WHAT MOTIVATES STUDENTS?

WHEN ASKED, THEY ANSWERED.

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"It's important to learn math because someday you might accidentally buy a phone without a calculator."
Two “Math for Dummies” at $16.99 each. That’ll be $50.
$\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4} = \frac{4}{8} = \frac{8}{16}$

“I understand they all have the same value, but I have to tell you, the ones on the right feel like more bang for your buck.”
Why Motivation?
“CATALYST FOR RESEARCH”
65%
Finger pointing does no good!!
PERSONAL GOALS

1. Find a way to motivate students to complete my math class by the end of the semester.

2. Teach students life strategies to help them realize and reach their goals.
What did I do to motivate?

- Semester Calendar
What did I do to motivate?

• **Semester Calendar**

• Emailed students who were behind in homework or had low quiz scores.
What did I do to motivate?

• Semester Calendar

• Emailed students who were behind in homework or had low quiz scores.

• Talked about how failing this math class could result in the loss of financial aid monies.
HOW did I motivate?
HOW did I motivate?
BANG HEAD HERE
Spring 2016
Developmental Math Student Survey
Weber State University

“What motivates you?”
“What motivates you?”

1. What are your feelings towards math?

2. Tell us if you’ve had any good (or bad) experiences in a math class.

3. How does your current instructor motivate you?
“What motivates you?”

4. In your own words, tell us what you would like your instructor to do to help keep you motivated throughout the semester to attend class and complete the work.
1. What are your feelings towards math?
1. What are your feelings towards math?

- Math is easy for me.
- Math is hard for me.

I love math!!!
I hate math!!!

N = 394 students
"I can do math. I'm just lazy."

"I'm bad at math. I hate asking for help."

"Math makes me physically sick."
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological Needs
  - "Math makes me physically sick."
- Safety Needs
  - "I'm bad at math. I hate asking for help."
- Sense of Belonging
  - "I can do math. I'm just lazy."
- Self-Esteem
- Self Actualization


"I can do math. I'm just lazy."
2. Tell us if you’ve had any good (or bad) experiences in a math class.

“My 4th grade teacher kept giving me multiplication tests saying I had to get faster at them, but I always got so freaked out on the tests I just froze.”
“I have dyslexia. But I didn’t know it until high school. I always feel dumb in school.”

“I had to watch my baby sister while my mom worked. I missed a lot of school.”

“We moved a lot and I never learned my math well.”
“My teacher never had time to help me, so I just didn’t do the math.”

“I pretended to know math in junior high, but copied off my friend’s homework everyday. I was invisible in high school to my teacher. He would just help the ‘smart kids’ and left me alone, which I was okay with then, but I still don’t know how to do math.”
The majority of students stalled their math progress because needs in these areas were not being met.
3. How does your current instructor motivate you?

- Weekly emails of what’s due that week
- Offers one-on-one help to students
- Emails, saying “Good job” on assignments
- Brings cookies/candies to class
“It’s not my instructor’s job to motivate me. It’s mine.”
In your own words, tell us what you would like your instructor to do to help keep you motivated throughout the semester to attend class and complete the work.
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<th>Personal attention</th>
<th>Teacher offering help</th>
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<td>Positive reassurance</td>
<td>Weekly updates</td>
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<td>Make math fun and meaningful</td>
<td>Extra goodies for the class</td>
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PERSONAL ATTENTION

“Email me personally and tell me what I could do better.”

“Talk to me. Don’t let me slip through the cracks.”

“Know my name.”

“Care about my success. Help me get better.”
“Tell me that all my hard work doesn’t go unnoticed.”

“My teacher told me that she was impressed with how far I have come this semester. That made me proud.”

“Math is hard. I keep trying. My teacher tells me not to give up because I am getting better everyday.”

“It’s nice to hear that I do well on my quizzes.”
MAKE MATH FUN AND MEANINGFUL

“It would be good to actually see how I’m going to use this math in the real world.”

“My teacher has such a fun personality. It’s fun to go to class to hear her teach math with dumb stories.”

“My teacher has my class do a group word problem everyday. I hate this, but it is helpful to understand why I need to know math.”
“Sometimes I’m afraid to ask for help (because I’m so dumb). It would be great if my teacher emailed me and offered personal help.”

“Please let me know how to figure out these stupid word problems without making me beg for help.”

“Don’t make me feel dumb if I ask a question. I WOULDN’T BE ASKING IF I KNEW THE ANSWER!”
“Help me stay organized all throughout the semester.”

“My teacher always sends out weekly messages of what homework needs to be done and how to study for my quizzes. I like this!”

“At the beginning of the semester, my teacher had me write down my goals for this math class. She reminds me to always look at my goals to keep me on track.”
EXTRA GOODIES FOR THE CLASS

“Candy is always a good motivator.”

“Having extra credit for coming to class would be good.”

“Pizza and beer.”

“Little Debbie Snack Cakes!!!!”
The key to motivating students is to determine which needs are not being met and help them fulfill those needs.
HOW did I motivate?

Learning for understanding

Belief in one’s self

Self-accomplishment
SAFETY NEEDS

- **Organized Notebook**
  - Section Notes
  - Section Homework
  - Daily Group work

- **Semester Calendar**
  - Weekly email updates
  - Instructor contact information
  - Student contact information
SENSE OF BELONGING

• **Build Community in classroom**
  
  – Daily group work
  – ‘Shoulder Partner’ questions
  – Student story problems
  – “Fortune Cookie”

• **Build personal rapport with each student**
  
  – Acknowledgement emails and comments for hard work, persistence, consistency
  – Offer tutoring times to struggling students
Fortune Cookie Quote of the Week

“By not giving up on your goals, it shows that you will always be successful at life.”
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• **Goal Setting**
  - What’s your *why*?
  - What are your goals?
  - Motivational collage
  - Affirmation note card

• **Personal Analysis**
  - How do you study?
  - What is your success story?
  - Are you reaching your goals?
  - What are your new goals?
What do you do?
True MOTIVATION comes from within...
Be the SPARK to ignite the power.