—topic—
NOTES

Motivation, as seen through student persistence and intense interest in a chosen subject area, plays an important role in understanding what contributes to giftedness.

- Several classroom practices can affect whether students will be motivated intrinsically. These include offering appropriately challenging tasks and projects, giving students a voice in what and how they learn, evaluating student work for improvement and mastery, and creating multidimensional classrooms.

- Students from gifted programs feel more capable than average achieving students to make their own judgements regarding classroom activities.

- Placing limited emphasis on competition and norm-referenced evaluation minimizes stigmatization of high achieving students as being "different" and makes it more likely that they will be working at an appropriate level. This de-emphasis also increases the opportunity for successful experiences among the other students.

What is the NRC/GT?
The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) is funded under the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education. The mission of the NRC/GT is to plan and conduct theory-driven quality research that is problem-based, practice-relevant, and consumer-oriented.

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NRC G/T

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented
2131 Hillside Road Unit 3007
Storrs, CT 06269-3007
Phone: 860-486-0283
Fax: 860-486-2900
Web: https://nrcgt.uconn.edu

What educators need to know about... student MOTIVATION

Practitioners' Guide - A9509
Pamela Clinkenbeard and
Marcia A. B. Delcourt - Editors

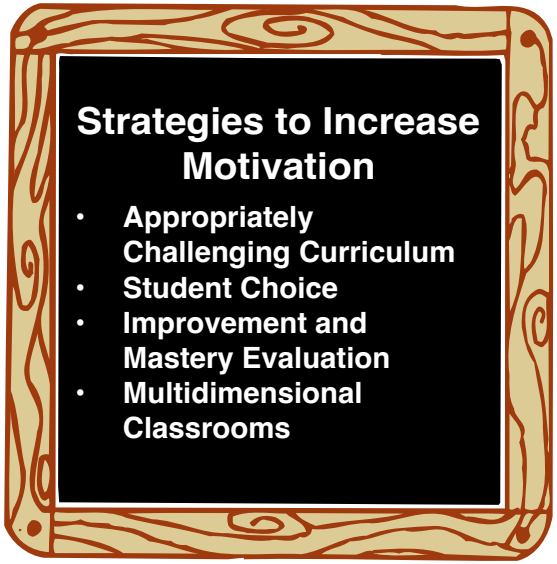
Del Siegle - Series Editor

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

Why do many gifted students seem to do just what is necessary to get by, while others enthusiastically embrace new challenges?

Most studies of motivation contrast intrinsic (or internal) motivation with extrinsic (or external) motivation. Intrinsic motivation is at work when students are engaged in something that interests and challenges them. They might enjoy the task so much that they lose track of time. Extrinsic motivation refers to work that is completed in order to gain something other than for the pleasure of the task itself; for example, teacher approval, a high grade, or a prize.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can lead to high achievement. However, students who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to find learning meaningful, to prefer challenging tasks, to focus on the task rather than how well other students are doing, and to feel satisfied with their performance. Students who are extrinsically motivated are more likely to work their hardest only when there is some incentive present, and are more likely to worry about their performance compared to other students.

What can classroom teachers do to increase intrinsic motivation?

Several classroom practices can enhance students' intrinsic motivation. Students need to be offered tasks and projects that are appropriately ***challenging***. This can be accomplished through curriculum compacting, allowing students access to material beyond their designated grade level, and assigning independent research projects. Students also need some voice and ***choice*** in what and how they learn. This may mean that the teacher incorporates students' interests into class material, lets students select which of several assigned tasks they wish to do first, and allows students to choose how they present projects. Teachers need to evaluate student work for improvement and ***mastery***, rather than just relative performance. This may mean giving two grades on some work, one for effort and one for performance. It may also be accomplished through portfolio assessment, where students can see clearly whether they are improving over time or whether they are simply collecting easy "A"s. Finally, intrinsic motivation may be enhanced in a non-competitive, ***multidimensional*** classroom, where all students do not do the same thing at the same time. While some students work with the teacher, others may work in small groups, and still others work independently at learning centers or in the library. When students learn in multidimensional classrooms they are less likely to compare their performance to that of other students, and less likely to be distracted from the task by comparing grades.