

GSTTS Summary

9/10/13

Today's topic was motivation. We stayed constant with this topic throughout the meeting, with very few deviations. The structure was split between direct instruction and group discussion. There was not much small-group interaction, by design. Motivating students (and the lack of motivation in both instructor and student) has long been an issue with our department, so we devoted an entire meeting to this topic.

Why Motivate Students?

- They will try harder.
- It will be easier to teach them.
- Gives them a reason to come to school (as well as a reason to enjoy school)
- Poorly motivated students reflect poorly on the instructor, both for informal assessments and the end-of-the-year evaluations
- The students will remember you later
- It's fun to share our knowledge, as we know a lot about the fields we are teaching
- It is more fun

How Do We Motivate Our Students? (What Motivates Them?)

- Make attendance worthwhile, so that they are not "going through the motions"
- Incorporate personal experience, when possible, into our lectures
- Candy/Food and other extrinsic forms of motivation, when appropriate
- Maintain a friendly atmosphere, possibly through jokes when appropriate, and certainly through positive reinforcement
- Creativity (promoting it and using it ourselves)
- Cross-curricular activities
- Admit our own struggles; be relatable
- Be prepared. Be super prepared.
- Personalize the instruction to our audience, if and when possible.
- Grades and scholarships
- Different forms of expectations (high vs. low, clear vs. unclear, etc)
- Development of useful skills, and enforcing over and over again how important the developmental process is

What De-Motivates Students?

- Lack of preparation
- Negative reinforcement, scolding, chiding, making fun of them
- Unclear expectations
- Saying things in the middle of a demonstration like "This is easy" or "This is trivial"
- Lack of feedback
- Tardiness; teacher coming to class late

- Lack of control of the classroom
- Being a “jerk”
- Tricking students in things like exams, possibly by using improper or imprecise wording, or giving problems that are of a completely different format and nature than, say, homework problems, on an assessment

What De-Motivates The Instructor?

- Bad handwriting
- Grading too many problems or papers
- Lack of attention, or preoccupied students
- No participation