Research Bites

Online motivation

As schools work to ensure continuity of learning for all learners whether they are in school or at home, maintaining learner motivation can be a challenge.

Boekaerts '8 Principles of Motivation' cited in a research paper from the OECD can support us to think about this. These principles are outlined below, together with tips to support practitioners with online teaching.

1 Students are more motivated when they feel competent to do what is expected of them.

- Set expectations of the lesson and have a clear opening routine for learners, such as sharing learning intentions and the activities that will be completed.
- Ensure that learners know from the outset the equipment they will need and allow them to gather this.
- Have a shared school system for opening routines so that this is familiar to learners.
- Use language and techniques that are familiar to learners. If learners are used to a particular questioning or assessment style use this in the online classroom too.
- Ensure pauses/wait time during lessons as you would in the physical classroom.
- Ensure that learners know where they will find and complete their work. It is worth testing this as a learner to see how complex it is in terms of number of steps. Time in class can be used to demonstrate this to learners and ensure they can all access this independently.
- Acknowledge pupil contribution and work completion and praise good work – learners need to feel 'seen'.

- Ensure that instructions given are clear and easy to access for all learners.
- Plan for intentional feedback loops just as you would in a session. There should be a balance of methods used. This can be through:
  - Implicit feedback – learners self-assess and correct against a model and it is usually not submitted
  - Real time feedback – learners use polls or quiz that are self-marking or provide verbal/written responses to receive instant feedback in either synchronous or asynchronous lessons
  - Distance feedback – work is submitted to a teacher and more thorough feedback is given to teachers and learners to reflect
- Sharing pupil successes can be helpful, such as posting work in the virtual classroom for others to see.
- Ensure learners know the timescales they have for completing work and how it will be submitted.
- Get learners 'doing' early in a lesson- don't let them passively listen or read for too long.

2 Students are more motivated to engage in learning when they perceive stable links between specific actions and achievement.

3 Students are more motivated to engage in learning when they value the subject and have a clear sense of purpose.

- Learner engagement and work should be recognised and valued through feedback and praise.
- Multiple short activities can build attentiveness in learners.
- Clear, simple instructions with clear planned activities put less strain on working memory – learning should be simple verbally and visually.

- Frequent and early pause points to engage with an activity engages learners.
- In both synchronous and asynchronous learning, it is important that there are procedure for participation and these are shared with and known by learners, for example the use of pauses to complete tasks of to add comments.
- Human connection with familiar adults is important for learners.
- Making the learning familiar in terms of styles and techniques used helps learners feel secure.
- Varying the ways in which learners complete and submit work is helpful and avoid screen fatigue.

4 Students are more motivated to engage in learning when they experience positive emotions towards learning activities.

5 Students direct their attention away from learning when they experience negative emotions.

- Opportunities to check for understanding, whether synchronous or asynchronous need to be planned into learning using appropriate feedback loops.
- Teacher marking as a whole class demonstration supports learners.
- Planning for learning needs to be refined in light of assessment in the same way that planning in class would adjust if learners were not secure in a concept.

- Allowing points in learning for learners to reflect on a question can allow learners space and time to consider their approach to learning, for example planning opportunities for learners to sketch ideas before a final piece of work is completed.
- Modelling of skills and tasks allows learners to see clearly what the expectations of them are. For some learners the ability to re-watch this will be helpful.

6 Students free up cognitive resources for learning when they are able to influence the intensity, duration and expression of their emotions.
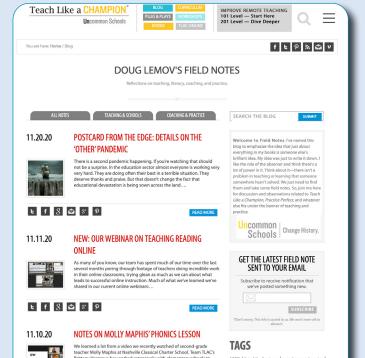
7 Students are more persistent in their learning when they can manage their resources and deal with obstacles efficiently.

- Whether synchronous or asynchronous it is important to manage the pace of the learning and share with learners how long they should spend on a task.
- Teachers should plan for misunderstanding and try to pre-empt where learners might need additional support – sharing strategies of what to so if you are 'stuck' can eliminate any problems.
- Learners need all the resources for a session ready – sharing these on a slide can be helpful.
- The use of simple icons can be used consistently to support meaning.

- Guidance for learners and parents on setting up a workspace and how to use any technology supports engagement.
- Learners need a balance of on and off-screen activities.
- Having opportunities to engage with the teacher whether synchronous or asynchronous, through video, voice or writing can be really motivating to learners.
- Reading instructions aloud can remove barriers for many learners.
- Using clear and concise language will support learners to understand.

8 Students are more motivated to engage in learning and use motivational regulation strategies when they perceive the environment as favourable for learning.

You can read more about this in Doug Lemov's 'Teach Like a Champion' blog

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