Chapter Nine

Creating Motivation

Beyond Weaning

A successful weaning program must build independent learning so that the teacher's time is no longer consumed during Guided Practice with tutoring the helpless handraisers. Once the teacher's time is liberated, possibilities open up for the management of *motivation* and *accountability* that were not previously available.

This chapter will focus on *motivation* – the building of *diligence* in the classroom. The following chapter will focus on *accountability* – the building of *excellence* in the classroom.

What tools can the teacher bring into play in the classroom to give students a reason to be diligent – to work hard? For many students, working hard on school assignments is a novel idea. How can the teacher build a good work ethic in these students – one that is often lacking?

Focus on Motivation

During training, teachers express as much frustration with students who *won't do anything* as with students who disrupt. These are the apathetic students who say:

"Do we have to do this?"

"This is boring."

"We did this last year."

"This stuff is dumb."

Preview

- The management of productivity in the classroom focuses on building *diligence* (working hard) and *excellence* (working conscientiously).

- In order to get more and better work, we must answer the basic question of motivation, "Why should I?" The answer to this question is called an *incentive*.

- A simple incentive is the juxtaposition of two events: a task and a preferred activity. The best preferred activities in the classroom combine fun with learning.

- Since preferred activities can only be given after the task has been completed correctly, work must be checked as it is being done.

- Say, See, Do Teaching plus the weaning of helpless handraisers frees the teacher to check work in the classroom during Guided Practice rather than at home.

How do you motivate the student who simply *does not care?* Motivation is a very complex topic. There are many reasons for the failure of students to apply themselves in school. A few of them we can control, but most of them we cannot.

Things We Do Not Control

A student's attitude toward learning is largely a function of *enrichment in the home environment.* One of the largest single correlates of success in reading during first grade is the amount the child has been read to *before* first grade. Contrast a home in which snuggling with children and reading is a daily nurturing ritual with a home in which books are not present and neglect is the norm. However, you have no control over the student's home life.

Abusive child rearing practices can also seriously handicap a child in school. A child raised by the "yell and hit" method of parenting is likely to harbor a deep resentment toward adult authority. That resentment will be transferred to the teacher once the child comes to school. There are few handicaps to learning greater than a habitual passive-aggressive response to the teacher's instruction. However, you cannot quickly alter the child's personality.

A student's attitude toward learning is also a function of the *ills of society.* Drugs, violence, and constant danger stunt a child's imagination and dreams. However, we cannot wait until the ills of society have been cured before we begin to teach.

A student who has been allowed to substitute *television and video games* for reading may show a short attention span and little interest in classroom tasks. However, you will not have influence over the child's access to video.

We do have some control over the curriculum, but this is not a book about the *content* of instruction. This is a book about the *process* of instruction. What elements of the instructional process do we control that might increase the students' motivation to learn?

Things We Do Control

We do control the students' experience of learning in our classrooms? We can affect the students' willingness to work if we create a learning experience that has crucial elements of motivation built into it.

Our management of academic productivity will focus on two things:

- *Quantity* of work or diligence
- *Quality* of work or excellence

Ideally, we would like the students to *work hard* (diligence), and we would like them to *work conscientiously* (excellence). If we can gain some leverage over these two aspects of performance, we can go a long way toward overcoming disadvantages that children bring from outside of the classroom.

A Dynamic Tension

When students work on a task, quantity and quality are constantly in dynamic tension. If students work too fast, quality suffers. But if they obsess, quantity suffers.

Ideally, we would like students to work as fast as they can *short* of becoming sloppy – to push hard without pushing *too* hard. This balance point between diligence and excellence

> ## Productivity
>
> The management of productivity in the classroom focuses on:
>
> - **Quantity** – diligence or "working hard"
> - **Quality** – excellence or "working carefully"

is different for each student depending on his or her ability, and it varies from one subject to another.

Discovering Our Own Limits

We have all gone through a process of discovery in learning our own limits with various types of tasks. We have gone too rapidly and made mistakes. And, we have gone too slowly and failed to finish. We try to function somewhere between *haste makes waste* and *get on the ball and hustle!*

By pushing ourselves, we learn that we can accomplish much more than we might have thought possible. When we have a deadline, for example, we focus our attention and mobilize our resources. When we want to do something badly enough, we usually can.

But, we must *want to*. To learn our limits we must *push* ourselves. Finding out what we can accomplish in different areas when we really try is part of discovering who we really are.

Incentives

Why Should I?

Before we will push ourselves to define our own capabilities, we must have a reason to do so. We must have a good answer to the question underlying any discussion of motivation: "*Why should I?*"

Why should I get to work right now? Why should I concentrate so hard? Why should I keep working when I would love to take another break? Why should I stay up late studying when I would love to just "hit the sack?"

> **Incentives answer the question, 'Why should I?'**

Without a good reason, we will effortlessly slip into our comfort zone. Our minds will wander and our hands will slow down as we unconsciously reduce stress.

Any answer to the question, "Why should I?" is called an *incentive*. The term "incentive" is interchangeable with the term "reinforcer." Incentives or reinforcers produce work.

You may *offer* a person a reward for doing something, but until they are willing to *work* in order to obtain it, you cannot say that the reward functioned as a reinforcer.

Incentives Drive Decision Making

Life is full of incentives. Showing interest in what a person says can serve as an incentive for that person's continuing to talk to you. A parent's love and approval can serve as an incentive for a child's cooperation.

The opposite of an incentive is a *disincentive*. While incentives give you a reason to do something, disincentives give you a reason to stop.

For example, a child might be sent to a piano teacher only to discover that, because of a lack of any natural ability, progress is agonizingly slow and the price of that progress is agonizingly high. The toil might provide a disincentive for continuing with the piano.

A second child, being gifted, might find that progress is rapid and adulation from proud parents comes at a very reasonable price. This child might find practicing the piano reinforcing. Thus, an activity that is a disincentive for one child may serve as an incentive for another child.

Incentives are, therefore, a matter of *cost* and *benefit*. An experience in which the benefit outweighs the cost tends to be repeated.

Incentive Systems

We call an incentive along with the structure for delivering it an *incentive system*. When teachers plan ways of getting students to work hard or be conscientious, they are designing incentive systems.

Types of Incentive Systems

Informal Incentive Systems

Most incentive systems in family life are *informal*. The universal incentive in child rearing is *love*. Love is both a bond and a motivator. Children who love their parents will often do things to please their parents.

One of the most important jobs of parents, therefore, is to spend a lot of time giving affection to their children – to cuddle and play, to rough-house and horsey ride, to snuggle and read stories. These "good times" serve many purposes – bonding, brain development, and emotional growth to name a few.

One purpose, however, is to establish the parents as powerful reinforcers in their children's lives. Most of the cooperation that parents eventually get from their children will be based upon all of the emotional "money in the bank" that has been stored up over the years.
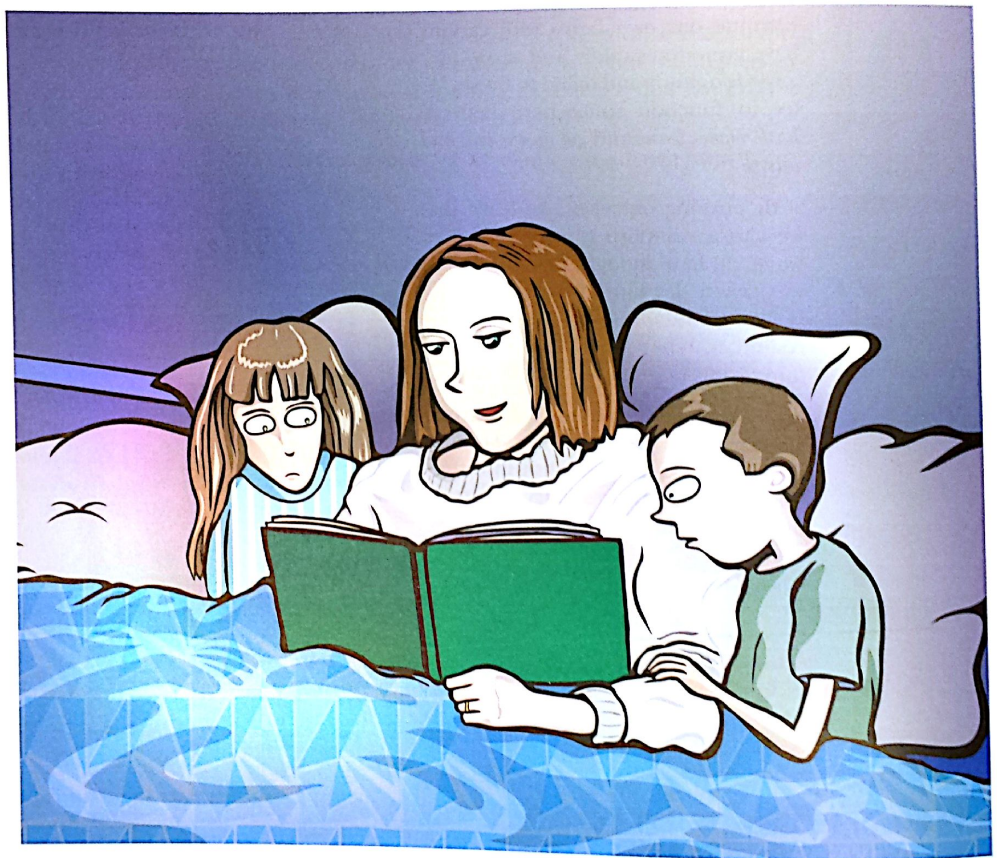
As soon as you are ready for bed, it will be story time.

If, for example, you ask your twelve-year-old to carry the groceries in from the car, and he or she says, "Okay," realize that your child has just given you a gift. But you have paid for it with all of the love and good times that you and your child have shared over the years. You have just received a small dividend check from your account in the bank.

Formal Incentive Systems

Some incentive systems in life are *formal*. They represent an agreed upon exchange of goods and services. Your paycheck is such an incentive.

Around the house, most of the formal incentive systems that we use as parents are simply routines to get the kids to do things. These routines are well understood in advance.

The one I remember most clearly from my childhood was "the bedtime routine." My mother would say:

"All right kids, it is 8:30 – time to get ready for bed. Time to wash your face, brush your teeth, and get your pajamas on. As soon as you are in bed, it will be story time. But, lights out at 9:00."

As you can see, the terms of the arrangement were no mystery. The faster we moved, the more time we had for snuggles and stories.

Formal incentives and informal incentives work together. No matter what the formal incentive, we always try harder for someone we love and respect.

Formal Incentives in the Classroom

In the classroom teachers will need both informal and formal incentives to motivate students. Students will naturally work harder for teachers they like.

However, formal incentives will play a more prominent role in the classroom than they do in family life. For one

thing, the students don't know you, much less love you, on the first day of school. And, for another thing, some students resent you just because they resent any adult authority who tries to tell them what to do. For these reasons, any teacher will need to develop technical proficiency in the design and implementation of formal incentive systems.

Classroom Incentive Systems

Simple and Complex Incentive Systems

Incentive systems can be simple or complex. A simple incentive system provides a reinforcer in exchange for a specified behavior. However, incentive systems can be complex depending upon the number of bonus clauses, penalty clauses, and fail-safe mechanisms that are built in.

Incentive systems for *discipline* management in the classroom tend to be relatively complex in order to get *everyone* to cooperate with the teacher – even the most disruptive students. These will be discussed in a later section of the book entitled, "Building Responsible Behavior." Incentive systems for *academic productivity*, the subject of this chapter, are relatively simple.

Grandma's Rule

Simple classroom incentive systems are straightforward applications of Grandma's Rule which says:

You have to finish your dinner
before you get your dessert.

Effective parents and teachers have always been instinctive incentive managers. They have a knack for pairing chores with treats in order to get the work done.

Traditional Incentives

When I was a kid in grade school, I had teachers who used Grandma's Rule. They would come by my desk, look at my work, and say:

"I think you know how to do this, Fred. When you complete that example, you may place your paper on my desk and then work on your art project for the remainder of the period."

I was thrilled! I loved working on art projects!

Most of my teachers were really into "projects." We did science projects, art projects, current events projects.

My teachers did not have to stop what they were doing in order to get us started on our projects. The projects were already organized so that teachers could simply excuse us and continue working with the rest of the class.

For example, all of my elementary classrooms had an easel in the back with three jars of tempera paint in the primary colors and a few well worn brushes. Every week we painted a new mural on the chalkboard depicting the theme of our social studies unit or the coming holiday. I can remember working on the hors-es for the wagon trains going west, the sails of the Nina, Pinta, and Santa Maria, and the turkeys in the Thanksgiving scene.

My sixth grade teacher, Miss Bakey, had a different system. She had us all bring a shoebox from home to serve as our "project box." We put our names on the boxes and filled them with the materials needed for an art or science project. All of the project boxes were lined up on a shelf beneath the window casements where we could easily find them when we finished our assignments.
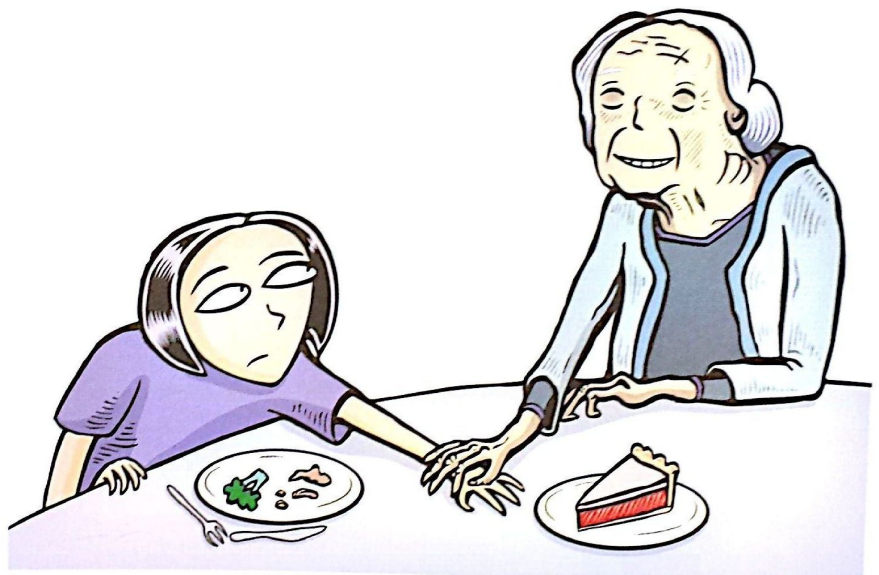
You have to finish your dinner before you get your dessert.

The Problem with Traditional Incentives

The problem with these traditional and rather "seat of the pants" incentive systems was that the same seven or eight kids always got to paint the murals and work on science projects. They were the "smarties" who finished early. Everyone else worked until the bell rang.

While I loved doing these projects, as far as incentive management is concerned, these systems were naive and backwards. The kids who already had a good work ethic got all of the "goodies." Those who needed a reason to try harder almost never received an incentive.

My teachers probably weren't thinking about incentives, anyway. They were probably just trying to keep us busy. Rather than providing incentives for those in need of some motivation, our projects served more as "sponge activities" – learning activities to soak up time that would otherwise have been wasted. To make the transition from a sponge activity to a cost-effective classroom incentive system that serves the many rather than just the few, we will need to learn a lot more about the technology of incentive management.

Incentive System Design

Dinner and Dessert

A simple incentive system, as described by Grandma's Rule, is the juxtaposition of two events – a task (dinner) and a reinforcer or "preferred activity" (dessert).

- **Dinner** – the thing I *have* to do
- **Dessert** – the thing I *want* to do

The heart of an incentive system is the preferred activity which answers the question, "Why should I?" It gives the student something to look forward to in the not-too-distant future. It should be fun. Hence, the truism of incentive management: *No joy, no work.*

Criterion of Mastery

While the heart of an incentive system is the *preferred activity*, there is an additional, equally important element: the *criterion of mastery*. Every lesson in the classroom is a learning experiment. Any learning experiment needs a working definition of when mastery has taken place.

A criterion of mastery is typically stated in terms of *consecutive correct performances*. How many *in a row* do the students have to do *correctly* before you can relax and say, "They've got it!" It is a judgement call, of course. Too few feels "thin," and too many feels like we're beating it to death.

Criteria of mastery for complex human learning typically range from five out of five to ten out of ten. This is a sensible range that you can use in the classroom. Notice, however, that criteria of mastery are *not* stated in the form of a percentage, such as:

> "When you pass your post-test with a score of 80% or above, you may proceed to the next unit."

While this example represents common practice in education, I would not recommend it. I would doubt if anyone reading this book would equate a 20% error rate with the normal meaning of the word "excellence." Would you buy a car built to that criterion, or would you call it a piece of junk?

Criterion of Mastery and Guided Practice

In the classroom, the criterion of mastery is typically employed during Guided Practice. As the students do the assignment, the teacher works the crowd while checking the students' papers.

Students must meet the criterion of mastery before they can be excused to do their preferred activities. The transition to Guided Practice for a math assignment might sound like this:

"Class, I would like you to open your books to page 127 and look at the practice set on the top of the page. As you can see, the problems are very familiar. We have done the first four of them together.

"We have twenty minutes until the bell. I will be coming around to check your work and to answer any questions. As soon as I mark five in a row correct, you may hand in your paper and work on your projects for the remainder of the period."

Checking students' work during Guided Practice is straightforward in a subject like math where the teacher can carry an answer key. Interactions with students might sound like this:

"That one is correct, and so is that one. You have three in a row correct. Two more and you can go work on your project."

Dynamic Tension Revisited
Keep in mind, a criterion of mastery is stated in terms of *consecutive correct performances*. In the previous example the student had to have *five in a row* correct in order to gain access to his or her preferred activity. If that student were to do three problems correctly and then make an error on the fourth, they would have to start over.

Thus, the more problems a student completes correctly, the more they have to lose should they become sloppy. As the student's total of correct problems grows, they gain a greater and greater vested interest in doing the next one *carefully*.

By having a criterion of mastery paired with preferred activities, the teacher creates the dynamic tension between speed and accuracy that trains students to work fast while being conscientious. In this way students learn to explore the limits of their abilities.

Continuous Work Check and High Standards
Having an incentive system for diligence is inseparable from having high standards. If the teacher were to allow students to work on their projects as soon as they finished *without* first checking the work, they would precipitate a disaster. The student would rush through the assignment as rapidly as possible, heedless of error, in order to get to the preferred activity as soon as possible. This is called a *speed* incentive.

The precondition of having high standards, therefore, is the teacher's ability to check the student's work *as it is being done* – typically during Guided Practice. Being free to check work during Guided Practice requires that the teacher's time and attention *not* be occupied by distractions – like tutoring helpless handraisers.

For this reason our weaning program for helpless handraisers had to precede our discussion of motivation. You could characterize the chapters preceding this one as, "everything you can possibly do to make yourself unemployed during Guided Practice so you can check the students' work."

Having high standards, therefore, is the *culmination* of classroom management. It is not where you begin.

> The precondition of having high standards is the teacher's ability to check students' work as it is being done.

Incentive Management Reality Check

A Sordid Past

Education has had a love-hate relationship with incentives in the classroom. In the 1960's many educators were anti-behavioral. In the 1970's, after accepting the notion that reinforcers produce motivation, educators went "hog wild."

Teachers were encouraged to offer "rewards" for everything under the sun, and administrators passed out so many certificates of merit at awards assemblies that trash cans became stuffed with them. The "hog wild" era of rewards in the classroom produced abuses as well as a strong reaction against those abuses.

Misconceptions breed anti-misconceptions with more heat than light being generated. Some theorists, wary of the overuse of points, tokens, treats, and meaningless "awards," decided that all incentives were bribery. They were to be eliminated.

This reaction is a classic example of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." Teachers need a way of managing motivation in the classroom, particularly with students who just don't care.

Rather than turning our backs on incentives, we need to learn to do it right. It would be useful, therefore, to take a moment to clear away the underbrush so we could see the topic clearly.

> **Bribery is the definition of malpractice in incentive management.**

Bribery

In order to exploit incentives while avoiding their abuse, we need to understand bribery. Are all incentives bribes? To eliminate confusion, it will be helpful to first categorize formal incentives as either *proactive* or *reactive*.

A **proactive** incentive system is an exchange of rewards for work that is established *in advance*. These exchanges are routine events in family life that give parents some leverage in getting their kids to do things. For example:

- As soon as you are ready for bed, we'll have story time.

- As soon as you've finished your homework, you can watch TV.

- As soon as you've finished practicing the piano, you can go outside to play.

A **reactive** incentive system, on the other hand, is an exchange that is established *in the heat of the moment*. Imagine a situation in which a father wants some cooperation from his son but doesn't know how to get it. The child says, "No" and won't budge. Frustration sets in.

The father *reacts* to this dilemma in the heat of the moment by offering the child a reward for cooperation. This *reactive* incentive constitutes a *bribe*. Take, for example, the following argument:

Father: "Billy, I want you to clean your room."

Billy: "I don't want to."

Father : "Now, I want that room cleaned. It is a mess!"

Billy: "I want to go outside and play!"

Father : "Not until you get this room cleaned!"

Billy: "I'm not doing it!"

Father : "Oh, yes you are!"

Billy: "You can't make me!"

Father : "Listen, I'll give you fifty cents when this room is clean, and then you can go outside and play."

By digging in his heels and saying "No," Billy has just shaken fifty cents out of the money tree.

Unfortunately, when you use incentives incorrectly, they blow up in your face and give you the *opposite* of what you wanted. In this example, the father has just reinforced Billy for *noncooperation* rather than cooperation.

By digging in his heels and saying "No," Billy has just shaken fifty cents out of the money tree. If he had simply cleaned his room without an argument, he wouldn't have gotten a penny. What do you suppose will be going through Billy's mind the next time mom or dad ask him to do some chore around the house?

To put it simply, bribery is the definition of *malpractice* in incentive management. Nobody who is well trained in the technology of incentive management would even consider offering an incentive in this fashion.

Incentives Are Unavoidable

Incentives Are Everywhere

The notion that you can turn your back on incentive management is both comical and costly. Incentives are unavoidable Any way in which you schedule work during a class period will produce an incentive system of some kind. You have three choices. One of these three will happen with your knowledge or without it.

Incentives for Speed

Employing a criterion of mastery requires that you have enough time to check the work *as it is being done.* As mentioned earlier, if you excuse students to do their preferred activities *without* first checking their work, you create a *speed incentive* which trains students to work "fast and sloppy."

Incentives for Dawdling

If you are unable to check work as it is being done and do not wish to create a speed incentive, you are left with few options. You could always excuse the "smarties" to do

preferred activities. That is what my teachers did. But the rest of the class will have to work *until the bell rings*.

Unfortunately, this creates a *dawdling incentive* for the rest of the class. Students say to themselves, "Why work yourself to death if it doesn't get you anywhere?" Students who must work until the bell rings will eventually learn to slow the rate of work in order to fill the time.

Incentives for Diligence

If you 1) *offer* a preferred activity and 2) *utilize* a criterion of mastery as you 3) *check* the students' work, you have it all – hard work and high standards. This, of course, is our goal.

**Parts of the Package
for Building Motivation**

	Task	Work Check	Preferred Activity
Speed	X		X
Dawdling	X		
Diligence and Excellence	X	X	X

Incentive Options

You have three classroom incentive options.

No Escape

You may as well get used to it. Everything you do in the classroom creates an incentive system of some kind. You get effective management or you get mismanagement depending on whether you have the whole package or just part of the package (table, below left).

As you can see, accountability is the most critical logistical hurdle that a teacher must overcome in order to build diligence and, with it, excellence. Work check must be *quick* and *cheap* so that it can be done while the students are working on the assignment. The entire next chapter will be devoted to this topic.

Checking Written Work

At this point in training someone will say,

"I see how this works with math. But I teach social studies, and apart from group discussions, most of our in-class work involves writing. There is no answer key for writing. What am I supposed to do?"

In fact, you do have an answer key for writing whether you know it or not. You carry the standards for written work in you head, and you reserve the right to excuse students to do their preferred activities when they meet your standards. Furthermore, those standards can be quite individualized.

Praise, Prompt, and Leave during writing is usually just a brief directive for improving a sentence or paragraph. As the student's writing approaches what you consider to be a good effort, you might say,

"We have this last paragraph in good shape now. All it needs is a little more pazazz. Go to the thesaurus and find 'upgrades' to these three adjectives. Then, after I check it, you may hand it in and work on your project."

A Final Note

Our discussion of incentives for diligence and excellence does not imply that I actually believe it will always be possible. I know how rushed and chaotic classroom life can be.

But, at least, you know your options. If you cannot have a proper incentive system for diligence and excellence, an incentive for dawdling is usually the "default mode." If it happens occasionally, it is not the end of the world. If you can provide incentives for diligence and excellence frequently, you can still have a major impact on your students' work ethic.

Preferred Activities

Keep It Cheap

Preferred activities are the fun part of the incentive system. They give students a reason to hustle.

In addition to being desirable, however, preferred activities must be cheap. They must be readily available, easy to use and represent a reasonable amount of prep time for the teacher.

Preferred activities are usually organized and ready to go *before* the lesson starts. The teacher will not have time to stop what he or she is doing during Guided Practice in order to get each student started on a separate preferred activity.

The "project box" that my sixth grade teacher used was very efficient. We spent most of one class period early in the grading period organizing our project boxes. For that investment, the teacher was free to teach without having to continually stop during Guided Practice to answer the question, "Now, what do I do?"

Types of Preferred Activities

The range of preferred activities available to a teacher in the classroom is quite broad and varied. Literally anything that the students eagerly look forward to can serve as a preferred activity. Many would come under the heading of "enrichment activities." The following suggestions only scratch the surface.

Art Projects: In addition to the tempera paint murals on the chalkboards of my childhood classrooms, I can remember innumerable art projects accompanying social studies and science units.

We sketched and painted everything from wild animals to cell structure, from maps with rivers and mountains to villages of thatched huts. We drew igloos and log cabins.

We would decorate the room. Every upcoming holiday or back-to-school night provided the teacher with preferred activities. We would decorate walls and bulletin boards. To this day I cannot understand why a teacher would spend valuable time creating bulletin boards when the net result is to preempt a wonderful preferred activity.

My high school French teacher was particularly clever. She assigned each of her five huge casement windows to a different class period. Each class had the job of transforming one casement into a beautiful stained-glass window.

> Anything that the students eagerly look forward to can serve as a preferred activity.

Our teacher surrounded us with examples from the cathedrals of France, and she taught us how the artisans built the windows. Our materials were colored cellophane and electrician's tape. We went through all of the stages of construction from drawing the life-size cartoons to "leading" the "glass." We rushed to complete our daily assignments so that we could get to work on our windows.

Music Projects: When the teacher does whole-group instruction, the class can have a whole-group preferred activity. Our foreign language classes were particularly well suited for doing this since so many drills and dictations were group activities.

When we completed our stained-glass windows in French class, we moved right along to French folk songs. I can still sing some of them. We had to practice so that we could serenade the school before the spring break.

Listening centers make great preferred activities. Some teachers use listening centers to teach music appreciation. Other teachers put on background music to make whole-group preferred activities even more enjoyable. Sometimes small groups of students rushed to complete their assignments in order to work up a routine for a student talent show.

Learning Projects: One question that I was never asked in school was, "What do you want to know?" Children are curious by their very nature. This truism even applies to students who may not be very curious about the subjects contained in our normal curriculum.

Having students describe their special interests will help you identify relevant learning projects. It may be dwarf stars or race cars, but whatever the topic, it can become a research project.

Preferred activities, therefore, provide the teacher with an avenue for teaching research skills on a topic

Preferred activities should be cheap, readily available, and easy to use.

that the student is motivated to explore. The student could also prepare a presentation to the class as part of the project, complete with visual aids.

Interest Centers and Computer Centers: Interest centers are ready-made preferred activities. In addition, access to computers or special equipment of any kind can be a powerful motivator.

Learning Games: Almost anything in the curriculum can be taught in the form of a game. Books of games have been published for learning everything from history to the multiplication of fractions. Books of learning puzzles and mind benders are also available for different grade levels.

Reading and Writing for Pleasure: Having students read their library books is a time-honored preferred activity. Journal writing is another traditional favorite. Other teachers have the students work on a class newspaper.

Helping the Teacher: Students who finish their work early are natural candidates for peer tutoring. Training the class to use Praise, Prompt, and Leave gives students a valuable teaching skill.

Some students like to help the teacher with work check, writing test questions, developing materials for interest centers, or even helping the teacher search for good preferred activity games and puzzles. You can often find a bright student with artistic ability who will make beautiful VIPs for you before you teach the next lesson.

Extra Work: Using preferred activity time to build up extra credit is particularly appealing to some students. Memorizing poetry, doing more advanced assignments, or preparing a special class presentation are examples.

Some students want to do their homework during preferred activity time. These are often the high achievers whose after school hours are taken up with extra-curricular activities.

Scheduling Preferred Activities
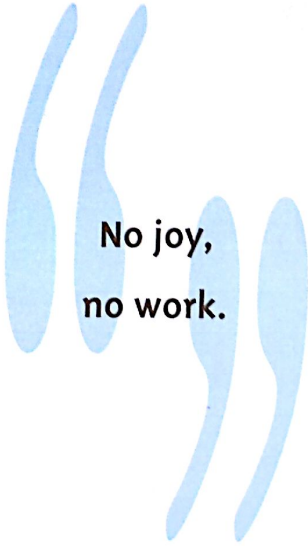
Lesson-by-Lesson

The simplest way to schedule preferred activities is on a lesson-by-lesson basis. Grandma's Rule implies the juxtaposition of two activities, one that you have to do (the task) and one that you would rather do (the preferred activity).

These two activities are most commonly scheduled back-to-back. When you finish the first activity (correctly, of course), you can work on the second activity until the period is over.

Sometimes, however, this arrangement leaves the teacher and the students feeling as though the day is too chopped up, with never enough time to really get into the preferred activity. In such situations, the teacher may want to consider a *work contract.*

Work Contract

A work contract is simply a preferred activity that follows the completion of a *series* of tasks. Teachers in self-

> No joy,
> no work.

contained classrooms might leave the end of the day open for preferred activity time once all of the day's assignments have been completed. Teachers in a departmentalized setting might have preferred activity time once a week on Friday.

One clever way of organizing a weekly work contract is called "Freaky Friday." Friday, of course, is the day on which all of the week's assignments must be completed. Explain the rules of Freaky Friday to the class as follows:

"Class, tomorrow we are going to have Freaky Friday. Let me remind you how it works. Before you can start Freaky Friday, all of your assignments for the week must be completed and turned in. Only then can you participate.

"For Freaky Friday, I will put seven assignments on the board. You may choose any four of them and omit any three. When you have completed your four assignments to my satisfaction and handed them in, you may work on your project for the *rest of the day.*"

Some teachers have two lists, column A and column B, with the core subjects in column A. Students must choose two assignments from column A and two from column B. This device prevents students from avoiding all of the subjects that are more demanding.

It is hard for adults to appreciate how sweet it is for young people to have control over their own destiny. One teacher who had implemented Freaky Friday had a parent storm into her classroom after school and say,

"I understand from my son that students get to do whatever they want all day Friday. Is that true? The children only work during four days of the week?"

The parent was slightly misinformed, of course. The child simply said that, "We get to do whatever we want on Fridays." In the excitement over getting to exercise freedom of choice, the student failed to clarify that "anything we want" included a full day's worth of academic work. But, how sweet it is to choose.

A Sense of Fun

You cannot have preferred activity time without having fun. Some teachers just have a sense of fun. They bring it with them into the classroom and find ways of making it happen.

But, implementing preferred activity time must also be affordable for the teacher. Work check must be cheap, organization must be simple, and a repertoire of preferred activities must be readily at hand.

Using preferred activities becomes much easier when the faculty members work together to gather preferred activity ideas and materials in a central "PAT Bank." Discovering more and more ways of making learning fun is a hallmark of our professional growth as teachers.

By understanding incentive systems, we can have our fun with learning and get motivation for free. Having fun with learning is, therefore, one of the main avenues to raising standards in education. Remember the maxim of incentive management: *No joy, no work.*

> **PAT Bank**
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