

Learning Center Helps

Providing Consistent Motivation

Procedures Manual Page 5-41 "Motivating Students"

A student who believes that others, especially his parents and school staff, believe in him—his worth, his capability, his efforts, and his ability to achieve—will be motivated in his work and play.

The supervisor utilizes different ways of motivation to inspire achievement. The supervisor's consistency, love, encouragement, support, and interest build the student's self-image and confidence and inspire him to greater success. Motivate your students by making them feel special, responding positively, praising Godly character instead of talent or physical features, positively dealing with student failure, and providing enjoyment.

Make students feel "special."

- Express admiration with a big smile when presenting Congratulations! slips.
- Compliment in front of others good attitude, behavior, or character.
- Convey meekness and grace in your voice, eyes, and posture. Make sure this is evident in opening exercises, devotions, chapel, and other times when talking to the whole group.
- Make sure male staff members pat the fellows on the shoulders (and female staff with the girls) and say, "I'm glad you are a part of our school."
- Look students in the eye when they speak to you. Show sincere interest in what they say. Give them personal attention with eye contact, smiles, and gestures.
- Send or give birthday and other special occasion cards or notes to all students.
- Build and encourage the students with uplifting comments that motivate.
- Accept students just the way they are physically. Everyone deserves to be loved. Look EACH student in the eye on a regular basis and speak kindly to him.

- Speak to and acknowledge them whenever you see them in nonschool settings about town.

Praise Godly character instead of talent or physical features.

Talent gains a measure of "success" in youth, but character determines the depth, length, and duration of that success. Few people can "handle" praise given only for talent or looks, but all can accept praise for character. Physical attributes are only temporary, but character relates to the image of God.

Respond positively.

A staff member's response to a student's request for help affects the learning process and may either inspire or demean. Students need encouragement and adult approval to build self-confidence, and staff members are either motivators or tend to be negative influences. Staff should always show a willingness to listen and help.

Negative: "You don't have to be afraid."

Positive: "You can have confidence and poise in the presence of others."

Negative: "Your office is messy."

Positive: "A neat office speaks well of you. You will want to check it before leaving for the day."

The supervisor should also maintain this attitude when helping a student with a problem. Encourage him and avoid any negative expressions.

Negative: "Can't you figure it out?"

Positive: "That is a difficult one; maybe we can figure it out together. How would you start?"

Negative: "Oh, come on! Surely you know the answer to that simple question."

Positive: "That type of question sometimes confuses me too. First, I try to pick out

a key word that provides a hint. Let's see if we can find one in the question or text."

Negative: *"Anybody with any sense should know the answer to that."*

Positive: *"That is a tricky question. Let's read it over together to see if we can spot a clue."*

Negative: *"You're wasting my time with stupid questions."*

Positive: *"Let's see if the software offers some assistance."*

Staff members should also use the positive instead of the negative in labeling students, especially when referring to them by nicknames. Some names are uplifting and others demeaning, and these labels tend to last. Consider the impact of "bonehead" and "troublemaker" or of "thoughtful" and "obedient." Take care to lift students up, and avoid causing them to feel demeaned and distressed. Every name must be Christ-honoring and character building.

Although the Bible admonishes us to set rules to control children, caution is in order. If controls are implemented in a "watchdog" manner, staff members may communicate a distrustful attitude. This discourages students' confidence in themselves and in the staff. Students need to feel that the school's staff trusts them.

An atmosphere of trust is enhanced through expressions of confidence and appreciation when the student exhibits good behavior. Smiling at the student; requesting him to carry something to the principal; or using words such as, "I am glad to have a student such as you in our school," "I have confidence in you," and "You have all the attributes

to be a great servant of God" increase the student's confidence and reinforce good character traits. A student who is told someone has confidence in him tends to act accordingly. Praise and compliment your students, and encourage them to build Godly character.

Positively deal with student failure.

Keep the student from feeling hopeless when he must repeat a PACE or when he misses a basketball shot or strikes out. Express confidence in him. Remind him that failure on a project is not failure in life. With practice and thoroughness a failure can be turned into achievement.

Provide enjoyment.

Show sincere interest and concern for student needs, hobbies, goals, hurts, failures, and achievements. Different type and varied activities release energy and provide opportunities to excel.

Some suggestions for special times are as follows:

- Pleasant surprises:
 - Devotions outside on a sunny day
 - Special chapel services
 - Games and activities between staff and students
 - Festivals and special programs
- Privilege status area where students can socialize:
 - Table tennis
 - Table games
 - Table hockey
 - Shuffleboard
 - Music
 - Embroidery kits
 - Butterfly mounting kits
 - Coloring books and crayons
 - Chalkboard and colored chalk
 - Puzzles

Remember

Students are under the school's authority and protection. School staff should:

1. Pray for them daily.
2. Be empathetic—feel for their needs.
3. Encourage them after failure of a project (test, speech, Scripture memory, etc.).
4. Provide remediation for weaknesses:

More practice and drill

More complete or precise instructions

Rest before the next rehearsal

Correction of errors