

How to reach the Unmotivated Student

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Abstract

Motivating students to succeed in school is becoming a constant battle. There are many reasons as to why a student may walk into your classroom completely unmotivated.

These reasons may consist of; home life, culture, the student may feel that the information is irrelevant, that they don't have a choice, they feel out of place, the work may be too hard, or too easy, lack of confidence and much more. As you can see it is becoming increasingly more complex for a teacher to reach the unmotivated student. This study describes the reasons why students have become unmotivated and investigates the perceptions through interviewing students and surveying teacher's views on the problems that hinder these students classroom motivation. Findings show that learners are not motivated to learn due to a multitude of factors within the school as well as their home life. Results also show that teachers complain of unmotivated students and not having the resources needed to reach them.

Key Words: unmotivated, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation

How to Reach the Unmotivated Student

Introduction

One of the most challenging problems that educators face is motivating the unmotivated student. While this has been a major problem in middle school and high school it is also being seen as young as the elementary school grades. Teacher's work really hard, every day to convince their students that what they are teaching is extremely important and worth their time and energy. These teachers are in a constant battle with forever attempting to motivate their students. (Toshalis 2012). However, what teachers may not realize is that their behavior and attitude and the classroom environment has a lot to do with their student's motivational level, and these two demands may make all of the students motivation dissipate.

At the beginning of the school year every child walks into the classroom with some sort of a hope that "maybe this year will be different." They walk in with just a tiny spark of internal motivation. The first impression that a student has on their teacher can drastically affect how their year is going to go and how much effort they are going to put into their work that year. A first impression can consist of the teacher's behavior, classroom environment, the structure of the course, the nature of the assignments, and the informal interaction with students (Krik 2013). All of these factors can have a large affect on whether the students' motivation is going to be intrinsic, extrinsic or not exist at all.

There are two different types of motivation intrinsic and extrinsic. If a student is intrinsically motivated it means that they have a desire to learn a topic due to inherent