Motivation and Classroom Management

T onight, before I started to write this chapter, I made dinner for my family. I detest cooking, but I have to do it to feed my family. When I patiently asked my son to set the table, he said—and I quote (in a snotty tone)—"Why do I *always* have to set the table?" A myriad of responses came to my mind: "Because I said so," "Just *do* it," and "Your life depends on it," for example. I didn't say any of these, however. Instead, I told my son he was a part of the family and setting the table was his family job. He rolled his eyes and then set the table. And now, I must begin to write a chapter on motivation. Ironic, isn't it? Why was I motivated to cook but my son was not motivated to set the table? I am not always motivated to cook. Sometimes I make my husband do it or take me out for dinner. Do I cook out of guilt, because my family depends on me, or for another reward?

We in education sometimes connect **motivation** with simple **stimulus-response** behaviors when, in fact, motivation is quite a complex feeling related to many things besides stimulus. Even if I am motivated to do something, I might not do it, but why? Of course, that is the million-dollar question for educators because we need students to be motivated to learn and succeed academically.

Our complex brains are connected to motivation in intricate ways. Maybe my 4-year-old son's brain is not capable of making the complex leap from setting the table to helping his family. Choices can greatly affect our motivation. My son did not have a choice in the matter. He had to set the table, and he really didn't even have a choice in how he went about setting it. Our previous experiences with a task can influence motivation. Maybe my son is just sick

of doing the same job night after night or doesn't see its importance. Other people influence motivation as well. I am certain that I influenced my son's motivation to set the table, even if it was not in a positive manner. As you begin to uncover motivation, think about a time you were very motivated to do a task, a time when you were not motivated at all but did the task anyway, and a time when you were not motivated at all and did not do the task (see Table 3.1).

Motivation cannot be completely controlled within others. Certainly, without something as severe as harsh punishment, you cannot be motivated to do or believe certain things. Although we can control others' behavior with extreme measures like punishment, we cannot control others' feelings about those behaviors. You may wonder why we, as teachers, should care whether or not students are motivated as long as we obtain the desired behavior. In other words, why think about motivation if we can come up with strategies that *make* children do what we want?

We need to care because we want students to persist and to continue to use what they learn with us. In other words, we want them to do more than learn. We want them to gain dispositions to continue to learn. If students can only learn or use what they learn until the test, are they really learning? If students don't care about what they have learned or are not motivated to continue to learn, are we successful? We need to care because we are dealing with human beings whose lives do not begin when they enter the "real" world after school. We want them to have happy, engaged lives prior to school. Upon entering school, many hours of those lives are spent in classrooms, and they should not be drudgery. We need to care because motivated students will make our classrooms easier, more relaxed learning environments. Teaching motivated students is fun and exciting because such students find learning easier and worthwhile. Finally, we need to care because sometimes we will do everything "right" but still fail to motivate our students. We need to understand motivation well enough to realize that this occurs and then move on.

TABLE 3.1 **Motivation Chart**

What motivates you? Think about deeply motivational and demotivational tasks.

	Highly Motivated and Completed Task	Not Motivated and Completed Task	Not Motivated and Didn't Complete Task
What are the characteristics of the task?			
Are you always motivated or not motivated to complete this particular task? Why?			
When the opposite is true, what things are influential?			
Besides the task, what was motivational?			

The last two chapters discussed, respectively, the students and the classroom environment. This chapter is about you, the teacher, and how you can help your students stay motivated to learn. Helping students stay motivated may be different than you think, however. It is not about giving them rewards or entertaining them in the classroom but rather about understanding what influences motivation and demotivation and then teaching in a way that uses those influences.

By the end of this chapter, I hope you have:

- A deep understanding of why motivation matters as you construct a classroom management plan

- An understanding of how the brain, self-efficacy, attribution, relationships, and tasks and topics influence motivation

- An awareness of demotivational aspects of classrooms

- An awareness of the many tools available to strengthen student motivation

Influences on Motivation

The idea that motivation is connected to academic success is a chicken-and-egg question. Which came first, motivation or academic success? Do the students in our classrooms need motivation to help them find academic success, or does their academic success motivate them to learn? And then, should we as teachers work to improve motivation or academic success? Of course, there are no "right" answers to these questions, but they are worthy of your reflection as you develop a management plan.

You could certainly argue that academic success will more than likely follow motivation. Many times teachers use that argument when they justify using rewards to help children learn. They believe they can jump-start students' motivation, and once the students become more motivated to learn, the rewards can be taken away. You could also argue that students with past academic success are motivated because they have been successful. This argument doesn't give much room for students who struggle in school. Again, we have made the complex concept of motivation too simple for there are endless numbers of influences on motivation. Teachers who are engaging or motivating do not rely on one mechanism for motivation but instead rely on many different mechanisms (Bogner, Raphael, & Pressley, 2002; Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). I have chosen five influences to discuss in this book. Although others may exist, these five—the brain, self-efficacy, attribution, relationships, and curriculum—seem to have great implications for teachers. We cannot control students and their motivation, but in our classrooms we can influence motivation in a positive manner.

The Brain

Recently, there has been an explosion of resources on brain-based learning and teaching (Fogarty, 2001; Jensen, 2005, 2000; Sapolsky, 2004; Sprenger, 1999, 2007). Some believe,

This child is motivated to complete his work with stamping patterns. Why is he motivated?
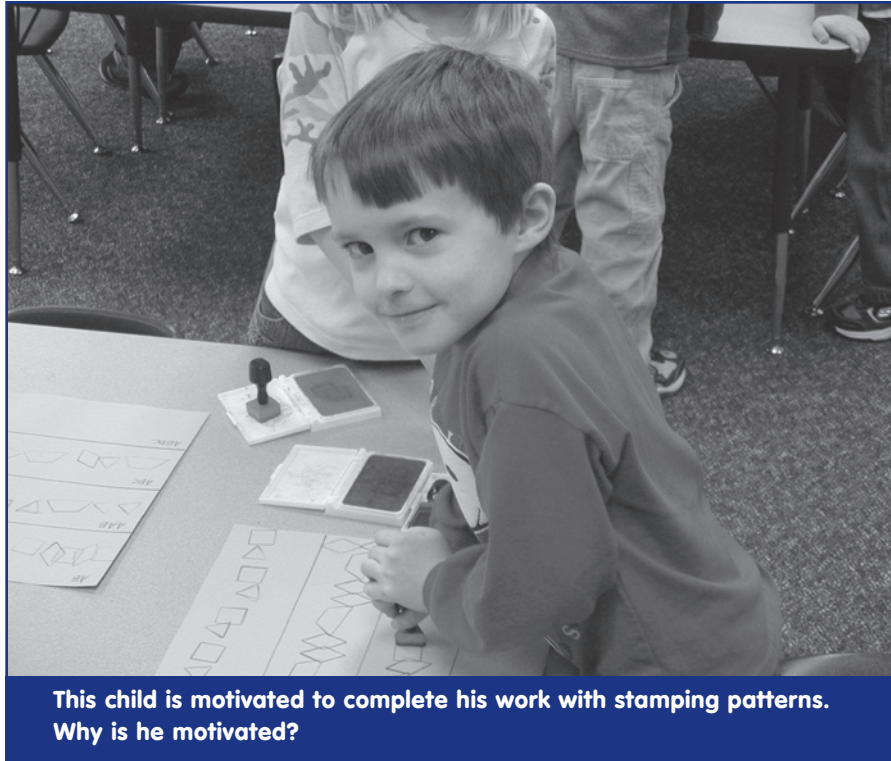
however, that brain research should complement rather than replace traditional educational research (Bruer, 1998; Goswami, 2004). For example, there is a plethora of educational research about young children and their need for manipulatives to help them make sense of mathematics (Kamii, 2000; Labinowicz, 1980), and now that idea has been supported through brain research as well. "Neural areas activated during finger-counting (a developmental strategy for the acquisition of calculation skills) eventually come to partially underpin numerical manipulation skills in adults. If this were the case, then perhaps finger counting has important consequences for the developing brain" (Goswami, 2004, p. 8). Indeed, it is important that, as with any research, we consume brain-based research with caution, however difficult it seems to ignore similar ideas from many different sources.

Much of the brain-based research coming out actually helps us improve classrooms and teaching by enhancing what educational studies have shown for many years. We may not know for sure that all of the brain studies give us "truths" about teaching and learning, but we do know that it sparks changes in how classrooms are designed and how teachers think about teaching and learning. Sprenger (2007) calls this "changing institutions that encourage students to have classroom-compatible brains to institutions that encourage teachers to have brain-compatible classrooms" (p. 5). Brain research helps teachers see the value in making classrooms **child-centered** rather than **teacher-centered**.

Counting on your fingers is a good thing. Why might it be motivational?

How does brain research relate to motivation? In my opinion, *brain-friendly* is synonymous with *motivation*. We don't have very many absolutes in the classroom because children are so different. The large individual differences between brains (Goswami, 2004) make brain research very difficult to generalize. We know, however, that motivated children can accomplish a great deal (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Morgan & Fuchs, 2007; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) and that teachers can influence student motivation by using many of the suggestions that derive from brain research (Jensen, 2005). We may not have bulletproof evidence that the ideas coming from brain research directly help students learn, but brain-based changes in how we manage, design, and implement instruction are, at the least, motivational. Indeed, many ways to motivate students are now supported through brain research (Sprenger, 2007). Let's look at a few examples.

Our brains can be motivated if new ideas and tasks are in the classroom. Neuroscientists have found that novelty appeals to the brain (Carper, 2000). In studies of motivational classrooms, teachers encouraged curiosity and suspense, stimulated appropriate cognitive conflict, and encouraged students to try a wide range of strategies to accomplish tasks (Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). This does not mean

that you must change your entire schedule every day; rather, you should add new topics, ideas, and strategies throughout the school year. Many teachers rely on routines in an effort to make students feel safe; however, some routines can cause boredom and fatigue. Have you ever been in a class where every day you graded the homework, listened and took notes during a lecture, got an assignment, and left? Although repetition is good for the brain when a concept is novel, if a task becomes boring, repetition is no longer effective (Jensen, 2000). You must find ways to have routines but also bring in new ideas and tasks (see Figure 3.1).

FIGURE 3.1   Novelty

Here are some ways to bring newness into a classroom.

Motivating the Brain

Ways to bring newness into the classroom:

- Find interesting problems that go with content you're uncovering in class.
- Make the walls of your classroom look slightly different with new posters or student work, or hang from the ceiling any items that connect with topics you're studying.
- Have students share their ideas in different ways, such as skits, drawings, poetry, and so on.
- Invite speakers to come in and talk about a topic you're studying.
- Invite students to share ideas and items that connect to topics you're studying.
- Rearrange the seating arrangement or classroom.
- "Do unusual experiments." —Gerald Brand, Master Teacher
- "Share cultural and traveling experiences with your students." —Liana Whipking, Master Teacher

Our brains can be motivated if we are physically active in the classroom. Movement has been found to be key in increasing attention, focus, and thinking skills (Jensen, 2005). "Physiologically, movement is essential for learning. It is vital for nerve net development, and adequate development of the heart and lungs. This development is necessary for support of brain function" (Hannaford, 1995, p. 158). Indeed, keeping young children from moving is like asking them not to breathe (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). We have all felt tiredness after sitting for a long period, yet in many classrooms, students sit in desks the entire day. Many school districts have limited physical education and recess to allow more time for academics (Jensen, 2005). While this may seem like a good idea, in reality exercise improves classroom behavior and academic performance (Dwyer, Sallis, Blizzard, Lazarus, & Dean, 2001). Movement and exercise are important for **special-needs students** as well. Children with dyslexia were found to have improvements in dexterity, reading, verbal fluency, and semantic fluency when participating in exercise-based programs (Reynolds, Nicolson, & Hambly, 2003). Teachers often fear they will lose control if students are moving around the room (Sprenger, 2007). Many movements, however, work well in classrooms and can easily be incorporated into a good classroom management plan. Try some of the suggestions in Figure 3.2, as well as within the many resources listed below.

Figure 3.2   Physical Activity

Here are some of the many ways to bring movement into a classroom.

Motivating the Brain

Ways to bring movement into the classroom:

- Do cross-crawl and lateral movement exercises before you begin class (Dennison & Dennison, 1994).

- Have students go on a walk and talk about a problem.

- Have students build a model.

- Have students go on a gallery walk to see others' work.

- Let students choose where they would like to sit, lie, or stand while reading.

- Go on a scavenger hunt to find things around the school that you are studying.

- Put some tape in the hallway so that students can do a "balance beam" on the way to lunch.

- Let students who are having trouble sitting in desks stand at the back of the room on one foot and then switch to the other.

- Get some exercise balls for students to sit on rather than chairs.

- Make sure students have time for recess.

- "We play lots of games—board races, alphabet knockout, sparkle, stand-up/sit-down activities, individual white board activities, vocabulary races using pictures." —Stacy Hagemann, Master Teacher

- "When my kids don't seem to be responding or able to concentrate, I have them stand up, and we do brain-friendly stretches. It really seems to help the students come alive." —Amanda Petersen, Master Teacher

- "We do an 'order of operation' movement activity in math." —Kathie Leach, Master Teacher

- "I have a brain box, and at the beginning of class a student selects an activity from the box. The activities consist of stretches designed to get the blood moving." —Tarah Jansen, Master Teacher

Our brains can be motivated if we have healthy snacks and plenty of water. We have known for a long time that students with poor nutritional habits struggle in school. "Students who come to school hungry, sick or hurt are unlikely to be motivated to seek knowledge and understanding" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 384). Although this is not always the case, some brain research now concurs with this evaluation. "Diet affects the brain. A child whose diet is poor will not be able to respond to excellent teaching in the same way as a child whose brain is well nourished" (Goswami, 2004, p. 2). Water is also a key to students' motivational success. "The brain, the control center for learning, needs energy, oxygen, and water to operate. Electrical transmissions in the nervous system depend on water. This neurological transfer of information through water is important for learning" (Fahey, 2000, p. 60). We cannot go into the homes of our students and feed them, but we can provide healthy snacks and water throughout the day.

Allowing water bottles in the classroom is one way to give students the opportunity to drink enough water throughout the day.

Even though water and healthy snacks can improve students' experiences in classrooms and in learning, some critics believe they disrupt learning and management. Teachers do not want children eating and drinking in the classroom because of the mess and distractions they may cause. Instead of completely ruling out snacks and drinks, however, think outside the box (see Figure 3.3). How can you integrate snacks into your routine? What jobs could you assign students with regard to snacks and drinks that would help keep the room mess-free? What kind of water bottles or containers would be appropriate and easy? One teacher I know grew tired of having water tip over onto papers. Instead of banning water, she collected half-gallon milk jugs, cut the bottoms off of them, and attached the handles to the back of students' chairs. These milk jugs became water bottle holders and helped solve her water problems. Important for learning, water and healthy snacks shouldn't be used as rewards or punishments, and they should be welcomed rather than tossed. Your students will feel better, and we all know people who feel better learn better, behave more appropriately, and love coming to school.

Our brains can be motivated if we have time to make connections and reflect about learning. Learning connections require time and maintenance. "The brain has several systems and structures, such as the hippocampus that actually inhibit higher speeds of processing" (Jensen, 2005, p. 42). In other words, we cannot continue to pretend that we can stuff a large amount of learning into children's heads and make it stick. Students need sense-making time—time to

Figure 3.3   Diet and Water

Here are some ways to bring a healthful diet and water into a classroom.

Motivating the Brain

Ways to bring healthy snacks and water into the classroom:

- First, make sure you know if children in your class or the school have allergies.
- Snacks don't have to be a whole bunch of food. A few pretzels, carrots, or raisins will do.
- Ask parents to take turns supplying snacks.
- Purchase ingredients for snacks, and make them with students.
- Ask local stores to provide snacks.
- Have individual students bring their own snacks.
- Make snack time when students are reading or writing.
- Let students get a drink of water whenever they need one.
- Let students bring water bottles.
- Have water breaks throughout the day.
- Make water containers out of milk jugs and attach them to each student's chair so that water stays off of desks.
- "I organize a snack schedule for my classroom with nutritional snacks for the month." —Nadine Poulos, Master Teacher
- "Food and drink are OK in my classroom as long as they don't disrupt anyone." —Doug Smith, Master Teacher

---

grapple with ideas and play with productive wrong answers. Eleanor Duckworth (1996) advises, "As teachers, I think one major role is to undo rapid assumptions of understanding, to slow down closure, in the interests of breadth and depth, which attach our knowledge to the world in which we are called upon to use it" (p. 78). To help students truly understand something, to appreciate their wonderful ideas, and to help them love learning, we must get past this notion that the right answer is the only good answer. Our brains don't construct such knowledge.

We seem to understand that concept for adult learners and our youngest learners, but we still expect children in school to learn without time or productive mistakes. Consider that for a minute. Do you think someone will be able to tell you how to parent? Someone who has done it before might be able to give you advice or reassure you, but he or she certainly can't give you the "right answers." Babies are given time and plenty of opportunities to learn to walk, talk, sit up, and eat. It's funny to think about a baby eating correctly the first time. My 18-month-old son goes up and down the stairs and ramps, and I can see him trying new things and working on balance. He knows to do this without any coaching from me. Every once in a while, he needs me to hold his hand or pick him up, but mostly he swats my helping hand away. This is the same kind of time we must give our students (see Figure 3.4). They need to work with numbers over and over again in different ways; to read and reread interesting books, act them out, and draw pictures about them; and to experiment with rocks, water, microscopes, and light bulbs. They may never get the right answer, but they will get a great base on which to build knowledge and motivation to continue to learn.

Figure 3.4   **Reflection**

Here are some ways to help students slow learning so they can retain it.

Motivating the Brain

Ways to slow learning in the classroom:

- Take all of your objectives and fit them into several themes. This way, you are not only doing all of the objectives but also connecting them.

- Think-pair-share throughout the day. Ask a question, ask your students to think about it or even write an answer down on paper, and then ask each student to share his or her answer with someone near them (or far from them if you want some movement too). Then ask your students to share their ideas with the whole class.

- Take time to make connections with unique assessment tools like concept maps, plays, body models, drawings, and so on.

- "I have students talk to each other about what they learned." —Brian Johnson, Master Teacher

---

Our brains can be motivated if we are in an appropriate emotional state. We talked earlier about the importance of movement and physical activity to get brains going. Sometimes, though, students get so wound up or are under so much stress that instead of getting brains going, we need to calm them down. For example, after children come in from recess, it can be difficult to get them ready to learn again. Just as you can use exercise and movement to reinvigorate tired brains, you can use music, lighting, and brain tools to help get children into an optimum state for learning (Swanson, 2007). See Figure 3.5 for ideas.

Our emotions greatly influence learning. "Emotional states run our lives, including how we think, feel, remember, act, and dream" (Jensen, 2005, p. 77). One emotion, stress, seems critical for optimum learning. Occasional or moderate stress is, for the most part, a healthy state. A brief period of stress enhances memory (Jensen, 2005). For example, you might remember a time in school when you were more moderately stressed than on most days. High stress, however, is not good for learning; it has been shown to kill brain cells (Sapolsky, 2004) and keep students from participating fully in class. "If the classroom is a fearful, unpredictable place and students seldom know where they stand, they are likely to be more concerned with security and less with learning" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 384). Fear and stress are demotivators, and punishment and public reprimand negatively affect students' academic motivation (Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003).

In addition, outside events that trigger emotions can influence motivation. If students are aware of disrespect toward culture or ethnicity, they can become demotivated (Jensen, 2005). Students' home lives, their friendships, and incidental events can all tip motivation into demotivation. "You never know what happens in the hallways. At the start of class, students could still be reeling from an insult, a breakup with a close friend, a fight, or the loss of something valuable" (Jensen, 2005, p. 111).

You will not be able to—nor do you want to—keep emotions out of your classroom. Lack of emotion is just as bad as uncontrolled emotion. Instead, work to avoid both

extremes. Just as we've seen with stress, moderate amounts of any emotion can enhance learning (Jensen, 2005). Teachers must provide students with the tools to control their emotions. Children, if taught, can learn how to self-regulate their own emotions using these tools. It is important that they know when and how they can help themselves become better learners.

For material related to this concept, go to Clip 3.2 on the Web-based Student Study Site.

Current brain research, though valuable as you plan strategies for classroom management, is not a cure-all that will make children perfect angels who gobble up knowledge each day. Instead, the little bit of brain research cited here and the multitude of research to come is another piece of the puzzle helping you be the best teacher possible. Brain research and the implications that stem from it require some action research on your part as well. Make it your mission to plan, try, reflect, and revise as you go. Making your room brain-friendly and motivational is not difficult. It only requires that you think about what makes learning easy. It's not hard to believe that being comfortable, having a drink of water, having time to think, and being able to get up now and then will enhance learning. Perhaps the Golden Rule applies here: Treat your students as you would want them to treat you.

Figure 3.5 Emotions

Here are some ways to help children deal with emotions in the classroom.

- In addition to oxygen demand, slow, deep breathing has been said to release tension in muscles, which is very useful for relaxation and stress reduction (Hannaford, 1995).

- Get some stuffed animals and remove their stuffing. Replace the stuffing with beans or sand and sew the animals back up. You can also put beans or sand in gloves and sew them up. These are called heavy hands, and when children are feeling stressed, put them on their shoulders or their heads. Try it; it feels great.

- If you don't have stuffed animals or gloves, just putting your hands on children's shoulders can help.

- When children come in for recess, have them put their heads on their desks and dim the lights. This is not to punish them but instead to help the pressure points in their brains calm down.

- Make some discovery bottles, and let children put them at their desks when they need to.

- Make or buy some brain tubes, and let children put them at their desks when they need to.

- Turn on music that is 60 beats per minute.

- When you need children's attention, say and have them say, "Shh, shh, shh" while bringing your arms down (like an airplane) and crossing them over your chest.

- "I have a box of brain toys in my room including stress balls, glitter wands, Legos, and other hand manipulatives that the students are welcome and encouraged to play with during class." —Tarah Jansen, Master Teacher

- "Early on I let the students know they can trust me and I will listen to them without judgment. I try to be their sounding board in private and keep our talks confidential." —Vicki Brabec, Master Teacher

LETTER FROM A MASTER TEACHER **3.1**

Using Brain-Based Strategies in the Classroom

I decided to become a teacher because I wanted to be a positive, encouraging influence on children while they were learning and growing. As soon as I found out I was going to be an "official" teacher of students in the first grade, I called everyone who would listen to tell them my good news, and then I went shopping! I knew that one of the keys to unlocking children's brains and opening the doors to learning was to surround them with an enriched environment that allows them to be engaged in every "sense" of the word.

For my students to grow and mature socially, emotionally, and academically, I knew that they needed to be surrounded by a secure, nurturing, caring, and stimulating environment. I felt it was very important to provide an atmosphere that was not only safe but also supportive of each of my students' beliefs and ideas. My students needed to feel they were a part of something big and that they were more than just a number or a body in a chair. They also needed an environment optimal for learning, an environment that engaged all the senses. I incorporated some brain-based strategies into my teaching by creating a "Brain-Friendly" classroom with brain tools that included Brain Gym exercises (Dennison & Dennison, 1994). After I incorporated brain tools into the classroom, my students discovered that there were tools to not only help them focus and concentrate but also help them handle their own fears and anxieties.

A student could choose to use a squish ball to help him or her think, or a student could choose to perform a few Brain Gym exercises as a way to help release his or her feelings of stress, nervousness, frustration, or anxiety. When my students started to realize the benefits of performing the Brain Gym exercises, their enthusiasm soared, and then I could be their coach and their number-one fan.

Because my students were in an environment that was positive physically, socially, and emotionally, they could allow themselves to feel secure enough to enjoy and celebrate learning. The enthusiasm and excitement that came from my students showed me that they were motivated. They not only enjoyed learning; they celebrated it. I will continue to incorporate brain-based activities into my classroom for future years to come. I highly recommend that you incorporate brain-based activities into your classroom to enhance the environment of your students. For teachers who wish to discover an exceptional way for their students to learn, engage the senses; it just makes sense!

—Julie Duff
First-Grade Teacher

Self-Efficacy

If you think about it, there are probably tasks and topics that you like to study and some that you would be willing to trade for going to the dentist. I like to read and study educational **pedagogy** (methods of teaching), and I like to garden and snow ski. I would rather go to the dentist every day for a month, however, than take a chemistry class. List the tasks or topics that you like or are motivated to do on most days, and list some you really hate to do. How do they compare? One common thread might be whether or not you feel successful doing the task. I, for example, can't do chemistry, don't understand chemistry, feel stupid when someone asks me about it, and actually don't even really care that I don't know it; in other words, I do not have **self-efficacy** within the chemistry field. (Luckily, others in this world love and understand chemistry. Diversity is good.)

Self-efficacy describes people's judgment about how well they feel they will perform on a task—that is, whether they perceive themselves as capable or incapable (Bandura, 1977, 1993). Self-efficacy is different from self-esteem in that it is task-specific (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). I can be efficacious about gardening and not about chemistry but continue to have high or low self-esteem.

Self-efficacy is an important construct for you as a teacher because it affects motivation and, in turn, student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Seifert, 2004). Students with high efficacy are more likely to be self-regulating, strategic, and able to engage in difficult or challenging tasks while students with low efficacy avoid challenging tasks (Bandura, 1993; Dweck, 1986; Schunk, 1984). High self-efficacy is positively related to higher levels of achievement and effort and increased persistence (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). For example, because I have high efficacy in gardening, I often spend a great deal of time in the garden and won't give up if a plant or two dies.

On the other hand, if one does not feel efficacious about a topic or task, he or she may exhibit behaviors that signal motivational issues. "If students perceive themselves incapable of performing well (low self-efficacy), they may become motivated to protect perceptions of competency, for if they can convince themselves and others they could do well, they will be able to maintain some sense of worth or dignity" (Seifert, 2004, p. 144). In other words, if a student feels he or she will do well on a task, he or she may not study or try to do his or her best. When students don't give much effort to a task, it is easy to explain poor performance. Students would rather not work and feel guilty than work hard and fail, which may cause them shame (Covington, 1984; Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001).

Feelings of efficacy need to be at or a little above actual skills (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). If a student's efficacy is too high relative to his or her actual abilities, he or she may take on tasks that are too difficult and struggle until feelings of efficacy deteriorate. I feel good about my gardening skills in my backyard, but I could not write a gardening book and would not want an expert to inspect my handiwork.

Stop reading for a minute and reflect on one of the topics you listed as something you are least efficacious about doing. How could a teacher help you feel efficacious about that topic or task at an appropriate level? How could a teacher help me feel efficacious about chemistry?

"In terms of instructional implications, self-efficacy is best facilitated by providing opportunities for students to succeed on tasks within their range of competence and through these experiences actually develop new capabilities and skills" (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 316). To feel efficacious about chemistry, I would need to relearn it in a way that is within my range of competence. In my case, that would mean making chemistry more concrete because I have trouble visualizing something that abstract. I would also need opportunities to step to harder concepts incrementally as I understood them. In other words, chemistry would need to be scaffolded, which might mean breaking it down into simpler steps or building onto what I already know. I would need to find and build from the point where I understand chemistry, and I would need someone I trust to help me make sense of it. I would need this person not to tell me what he or she knows but rather to find ways to help me understand. "For their part, teachers must find ways to understand students' viewpoints, propose alternative frameworks, stimulate perplexity among students, and develop classroom tasks that promote efforts at knowledge construction" (Glasson & Lalik, 1993, p. 188). Opportunities to work with others and share ideas promote efficacy as well (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002).

Lev Vygotsky (Bee & Boyd, 2007) referred to this "range of competence" as the **zone of proximal development (ZPD)**. Vygotsky believed that this optimal zone for learning was unique for every individual. "Each child, in any domain, has an actual developmental level and a potential for development within the domain. The difference between the two levels is what Vygotsky termed the zone of proximal development" (Hausfather, 1996, p. 3). Learning takes place within the ZPD because the material is challenging yet attainable. "It is important that educators calibrate tasks and assessments so that success is attainable" (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 316). Vygotsky believed that to operate successfully in the ZPD, learners need to interact socially with peers who have a greater understanding of the subject (Hausfather, 1996).

Teaching within this "range of competence," or ZPD, means knowing what students already understand, helping them by scaffolding onto what they already know, and providing support through peers and the teacher. Students can develop self-efficacy both by learning and by supporting others.

Attribution

Researchers have found that motivation declines as students get into higher grades (Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, & Blumenfeld, 1993; Gambrell, Codling, & Palmer, 1996; McKenna, Ellsworth, & Kear, 1995). This may be because children begin to show differences in abilities and place more emphasis on competition in upper grades (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Students begin to understand that others may have higher abilities in certain areas than they do. A key to influencing motivation is how you, as a teacher, deal with those realizations.

If students begin to think that they don't have the ability to succeed at a task, they may decide not to try. For example, I ran in track and wanted to run the sprints, the short, fast races. My friend Soni, who also ran the sprints, was much quicker than I was, and I distinctly remember telling her that I would never be able to run as fast as she could, that my body just wasn't made for running sprints. A kind friend, she tried to encourage me, explaining that

if I just tried harder, I would be able to run faster. I, however, attributed my failure in track to my ability rather than my effort or strategy. I continued to run track but without much motivation to improve. **Attribution** theory suggests that when a failure or success occurs, students analyze the situation to determine its perceived causes (Weiner, 1985). This theory is important to motivation and you as a teacher, because if students believe that they can never improve at a task or that their innate ability keeps them from obtaining a goal, they won't be motivated to continue (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). My niece, a fourth-grader, has already decided that she isn't good at math. Many teachers with whom I work, having decided that they can't teach science, don't. What are the implications for my niece? What are the implications for the students in classrooms where teachers don't teach science?

If we want to motivate students, we need to help them understand that ability is only one factor in successful learning. "Students need real evidence that effort will pay off, that setting a higher goal will not lead to failure, that they can improve, and that abilities can be changed" (Woolfolk, 1998, p. 395). Some researchers recommend that teachers promote **effortful strategy** use rather than merely effort (Carr, Borkowski, & Maxwell, 1991; Licht, 1983). Effort alone will not help many students succeed, and all students need strategies for learning and success. I have a problem with losing keys—OK, my husband would call it a disease, and he might add my cell phone, my planner, my purse, and so on. At any rate, effort alone is not going to help me with my issue. I can try really hard not to lose my keys, but I really need a strategy to help me, just like a struggling student would. Simply telling your students to try harder is not good enough. You must help them gain strategies for future success (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002).

Try not to think of strategies as giving students the answers or "tricks" for performing pseudowell. There is a difference between helping students become competent with strategies and helping them pass tests. Instead, strategies need to be tools students can use to think, plan, reflect, and comprehend. For example, if students don't believe they can do mathematics, I might help them develop the strategy of drawing a picture of the math problem. If students are struggling with reading, I might give them a bookmark that helps them remember what to do if they can't figure out a word: Sound it out, look at the picture, replace it with a word that makes sense, and so on. Many students who are successful in school already use these strategies automatically. By the way, strategy use isn't good just for motivation but for learning as well.

Teachers also can help set **mastery goals** for students who attribute success to ability. "Mastery goals orient learners to developing new skills, trying to understand their work, improving their level of competence, or achieving a sense of mastery based on self-referenced standards" (Ames, 1992, p. 262). In contrast, **performance goals** are more competitive and encourage students to focus on their ability by outperforming others in achievements or grades (Ames). Mastery goals have been shown to help students become self-regulating and self-determining and to foster cognitive development (Seifert, 1997). "When students are focused on trying to learn and understand the material and trying to improve their performance relative to their own past performance, this orientation will help them maintain their self-efficacy in the face of failure, ward off negative affect such as anxiety, lessen the probability that they will have distracting thoughts, and free up cognitive capacity" (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 321).

On the other hand, performance goals can be demotivational. Students pursuing performance goals, or goals measured in relationship to other students' performances, are likely to believe that their ability caused their success or failure and that intelligence is a fixed entity, to view difficulty as failure, and to engage in less sophisticated strategy use. Such students make more negative self-statements and attribute success to uncontrollable factors (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nolen, 1988; Seifert, 1995).

Ames (1992) recommends teachers create lessons that engage students in hands-on, applied activities and help them see how what they learn in school relates to things outside of school. In addition, teachers should use a variety of tasks and allow students to choose among them to keep social comparison to a minimum. Teachers can also promote mastery goals by developing opportunities for autonomy and belonging (Ames).

Teachers' reactions to students can also influence attributions. For example, if a teacher pities a student who does poorly, he or she may attribute the failure to low ability (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). You can help students feel they can improve by reacting in a way that suggests this and by giving them feedback and strategies to do well (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

The kinds of assessments you use also influence attribution and thus motivation (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002). Rather than focusing on students achieving absolute standards, focus on individual progress (Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). It is important to note here the connections between attribution and assessment. To do so, let's look at assessment versus evaluation and progress versus growth (Lockett, 2006).

According to the *Merriam Webster New Collegiate Dictionary*, the Latin root of the word *assess* is *assidere,* meaning "to sit beside, to sit alongside a judge." Although it may be difficult to distinguish assessment from evaluation, this root helps. **Assessment** means to *work beside* students, facilitate their learning, and plan the next step in the learning process—that is, to tell them what is right, what is wrong, and how to fix it (Lockett, personal communication, February 10, 2008). In contrast, to evaluate means to *judge* how well a student (teacher, school, or school system) performs relative to a standard or to others' performance. Nancy Lockett distinguishes between assessment and evaluation with a metaphor comparing assessment to being a coach and evaluation to being a referee. A coach watches and then helps players improve by giving them strategies, things to work on, and so on. A referee just tells players how well they did in the game and doesn't give suggestions or help them improve. We can't give students a grade (evaluation) and expect it to motivate them. We can, however, tell them what is right and wrong and give them strategies to fix it (assessment), which will allow them to get better. In other words, we need to do a lot more assessing and a lot less evaluating.

Lockett (personal communication, February 10, 2008) also believes that teachers need to understand the difference between progress—how well a student did in comparison to others in the class—and growth—how well a student did in comparison to his or her past work. For example, if a student gets a C grade, that tells us something about how he or she did in comparison to his or her classmates. If the student got an F on a previous test, however, he or she has grown tremendously. Motivating students requires measuring and celebrating both progress and growth.

Relationships

Perhaps one of the most important things we can do as teachers to help students enjoy school and become motivated to learn is to create relationships with them. Strong evidence suggests teacher-student relationships influence students' social and intellectual development from preschool to high school (Davis, 2003). The quality of relationships between teachers and students also influences learning problems, retention (Pianta & Steinberg, 1992), competence with peers, tolerance of frustration, academic and social skills (Pianta & Steinberg, 1992), concept development (Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997), and behavior problems (Marachi, Friedel, & Midgley, 2001).

I bet you can name a teacher who made you feel good about yourself and believed in what you had to say. As an undergraduate student, I had a teacher who thought I would be the best elementary teacher in the world. In fact, *every* student who took his classes believed he or she would be the best elementary teacher in the world. The relationship this teacher formed with me and probably hundreds of others motivated us to be the best teachers we could be. He believed in us, and we believed in him.

Relationships with students don't have to be mushy or stringy. In other words, you don't have to buy students things, tell them they are great, or try to be their friends. You don't have to see them outside of school or stay in contact with them forever, but you should let them know that they are worthy, truly believe that they matter, and be willing to support them on their journey of learning.

I once asked a group of 50 experienced teachers of all levels and subjects to name one tool they use to help manage their classroom. Most of the teachers named behavior charts, stoplight cards turned from green to yellow to red with poor behavior, and referral cards to go to the office. A usually quiet teacher named Karla spoke up after a while and said, "I ask them what is wrong and wonder how I can help them"—a powerful statement from a special education teacher who probably deals with more behavior problems than most. Karla's students know they can count on her and that she cares. In turn, they work hard and do their very best. "Teachers who are perceived as being nurturing, supportive, and helpful will be developing in students a sense of confidence and self-determination which will be translated into the learning-oriented behaviors of the intrinsically motivated student" (Seifert, 2004, p. 148.). Teacher-student relationship is a critical factor in fostering a sense of competence and autonomy (Seifert & O'Keefe, 2001).

Although positive relationships sometimes keep problems from occurring, they are not the answer to every problem. There is a difference between having a relationship with students and using relationships to get them to do what we want. I am reminded of teachers who talk to children in sugary-sweet voices but who say things that are really coercive. "I like the way Ryan is sitting so quietly," even in a sweet voice, may motivate some students to sit quietly, but it makes Ryan into a goody-goody and doesn't address the problem. We don't want a group of children who are motivated to learn because they like the teacher. We want children who are motivated to learn because they are interested in the topic, have the tools to be competent, and realize the importance of learning. One seventh-grade teacher told me he

Miss Laura takes the time to let Tyler share his project with her.

puts a question on the board that students work on as they come into his room each day. He came to me frustrated because on a particular day he had stepped out of the room for a moment to talk to a parent and, when he came back to the room, many of the children were not doing the question and instead were "messing around." He told me how he doesn't have any trouble with them usually, but he couldn't believe how awful they were being that day. I am guessing that this teacher and his students have a relationship where they do things to please him rather than because they believe they are important or worthwhile. I wonder if he ever spoke with them about the questions he poses at the beginning of class, genuinely listened to why they were having a problem answering them, and discussed with them how it could be solved.

While we don't necessarily want students to do things to please us, relationships certainly create opportunities to work out problems rather than sweep them under the rug. A third-grade teacher, Christine, had a student who threw a fit after math one day. Instead of sending him to the office or assigning him time out, she sent the rest of the children to music and let him calm down for a bit. Then she walked by and asked him if he would like a juice box. He said yes. Christine let him drink the juice box for a while and then asked him why he was so upset. The child told her he didn't understand the math, and together they

came up with ideas about asking for help and how she could help him. The simple gesture of asking him if he would like a juice box was compassionate, created a trusting relationship, and helped the student find other ways to get help. Strachota (1996) calls this "allying with children" (p. 30).

This is the part where you wonder how the student in the story above could possibly be motivated to do math or behave appropriately with the thought of extra teacher time and a juice box after throwing a fit. You might think the child should have been punished, ignored, or given a logical consequence (like having to stay after school to get math done) so he wouldn't ever want to throw a fit again. As you wonder about ideas like this, reflect on what you believe about the nature of children in general. "We need to be on the lookout for profoundly negative theories about the motives and capabilities of children, which frequently animate discussions about classroom management" (Kohn, 1996, p. 2). Is the child just inherently bad? Was he trying to get something? Probably not. Children inherently want to do well, to be kind to others, and to be generous. When they are not, they may be unaware of the effects of their actions or unable to act otherwise (Kohn). Remember that self-efficacy and self-worth are important constructs in motivation. Instead of teaching the child that he is bad or that you don't care whether or not he understands math, why not give him time to calm down, let him know you have had a similar experience and that throwing a fit isn't a good way to solve problems, and work together with him to find a solution? Children want to do a good job in school both academically and socially. We need to help them do so by listening rather than telling, understanding rather than judging, and being a part of the solution rather than denying there is an underlying problem. Isn't that how the best relationships are created?

Relationships cannot be created when there is fear. "The simple truth is that most classrooms today are managed by one thing and one thing only: fear. The teacher is afraid: afraid of looking bad, of not being liked, of not being listened to, of losing control. The students are even more afraid: afraid of being scolded and humiliated, of looking foolish in front of peers, of getting bad grades, of facing their parents' wrath" (Esquith, 2007, p. 5). Although fear may get children to do what you want, it will not help them learn, help you learn, or get them to do what they need to do when you're not there. If we form relationships so children can be good human beings and not just good students, we must help them understand productive, positive relationships rather than relationships of power and fear.

Finally, it is important to form relationships with parents as well. Researchers have found that teachers who make contact with parents have highly motivated students, especially if those parents are invited into the school as volunteers (Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). Just as you need to build relationships with students, you also need to let their parents know that they are important in your classroom. This means having an open-door policy at all times, asking parents to volunteer whenever they can, and regularly providing notes, newsletters, e-mails, and so on, about what you are doing in class. A cooperating teacher of mine once told me it was important to stop and talk to parents wherever you are and wonder how they are doing. I agree.

LETTER FROM A MASTER TEACHER 3.2

Building Relationships With Students

Ours is the most important profession in the world, because from the fruits of our labor come all other professions. Moreover, we influence how people relate to others and solve problems. We have the capacity to evince great changes in people. We can help create an avid love of learning, an intense fear of failure, or absolute apathy.

Motivating students is possible only if we understand them and truly care about them as fellow human beings. In other words, we must start by building relationships with them. How? Treat each student as if he or she is your favorite. Greet your students every day with a welcoming smile, whether you feel like it or not. Laugh with them. Give them choices. Respect them and show and mean it. Tell them you're proud of them when they show progress, creativity, tenacity, and empathy for others. Help them when they feel discouraged. Listen to them. Play with them. Let them explore. Be patient with them. Be brave enough to gently guide them into finding their own answers to their questions. Know when to hold back. Let them ask, "Why are we doing this?" Help them see purpose in all they do. Tell them you're thankful for them. Promise them you will always do your best for them. Tell them you expect the same. Remember they are strong but unbelievably fragile. Promise them a safe environment free of threat or ridicule. Let them experience the sheer joy of learning. Ask for their ideas. Tell them you expect to learn from them as well. Ask them how you can help. Tell them about yourself. Ask them about their likes, dislikes, dreams, and fears. Never lie to them because once they find out, they'll never fully trust you again. Trust them. Let the classroom be their home away from home. Consider what makes a home, and include all of those elements still practical for a classroom that you possibly can for the children who so openly trust and depend on you to guide them in their pursuit of knowledge. Create a room rich with color, music, plants, good smells, and inspirational quotations. Provide comfortable places to sit and read, think, reflect, and collaborate with their peers. Commemorate your journey with them, and memorialize even the small moments with pictures.

I wish you much happiness as you continue on this profound journey with the hundreds of children whose lives you'll touch. Use your heart in making decisions that will affect them, and hold what's best for your students above all else. May you hold on tight when challenges arise, and may you touch the heart of every child you meet in some small way. The world needs you. Thank you for making education your vocation.

—Mary K. Trehearn
Ninth-Grade English Teacher

Tasks and Topics

For material related to this concept, go to Clip 3.3 on the Web-based Student Study Site.

The tasks we ask students to do and the topics we ask them to learn about influence motivation. "It is not difficult to see how learning flourishes where there is interest, confidence, and understanding and how it withers under boredom, trepidation, and confusion" (Smith, 1998, p. 85). Unfortunately, motivation usually rests with the child who doesn't do what he or she is asked and never with what he or she has been asked to do (Kohn, 1996). To help motivate students, then, we need to be mindful of the tasks and topics we ask them to do. I once observed a student teacher who had first-graders sit on the floor for more than 45 minutes while she read and reread an inappropriately difficult book. Supposedly learning vocabulary, many of them started to get restless, others started playing with materials around them, and several sat patiently with glazed looks in their eyes. As things started to get out of control, instead of considering the task, the teacher gave out tokens (to spend at a class store) to those who were sitting still "listening." All the children shaped right up in a matter of seconds but quickly resorted to keeping their minds and bodies occupied after a while. What did these children learn that day? Some learned they are unworthy of tokens because their way of keeping their minds and bodies active isn't as appropriate as staring into space quietly. Some learned that being a good person is about mindlessly doing whatever the teacher says. None learned that reading is exciting and fun or that vocabulary comes from many different places and can help tell stories. My student teacher learned the importance of planning meaningful tasks rather than planning how to control children. I learned that tasks, topics, and their level of difficulty matter.

As teachers, we should work to motivate children by manipulating the tasks and not the children themselves. "It is a great irony that in any discussion of motivation, the one factor that is almost universally overlooked is student interest" (Clark, 1997, p. 41). Manipulating tasks and topics means taking an objective and fleshing out all of the possible topics that will help students meet the objective, creating opportunities for choice in the classroom, and scaffolding content so it connects to students' prior experiences. Wiggins and McTighe (2005) agree, saying, "Motivation is increased when the work is of obvious value, has intrinsic interest, and provides transfer" (p. 206).

Jesse Keifer

When students are interested in the topics they are studying, they have fun in the classroom.

In this day and age of standards and teaching so that every child is on the same page at the same time, it may seem difficult to manipulate tasks to keep students interested and motivated. Many argue that teachers who teach the same thing as their counterparts in other schools help students who transfer schools regularly. That solution, however, seems only to mask a bigger problem and at the same time prevents all students from being interested and engaged in learning. No matter how hard we try to keep students the same, they will always be unique, and I am glad about that. Our classrooms should support rather than squelch that uniqueness. How can we use objectives to help us construct meaningful tasks and topics?

First, we need broad rather than narrow objectives. For example, if our goal is to help all students learn about life cycles, many different tasks and topics can help them, but if our goal is to help all students learn about the life cycles of mealworms, we cannot integrate as many interests. Does it matter if students learn about life cycles of frogs, insects, cats, or humans? Is the conversation in a classroom not richer if many life cycles are studied and compared? Smith (1998) tells us, "Learning is most effective when we voluntarily participate in an interesting activity" (p. 84). If our objectives are broad, students will be able to find something that interests them and everyone will be exposed to the objective. It is your job as a teacher to do the "behind the scenes" work of determining all the different topics that might fit under an objective, which ones would work best for students, and how they fit together. In my district, we had to teach life cycles, and if I had used the textbook, students would only have learned about life cycles through insects. One year, however, a couple of my students were extremely interested in frogs. So I ordered some frog eggs to go along with our life cycle unit on insects. Were the children motivated? Yes. Did they have a broader understanding of life cycles? Yes. Did they have behavior issues? No.

Second, students need to have choices within the broad objective, in how they learn the objective, and in how they demonstrate what they know about the objective. Choice is a huge motivator as well as a deterrent for inappropriate behaviors. Cordova and Lepper (1996) found that choice produced dramatic increases in students' depth of engagement in learning, how much they learned, and perceived levels of competence. A study by Powell and Nelson (1997) indicates that choice may help teachers manage behavior in general education classrooms and reduce undesirable behavior. Jolivette, Wehby, Canale, and Massey (2001) found that opportunities to make choices can positively influence behavior of students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Third, students need content that builds off of their prior experiences. My sister, a molecular biologist, once had me read a paper that she wrote. I was motivated to read it because I have a great relationship with her and wanted to provide some good feedback. I am somewhat efficacious about biology, although not at that level. It was a meaningful task; I had enough water, and so on. In other words, my motivation was influenced positively in many ways. I started to read the paper but then found myself thinking about something else—not because it was boring or repetitive but because I couldn't understand it. I didn't have the language to read it. In fact, I found myself looking for a sentence that I *could* read. Finally, after a little while of struggling, I found myself unmotivated to continue. With every motivational

construct in place but prior experience with the topic, I became unmotivated. How often do we do this to children? We give them a topic that they have no experience with and expect them to stick with it until they get it. It would not have mattered if someone had given me a reward for reading the paper; nor would it have mattered if I was kept in for recess. I still wouldn't have been motivated to read the paper. Understanding that paper would have taken me forever, even with a biology dictionary. We must start our tasks and topics where students have experience, or keeping them motivated will prove very difficult.

Content can be too easy at times as well. Students may avoid classroom activities if they see no reason for them. They may find little challenge, stimulation, satisfaction, or meaning in the work, so they just do the minimum to get by (Seifert, 2004). If a student knows how to do something or knows a topic well, it may be difficult to keep him or her motivated. I often feel unmotivated to play trains with my sons. I love them, but choo-chooing for hours gets really old. It's OK if I get to help build the track because figuring out how to make tunnels and bridges is a puzzle that keeps my mind engaged. We need to do the same in classrooms. Students must have opportunities to stretch their brains.

Finally, we should use many kinds of materials to motivate students in the classroom (Dolezal, Mohan Welsh, Pressley, & Vincent, 2003). Technology, games, manipulatives, and music all help motivate students. Teachers often save these materials as a way to motivate students to do not-so-engaging things. For example, a teacher might say that after students get their worksheets done, they can have 10 minutes to work on the computers. Why not have them use the computers to learn the task on the worksheet? Traci, a master teacher I know, studied special-needs students and technology. She had them do graphs on paper and then showed them how to do it on the computer. Motivated because of the tool they were using, the students loved it and continued to make graphs on the computer all the time. Technology, games, manipulatives, music, and many other tools are good for motivation because they help children understand in engaging ways.

Demotivational Influences

Just as teachers need to be aware of influences that positively affect motivation, they also need to be aware of influences that negatively affect motivation. Almost all of the influences listed above have demotivational opposites. For example, fear, mindless tasks, performance goals, and low self-efficacy all influence motivation negatively. These influences hinder rather than help students in classrooms.

Why think about demotivators? Interestingly, many demotivators look like motivators if framed in different ways. For example, you may believe that fear is a motivator because it gets students to do what you want. This is similar to performance goals. Many teachers believe that comparing children or schools is motivational because it makes tasks competitive. I cannot argue with these statements, but I can argue that many practices used to motivate students and people in general only work for a brief period, require direct supervision, and do not promote learning. In other words, demotivators shape behaviors but not long-term dispositions. Let's look at one example more closely: rewards.

Rewards are demotivators (Jensen, 2005; Kohn, 1993). Although rewards have traditionally been touted as motivators, in reality they merely get children to comply or motivate them to get more rewards. Because the brain requires novelty, students given rewards will need and want an increasingly higher level of reward each time (Jensen). Children who frequently get rewards tend to be less generous than their peers (Fabes, Fultz, Eisenberg, May-Plumlee, & Christopher, 1989; Grusec, 1991), don't perform as well as their peers, tend to lose interest in tasks, and often choose the easiest possible tasks (Kohn). Internally motivated students develop increased persistence, engagement, and academic achievement (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

Teachers use rewards (i.e., stars, stickers, extra time at recess, the opportunity to do a special project) for many reasons, and I hope you will consider why you would use them. I believe that many teachers use rewards because they fear the unknown. They wonder how they would get children to do what they want without rewards. Hopefully this chapter has given you some ideas about how to motivate children without using rewards and in ways that promote learning dispositions. Some teachers have only experienced motivation through rewards, which are commonplace in schools everywhere. I am asking you to try something new and to try again if at first it doesn't work exactly as planned. It will be worth it. Other teachers believe that there is no harm in using rewards. If you are one of them, I encourage you to gather some research on rewards and see for yourself.

As you probably guess, I didn't give rewards when I taught elementary school. I did, however, celebrate both individual and class accomplishments. What's the difference? Celebrations are not meant to be coercive. I didn't tell the students that we would have a pizza party if they all read a certain number of books. They read books because they got to choose the books they were interested in reading, to make cool projects to go with their books, and to share their books with friends. I didn't announce some children's names over the intercom because they were "good" in my eyes. I did, however, eat lunch with my students when *we* felt like that was a good thing to do; celebrate at the end of a unit all that we had learned by inviting parents to come in and see our projects, our play, or our demonstrations; and write notes home about things we did well that week. Everyone got a note because everyone deserved one.

At the beginning of this chapter, I told you my son wasn't motivated to set the table. You may have screamed into the book (like I often do to the television) that if I gave him money or a treat, he would set the table. I could probably even "help" him get rid of that snotty voice by threatening to take the treat away. But what would he learn, and how long would it last? Instead, I will help him understand the importance of the task, create opportunities for him to set the table creatively (yikes!), and sometimes let him do other tasks than setting the table. Perhaps when he is a bit older he will understand that families need each other and that we need him. As an adult, he will have a job that pays him to do things, but I hope he feels it is so important and he is so vital that he would do it for free. I'll let you know how it goes.

So . . . What?

Motivation is key to classroom success for you and your students. The good news is that you can influence motivation in several ways:

The brain likes novelty, physical activity, nutrition and water, time to reflect, and low levels of stress. Treat students as you would like them to treat you.

Self-efficacy and self-worth are important influences of motivation. Help students feel efficacious by providing appropriate tasks and by scaffolding material at their ZPD level.

If students attribute their success or failure to ability, they won't be very motivated. Help them by providing effortful strategies rather than telling them to try harder. Provide opportunities for them to set up mastery goals rather than performance goals.

Your relationship with students needs to be genuine and not coercive. We don't want relationships that create pleasers or brown-nosers. We want students to know they are cared for and that they matter.

The tasks and topics that you design matter with regard to motivation. Connect them to students' prior knowledge, interests, and competency levels.

Don't be fooled. Rewards are demotivators. If you use them, you will end up with children who need more rewards rather than have the dispositions to keep learning.

Get Ready For . . .

The first three chapters of this book were all about beliefs. What do you believe about students' needs, the environment where students go to school, and teachers' role in helping students do well in school and in life? If you believe that all children need autonomy, belonging, and competency; that the environment in classrooms should foster democracy and community; and that a teacher can influence motivation in positive ways, you need to design a classroom management plan with structures that will help you create that place. Many teachers tell me, "I just can't [blank]," and I tell them they can, but they just don't have the necessary structures. They often try to give students autonomy without such structures as class meetings, belonging without cooperative learning, and competency without workshops. They often try to eliminate rewards without replacing them with structures. When teachers don't have structures that support their beliefs, they end up not believing any longer. The next three chapters, all about structures, will help you plan a classroom that is good for students and for you.

Activities to Try

✎   I purposefully did not define motivation in this chapter. Think about past experiences when you were motivated and not motivated in relation to the chapter and write a definition of motivation.

✍ These first three chapters are full of ideas that will help you determine how you will plan for classroom management. Take some time before moving to the next section to make connections among all of the ideas. In a sense, the concepts presented depend on each other. Can teachers help students have autonomy, belonging, and competency without democracy? How about motivation?

✍ If you were given the assignment of teaching fifth-grade students a unit on machines (or any other topic), how would you motivate them? How would you begin? How would you incorporate the ideas from this chapter?

✍ **Make a collection!** Collect some exercises you can do in the classroom to get students moving and learning.

✍ **Conduct action research!** Try this on yourself. Pick something you really want but are unmotivated to do (like cleaning the kitchen, exercising, or losing weight). Give yourself a reward every time you do it. Keep a log of what happens throughout the research.

Student Study Site

The companion Web site for *Elementary Classroom Management* can be found at www.sagepub.com/kwilliamsstudy.

Visit the Web-based student study site to enhance your understanding of the chapter content. The study materials include video clips, practice tests, flashcards, suggested readings, and Web resources.