
Foreword

The concerned teacher said, “I have tried everything and I just cannot seem to find a way to engage John in American history! What can I do?” The principal’s reply involved a series of “did you try this?” and “did you try that?” questions. The brief conversation ended with little assistance for the excellent teacher, who was seeking to find a way to *motivate* her student(s) to be successful. As a busy middle school principal, I can attest to the reality of this hypothetical conversation with a number of excellent teachers and the inadequacy of time to address each concern.

In this book, *Increasing Student Motivation: Strategies for Middle and High School Teachers*, Dr. Margaret (Margie) Theobald succinctly identifies various motivational techniques which provide teachers with alternatives to implement as an answer to the hypothetical question above. Dr. Theobald identifies specific strategies which are centered around the creation of a positive, personal environment for learning for the “action-oriented” students of the 21st century. For example, she encourages teachers to provide action alternatives including “designing a floor plan for a house” or “creating a new lab experiment for a science class.” As I read the book, her choice of action words for the teacher’s role in utilizing the suggested alternatives is indicative of the role of the teacher. Amongst these the teacher should “provide,” “allow,” “ask,” “involve,” “help,” “expect,” “assign,” “encourage,” “give,” “offer,” and “teach”—referring both to teaching how to meet expectations as well as teaching content.

This book provides a wonderful resource for busy teachers, harried principals, and school improvement teams searching for methods designed to enhance the achievement of all students by providing them with tools for lifelong learning. Her approach to teaching is student focused and involves the engagement of students in the learning process.

Margie’s academic background, which includes graduate degrees in her teaching area, secondary administration, and curriculum and instruction, combined with her experience as a middle school teacher and college

professor, have given her a personal, firsthand opportunity to develop and implement multiple motivational strategies for her students. In addition, other professional experiences involving publication of educational literature including books, numerous articles, textbook reviews, as well as multiple presentations and workshops have exposed Dr. Theobald to the very best in current philosophy and implementation of the teaching act. She espouses the concept of student empowerment and responsibility. She believes that students must be involved in all aspects of their education. I have personally attended several of Margie's presentations over the years at both state and national conferences and have read many of the articles that she has written, and I recall her focus on student motivation.

I believe that this book fills an important niche in educational literature and will prove to be an invaluable resource for teachers, principals, and other educational personnel who work with students and are concerned about how to help students maximize their potential. With this book as a resource, the principal mentioned at the beginning of this foreword will have a resource to utilize in providing alternatives when caring teachers come with questions and concerns. In this day of increased accountability, maximizing student performance is a significant goal. This book helps to address significant issues related to student achievement.

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