

*Only Motivated teachers will result in Motivated students*

- Chan, C.K.Y.

### 16 TIPS FOR MOTIVATING BUSINESS STUDENTS

#### 1. Encourage students to submit their work for peer evaluation

A good way for students to learn effectively is to get evaluations from their peers. Having students learn from their peers can be enlightening because the process of peer-evaluation offers students the opportunity to critically evaluate each other's work in order to make improvements. In addition, the opportunity for students to get evaluated by their peers can also facilitate their communication with each other, which helps develop their communication skills and friendship and allow students to mutually motivate each other in the learning process. Peer evaluation is not a common assessment method in the business discipline although it is often used in the business world, such as the 360 degree evaluation feedback process. Both teachers and students are often skeptical and uncertain of the procedures and are concerned that students would not know how to evaluate. More practices and clear guidelines on peer evaluation for non-credit assessment will help both teachers and students to become more familiarized with the practice of peer evaluation. For ideas on self and peer assessment, you can visit our Assessment Resources@HKU:[http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/self\\_peer.htm](http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/self_peer.htm)

#### 2. Spreading enthusiasm to motivate students

Students are more motivated and enthusiastic if they see the teacher's enthusiasm. Thus, teacher's enthusiasm can motivate students. Enthusiasm can be shown using humor, by describing personal experiences and facts, through body language, facial expressions, and well-preparation of lecture materials. However, in order to maintain enthusiasm, the teacher should note how to balance enthusiasm appropriately in front of students.

#### 3. Apply real-world business examples and situations into your teaching

Business students are more motivated when they can relate their course content to real-world examples and problems, particularly high-profile problems that are topical in wall-street or businesses around the world. It provides students concrete examples to demonstrate how a theory or concept can be applied into real life situations. It also gives students the potential to recognise what

their future career holds. According to AACSB, business programmes should ensure that "the intersection of theory and practice" are grounded within the curriculum.

#### 4. Reach out to students

Reaching out to students will help figure out the connection between how students learn and how teachers teach. Students will certainly feel motivated to strive through a course and not give up, especially if a teacher is reaching out to students who are struggling or performing poorly in class by providing them the necessary guidance and advice for improvement. Moreover, through this type of interaction, the teacher can reflect on his/her teaching to see what might have gone wrong in the process.

#### 5. Provide students an opportunity to make choice or decision

If students are offered some degree of autonomy and choices in selecting or carrying out an activity, it is likely that they will be more motivated to take part in that activity. It is up to you as a teacher to decide how, where or when to apply such autonomy: you may opt to change the proportion of the assessments (for example, administer more quizzes or tests instead of written assignments), or you may ask students to decide where they wish to go for a field trip by casting a vote.

#### 6. Minimize the "effort" needed to complete an assignment

When designing an assignment, it is important to consider the scale of complexity. If an assignment task designed is too difficult or too easy, students are likely to lose the motivation to complete the task; if it is made to match the students' ability, students are likely to be more willing to complete the task. As a teacher, you may (i) opt to separate a large task into smaller sub-tasks for students to complete; (ii) assign teaching assistants or tutors to assist and guide students in their assignment, or (iii) ask students to do a group assignment where each student contributes a small part.

#### 7. Give students a break

It is not a crime to give students a break - a break during a two-hour lecture, a break from assessment, a break to finish class early, etc. In a two-hour lecture, it is often hard to sustain student's attention; in fact, studies have shown that it is difficult to retain full concentration beyond 10 minutes, with attention level dropping significantly after that (Johnstone & Percival, 1976).

#### 8. Invite business experts, bankers or potential employers

Invite business experts, bankers or potential employers to give presentations to students,



which can offer students valuable insights into the industry. These insights can provide students with incentives or realistic expectation to pursue their designated career path. Career speed dating (Chan & Murphy, 2010) is an interesting way to bring students and employers together: employers are invited to have lunch with students; afterwards, employers will be seated individually and students will have the opportunities to converse with the employers one-on-one for 5 minutes, similar to a speed dating setting. In order to prepare the students, teachers and career counselors should provide briefings and related information of the companies.

#### 9. Reward students merit for what they have done

Students are likely to be motivated to complete a task if that task is awarded for grades. You can also offer other types of incentives to motivate students to participate in the learning process, such as competitive internships or even a simple treat of sweets.

#### 10. Align outcomes, pedagogies and assessments

Teachers need to know how to administer tests that motivate students. The administered tests need to be related to the topics and aligned with what is being taught within the course. In addition, it is not wise to administer a test that is way more demanding and challenging than anything practiced in class because it will have a negative effect on student's motivation. The tests should be developed in accordance with student's ability, the course outcomes, and at best should not involve any surprise.

#### 11. Be a digital teacher

Students are likely to be more motivated to learn if the teacher is not only using traditional teaching approaches and assessments. From the student's perspective, traditional assessments and teaching approaches may not be intriguing. Nowadays, with the wide-spread effect of digital technology and the use of Internet on teaching and learning, many teachers have been using websites such as YouTube to demonstrate examples about concepts related to their subject. The use of such technological resources has been advantageous because it can stimulate students' interest and arouse their attention. This is particularly true for the digital natives of this generation, who tends to be motivated by technological gadgets and tools. For ideas on innovative assessments, you can visit our CETL- Assessment Resource Center: Publish Your Work section ([http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/assessment\\_with\\_table.php](http://ar.cetl.hku.hk/assessment_with_table.php)).

#### 12. Timely Feedback

An interactive channel between teachers and students is important in the process of motivating our students. Teachers cannot possibly know whether a student is struggling in class or not. Therefore it is important to get timely feedback from and to students in order to attend to the

situation. Here is an example on obtaining students' feedback: after the end of each lecture the teacher can initiate students to actively give suggestions or even raise problems that they have by writing on a piece of post-it; ask the students to stick the post-it onto the board; the teacher would then gather these papers to see what the students have to say. This way of interaction can motivate students to be confident in expressing their concerns without having to feel embarrassed to speak in front of the class. The feedback can also help the teacher to make timely adjustments after the end of each lecture to figure out areas that need to be given more attention. The teacher can also make use of the discussion forum to post the answers to these feedback or concerns for sharing.

#### 13. Be expressive

The use of vocal variation, facial expression, movement and gesture can enhance communication and facilitates student comprehension.

#### 14. Be active

Move around the classroom and invite participation.

#### 15. Don't overload students, space out activities

Include an activity after every 15-20 minutes of presentation, which require students to use the information/concepts presented.

Consider spacing demonstrations, student participation activities, and multimedia (e.g. music, video clips or computer simulations) throughout your lecture to maintain and revive students' attention.

#### 16. Recognising the Power of Entrepreneurship/ Business Experiential Learning Projects

Recently, there have been more meaningful and innovative ways for business curriculum to demonstrate entrepreneurship or non-profit organization activities; often, these activities are initiated by students themselves. Business schools should incorporate and recognize these achievements, as they align with the learning outcomes of most universities and business accreditation bodies. These activities greatly motivate students' interests in the business discipline and can often help the promotion of the curriculum by bringing in publicity.

#### Web Reference and Resources

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