



THE ROLE OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC MOTIVATION

ROLUL RELAȚIEI PROFESOR-ELEV ÎN DEZVOLTAREA MOTIVAȚIEI ACADEMICE

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Rezumat: Personalitatea profesorului reprezintă unul dintre factorii de bază ce influențează motivația de învățare a elevilor. Articolul de față prezintă un studiu asupra paradigmeilor relaționale dintre profesori și elevi, care generează sporirea motivației și, respectiv, eficienței școlare.

Cuvinte-cheie: motivație, relație profesor-elev, paradigme relaționale, bariere de învățare, eficiență școlară etc.

Some people consider the teacher's personality to be the most motivating factor in learning. The relationship between a student and a teacher can create a barrier to learning, but it can also encourage the student to reach their full potential. This article presents an overview over the creation of motivating relationships between teacher and students. This type of relationship is characterized by mutual affection, respect, trust, support, positiveness, friendliness. (Spaulding 1992:64-80). According to Spaulding there are a few things a teacher should do to create relationships that increase student's academic motivation drastically.

First of them is "avoiding severe and excessive use of punishment". Spaulding offered not to use any punishments that somehow create pain, suffering or humiliation. Either of this punishment is established by the teacher, or parents and authorities, with the help of teacher. Instead of this, she offers to use "subtle time-out procedures". Somehow isolating the child from the environment that sup-

ports misbehavior for a few minutes, as privately as possible – does not offend child that much, yet it helps by preventing the misbehavior. Another thing you should keep in mind is "avoiding humor targeted at students" and "avoiding differential treatment based on unjustified prejudices". Some pupils do not understand the humor of adults, it may embarrass them. "The student should never be made the object of a joke" (Spaulding 1992:64-80). All the students should be treated in the same manner, no matter the sex, religion or the color of the skin. Even if it is impossible to communicate to some misbehaving kids – the attempts should be still made. Showing interest and concern for students is important too. All the students should be treated as humans, not as some jar that needs to get filled with knowledge. If you are interested in students as in subjects of your job, some people you meet on your workplace, you are never making real relationships with them. To create successful relations with them, your interest should be sincere, and should be obviously ma-

nifested in your actions. Two other things that create motivating relationships is being calm, consistent and forgiving, as well as having high but attainable expectations for student success. The last one is connected to the “flow” notion. Yet there some things you should not overdo, or dependency (when students are depended on teacher’s approval) may be created. To avoid it, you should not focus on the social part of teaching, but academic. Even misbehaving students should be treated in the same manner as others, yet you should show that you are not amused by the things they do sometimes. Excessive use of praise leads to the dependency too. And the most important thing to do is to redirect students feeling of cause of their success and failures not to luck or teacher’s traits, but their own attributes. Showing the students the real cause of their success motivates a lot. If you manage to create such relationships, as described in that advice, you are surely to get a highly motivated and interested in learning process group of pupils.

Although teachers arguably play the largest role in student motivation, a principal can do many things to aid in the area of student motivation. A principal wears many hats having to be good in many different capacities as they deal with students, teachers, and parents. One of those hats includes motivating students. An outstanding principal will have several strategies to motivate students in the areas of academics, leadership, and student discipline. One thing is certain; there isn’t one program that will motivate all students. It will take a variety of programs to reach every student:

- **Student of the Month/Year** – Most schools offer some sort of student of the month program to recognize students who excel in the areas of academics, leadership, and citizenship. Good student of the month programs offer substantial incentives for students who receive this honor
- **Reading Challenge** – Conduct a month long reading challenge to motivate students to read. There are several ways to do this. You can have classes compete against each. In this case, the class that reads the most books over the course of that month will earn something as simple as a pizza party or an ice cream party. Another variation of this is to set a school-wide goal that if reached allows something semi-humiliating to happen to you.
- **Testing Exemption** –This provides students who maintain an A average over the course of a nine weeks or semester an exemption from such tests. The idea is that if a student puts in the hard work necessary to maintain an A, then they probably know the material well enough that they would score well.
- **Charms** – There are several elementary schools starting to adopt charm incentive programs. Students can earn charms for a variety of things including good behavior, academic successes, athletic endeavors, etc. Schools that have invested in this type of program consistently see improvement in many students who aren’t motivated by anything else, but they love to collect these charms.
- **Free Fridays** – This is a program that provides certain students an

organized free afternoon on select Fridays. Students who earn the reward get concession stand vouchers, can have free play in the gym, play games on the computer, watch a movie, listen to music, etc.

- **Reward Trips** – Although the financial burden of paying for a trip may be too difficult for most schools, it can provide academic student motivation particularly in the area of high stakes testing.
- **Sweet Behavior Incentives** – This program keeps an eye out for any student who is doing something selfless without being asked. If you have an ice cream machine in your school, then this would be perfect. Give members of your faculty and staff three ice cream certificates per week to hand out to students that they see doing something praiseworthy.
- **Homework Pass Program** – This program rewards students for giving maximum effort on daily class assignments. When a student earns seven A's in a particular class, then they receive a home-

work pass that they can use whenever they choose.

Teachers have the potential of being the most influential person in the classroom. In order to influence your students, **be accessible** where they feel free to engage you on any topic. Students who walk in the classroom without desiring to know what you are going to say and do are your least motivated students. Be interested in their lives. If they know you care, they will start to care, too, about what happens in the classroom. While you are teaching, call them by name, keep your lesson content relevant to their lives and to pop culture as much as possible. Using technology in the classroom that interests them such as YouTube videos and MP3 players will make them feel as if they can approach you if they have a classroom issue. Keeping examples in your lessons as close to real life as possible will motivate your students to listen and participate. Being accessible motivates your students to initiate more questions and be more open in what they have to say about class.

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