they interviewed a total of 117 students in grade 5 Science, some of which had to implement the digital storytelling approach, while others took a more conventional project-based learning approach. Using a motivational scale, their results showed that students participating in the digital storytelling group were significantly more motivated than students in the conventional group. They also found that the digital storytelling could significantly enhance their problem-solving competence as well.

This article gives teachers an interesting idea of how to teach subjects that can be a bit intimidating, like Science, in a fun and interactive way. Digital storytelling
would be quite engaging for young children in elementary school because it allows
them to explore the subject with technology, which is an innovative and more
exciting approach. Integrating technology into lesson plans can help motivate
students to participate because they’ll want to use the programs themselves and
make movies they can watch and be proud of.