2 SIMPLE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MOTIVATE YOUR STUDENTS

*** Increase Participation * Reduce Disruption * Improve Attitudes ***

Student MOTIVATION Made Simple

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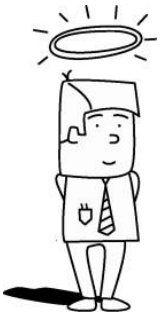

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Student MOTIVATION

Made Simple

2 Simple Steps You Can Take to Motivate Your Students

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About the author

Rob Plevin runs training courses internationally for teachers, lecturers, parents and care workers on needs-focused teaching, behaviour management, student motivation & mindfulness. His live workshops are frequently described as 'unforgettable' and his materials are used in thousands of schools worldwide. His 'Noisy Class' video is the highest ranking video on YouTube for the term 'classroom management'.

"We were delighted to be able to get Rob Plevin in to work with our Teach First participants. From the start his dynamic approach captivated the group and they were enthralled throughout. We will be inviting Rob back on every possible occasion to work with all of our participants and trainees."
Terry Hudson, Regional Director 'Teach First', Sheffield Hallam University

*"I found Rob Plevin's workshop **just in time to save me from giving up**. It should be compulsory - everybody in teaching should attend a Needs-Focused workshop and meet the man with such a big heart who will make you see the important part you can play in the lives of your most difficult pupils."*
Heather Beames, Teacher, London course attendee

To book Rob for INSET or to enquire about live training please visit:
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Introduction

When I think back to my own early days as a teacher I remember it being almost impossible to get some groups motivated and it frustrated the hell out of me. I would continually ask myself "Where is the 'on' switch for these kids? How do I get them INTERESTED? Why won't they LISTEN to me? How can I get them to see a point in learning and believe that they *can* succeed?"

Some students *really* got me down with their negativity. They had that 'I-couldn't-care-less' attitude which was contagious and affected the others in the class. It was written all over their faces before they even walked in the room... "I don't want to be here and you can't make me work."

Then there were those who were intent on 'ruining' the lesson. They would make it their mission to disrupt the other students and prevent the activities from happening. There were incessant talkers; not 'bad' kids but they found talking to each other *far* more interesting than listening to me. The 'wanderers' – students who would spend the bulk of the lesson out of the seats; the 'jokers' – those likable but tiring kids who just didn't know when to stop and, of course, the 'lazy' students who didn't seem interested in anything at all.

Sadly, the subject of how to motivate these students isn't taught in Teacher Training Camp despite it being one of the most important skills a teacher can have. It is one of the key components of effective teaching AND classroom management because if students are not motivated & engaged in the lesson they will cause even more disruption along with all the other associated classroom management problems.

So how do you motivate a student who simply *doesn't care?* How do you motivate a student who is totally *opposed to learning?* How do you motivate students who are *apathetic, lazy, disinterested*... and *disruptive?*

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Hopefully this little report will give you some ideas. I'm going to start by giving you two helpful steps to take and then a few lists of ideas you can implement in your classroom straight away. Let's get started with step 1...

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Step #1: Stop Doing What DOESN'T Work – Realise That You CAN'T Motivate Your Students!

Motivating your students is EASY isn't it? I mean, come on, all you've got to do is promise them a reward. If you offer a group of teenagers a crisp $10/£5 note to copy some numbers and letters from the board they'll be finished in no time.

There you go, Student Motivation Made Simple – just promise them a cash reward.

There are a few problems with rewards though – even wads of cash. For one thing they only work if the students already possess the skills you're trying to help them develop. Offer the same $10/£5 reward in return for performing some advanced algebra with the numbers and letters they just copied down and you'll get a much different result from your students. Those who have the skills to do the task *may* work a little harder to get the reward but for those who don't have a clue about algebra, the reward won't help at all. If anything, seeing other students happily working their way to some extra money for the weekend – when they have no hope of doing so - will only add to their frustration.

Besides, the effectiveness of rewards wears out over time. Students who become conditioned to expect rewards feel *entitled* to receiving more and more. "OK, I'll do as you say, but what are you going to give me in return?" is the stock response, followed a few days later with "Er OK, I'll do what you want again but I want something better this time."

Another problem with rewards is that they take the focus away from the actual task – rather than motivating a student to put more effort into their work, they are usually just motivated to get their hands on the reward. Study after study has found that interest in the task at hand actually *decreases* when rewards are used as an attempt to improve performance.

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OK, what about punishments? If your students can't be coerced or 'bribed' into a doing a task with a fat, juicy reward, surely they can be brow-beaten with a sufficiently threatening penalty? Well, yes and no. Some students can, but the students who do fear threats and punishments are those who usually conform anyway. The hard cases have heard it all before and couldn't care less. And bigger punishments don't work that well either; most of the time they only create a bigger divide between teacher and student. Building resentment isn't a good way to get the best out of people.

This is where most teachers go wrong when trying to motivate their students - they are under the false impression that you can *make* children motivated – with either carrots or sticks. *Real* motivation doesn't work like that; you can't FORCE people to be motivated. Trying to control things you have no real control over can be incredibly stressful and frustrating. You've no-doubt already discovered that. ☺

A much better way to get your students engaged is to forget trying to control them and instead create a situation where your they are naturally motivated, from *within*. You do this by focusing on the only things you really *can* truly control.

Let's move on to step 2 to find out what they are...

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Step #2: Make Sure You FOCUS On The Right TYPE Of Motivation

If you think about it, we are all born with our motivation button having been fully pre-pressed. Watch any young child and you will see natural, internal motivation in action – they *want* to discover, they *need* to explore, they absolutely *must* touch, taste, push and pull. They don't need to be bribed or coerced into learning more about something new. There is no need for rewards or threats because their motivation is *intrinsic*, it comes from inside, driven by a desire to learn.

THIS is the kind of motivation we are looking for; the kind of motivation that has students engaged and involved for the enjoyment of the task itself – not because they are trying to earn a merit mark or avoid a detention.

So how do we do it?

"Desire is the key to motivation"

Mario Andretti

It's not hard to see that desires have a lot to do with raising *real* motivation in the classroom because the only way a person will be truly motivated to do something is if they actually *want* to do it. But where does this desire come from and how can we, as teachers, tap into it and create a situation in which our students *want* to take part?

The answer to this perplexing question... and the secret to increasing intrinsic motivation in the classroom, (get this right and you'll never need to resort to carrots and sticks again), lies in...

...**providing a learning environment in which your students' key psychological needs are being met.**

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Definition: 'Need'

To most psychologists, a need is a feature that arouses an organism to action toward a goal, giving purpose and direction to behaviour.

Our needs are *crucial* to human motivation – they cause us to do what we do, they make behaviour happen. At a very basic level, for example, we all have a need for food and this drives us to get off the sofa, make a sandwich and eat it. If we weren't able to find food this particular need would not be satisfied and we'd have to take careers as fashion models. Eventually, of course, we'd starve to death.

That's an extreme example involving our most basic survival needs. Missing out on a psychological need isn't likely to result in death but it *would* have a significant effect on our overall sense of wellbeing. Satisfaction of our psychological needs is vitally important if we are to feel content and fulfilled and has as much, if not more, influence over our behaviour.

As you know, this theory is not new (although the fashion model bit is a late addition). The theory of needs-driven motivation was first proposed by Abraham Maslow and is supported by many psychologists including Professor David McClellan in "The Achieving Society" and Dr William Glasser in "Choice Theory". The idea being, that people are intrinsically motivated to continually try to meet one or more of the psychological needs which form part of their genetic structure.

So, which psychological needs in particular are relevant? Well, there is no definitive list, it depends a lot on which psychologist or theorist you're talking to, but we at Behaviour Needs believe they can be categorised into just three broad groups to keep things nice and simple. These three groups of psychological needs are the foundation of a very reliable method for raising intrinsic motivation in your students...

1. The need for **Belonging**; the need to love and be loved, to be appreciated, valued, needed and connected.

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2. The need for **Empowerment**; the need to feel competent, to succeed & achieve (and be recognised for those achievements) as well as being free to make choices & be autonomous.

3. The need for **Fun**; the need for excitement & adventure, variety, amusement, entertainment and surprise.

Not convinced? To highlight how need-satisfaction (in particular, satisfaction of the three groups of needs I've just mentioned) plays a part in motivating your students, let's look at something which holds almost universal appeal for them - particularly unmotivated boys. You guessed it; game consoles.

Every young boy in your class is likely to spend a large slice of his life playing one of these things, and not because he is forced or bribed to, but because he desperately *wants* to. He might not be able to sit still and concentrate on his work for more than five minutes at a time yet he will happily sit for hours on end playing a computer game; often in preference to eating and sleeping.

So what are the features of computer games which make them so appealing? If we could somehow integrate these same features into our lessons, we'd stand a very good job of raising intrinsic motivation, right?

In a study on this issue, psychologists at the University of Rochester asked 1,000 gamers what motivated them to keep playing. The results published in the journal *Motivation and Emotion* suggested that people enjoy video games **because they find them *intrinsically satisfying***. The research found that games can provide opportunities for achievement, freedom, and, in the case of online communities, a connection to other players.

> *"We think there's a deeper theory than the **fun** of playing. It's our contention that the psychological 'pull' of games is largely due to their capacity to*

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> *engender feelings of **autonomy**, **competence**, and **relatedness**."*
>
> **Richard M. Ryan**, motivational psychologist at the University of Rochester

Did you catch that? According to the researchers, the allure of video games is largely rooted in their capacity engender feelings of autonomy and competence (**empowerment**), relatedness (**belonging**) and, of course, **fun**. (Nobody could argue that users don't have fun when they play).

So, hopefully you'll agree that satisfying your students' psychological needs is a fairly dependable way to increase intrinsic motivation. Even if the research on computer games hasn't convinced you, I'm sure you can see that it's basic common sense. We CAN'T get the best from our students through punishment and reward, we have to be smarter than that and the Needs Focused Approach offers a sensible, logical solution.

OK, the theory is all well and good but I know what you really want – practical stuff you can use in your classroom. So how do we go about satisfying these student needs within the constraints of the day-to-day classroom setting?

This is achieved by altering the only areas over which we have direct control in the classroom (**Hint:** It's NOT the students)...

...the lesson delivery/teaching styles we adopt, the learning environment we create and the activities & tasks we present.

In the remainder of this report I'll briefly go through some of the ways you can make provision for your students to meet these three important groups of needs.

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Meeting the need to Belong

(Belonging includes the need to love and be loved, to be appreciated, valued, needed and connected).

School, and your classroom, needs to be a place where all students feel at home. They need to feel almost as if they are part of a 'family' where they will always be accepted and valued.

While students *thrive* on social contact, teachers must strike a balance between providing opportunities as an aid to motivation while making sure they are productive & appropriate. Encouraging students to interact more during the lesson isn't just about letting them chat, sit next to their mates or go off for breaks together.

There are many ways to improve relationships and build a 'community' within the classroom such as setting up structured discussions, cooperative work activities, team-building activities, peer support programs, group games, pair work & collaborative problem solving. These ideas are covered in more detail in my forthcoming 'Motivate the Noisy Class' e-course if you would like additional guidance. For now, here are a few extra ideas to make students feel connected & cared for...

Ten Ways To Build Community and Develop Positive Relationships

1. Provide support: Have a variety of support systems in place so that students can access support in multiple ways without taking up all your time. E.g. have a suggestion box, a FAQ section on your class blog for each topic you're teaching, a text service, peer support program etc. Encourage students to use these options *before* asking you for help.

2. Make frequent contact with parents/carers: Call home, phone home, write home. Do it regularly and frequently to build the connection with parents and show students that you are all collaborating for their benefit.

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3. Peer assessment: students receive each other's drafts throughout the semester and one by one the whole class peer reviews the drafts. Students learn from other student papers and gain critical feedback on their own paper. In other words, every paper is read by every student, and every student must provide feedback.

4. Names: Take students' pictures on the first day of class and use them to memorise their names. If you struggle to do this use the '*Easy Way to Learn Student Names*' in Take Control of the Noisy Class. Once you've learned their names (you should be able to do it in a single lesson) make sure to use their names every time you address them. This builds community and shows you value every student – there must be nothing worse for a student than to be in a class where the teacher doesn't even think enough of them to bother to learn their name.

5. Share: Share (appropriate) details and stories about your own my personal life so students can get to know you better. The more you let them into your life, the more they will trust you and let you into theirs.

6. Get on their level: Pay attention to the books your students read, the films they watch, the TV shows they like, the music they're into etc. Find out their hobbies and interests – it gives you something to talk about with them and talking is the best way to build your relationship with them.

7. Get them to coach each other: Ask students to pick an example from their prior experiences & knowledge (interests, hobbies, coursework etc.). Then show them how to teach the key points to another student. Swap partners to get students mixing and sharing with each other.

8. Team-building: Split the class into groups and set up team-building challenges/exercises once a week or once a month. Do a search on Google for 'Team-Building Exercises' and look for those requiring little/no equipment. You students will appreciate these sessions and while it will be difficult to link them specifically to

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curriculum topics, the long term benefits they will have on your students is time well invested.

9. Make students feel 'welcome': Always greet students warmly at the door and in the corridor with a smile, a brief chat and a hand-shake or a 'High-Five'.

10. Show you care: Each week ask all your students if there is anything you can do to make the lessons more appealing or if there is anything you can do to help them in any way. You can do this verbally to the group, on a 1:1 basis or in written form – with a 'suggestion box'.

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Meeting the need for Empowerment

(Empowerment includes the need to feel competent, to succeed & achieve, to be recognised for those achievements and to be free to make choices).

Achievement brings a feeling of personal satisfaction and accomplishment and this is real internal motivation – if a person feels satisfied that they have reached a level of success or competency, there is no need for external reward of any kind. Achievement is met by providing interesting work at the appropriate level of challenge (think 'Goldilocks' – not too easy, not too hard; *just right*), and by giving excellent guidance, encouragement & support along the way.

Another way to empower students is to give them some sense of autonomy or choice in the learning process. Giving your students options and choices can be as simple as letting them pick their partners or select from a list of alternate lesson tasks; or as complex as creating new classroom systems and having input on lesson delivery.

12 Ways to help your students experience Success and Achievement

1. Test often. Give several smaller "low-risk" assignments in addition to "high-risk" mid-terms and finals. This helps build knowledge & confidence throughout the term and shows students what they are learning

2. Teach thoroughly: Teach the steps of any process so that students have the tools they need to be successful:

- Use acronyms to remind them of the various steps
- After each step, stop and get them to explain the preceding step back to you
- For more complex steps ask which students understand and then get them to teach others who don't

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3. Involve them in the whole process: Have conversations with them about why we do what we do and what we hope they get out of it. Then ask them what we can change for them to help them achieve more.

4. Make work relevant to their lives: If they can see a point in the work there is more chance they will buy into it. Link topic to Youtube clips, films, TV shows and the news. Can't think how you could link your topic to their life? Just link it to one of these SUREFIRE student topics… (in no particular order) blood/guts/gore/horror, The Simpsons, Any current Xbox/PS3 game, Current blockbuster film, Skins, Hollyoaks, A place they all congregate at night (local park/mall),

5. "Real World Example" Project: Tell students to create a brochure highlighting a way the topic in question is used in the "real world." They must give an example of the topic complete with pictures, famous person-links, locations, statistics etc.

6. Give step-by-step directions. Give students a jumble of directions for the activity and ask them to sort them into the correct order. Going through this ordering process will help cement the steps they are to take during the activity.

7. Checklist: Give students a checklist for each assignment detailing exactly what is required from them. Encourage them to 'tick off' each feature as they go along.

8. Multiple styles: Give instructions in different ways to account for differing learning styles. Some students may appreciate an audio recording, some will need an active demonstration and some will be happy with written instructions.

9. Skill focus: Give a mini-test. Assess/mark as soon as possible – students can mark each others' papers. Identify the weak areas – questions which most students found difficult and then run a 'focus workshop' on these questions. Teach these questions thoroughly, use memory hooks, get students to teach each other etc. When you are satisfied they have all met the learning outcomes test them again to show them how much they have progressed.

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10. Reflections: Have students reflect on a learning experience and talk about how it felt and how they might do things differently in future to improve.

One of the keys is that the activity has to be 'low pressure' – it has to be something which although challenging, they see as possible. It also has to be interesting.

11. Choices: There are lots of opportunities to give students more choice – one of the simplest is to give them options in terms of lesson activities. Write five different tasks up on the board on the same topic – e.g. 'annotate this diagram', produce a mind-map, 'write a quiz', complete questions 1-010 from the textbook', 'produce a PowerPoint presentation' etc. and tell them to complete ANY THREE of their choice during the lesson.

12. Reinforce successes: It's empowering for students to realise that they have done something right and to be aware of the progress they've made. This is not achieved by merely acknowledging or rewarding their efforts but by getting them to take a moment to *stop* and *think* about what they've done so that they internalise the behaviour and thereby increase the likelihood of them repeating it. One way to do this is simply to ask them how they did it...

"Hey Jonny, you've managed to work independently for the last fifteen minutes. How did you do that? So if I asked you to work independently again how would you do it?"

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Meeting the need for Fun

Fun evokes positive emotions and encompasses all that is interesting and enjoyable - variety, humour/laughter, jokes, interaction, colour, music, laughter, excitement, discovery, intrigue, novelty, surprise and challenge. Fun rejuvenates, energises, uplifts stimulates and invigorates.

"In my 30 years of investigating people's associations with the word 'study', ten major words or concepts have emerged. They are: boring, exams, homework, waste of time, punishment, irrelevant, detention, hate, fear."

Tony Buzan

Eight ways to make learning FUN & Interesting

1. Have a GREAT opening: While some very tough, disruptive groups may benefit from a calm and settled start to the lesson, most groups will appreciate a novel, unusual, fun activity which grabs their attention and establishes positive attitudes.

2. Be enthusiastic (& show it!): Enthusiasm is contagious – you can't expect students to be motivated if *you're* not motivated. See yourself as a performer, put some energy into demonstrations and teacher-talk sessions and continually let your students know that you *enjoy* being their teacher.

3. Be DIFFERENT: Do the unexpected to liven up a lesson – sing the instructions, wear a silly hat and a false moustache, put some crazy music on during transitions to signify the changeover, rearrange the furniture, turn off the lights/play a loud drum roll immediately before announcing every key point, teach without talking, dress up as a waiter and give each table group 'star' treatment for a lesson etc.…

4. Hooks: Kids LOVE memory hooks and they are often ASTOUNDED by the amount of information they can learn and remember once they are taught clever systems to

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help them do so. If you don't know anything about memory hooks, just Google the term 'memory hooks'.

5. Drama & Role-play: Not all your students will immediately take to role-play and drama. In fact, many of the less-flamboyant souls will find it very daunting at first but by introducing the opportunities *gradually* – as starter activities and fill-in games - you will find this to be very popular as a learning tool.

6. Mystery: Mysteries encourage students to think and they appeal to students of all abilities a) because they involve discovery, and b) because there is no single correct answer. This type of activity is infinitely more engaging than a typical information retrieval/comprehension task. Through the process of deciding which information is relevant and then discussing ideas students get to practice and develop crucial skills such as sorting information, forming hypotheses and, of course, social skills. To use mysteries in any topic simply present your students with a limited amount of information in the form of 'clues' (letters, samples of text, pictures, tables of results etc.) and then pose any/all of the questions below.

What happened here?
Who/what do you think caused it?
What do you think would have made it bigger/better?
How could it have been prevented?
What do think will happen next?

7. Themes: Special 'theme' days bring a touch of magic to the classroom and can energise a bored, listless group. Themes can be related to the topic – 'Titanic', 'Romans' etc. or they can just be a bit of fun 'No Complaining Day', 'Funny Hat Day' etc. With some imagination and creativity there is no limit to how far you can take a theme – some teachers will decorate their entire classrooms in line with the current teaching topic to bring it to life.

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8. Props: A prop box full of silly hats, masks, clothes, wigs, jokes etc. is a fun classroom 'must-have'. Use the props whenever you want to make a particular point or get the students to wear them for recall activities ("answer the question in the style of a Rock Star and wear this crazy wig while doing so") and role-play.

Include inflatable and over-sized items as well as clothes, hats and 'toys'. Wear huge plastic ears when noise levels get too high, a big inflatable hammer can take care of students who are just starting to go off the boil, a big 'Roving Report's microphone is a much better way to ask for answers than 'hands up', a bike horn can signify the end of activities, a Stetson, Sheriffs badge and toy pistols can be used to deal with students who get answers wrong in quizzes etc.

Ten Ways To Make Learning Active:

1. Random Link-up: After working through a concept, give students random objects. In groups they come up with connections between the ideas discussed in the topic/concept and the random object. Groups then share their ideas with the whole class.

2. Ten Minute Tutorials: Students choose a theme-based topic they feel they could teach the class (for 10 minutes). They practice with each other in groups to get feedback/develop their presentations and then present to the class in turn.

3. Group tutorials: Split class into groups of 4. Give them roles, presentation materials and 20 minutes to study/prepare. They then make a 10-minute group presentation

4. Whiteboard Carousel: Have dry wipe boards installed around the classroom and create activities that send students to these boards in groups to work out problems, brainstorm, draw, write etc. before moving to the next stage. Once the teacher has assessed their work (could use digital camera if pressed for time) they move to next stage/board.

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5. Mobiles: Create mobiles that represent information. When students read a novel or a section in the textbook, have them draw pictures that illustrate the concept or events and hang it on a mobile.

6. Paper chains: Each student writes one fact on a strip of construction paper. Have the class stand in front of the room. The first student reads their strip and then folds it in a circle while you staple it. The next student reads their fact and then attaches their strip to the chain. Continue through the entire class.

7. Mini-Reviews: Mini Reviews can be used to inject some energy into the lesson at any stage. They are also a very effective way to reinforce any piece of learning. Students remember very little from a lesson if they only hear the information – possibly as little as 10%. When they are given chance to repeat it, this figure goes up dramatically.

There are a range of Teach Back activities included with Take Control of the Noisy Class. Here's one as an example… Students stand in a circle rapidly passing a soft ball around the circle as the teacher plays music or repeatedly says, "Pass" At random intervals, the teacher will stop the music or call out "Stop!" The student holding the ball at that point will have to answer a question or call out a fact they have learned during the lesson.

8. Road Trip: Give students a simple map of the school/classroom with 'places of interest' marked on. Place different 'stop' signs around the school or classroom to mark the place of interest and attach sheets of paper with reading text or activities to complete at each stop. Students must "travel" to each place and complete the activity Give students a "passport" that must be stamped at each "stop" on their trip.

9. Envelopes: Give envelopes to pairs of students as they enter the room. Envelopes could contain…

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- ✓ A list of statements for students to agree or disagree with or put in a 'True' or 'False' pile
- ✓ A jumbled list of events to put in order
- ✓ A list of people and places to match with information about them or photographs of them
- ✓ A list of causes and effects to match up

10. Expert interviews and surveys: Students get out into the real world and either interview an expert (online or in person) or collect data through surveys before presenting findings in a presentation.

I hope you enjoyed this free report. I've got a quick question for you before I sign off…

Would You Like To Use The Needs Focused Approach™ (& Our Very Engaging Resources) to Motivate YOUR Students?

"I have become a much better teacher using the needs focused lessons. I have seen nothing short of miracles occur. My students' attitudes and behaviours have improved, they are excited and personally involved in their educational experience! What more could I ask? My E books have become my bible!!!

My son is currently attending University to become a teacher. Make what you provide a mandatory part of their teaching degree and we could really change the lives of future generations! I truly am a disciple!!!!!. Love you guys."

Dawn H (Lesson-ology™ customer)

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