

# Motivating Gifted Students



# Dr. Barbara L. Branch

## Branch Consulting



[drbabs@starstream.net](mailto:drbabs@starstream.net)

[drbabs.wikispaces.com](http://drbabs.wikispaces.com)



# Motivation

- Underachievement
- Organizational Problems
- Homework Problems



What motivates a person to complete an assignment or a task?

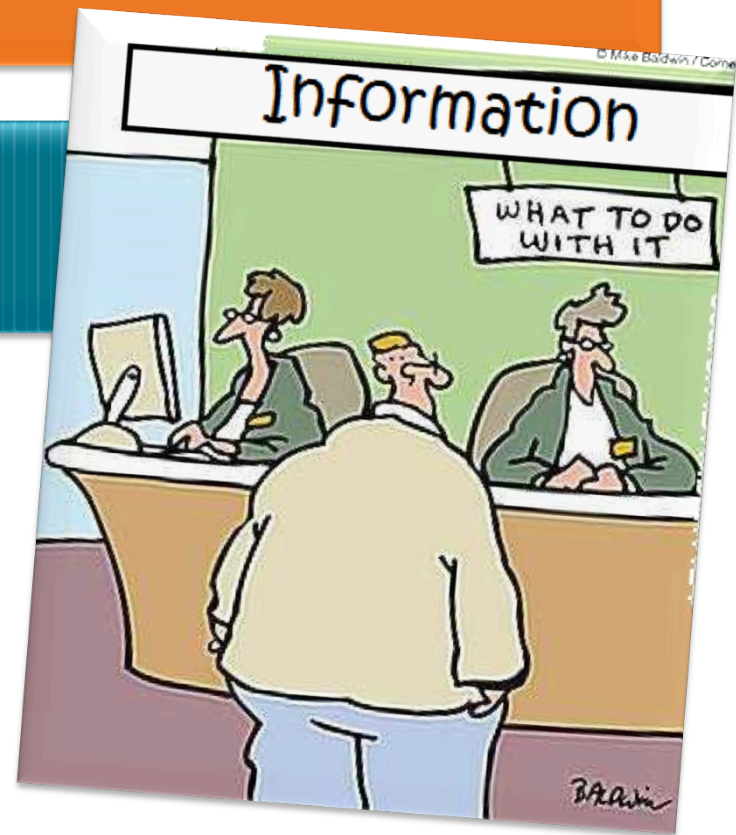
It's INTERESTING





What motivates a person to complete an assignment or a task?

It's USEFUL



# What is Motivation?

1

- Internal state or condition that activates behavior and gives it direction

2

- Desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior

3

- Influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behavior



# Characteristics of Motivated Students

**Find value in their school experience**

**Enjoy what they are doing**



**Believe what they are doing will  
produce beneficial results**



# Characteristics of Motivated Students

**Believe they have the skills to be successful**



*Making a Difference: Motivating Students Who are Not Achieving, Del Siegle & D. Betsy McCoach*



# Characteristics of Motivated Students

**Trust their environment and  
believe they can be successful in  
it what they do.**



# When Students are Motivated They

Self-regulate their behavior

Set realistic expectations

Apply appropriate strategies for academic success



# Motivation

Emotional factors play a determining role in what children attend to and remember.



Lyons, 2003, p. 66



# Attention and Motivation

**The brain pays attention  
to--and remembers--that  
which it feels.**





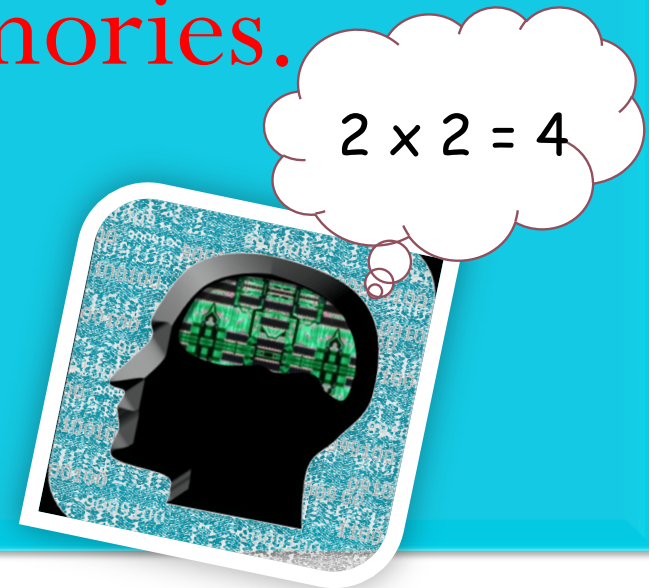


You will  
remember  
this!



Emotion is the building block of all learning, from birth throughout life.

Emotions build memories.



(Lyons, 2003, p. 66)



# Motivation

Emotion drives attention, and attention drives learning, problem-solving and remembering.



(Lyons, 2003, p. 66)



# Why are some gifted students not motivated?



# Pressures the Gifted Internalize

- Marches to a different drummer
- Wants to be unique or very creative
- Wants  $6 + 8$  to not always be 14
- Express themselves in unusual ways



## Causes of Underachievement

**There is a mismatch between student and his or her school environment thus no motivation to do well or complete tasks.**

**There is motivation to learn but not in the style of the school environment.**

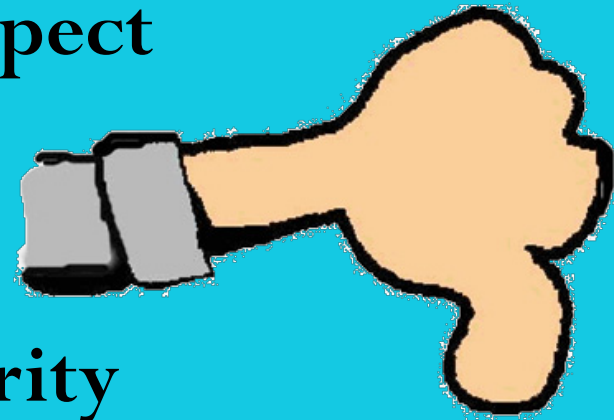


# How can we help motivate students?



## What Doesn't Work? (Adult "Interventions")

- **Failing to communicate respect**
- **Trying to maintain superiority**
- **Setting unrealistic goals (too high or low)**





## What Doesn't Work? (Adult "Interventions")

- Using threats or ultimatums
- Acting cold or impersonal
- Setting predictable, rigid structures



# Breaking the Cycle

Don't act as an external motivator  
-- every time you do, you  
undermine their development of  
self-management skills.



# What Might Work?



# Enhancing Motivation

**Teach Students How  
to Make Their Tasks  
More Manageable**



# Enhancing Motivation

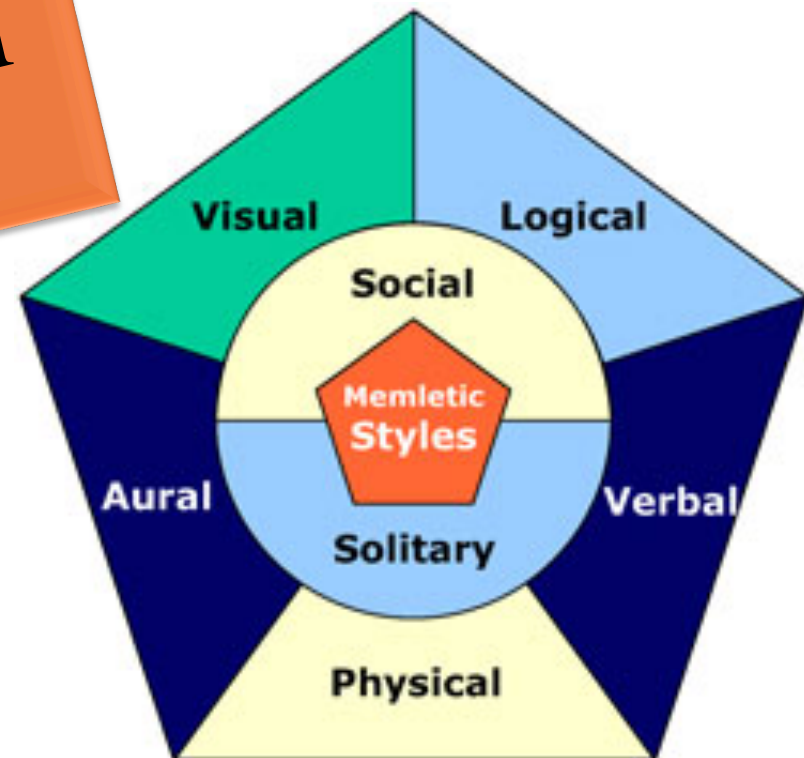
**Learn About Their  
Interests**

**interests**



# Enhancing Motivation

**Learn About Their  
Learning Styles and  
Yours**



# Evaluating Student Motivation

1. When I try hard in school it's because \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I would spend more time on my schoolwork if \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If I do poorly in school then, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. When I don't try hard in school it's because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Evaluating their motivation

5. I would rather do \_\_\_\_\_, than my schoolwork.
6. Doing well in school will help me to \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Doing poorly in school will keep me from, \_\_\_\_\_.
8. School is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_.



## Evaluating Student Motivation

9. The thing that I am most interested in learning is \_\_\_\_\_.

10. The most interesting thing I learned in school is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Paper load and Organization

- Get a large paper calendar and small post-it notes
- Get folders the same color as the post-it notes.
- Place all similar assignments or single subjects in different colored folder



## Paper load and Organization

- Backward map homework, projects, and large assignments
- Make intermediate goal steps for longer assignments or bigger projects
- Use different color post-it for each subject or type of assignment matched to the folders



# Homework Help

Don't ask about the tasks -- ask about the goal.

**Set a goal and a time-frame for achieving it.**



## Paper load and Organization

- Check calendar daily for what's due and what's coming up.
- Make note of intermediate goals and don't miss working on them even though they may not be due to the teacher that day.



## Paper load and Organization

- Keys:
- Model the same behavior in your own work at home (bills, taxes, vacation planning, office organization.)



## Paper load and Organization

- Keys:
- Supervise but make the student do the work, the planning, and the goal setting.



## Self Motivated Homework

- Set a time limit for homework depending on grade level.
- Set a timer.
- Leave the student to work on the task.
- If it is not finished after the time limit,  
ask the student to put the homework in the backpack.
- Hang the backpack on the door.
- Let the student deal with the school consequences.





## Homework That is too Hard

- Ask “Did you ask the teacher how to do this before you left the classroom?”
- If the answer is no, don’t get angry at the student or teacher.
- Say, “I’ll bet your teacher didn’t know that you don’t understand this.”



## Homework That is too Hard

- “I want you to go back and tell her that you thought you understood but you got home and did not understand. Is it possible to get another explanation?”
- Contact the teacher and explain the situation. Ask for support from the teacher to explain and give some more time to do the work.



# Organization

- Use mind mapping or webbing to organize school work, information for a test, new information,
- Do on paper or online



# Mindmap Websites

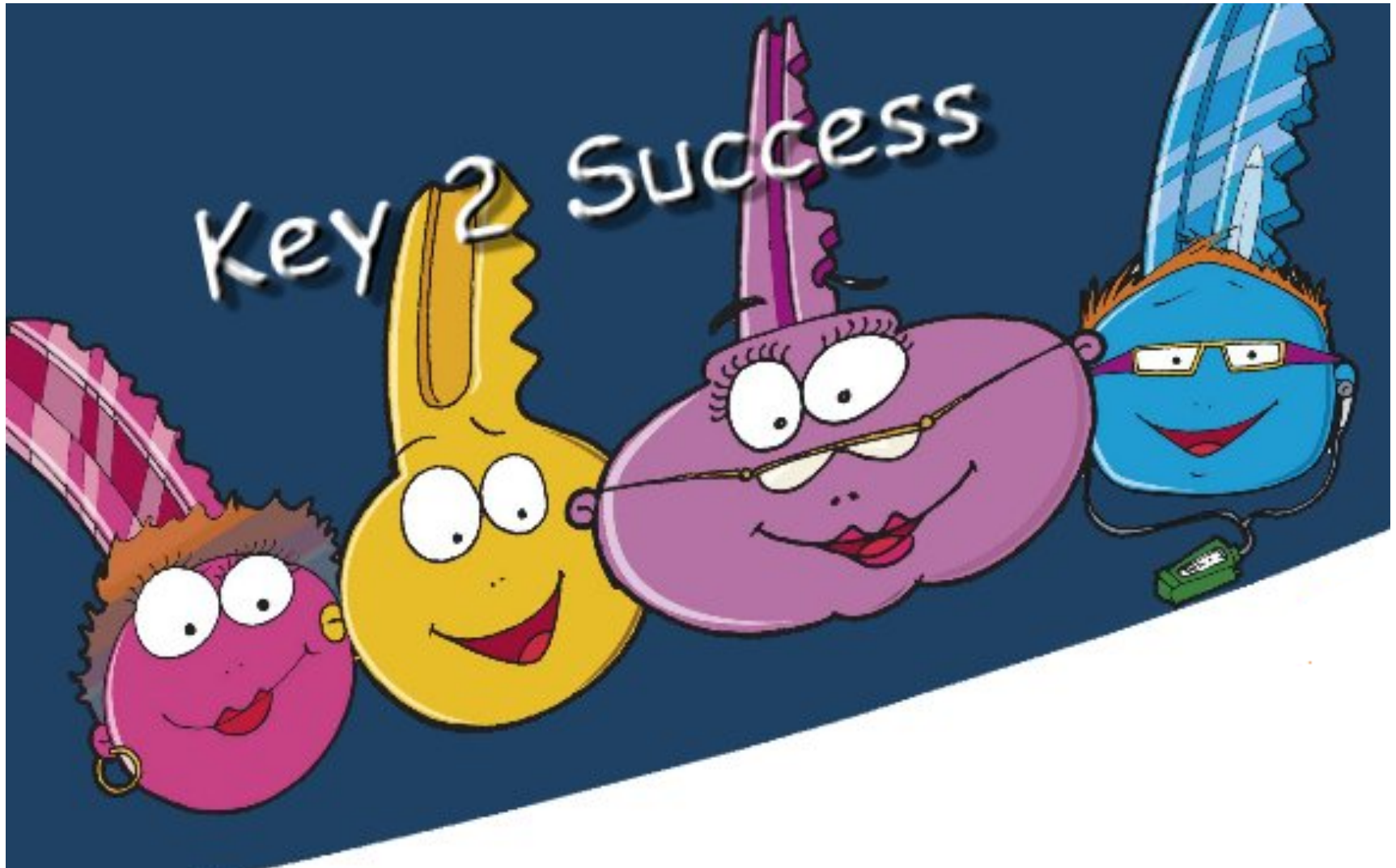
- StormBoard ([www.stormboard.com](http://www.stormboard.com))
- bubbl.us ([www.bubbl.us](http://www.bubbl.us))
- MindMeister ([www.mindmeister.com](http://www.mindmeister.com))
- Mind42.com ([www.mind42.com](http://www.mind42.com))
- Text2MindMap ([www.text2mindmap.com](http://www.text2mindmap.com))



# Enhancing Motivation

**Offer Choices**





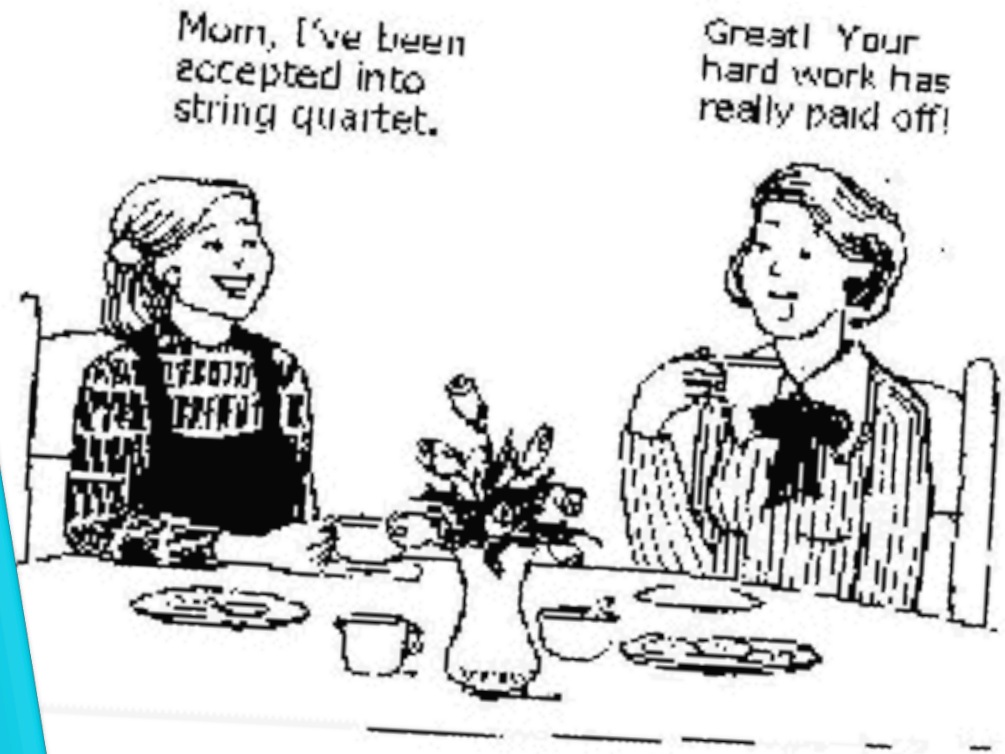
# Enhancing Motivation

**Teach Students to Evaluate  
Themselves**



# Breaking the Cycle

Don't ask how well they did on a test -- ask if they learned anything from it, or how much effort they made.





# Breaking the Cycle

Role model by working  
to understand your own  
motivational  
assumptions and skills.



# Self-Evaluation

- Develop a rubric together that will show how well the student did after a project, assignment, home task, etc.
- Ask your student to evaluate themselves on the rubric each time they complete a task



## Self-Evaluation

- Help them build on their strengths and set goals for improving the areas of weakness before the next task.
- Use it yourself to model the behavior and help you get organized if you are not.



## Creating a Rubric

- Make a list of what you want the to accomplish through the assignments.
- Organize your list from most important to least important.
- Generalize to most assignments so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.



# Creating a Rubric

Include:

- How much effort was put into the task.
- What did I do well?
- What was difficult for me?
- How interesting was the assignment?
- What did I learn?
- Where can I improve?



# Enhancing Motivation

**Students Need To  
Understand The  
Relevance Of All Their  
School Activities**



# Making Relevance

- Talk to your child's teacher about being partners to make some assignments more interesting.
- Help your child understand that some assignments are practice, some are new learning, and some are for stretching the brain.



## Start Having an Hour of Quiet Time at Night

- Have quiet time at night if you don't already have it. This will become part of their homework time.
- Read a book, comics, or magazines.
- No electronics—including cell phones and texting—during this time.
- You model the behavior during quiet time.



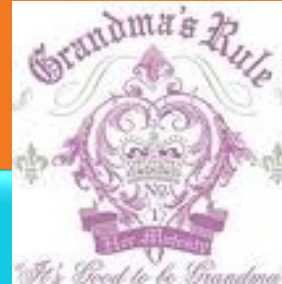


## Study with a Friend, Create Study Groups

- Sometimes studying with another child helps your child get motivated.
- Nothing motivates kids like studying with other intellectual peers—nothing.
- Well-managed study groups are very helpful.



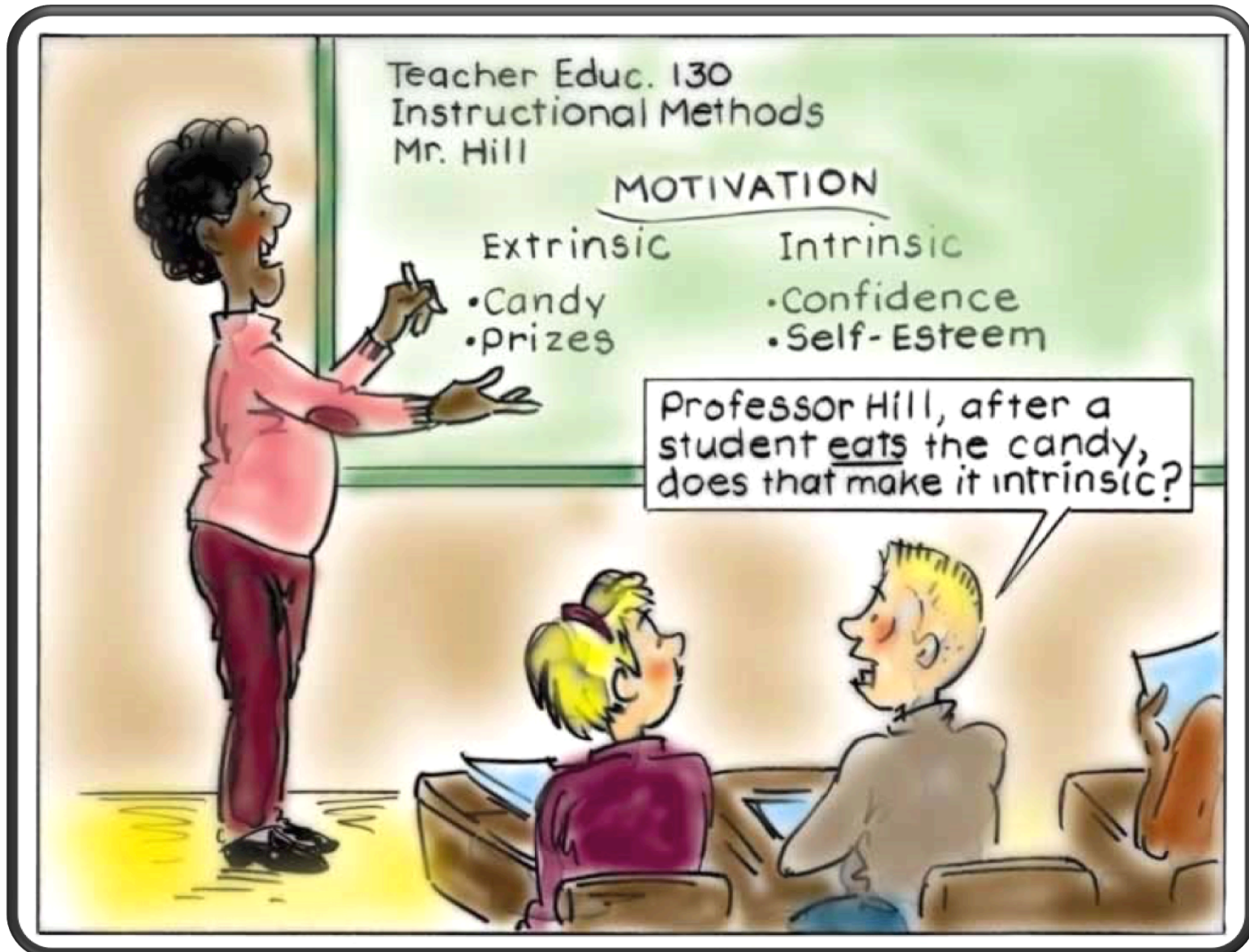
# Grandma's Rule



Use a more preferred activity as a reward for a less preferred activity.

- First eat your spinach and then you can have dessert
- After you wash the dishes, then you can go out and play
- Finish your homework then you can visit your friend





## Reward Strategies

Rewards are most effective when they provide informative feedback about performance.



# Expose Your Child to New Ideas and Areas

- Sometimes a child lacks motivation because he or she hasn't yet been exposed to what might be a life passion.
- Keep an open mind; it's your child's interests that are important.



# Keep a Positive Attitude About School

- Children need to see that their parents value education.
- Blaming the school will allow the child to avoid personal responsibility.





# Making Homework Motivating

- Set a time that works best for your child.



Make your child part of the decision-making process



# Making Homework Motivating

- Keep the same time everyday



- Break work into chunks





# Making Homework Motivating

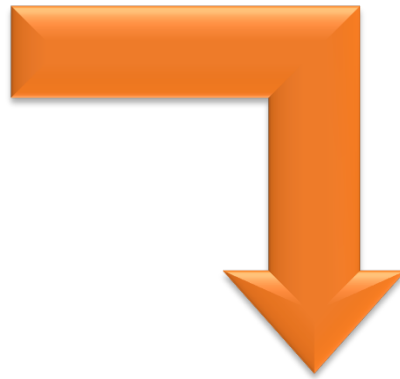


- Set time limits and check in at each interval

Take quick  
refreshing breaks



**Final goal**



# Motivating Summer Activities

- Learn and go Geocaching ([www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com))
- Listen to Ted Talks for Kids in Kid Groups  
([www.ted.com/playlists/86/for\\_kids](http://www.ted.com/playlists/86/for_kids))
- Camp Invention ([campinvention.org](http://campinvention.org))
- Decartes' Cove Math Series ([cty.jhu.edu/descartes/about/index.html](http://cty.jhu.edu/descartes/about/index.html))
- Summer Water Activities ([lifestyle.howstuffworks.com/crafts/seasonal/summer/summer-water-activities-for-kids.htm](http://lifestyle.howstuffworks.com/crafts/seasonal/summer/summer-water-activities-for-kids.htm))



# Virtual Field Trips

- NASA Quest ([quest.arc.nasa.gov/index.html](http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/index.html))
- 4-H Virtual Farm ([www.sites.ext.vt.edu/virtualfarm](http://www.sites.ext.vt.edu/virtualfarm))
- Smithsonian ([www.mnh.si.edu/panoramas/#](http://www.mnh.si.edu/panoramas/#))
- Google Earth (<http://www.google.com/earth/learn/>)  
Google Lit Trips ([www.googlelitrrips.com/GoogleLit/Home.html](http://www.googlelitrrips.com/GoogleLit/Home.html))
- Jamestown (<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/page2.html>)



# Create Your Own Summer Camp

- Choose an interest area for your child or a group of children
- Work with the kids and other parents to set up a schedule
- Have one day at each home
- Create activities for the camp
- Have students keep a blog of the activities

Dr. Christy McGee





# GARDEN SURVEY

To grow vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and other kinds of food, people have to work with nature.  
What kinds of edible things are growing in your neighborhood?

## Keep a Record!

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Weather \_\_\_\_\_

## Helpful Things to Take Along

☐ Pencil and paper

☐ Camera

Try this:

1. Take a stroll around your neighborhood and see what edible plants you can see.
2. Better yet, ask some neighbors to take you on a tour of their gardens. Ask:



# Neighborhood Garden Survey

- Plan ahead with your neighbors to allow your child to interview them about the edible things in their gardens
- Allow your child to set up interviews
- Record the interview
- At home, draw the plants, blog what was found
- Make a graph of the kinds of edible plants in the neighborhood
- Plan a presentation for neighbors to view the results

Ranger Rick



# Planning the Family Vacation or Weekend Trip

- LETTING YOUR CHILD EXPLORE VACATION OPTIONS WITH YOU:
  - Parents can have their children participate in the preparatory phase of a summer vacation, so the child is learning new information and reinforcing previous learned material.
  - Skills used: Decision making, science, geography, history, organization, reading, prioritizing and calendar use.
- BUDGETING FOR THE VACATION:
  - Skills used: Math, realistic understanding of the “real cost” of experiences, food, gas, etc.
- FINAL VACATION CHOICE:
  - Skills used: Communication with family, listening, realistic evaluations of options, and compromise.
  - Skills used: Organization and planning.





# Planning the Family Vacation or Weekend Trip

- **TRANSPORTATION CHOICE:**
  - Skills used: Math, geography, and time management.
- **PACKING:**
  - Skills used: Organization and planning.



# Family Genealogy

- Begin with family interviews
- Resources:
  - Cyndi's List
  - Family Search
  - Ancestry.com
- Visit a Family History Center and ask for help for children
- Plan a family trip to visit family history sites, cousins, grandparents
- Begin a family tree on Ancestry.com or on paper

