**14.1 Motivational Activities**

**Keeping students motivated**

* How do we keep students motivated?
* I would like to compare it to keeping a healthy successful marriage.
* Like passion, motivation eventually fades away, if we don’t feed it every day.
* It takes time, efforts and energy--but it is worthwhile.
* A motivated teacher keeps students motivated.
* If we have a passion for teaching, our students are more likely to show a passion for learning.
* However, if we don’t care about teaching, our students won’t care about learning.

**Involve the students**

* We may not keep our students motivated if we do not involve them and let them an active role in your classes.
* Long gone are the days when teachers talked for most of the lesson, with students taking a passive role.
* Classes need to be student-centered. The teacher should act as a coach and facilitator, to help, guide and direct the learning process.

**Give students the chance to shine**

* It is also very important to give students opportunity to be successful.
* Give them tasks where they can see the results of their efforts.
* That feeling ‘yes I did it’ that ‘ala’ feeling students get when they have done a difficult exercise, boost their motivation.

**Make learning fun**

* We need to make our classes memorable.
* Use games and competitions.
* Everybody loves competitions, and it gives students a nice opportunity to interact with each other, have fun and learn at the same time.

**Step away from the text books**

* Bring in the authentic material that our students connect with, and that matches their needs and interests. Create activities and show them that we are also prepared to put in a lot of efforts and time to help them succeed.

**Explain why the things are done in a certain way:**

* There is nothing more boring than a teacher telling students to open their books on a certain page and asking them to do a certain exercise.
* We need to explain them why it is important to do this exercise and what they are going to accomplish by doing it.

**Give very clear instructions**

* When setting a task, be clear and allow students time to prepare first and ask any question.
* There is nothing more frustrating for them than not being able to perform well, because they don’t understand the task. This is very important to students.
* They need to have a very clear idea of what they are supposed to do.

**Set clear, attainable goals for every lesson**

* Leave the class at a point when the students have a feeling of gaining something new.
* Start the lessons by writing down the lesson plan on the corner of the board, so that students know what they are going to learn.
* At the end of the class, point to the lesson plan and go over everything they have learned.
* It’s important for them to see where they are now, and where they will be taken next.

**Vary the social dynamics and include movements**

* Ask students to work in pairs or in groups.
* Get them out of their seats and moving.
* Ask them to change partners regularly.
* To keep the students’ attention, set a variety of engaging, meaningful activities, and create a friendly atmosphere where they feel they can talk freely and ask questions.

**Use different materials**

* We all know that our students prefer looking at a screen more than at a book, so, use visuals, flash cards, info graphics, quizzes and make use of new technology.
* There are plenty of sites that offer online quizzes, games or videos.
* As teachers, it’s up to us to seek-out new resources that may benefit our classes, and bring technology into our lessons in a great way to motivate students.
* We cannot expect our students to be motivated if we spend half the class doing endless grammar and vocabulary exercises.

**Don’t over correct**

* Avoid over--correcting, especially when students are speaking in front of the class.
* Don’t undermine their confidence by interrupting every single time they make a mistake.
* Listen to them, and when they finish, thank them for their contribution and point out one or two important mistakes they might have made.
* You can then remind students that making mistakes is a natural part of learning and that everybody makes mistakes, even the teachers.

**Believe in them**

* If we don’t believe that a particular student is going to complete his work, he probably won’t.
* So, stop assuming that they won’t, and start believing that they can do and they will do for sure.

**Be extremely encouraging:**

* Our words can extremely be powerful in inspiring them.
* Sometimes students who appear lazy are actually discouraged or frustrated that they are having trouble learning.
* But more importantly, we can encourage them by giving them one-on-one help and showing them that they can indeed do the work and be successful.
* It can make a world of difference when they see that they are capable of even small success.

**Make sure that students are the ones who are working:**

* The one who is working is the one who is learning.
* So, if we want our students to learn more, make sure they are actually working in our class, not just listening to lectures all the time.
* Plan the time when the students are working and the teacher is taking a round to help them one-on-one.
* Incorporating writing-to-learn is also another easy and powerful way to increase students’ engagement.

**Use memory work and recitation.**

* Although memory work has fallen out of favor in recent years, but that doesn’t mean that it is not a powerful tool.
* When the class cites facts and passages together, the students simply cannot help but learn them.
* We can make it interesting by adding variety to the recitation.

**Make learning fun**

* It is not necessary to intricate activities to make learning fun. Just be passionate about the teaching and let the passion shine through.
* Add some humor to the story telling, and simply show the kids that they can do it.
* Students enjoy learning when they feel that they are successful.

**Be wise with the homework**

* More homework does not necessarily means more learning.
* So, be considerate to students’ family time by only assigning homework that is truly valuable and necessary.
* When we limit the quantity of homework assignment, we can focus on quality and expect more from the students.

**Have one-on-one conversation**

* When a student has a chronic problem, get him aside and talk to him.
* Ask questions to try to understand why he is struggling, and ask him what needs to be changed so that he can be successful.
* Develop a plan together and then help student/s stick to it.

**Get the parents involved**

* This may sound impossible, but need not to give up on this one quite yet.
* Sometime, parents who seem to just not be interested in helping their kids are actually at a loss of what to do.
* So, give them some specific things they can do to help their kids, and see what happens.
* When speaking with the parents, solutions should remain a point of concentration rather than the problems.

**Help to the students needs to be more organized**

* Few things are more motivating for students than finishing their home work.
* Help them in organizing their book-bags, binders, lockers and folders.

**Praise**

* In capital letters, a ‘WELL DONE’ or ‘THAK YOU’ at the end of their contribution, even if their answer was not correct, will boost confidence a lot, especially for weaker students.
* There is always something positive to say.
* Start with the positive things, and then tactfully move on to what needs to be improved.

***“Teach them as we would like to be taught”. It is as simple as that.***