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# Introduction

*If America's only educational duty were to educate everyone who is anxious and willing to learn, we could close down half our schools.*

—William F. Buckley, Jr. (as cited in Shanley, 1990)

Herein lies the challenge for teachers: to help students become motivated enough to learn and eager enough to continue to learn and succeed beyond the formal years of schooling. Motivation is internal; it comes from within oneself. A student who is not motivated and does not want to learn cannot be made to learn. One of the greatest challenges for teachers in the 21st century is to provide an environment and atmosphere that can stimulate a student's desire to learn. This task is especially complex because of the numerous variables that affect a student's motivation and because of the differences that students bring to the school environment.

Some of these differences include cognitive abilities, home environment, personal physical challenges, and especially differences that directly relate to the student's culture. Wlodkowski (1999) said that "individual motivation is inseparable from culture" (p. 8). Therefore, effective teachers must continually seek ways to manipulate the learning environment in order to maximize the motivational levels of individual students to learn as well as address the social ramifications and instructional needs resulting from differences in culture. The ultimate goal is to help all students succeed during their years of schooling so that they will also succeed throughout their adult years.

In theory, there are two general types of motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic. *Extrinsic motivation* refers to the external influences of praise and rewards. For some students, extrinsic tools are necessary for motivation. This might eventually lead to a level of motivation that is intrinsic. *Intrinsic*

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*motivation* refers to the internal drive within oneself to do well because of a desire to be challenged, for the sheer joy of participating or learning, or because of a personal desire to succeed. Certainly, the development and nurturing of intrinsic motivation is the ultimate goal of educators for their students. Wlodkowski (1982) said that intrinsic motivation occurs when there is value in the process of doing something. Helping students find value in learning through the implementation of various instructional strategies and multiple alternative and authentic forms of assessments, while maintaining high standards of student performance in an environment which encourages students to do their best work by effective, nurturing teachers, will help increase the motivational levels of all students.

In an effort to provide practical suggestions teachers might use to help create an environment for students to maintain or increase internal motivation to learn, this book offers many suggestions. The professional literature abounds with theories of learning that affect a student's level of motivation. This book offers a snapshot of those relevant theories that provide some foundation for students' motivation. While the book contains references to enduring motivational theories such as those of Maslow (1954, 1968), Gagné (1965, 1974), and Bandura (1977), the root of the strategies and suggestions lies in the experiences of the author and the hundreds of teachers who have worked with her preservice students over the past decade.

This book is not intended to provide all the answers to issues of student apathy, disinterest, and lack of motivation to learn, but rather, the strategies and suggestions in this book are offered as a springboard for teachers in developing and implementing ideas that might be useful for them and their students. Because students are individuals and motivation is an internal, personal attribute, some strategies and suggestions that work for some students will not work for others. Not everything will work for every person.

The strategies in this book were written primarily for middle and high school teachers for use with adolescents. However, this is not to say that elementary school teachers and even college professors would not benefit by adapting some of these ideas for students at these respective academic levels.

Each chapter has strategies and suggestions that relate to a theme that is suggested by a letter in the word motivation. Chapter 1 explores strategies related to one's "mindset." Adolescents come into their classes with an already established mindset as to whether or not they can succeed. Chapter 2 offers suggestions for establishing a motivating environment centered on the theme of "observation." Adolescents are influenced by what they see and observe in others, especially their teachers. Chapter 3 suggests that students may be affected by "timing." Maslow's (1954) theory of motivation provides the foundation for the strategies in this chapter.

Students' needs and readiness influence their levels of motivation. In Chapter 4, the theme of "independence" is offered. Teaching students to write goals for themselves, make their own decisions, and recognize consequences for those decisions provides the focus for strategies in this chapter. The fact that students are motivated by their own successes provides the theme of "victory" for Chapter 5. Some students have never experienced success. The strategies in this chapter are for them. Students, especially adolescents, need to be active learners, and Chapter 6 contains suggestions centered on "action" strategies. One of the goals for student learning is that students be able to "transfer" information when needed. Chapter 7 provides numerous suggestions related to this process of transference. Chapter 8 contains strategies related to "individuality." Each student is unique and is affected by the environment differently than anyone else. In Chapter 9, taking responsibility for one's own actions provides the theme for "ownership" strategies. The essence of motivation is actually an internal need reflected in ownership and responsibility. Chapter 10 provides strategies that revolve around the theme that motivation is "natural." All persons have an innate drive that motivates their actions.

For new teachers as well as those with some experience in the realm of educating students, this book offers strategies and suggestions that you might find directly adoptable for you and your students. Or, you might modify a suggestion or develop your own slant on an idea from this book. In any case, I sincerely hope that in reading these ideas, you find some benefit from my sharing them.

