



Does Emotion Help in Learning?

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Educators define learning as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes or values, through study, experience or teaching. If all the variables that influence learning could be placed on a yardstick, each variable would account for a small amount of measurement on the yardstick. For example, level of reinforcement, amount of drill and practice, corrective feedback, active participation, time on task, study skills, rate of presentation, auditory and visual modalities, filtering, learning preferences, to name a few. Add to these, attitudes, motivation, emotions, arousal levels, and chemical balances in the body. Another critical variable is teacher expectation.

Encourage Greater Works

Jesus inspired His disciples to expect to do greater things than He himself had accomplished (John 14:12). Teachers need to instill this same attitude. Set high expectations for your students; then, help them to achieve at the level you establish.

Research shows that teachers who set and communicate high expectations to all their students obtain greater academic performance from those students than teachers who set lower expectations.

Redirect Negative Thinking

In communicating achievement of these expectations, redirect negative comments to an "I can do" attitude and establish an expectant mind set. When a student says, "I can't," respond with, "God says you

can. Do you mean can't or won't?" If you hear, "I've done everything that I could," offer this: "Everything? What about?" Hearing, "I've tried that but it won't work." Respond, "Did you really try- how many times?" For students who say, "That's impossible"; respond with, "What you mean is that you need more time.

Monitor Student Responses

Bruce Atteberry uses the following motto in his class: "GOOD-BETTER-BEST. I'll never rest until my GOOD is BETTER and my better is BEST!" As you monitor the work of your students, keep in mind that any assignment, any piece of homework, any task that is worth doing, is worth doing well.

Set your standards high and students will come up to these standards. Keep the expectation of success no less than the 75% probability of success. When teachers do this, student motivation will be enhanced. If a task is perceived as being too easy, motivation will be less. If the work is too difficult, they will perceive that they can not do it and motivation will be lost.

I was leaving the school building one day and a youngster was working on a rubiks cube. I asked if he was able to get all sides completed; he had only completed two sides. Rather than saying, "I can't do it," he said, "I can do all things through Christ, even this crazy cube." I responded, "I believe you can do it."

Four days later, he came back with all six sides in place except for two small squares. He had set his expectations high and he proclaimed the end result. He then walked out these expected results. His attention increased, adrenaline was released, endorphins were activated, emotions were enhanced, and he released his faith through the words he spoke. He succeeded in overcoming his challenge.