

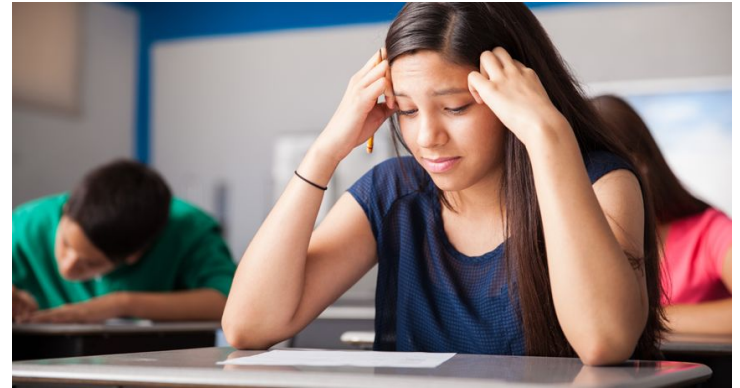
He Just Doesn't Want to Learn!

A Research-Based Workshop on Improving Students' Motivation



Emily Rosenzweig, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Are your students motivated?



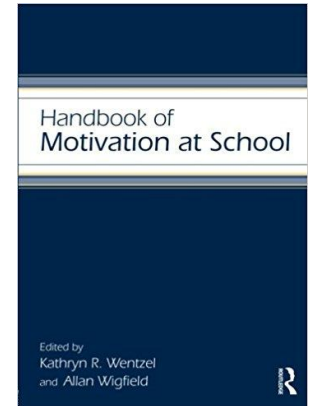
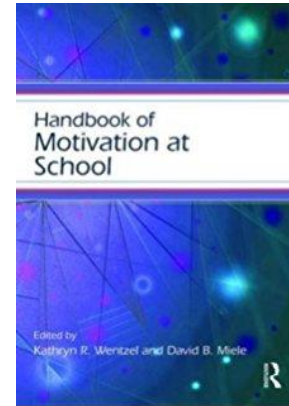
Today's Workshop

- Part 1: Interactive Presentation
 - Why should we care about motivation?
 - What are common motivational issues that students face?
 - How can we address them?
- Part 2: Group Activity
 - Develop and share strategies to address your own students' motivation
 - Work together to create a “toolbox” of strategies to help with students' motivation

What is Motivation

“Scholarly” Definition:

Energy that drives students towards or away from achievement behavior



How Tutors or Teachers
Can Use Definition:



Why Is It Important to Support Motivation? Part 1

- Engagement with school
- Deep thinking and processing of material
- Curiosity to learn
- Achievement
- Choice of classes
- Choice of extracurricular activities
- Choice of careers and majors (even years later!)

Some children are shut off from all of these future paths because they do not have enough motivation support!

Why Is It Important to Support Motivation? Part 2

Lazy and Dumb?



Doesn't think math will ever be part of his life

Material is dry and boring

Up late studying

Afraid to seem stupid in front of friends

Nervous about upcoming exam

Versus

Smart and Engaged?



Received positive feedback

Interesting content

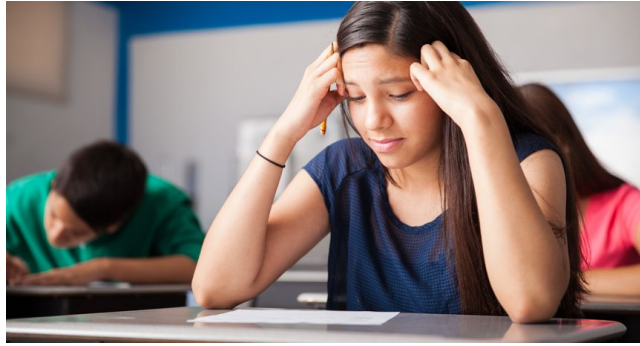
Not a very busy week

Allowed to work With friends

Feels confident

Why Is It Important to Support Motivation?

Part 3



Tutors can make a difference!

- You are a source of warm support and a role model
- Rare opportunity to individualize instruction to kids' unique needs!
- Even small efforts can break a cycle
 - More participation → better feedback → better grades
- These things make a big difference down the line

Motivational Issues Students Might Have:

- 1) I'm not capable of doing this work
- 2) This material is not useful to me
- 3) Learning/studying is too much work/ stressful / too much time
- 4) I don't have any support from others while learning
- 5) I am not a "math" person
- 6) I can't learn in the way I want/on my own terms

Strategies for Success: Addressing motivational problems that math students experience

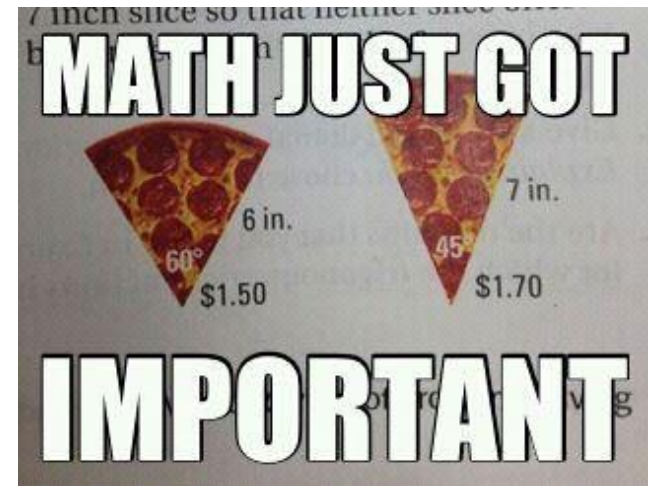
1) I'm not capable of doing this work

- Help students feel more confident through success experiences, verbal persuasion, and modeling
- Focus on progress and strategies for success more than grades and test scores
- Examples:
 - Ask students to set small, achievable goals for a worksheet and praise them if they achieve the goals (e.g., how many sentences / paragraphs can you write today?)
 - “After using this strategy a few times, see how it is easier to do?”
 - “You just put in at 10 minutes of hard work, I can see how hard you are working and it is going to pay off.”
 - “Last week you said this was hard, but this week you got X more problems right. You are making progress.”



2) This material is not useful to me

- Make connections! Point out examples of course material in students' own lives, talk about jobs that use the material, or talk about how material can be used to help others
- Examples:
 - "... Graphs are all around us so it is very important to know how to read them."
 - "Have you heard this vocabulary word before? Where? Can you use it in a sentence. "
 - "It might seem like this is not related to you now, but learning how to solve equations will help you in almost all of your math and science classes in high school."
 - "If you were talking to your friend and you were in X situation, what would you say to them? Do you see how the character might be in a similar situation?"



3) Learning is too much work / stressful / too much time

- Talk to students about strategies for time management
- Make it clear that it is normal to perceive these dilemmas; they are challenges, not threats
- Emphasize that it will not feel this hard forever
- Examples:
 - “I also thought math homework seemed really hard in middle school, but I remember that overcoming the challenge felt really good when I finished the math class.”
 - “I know it is a really busy week, but I bet this weekend you will do something fun once you are done working so hard!”
 - “If you feel stuck on a problem, a good strategy is to skip it and come back later, so you don’t have to get frustrated staring at it for a long time.”



4) I don't have any support while learning

- Tell students that you are there for them
- Give students opportunities to work together
Tell students you care about their success and can see the progress they have made
- Examples:
 - “Maybe you can ask Kenneth to show you how he got the answer to this one?”
 - “Do you and Breanna want to work together on the next problem?”
 - “I am really happy that you’ve been working so hard during this session. You should be proud of the progress you made.”
 - “I know that this is not your favorite type of problem, but I want to challenge you to do it so that you can learn how to do it before the exam. I want you to do well and I think we can do it if we work together.”



5) I am not a “math” person

- Use process praise, not person praise
- Tell students that their brains are growing when they work hard
- Give examples of your own efforts you have made to learn material
- Examples:
 - “You got the problem right! Great job working hard to master that one.”
 - “Remembering how to use punctuation with dialogue is tough, so we are really going to grow our brains by thinking about it!”
 - “I know it seems like I know fractions now, but when I started I had to practice them over and over to get them right.”



6) I can't learn in the way I want/on my own terms

- Emphasize that students can choose to make the most of the session or not
- Give students choices during learning
- Ask students what would be the best way for you to help them
- Examples:
 - “Lindsay, I am here to help you but it is up to you how much you get out of it. Do you want to try a problem now or would you rather take a minute to yourself?”
 - “I will let you to choose where to start with this worksheet.”
 - “Do you want to read the story together out loud, or do you want to read it yourself? What would be the most helpful for you while I am here?”



Workshop to address
motivational dilemmas with our
own students

Activity: Part 1

- Write down:
 - 1) One or more motivation-related challenge that you encountered while working with your students
 - 2) What motivational factors might have come into play
 - 3) Did you try any of the strategies discussed above? Were they effective?
- Get together with the person sitting next to you:
 - Read your challenges to each other and discuss what you think the motivational issues were
 - What could you have done differently, if anything, to address the challenge? Brainstorm a strategy for each one and jot that down