

The Smart Connection

Newsletter for Students, Parents, and Educators
Smart Tutor Referrals
www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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News & Announcements

Referrals Please

Smart Tutor Referrals' reputation for professionalism and integrity in tutoring is unmatched in Victoria. We are proud to be supporting Victoria's families in education. We are a small business, owned and operated locally. Please refer students to us if they are looking for on-going, one-on-one support. We would be pleased to match them to a tutor.

Upcoming Workshops

The following STR workshop is being hosted by Pearkes Recreation Centre. To register, please call Pearkes at 475-5400, or register online at: www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/resident/recreation/prc.html

▶ Study Skills

date: Saturday, April 14, 2007
time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
cost: \$42

▶ Provincial Exam Prep

date: Saturday, June 2, 2007
time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
cost: \$65

Please contact us directly if you would like to arrange a workshop in your school or home.

Recent Testimonials

"Our tutor has been great. Our daughter needs a lot of attention and patience and usually loses focus within half an hour. The tutor has boosted her confidence. She now believes she can pass the course. He has also kept her focussed for up to 1.5 hours. She is happy to keep working with him."

mother of grade 10 math student

"Our tutor was very helpful to our son. They spent extra time together preparing before his last Socials exam and he got 90%!"

mother of Socials 10 student

Motivation

by Dahlia Miller

"Flogging will continue until morale improves.(??)"

Anonymous Joke

Where does motivation come from? It's a spark of energy and excitement that isn't easy to describe. Besides, what motivates one person might not spark any interest at all in another. Of course we are all different – but not that different. We all want to feel confident, interested, recognized for our abilities and engaged in useful work.

For students, motivation is especially important. A student's work takes many years to complete. Full-time study often requires students to study a subject they don't have a natural liking for. In order to learn, students must constantly push themselves outside of their comfort zone. These, and many other factors (including personal and parents' expectations) can test a student's persistence, interest-level, drive to achieve and self-esteem.

Motivation can come from inside or outside a person. Motivation through fear (for example, fear of a parent's reaction, fear of a low grade, fear of rejection from friends, fear of failure) is an example of external motivation. This type of motivation doesn't last. Fear can motivate, but the motivation to act disappears if the source of fear is removed. One cannot spark a person's desire with force. Internal motivation, on the other hand, comes from within and is generally considered to be more durable and self-enhancing.

Students who are motivated, are interested in what they are doing. They keep working even if they encounter difficulties. They obviously enjoy their work. There are lots of different pieces to the motivation puzzle. It's easier to be motivated if one has a healthy lifestyle – eating well, exercising often, and taking time to be with friends.

High self-esteem also contributes to motivation – if you think you can do it, you are more likely to want to try. Having reasonable expectations of one's performance, and positive support at home contribute to a student's motivation level. Personal interest in the course also helps, as does the enthusiasm of the instructor, and the instructors' interest in the students. Courses that cover material relevant to the student at an appropriate level of difficulty (with appropriate examples) are more likely to inspire motivation. As well, variety in learning activities and active involvement of students with the material make it easier to get geared up to achieve.

Some Reasons Students Become Unmotivated

- ▶ They aren't sure of the next step.
- ▶ They are unclear about what they are being asked to do.
- ▶ The goal is not their own.
- ▶ They think they won't be able to achieve the goal.
- ▶ They think they won't receive enough of a reward.
- ▶ They are trying to escape an authoritarian parent or teacher.

Sparking Motivation

True motivation comes from within, yet it is possible to spark a student's internal fire of motivation. There is a process to motivating others, though. It takes time and patience. It also takes skill to help a person to grow.

The first step to motivating a student is to talk with him or her. Sit down, ask what is important to him/her, and then use your listening muscles to hear what is being said. Questions you'll want to find the answers to in discussing motivation include:

- ▶ How does your student feel about the topic and studying?
- ▶ What is important to your student?
- ▶ What does your student think s/he is capable of accomplishing (i.e. any false

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

*Superior private tutoring
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. Each is carefully screened and selected to match individual students' needs.

We help students to achieve.

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Contact Us

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ceilings)?

- ▶ What is your student expecting to happen with the topic and his/her learning?

- ▶ What does your student think are the sources of his/her lack of motivation?

- ▶ Again, what is important to your student?

The more you understand your student, the better you'll be able to appeal to his/her true interests and values.

Tips to Creating an Environment that Sparks Internal Motivation

- ▶ Gather information about the student's interests, energy and confidence— talk with parents, teachers, but most importantly with the student.

- ▶ Discuss your student's current level, ability and motivation.

- ▶ Discuss your student's concrete goals.

What does s/he want to have learned, by when, and how will s/he know if the goal has been achieved?

- ▶ Consider the best approach for your student. Talk with your student about your ideas. Lay your plan out on a timeline; starting from the present, show the steps you'll take together to reach his/her goals. Having concrete goals and clear steps can help to alleviate vague fears.

- ▶ Express your belief in the process and in your student's ability to succeed. Knowing that someone else believes in you can be a powerful motivator.

- ▶ Be sure that your student sees the benefits of changing his/her habits, if necessary. (Remember it has to be a benefit from the student's point of view.)

- ▶ Brainstorm rewards for accomplishments. (A bit of conditioning comes in handy when you are working with someone to facilitate a change in habits!) Match your rewards to your student...do they want time off, a treat, a pat on the back, to play a game, money, tickets to a concert, recognition...

Tips For Creating Motivating Tutorials, Classes & Homework Time

- ▶ Use positive feedback and encouragement often. Be specific and brief when discussing mistakes.

- ▶ Tutorials ought to be a safe environment to make mistakes. Be sure

to give work that is appropriate to the student's level and then encourage experimentation.

- ▶ Help your student feel valued as a learner and an important part in the learning community. When possible allow your student to choose what will be studied.

- ▶ Build on your student's strengths. You might, for example, use your student's strength in math to build self-esteem and willingness to challenge in reading.

- ▶ Break each task into smaller tasks – completing small steps can foster a sense of accomplishment.

- ▶ Celebrate the small and big steps along the way. People love to be loved. If we're getting a lot of positive reinforcement for doing something, we're much more likely to want to keep doing it.

- ▶ Hold high but realistic expectations. Emphasize mastery and understanding rather than grades.

- ▶ Help to set up schedules or prioritized lists to keep your student stay on track.

- ▶ Be enthusiastic about the topic and about learning.

- ▶ Make it fun.

- ▶ Be interested and interesting. Offer interesting exercises and topics for discussion; give your undivided attention. Take the time to mentor and model a healthy relationship to learning – be curious and look for answers.

- ▶ Give clear directions or clarify what is being asked. When people know what's expected of them, they're more likely to try to meet expectations.

- ▶ Offer helpful support along the way – help find solutions (rather than simply presenting the solutions). If you notice your student having difficulty with something, offer assistance in working through the problem.

- ▶ Show the relevance of the topic to the world beyond the textbook. It can be especially great if the work can be related to one of the student's values or interests.

- ▶ Help your student find personal meaning and value in the material – help your student see success as a valuable aspect of his/her personality.

“Help people become more motivated by guiding them to the source of their own power.”

Paul G. Thomas