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Breaking the Norm: A Classroom without Incentives

Morgan Houk
Illinois Wesleyan University

Leah Nillas, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Breaking the Norm: A Classroom without Incentives

Morgan Houk and Leah Nillas*

Educational Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

Research Question

In what ways can a teacher promote intrinsic motivation to learn without the use of incentives as rewards?

Intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to engage in an activity for the internal satisfaction it provides (Kohn, 1993).

Literature Review

- Intrinsic motivation can be observed through student engagement and behavior in the classroom (Kohn, 1993).
- Student engagement can be defined as a "student's willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process" (Bomia, 1997).
- Student behavior can be defined as an action a student completes that can be observed (Bicard, 2011).
- Sieberer-Nagler (2015) concluded that teachers who maintain strong relationships with their students are more likely to create a classroom learning environment with minimal behavioral disruptions.
- Providing students with freedom of choice in various aspects of the classroom environment can cultivate student engagement (Thompson, 2015).
- Student interest and intrinsic motivation share a strong correlation to an impactful learning experience for students (LaSalle, 2015).

Results and Data Analysis

- As Thompson (2015) concluded, student engagement and behavior was increased when students were allowed choice and agency in an assignment.
- Correlating with the findings of LaSalle (2015), when students' personal interests were integrated into the material, they were more likely to show enthusiasm and think critically about the topic.
- Getting to know my students on an individual level led to overall improved classroom behavior.
- Students were most engaged during hands-on activities.
- Lesson plans that incorporated music and creative movement heightened engagement and satisfaction in students.
- Students were motivated to conquer optimally challenging tasks. In contrast, students became bored when a task was too easy and showed frustration when a task was too difficult.
- Intrinsic motivators varied from student to student.

Methodology

- The participants are a class of 25 first grade students.
- The students attend a K-5 elementary school that is located in Central Illinois.
- Implemented classroom management strategies that focused on cultivating intrinsic motivation through student engagement and student behavior without the use of incentives.
- Data collected in the form of daily field notes, weekly post-teaching reflections, and weekly anecdotal notes on each student.
- Data analyzed using Ryan and Bernard's (2003) coding strategies with a focus on repetition, linguistic connectors, and missing data.

Conclusion

- Teachers can promote intrinsic motivation to learn by providing their students with the freedom of choice in the work they are completing.
- Teachers can promote intrinsic motivation through strong relationships that are built on getting to know their students on an individual basis.
- Integrating students' interests in the curriculum keeps students engaged in the material.
- Further research is needed to determine effective teaching strategies that promote intrinsic motivation in students.