

# MOTIVATION OF LEARNERS

## DEFINITION

If someone carries out a task in order to get something (or avoid something), he/she is being *moved*  
If someone carries out a task with dedication because the task itself is enjoyable, he/she is *motivated*

## THE OPPOSITE OF UNHAPPY?

Unhappy - Not unhappy

Happy - Not happy

## THE IMPLICATIONS

Correcting an unhappy situation will NOT bring about motivation

Teachers therefore have to take steps

- (a) to avoid making learners “unhappy”
- (b) to make schoolwork “enjoyable” for learners

## WHAT DEMOTIVATES LEARNERS?

### 1. Unfair treatment

- Favouritism towards other learners
- False accusations
- Unreasonable demands
- Undeserved punishment etc. etc. etc.

### 2. Humiliating treatment

- Yelling at learners
- Mocking them, making sarcastic comments
- Undermining a learner's self-esteem
- Etc. Etc. Etc.

Fair and considerate treatment will, however, not bring about motivation

## THREE BASIC PERFORMANCE LEVELS

<b>Minimum Level</b>	-	<b>Expected Level</b>	-	<b>Maximum Level</b>
Doing less than expected		Carrying out duties faithfully		Doing more than expected

## WHAT MAKES SCHOOLWORK ENJOYABLE ?

The pride of achievement

If schoolwork is not a source of pride, the learner will never be motivated, only moved

## WHAT MOTIVATES LEARNERS?

### 1. An experience of success

- Keeping score of performance
- A weekly rating with regard to:
  - Attention in class
  - Effort put into homework
- Goal-setting to compete against themselves
  - Test marks during the term
  - Exam marks at the end of the term
  - Any competition must preferably be on a handicap basis
  - Low goals are more motivating because they increase the possibility for success

- Opportunities to discover facts and insights for themselves
  - The focus should fall on "problem-solving" and not on "data-reproduction"

## **2. Responsibility for schoolwork**

- Learners must be allowed to do in class whatever they like
  - Except cause a disturbance
- Homework should not be compulsory
  - Only the non-achievement of goals should lead to negative consequences

## **3. Recognition for achievement**

- A "Winners" list for all learners who:
  - Improve their overall rating
  - Maintain a high overall rating
- Reward individual achievement:
  - Extra 5% in the next test
  - Going home half an hour earlier
  - A small gift
  - Any other appropriate 'reward'
    - Phoning parent to express appreciation
- Reward group achievement
  - Put learners in teams of ± 5-6 members
    - Ensure a well-balanced mix in terms of scholastic ability and class behaviour
  - Team score = Average of individual score
    - Create a "winners" list for teams
  - Reward the teams for good achievement
    - Eg. going home early

## **WHAT ABOUT DISCIPLINE ?**

1. Discipline should apply only to wilful misbehaviour
  - Not to poor marks
2. Get commitment by letting the class decide on the rules
  - Eg. disruption of class is unacceptable
3. Deliberate offences must result in negative consequences
  - Stay in classroom (or detention room) during break or after school
  - Barred from participating in certain functions or sports events (or even attending them)
  - Extra duties (from gardening to setting out chairs)
  - Any other form of unpleasant consequence
4. Harness the power of peer pressure
  - Eg. A team loses a 'reward' for every three individual offences by team members
5. The ultimate form of discipline must be suspension and eventual expulsion

## **THE DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

**Be hard on standards**

- Do not tolerate any form of misbehaviour

**Be soft on people**

- Always treat a learner with dignity and respect

# EXAMPLES OF DEMOTIVATING BEHAVIOUR

## FAVOURITISM

1. (Grd 6) Four learners make a noise - all are punished. Teacher's pet protests and is let off
2. (Grd 8) English teacher says she doesn't like boys - so they won't get good marks. One boy got over 60% for English - no girl got under 60%

## FALSE ACCUSATIONS

1. (Grd 8) Paper aeroplane flew through the air. "I know you did it, because you are that type"
2. (Grd 7) Teacher accuses boy of taking her keys - and finally takes him (in tears) to the headmaster. Later she finds her keys in her handbag

## UNREASONABLE DEMANDS

1. (Grd 6) Bright girl was not allowed to swap desk partners until she and the boy next to her both achieved full marks for a test. The boy never did, and she was stuck with him for the rest of the year while the rest of the class swapped desk partners regularly
2. (Grd 6) History project in the middle of exams
3. (Grd 9) If a soccer player missed one practice (even if he was ill) he was demoted to the B-team. My son, Michael, came back two weeks late from overseas, and (despite having told the coach that this would happen) had to sit on the reserve bench for the rest of the season

## UNDESERVED PUNISHMENT

1. (Grd 8) If the class monitor does not have at least one name on the board for misbehaviour during a teacher's absence, the monitor is punished
2. (Grd 7) The entire class is punished because one learner misbehaves but doesn't want to own up
3. (Grd 1) A girl walks past a group of learners who are misbehaving. At that moment the teacher catches them, and the girl is included in the punishment
4. (Grd 7) A boy did a project on a locust - and put in a lot of effort. But in class (before he could hand the project in) the locust escaped. He got 10% for his project

## NAME-CALLING

1. (Grd 6) A boy forgot to set up a project once (he had done it faithfully many times) - and was called a "slapgat"
2. (Grd 5) Student teacher calls a learner "an idiot" and "a perverse specimen" in front of the whole class
3. (Grd 8) A boy is told by the teacher "not to be a Suzy". That became the boy's nickname for the rest of his school life - and now at the age of 45 he still suffers from a poor self-image

## MOCKING/SARCASM

1. (Grd 5) Learners had to write an essay on what their fathers do. One boy's parents were divorced and he honestly did not know what his father did. Teacher told him in front of the class how stupid he was. He cried.
2. (Grd 8) Learner asks teacher to explain something - and is told how dumb he is
3. (Grd 2) Boy in rural town is told: "You must tell your father to buy you a farm, because you'll never make it through school"
4. (Grd 3) Boy in Riversdal: "Children, please take out your books. Johnny you don't have to, because you won't understand anyway"

## UNDERMINING SELF-ESTEEM

1. (Grd 0) Boy didn't want to go to school anymore - and cried bitterly each morning. Parents discovered that the teacher had a dummy in her desk, and when the boy cried (because he was bullied by an older boy), she made him suck a dummy in front of the whole class
2. (Grd 7) My son, Duane, was captain of B-team (soccer) and they were going to play in the Cup Final for their league. Two weeks before he was told to play half a match for the A-team. He pointed out to the teacher that it would disqualify him to play for the B-team in the Cup Final - but the teacher insisted that he play that half-game. During the Cup Final he was told to report for the match, but he sat on the bench for the entire game, because he was disqualified from playing