

Instructional Strategies for Motivating Students: Reflections from 13 Years of Teaching in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT Keeping students constantly motivated is a challenge that many instructors in Higher Education (HE) find insurmountable. Stimulating students' interest and motivation is important as it increases the likelihood that students will commit the time and effort necessary to achieve the learning objectives. While motivation is a potent factor in student learning, motivating students remains a hurdle that many practitioners in HE face. This paper explores instructional strategies that lecturers in HE can consider and probably adopt to enhance students' motivation to learn. Drawing from theory and practice, the paper proposes motivational strategies. These range from making teaching/learning relevant to student lives, basing teaching and learning on students' interest and background knowledge, developing skills of self-regulated learning in students, clarifying course goals and assisting students to develop their own study goals.

INTRODUCTION

While there is hardly any consensus about what constitutes effective teaching in Higher Education (HE), there seem to be general agreement among scholars that successful teaching should be about influencing the ways in which learners understand, experience or conceptualise the world around them (Bransford et al. 2000). This, among other things entails mediating how students think about and experience learning. From this point of view understanding constitutes a vital competence in learning within HE. It is axiomatic that effective learning in HE can only come about if certain preconditions are cultivated and nurtured in the teaching and learning situation. While this paper will not attempt to isolate all the requisite conditions that are essential to effective learning in HE, it will, however, give motivation the spotlight.

Motivation has been singled out by many educational psychologists as one of the potent factors with a great influence on student learning in education in general and higher education in particular and yet motivating students remains a critical challenge that many practitioners in HE face (Christenson and Sheriadan 2001). The researcher's experience as a practitioner in HE has shown that one of the major challenges encountered by lecturers is not teaching the finer points or intricacies of their subject matter, but in keeping students constantly motivated to forge ahead. Gaining students' interest and improving their motivation is impor-

tant as it increases the likelihood that they will commit the time and effort necessary to achieve learning objectives (Harvey 2001).

Motivating students in HE is particularly problematic given that every class in HE consists of a wide variety of students, each bringing with him/her different learning styles, interests and life experiences that make every class or lecture-room unique and special (Donald et al. 2001). This diversity is compounded by the absence of specific recipe or formula to keep all students motivated. Experience of teaching in HE has shown that while some students are by nature intrinsically passionate and focused on their studies, a great deal of others enthusiastically look up to instructors to guide them through. The critical issue is that while motivating factors may differ from student to student the bottom line is that at least every individual student will need some form of motivation so as to execute their learning goals successfully. Therefore, in order to operate effectively in HE, academics need to have a deeper understanding of the essential factors that promote learning, chief among them being motivation. This paper will explore experientially informed proposals for motivating students thereby increasing their desire to focus consistently at their learning tasks. By reflecting on both theory and practice, the paper attempts to underline those aspects of the teaching/learning situation that are considered useful in enhancing students' self-motivation. First, the researcher provides a conceptualisation of moti-

vation and its rationale. The researcher gives an exposition of the components and process of motivation followed by experientially-informed practical strategies for generating and sustaining students' levels of motivation in HE.

Rationale for the Study

The purpose of this paper is to explore strategies that lecturers can use so as to motivate students in HE. This has become necessary given that the majority of students entering higher education particularly in the African continent are inadequately prepared for higher education studies (Greenberg and Baron 2008). Svinicki (2004) has demonstrated that the demography of students entering university is actively changing from that of exceptionally good students, to one of under-prepared and unprepared students. This therefore requires practitioners in HE to be able to adjust their teaching methods and philosophies. This means that lecturers in HE must be able to construct an environment in which students who are less and under prepared for HE excel in their learning. The study intends to provide ideas that could be used to improve student levels of participation and learning, an essential prerequisite for quality education especially within the context of HE. The researcher will draw examples from his own experiences as a teacher educator, and from relevant literature review.

Theoretical Framework

This work is based on the theory of andragogy. Sargent (2000) refers to andragogy as, "...the art and science of helping adults learn". Knowles (1998) believes that andragogy is important as it facilitates the development and implementation of learning activities for adults. The theory of andragogy stems from the realisation that adult learners are more self-directed, have a need for direct application of knowledge to their work and are able to contribute more to collaborative and situated learning through their experience. He goes on to identify five key principles in the andragogical model that lecturers in HE need to observe when designing instruction namely:

- (a) Helping learners know why something is important to learn
- (b) Showing learners how to direct themselves through information.

- (c) Assisting learners set realistic goals and expectations
- (d) Helping learners develop skills for independent learning
- (e) Basing all learning on learners' interest and background.

The motivational strategies that form the core of this paper are informed by these andragogical principles.

Conceptualisations of Motivation

A thorough understanding of the concept of motivation is a pre-requisite for educational practitioners who are keen to motivate their students achieve their learning goals. It is therefore important that this discourse attempts to operationalize the concept of motivation so as to establish a common understanding.

Ahuja (1991: 438) conceives motivation as "the action that compels or urges an individual to assume an attitude generally favourable towards his work leading him to perform satisfactorily." To him, motivation can be reduced to the study of urges, drives, impulses, preferences and aspirations of people at work, who, if satisfied tend to promote and maintain high morale. A related view comes from Wall (2003) who asserts that motivation represents the forces acting on or within a person causing him to behave in a specific goal-directed manner. Furthermore, motivation is construed by Mullins (2005) as an action that stimulates an individual to take a course of action which will result in attainment of some goal or satisfaction of certain material or psychological needs of the individual himself. This process is brought about by factors that activate behavior and influence the direction and persistence of behavior.

When applied to learning, motivation is understood by Schultz and Schultz (2006) as the complex of forces inspiring a student in an academic organization to intensify his/her desire and willingness to use his potentialities for achievement of his/her own goals. He goes on to elaborate that it is something that moves a person into action and continues him/her in the course of action enthusiastically. A running thread that permeates all the conceptualisations given in the above, is that the role of motivation is to develop and intensify the desire in every member of the student body to work effectively and efficiently in his /her programme of study

by arousing and directing behavior towards certain ends. As broadly conceptualized by Wlodkowski and Jaynes (1990) motivation simply refers to the value and desire for learning.

The Process of Motivation

Furnham (2001) argues that the process of motivation can be explained using the tension–reduction hypothesis. This hypothesis has it that the process of motivation begins with the identification of a person’s needs. The crux of the issue is that an unsatisfied need creates an uncomfortable state of tension in the person. These needs may either be psychological (such as the need for recognition) or physical (such as the need for friendship). Thus, the tension spurs the individual into action so as to reduce the uncomfortable state created in the individual by the deficiency (Robins 2007). As alluded to earlier on, motivation is goal directed. Steyn and Niekerk (2002) simply regard a goal as any specific result which the individual wants to attain. Viewed in this way, goal accomplishment thus becomes a mechanism of reducing needs deficiencies. Thus a student’s goals may be viewed as the major driving force behind his/her effort to study.

Greenberg and Baron (2008), caution that motivation should not be confused with good academic performance, although the two are closely related. Thus, if a student performs well in a learning area, this does not necessarily mean that he/she is highly motivated. For instance, a skillful student, who is a mathematical genius may handle his or her calculus problems very easily, scoring very high, but without exerting much effort. By contrast, another hardworking and enthusiastic student may perform very badly despite putting forth a great deal of effort. At issue here is that this student, though motivated, may fall short of the desired goal because he/she lacks the skill needed to succeed. Contributing to this debate, Robbins (2007) contends that student performance is a product of ability and motivation. For him, this can be expressed using the formula:

Performance =Function of (ability x motivation)

According to this formula, for an individual to be able to perform a task successfully, he/she

must have the ability to do so. This ability might include intellectual skills or manual dexterity. However, no amount of intelligence, skill or ability can lead to higher performance without the individual desire to achieve that level of performance. In short, motivation is viewed as a function of the interaction of ability and motivation. This has the implication that if either is inadequate, performance will be negatively affected. This argument seems to bolster the view raised earlier on that all students, including those who are talented, need some form of motivation so that their latent potential can be stimulated.

The Rationale for Motivation in HE

After an educational institution has selected its students and assigned them to different areas of studies in accordance with their choices, it is important that these students be motivated and satisfied with their studies. This is not to suggest that students do not bring with them initial motivation to their studies upon enrolling. As cogently argued by Svinicki (2004) when students decide to enrol with any institution, department or university, that can be taken as a clear manifestation of the fact that students bring with them a certain amount of initial motivation to their studies. However, the critical point is that whatever level of motivation students bring to the classroom may be transformed, for better or worse, by what happens in the classroom. This point is illuminated by Merriam and Caffarella (1998) who argued that a student may arrive in class with a certain degree of motivation, but as the year progresses and courses settle into a comfortable routine, student interest start to flag. It is particularly at this stage that the need to reenergise students comes to the fore and lecturers play a critical role in this regard.

Shaïda and Safaya (2005) have demonstrated through a research conducted in India that different factors tend to affect different students’ motivation to work, learn and their ultimate performance. Such factors may include interest in the subject matter, its usefulness, general desire to achieve, self-confidence and self-esteem, teaching style, structure of the course, nature of assignments and informal interactions with students. These factors exert varying but significant effects on student motivation and ultimate performance (Ash 2002). Lecturers can thus

influence student motivation in ways that can either facilitate or impede learning. Paradoxically, university faculties often appear not to have either the time or the inclination to address difficult motivational issues in the classroom, with the ultimate consequence that the task of trying to effectively motivate students is often ignored to the detriment of the students concerned. However, this paper posits that there are several ways that conscientious academics in HE can tap into the individual learning styles and interests of students, thus making learning more focused, meaningful and motivational.

In a related argument, Sing (2003) observes that higher education practitioners across the world are frustrated with the challenge of how to motivate the ever increasing numbers of students entering university who are psychologically, socially, and academically unprepared for the demands of higher education. Such students often exhibit maladaptive behaviour such as tardiness, hostility towards authority, and unrealistic aspirations. To argue in this manner is by no means suggesting that lack of motivation is confined only to those students who are academically challenged since motivation is not synonymous to ability to perform (South Africa Department of Education 2002).

Alluding to the preceding Sands et al. (2000) assert that the will to work, which is the hallmark of motivation, should not be misconstrued with the power or capacity to work. He goes on to illustrate that a student might possess the physical, mental or technical capacity to excel in a particular area of study, but these qualities will remain of no consequence if the student is not physically or psychologically willing to make use of these abilities for the ultimate good of his studies or the educational organization that he/she studies with. This is where motivation is needed to ignite and propel the student into action. Put together, this simply means that students of all abilities need some form of motivation if they are to realize their study goals. This makes the need for motivation a critical and urgent matter. Therefore, the need to acquire skills of inspiring students (both talented and challenged) with the zeal to do work for the accomplishment of both individual and organisational objectives remains a clarion call for all lecturers in HE. Lecturers can achieve this if they are able to create a need and desire on the part of their students to better their present performance.

With so many attractive alternatives competing for students' attention in contemporary classes, motivating them to focus and perform becomes increasingly difficult, but urgent. For instance, students might be distracted from paying attention in class by non-educational factors such as the need to play 'mixit' on their phones, chat with their colleagues, restlessness and general disruptiveness (Ozga 2003). This therefore calls for greater tact and knowhow on the part of the lecturer to get students to focus and perform. It is therefore of cardinal importance that lecturers acquire knowledge of best practices on how to increase students' desire to work hard at the tasks at hand. It is in this regard that this paper will find a niche in which to contribute to contemporary debates and discourses on student engagement and motivation in HE.

What Kind of Strategies Can be Used to Influence Motivation?

While the subject of motivation is complex, and can be approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives, some basic aspects of student motivation for learning can be inferred from practice and studies done on the subject. In this paper the researcher propose a model for the motivational design of instruction so as to generate and sustain students' learning interest. The model outlines a cycle of inputs, events, and consequences that could result in positive learning outcomes. This model is based on the premise that good everyday teaching practices can do more to counter student apathy than special efforts to attack motivation directly Sargant (2000). According to this model, students and lecturers enter into a teaching-learning situation with sets of values and expectations that affect the extent and nature of the effort they expend. Positive attitudes (for example, the student is interested in the subject; the lecturer has done research on the topic) and expectations (for example, the students believe themselves to be able in the content area; the lecturer expects the course to be well received) lead to greater effort which positively impacts on performance. High academic performance may lead to both satisfaction and heightened value and expectations for the future, which further motivates effort.

This paper adopts an intrinsic view of motivation which is based on the premises that student understanding and success involves pro-

motivating or creating sets of conditions under which the individual student is the one who actually provides the motivation (Christenson and Sheridan 2001). Harvey (2001) notes that when students are intrinsically motivated, they tend to use strategies that require more effort and involve processing of information at a deeper level. A typical case in college learning would be a teacher's creation of sets of experiences that arouse the students' interest and allow engagement in activities that both promote growth and provide opportunities for success. In this scenario, satisfaction comes internally from accomplishment and heightened motivation. The section below focuses on specific practical instructional strategies that lecturers in HE could use so as to enhance students' self motivation.

Design Relevant Learning Materials

In higher education, students are usually asked to take a course simply because the course is deemed a necessary requirement for their degree programme. Rarely are students afforded the opportunity to consider specific ways in which the course content is relevant to their educational goals. Lieb (1991) and Tzuril (2000) concur on the view that university students, like other adult students, are relevancy-oriented. This simply means that they must see the reason for learning something. In other words, learning has to be applicable to their career aspirations to be of value to them. One way of making learning relevant is by relating theories and concepts to settings that students are familiar with as well as involving students in choosing projects that reflect their own interests and experiences. This view links very well with Ash (2002)'s assertion that motivation to learn is highest when the subject meets the immediate needs of the learner.

It is therefore critical that lecturers attempt to show students how what they are learning matters in real life. In terms of Dewey's (1997) argument, experiential learning is one of the most effective motivational techniques, especially for older students as it gives meaning and purpose to their work. It is therefore highly advisable that lecturers guide students to discuss the learning material, allowing them to draw on their own experiences to learn and understand the new material. The researcher's own experience of teaching in HE has shown that most students do poorly on assignments or in

participation because they seem not understand what to do or why they should do certain things in the first place. There is therefore a need for lecturers to spend more time explaining why the topic, concept or activity is important and worthwhile. In this vein, Sands et al. (2000) opine that lecturers should spend some time explaining what is expected on assignments and learning activities. As demonstrated by Harris (2010), students who are uncertain about what to do seldom perform well in their studies.

One way of making the learning more relevant in the eyes of the student is through the use of role models. Role models could be people of good social and academic standing who can make a positive impact on the students' aspirations. For instance, when teaching a course that is perceived as difficult such as Electrical Engineering, the lecturer can invite guest speakers from industry, past students who have excelled in the learning area to give motivational talks and presentations to current students. This will help students appreciate the utility of the material that they are currently engaging with. Hymer et al. (2002) argue that adult students learn better by solving problems relevant to their lives. Therefore, solutions at classroom level must be based on their practical understanding and analysis drawing on their experiences. In light of the above, the author proposes that well designed instructional methods such as the problem-based learning (PBL) case studies, discovery learning exercises, experiments and group dynamic exercises could go a long way in engaging the student thereby generating and sustaining their motivation to learn.

Specify Course Goals and Assist Students Develop Own Goals

Lecturers teaching in HE should resist the common illusion that university students naturally appreciate the importance of the courses for which they are registered and the rationale for the structure of knowledge. On the contrary, lecturers should strive to help students understand why the course is important, how it is structured and how students can successfully complete it. It is also crucial that lecturers explain why certain kinds of learning material are necessary for specific applications in other courses, in future employment or in everyday life (Stanford University Newsletter on Teaching 1998). This preliminary information is

important as it helps students appreciate the utility of what they are studying thereby helping them to be more focused in their studies.

Giving an outline of the course outcomes and a discussion of course goals in the first encounter with the class is considered by the Stanford University Newsletter on Teaching (1998) as one way of helping students reflect on their personal goals for the course. The issue of setting study goals is well located within the goal setting theory of motivation. The theory rests on the assumption that setting goals for students motivates them to strive towards achieving these goals (Cheminias et al. 1998). This is so because goals, as perceived by Berry (1998), are the central features of the motivational structure as they provide direction for action and energy for the persistence of behaviour. In a teaching learning situation, a goal can simply be regarded as that which an individual is trying to accomplish or the object or aim of an action. This has the implication that lecturers should set clearly formulated learning outcomes and goals, which are then discussed with students before they direct their efforts towards their attainment.

This strategy worked very well with the researcher's Theory of Education classes for Master's degree students. In explaining course goals to students, the researcher did not only include a summary of the knowledge the researcher expected students to master, but also expectations for their own participation. Research by Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2001) has shown that a teacher's expectation has a powerful effect on a student's motivation and performance. However, practitioners in HE should realise that student motivation can be maintained if learning goals are challenging, but not overwhelming. In other words, both course goals and personal goals need to be set at an appropriate level of difficulty. This idea derives support from McCombs (1991) who succinctly remarks that students' interest will remain high if the challenge seems realistic and the path to success is made clear to them.

Adopt a Supportive Teaching Style and Embrace Realistic Expectations for Students

A supportive teaching style that promotes greater student autonomy is believed by Kirk

(2011) to foster increased student interest, enjoyment, engagement and performance. The critical question then becomes what constitutes supportive teacher behaviour in a teaching and learning situation. While there is no consensus on what supportive teacher behaviour is all about, Mullins (2005), identifies critical elements that are central to supportive teaching. These include but are not limited to ability to listen to student views, being responsive to student questions, giving hints and encouragement as well as being empathetic to students.

Given the diverse nature of contemporary academic classes in terms of ability, lecturers can best stimulate students' interest if they strategise with students who are struggling with their learning. Teaching students how to learn is one such strategy that the researcher found extremely effective with students who were struggling with poor academic performance and low motivation in an undergraduate class studying towards the Sociology of Education Degree in Zimbabwe. This among other things involved outlining specific strategies on how to study, completing assignments, note-taking, giving seminar presentations and revising for exams. A related strategy involves providing sufficient study options and choices to students. Giving students options can range from choosing from alternative assignment or presentation topics or electives, deciding on places of learning interest to visit as well as deciding on due dates for submitting projects. Harris (2010) and Kirk (2011) concur on the view that student motivation tend to increase when they feel some sense of autonomy in the learning process, and it declines when students have no voice in the class structure.

In trying to motivate students who are struggling with their work, Svinicki (2004) cautions that the practitioner should exercise caution and guard against hidden messages that can be latently conveyed to students. For instance, a lecturer who designs tasks which are too easy does not only run the risk of promoting boredom on the part of the students but may also send a signal that the lecturer lacks confidence in the students' capability to work hard. On the other hand, if the lecturer resorts to assigning tasks that are too difficult, students may develop the perception that the learning tasks are untenable and this may give rise to anxiety and frustration. Naicker (2005) illuminates this view by

postulating that failure to attain unrealistic goals can disappoint and frustrate students thereby adversely affecting their motivation. It is therefore argued that tasks that are either too easy or too difficult tend to undermine the self-efficacy of the students thereby adversely affecting their levels of motivation. Thus, the lecturer's ability to set realistic expectations to students be it in assignments, seminar presentations, discussions and grading of examinations is key to student activation in learning in HE. As cogently articulated by Bush (2003), to develop the drive to achieve, students need to believe that achievement is possible, thereby making it incumbent upon lecturers to provide early opportunities for student success.

In line with Bush (2003) and Kirk (2011) views, the author suggests the use of scaffolding as an instructional technique where the challenge level of tasks assigned to students is gradually raised as students are capable of more complex tasks. Such tactics help strengthen struggling learners' beliefs in their academic abilities and therefore increasing their willingness to engage in academic tasks. Getting early feedback, through homework and informal assessment can help the practitioner to judge the appropriateness of challenges, and if necessary, provide extra support for students. Ozga (2003: 112) alludes to this practice when he points out, "...when you include help sessions, study sheets, review sessions, and workshops on study skills in your teaching, students are more likely to feel that even more moderately difficult goals can be achieved."

Schultz and Schultz (2006) advance a pertinent view when they assert that motivation should not simply be construed as something that the lecturer does to the students. Instead, efforts to motivate the students involve first connecting with their interests and their concerns.

Making Use of Students' Interests and Background Knowledge

It is axiomatic that students enter their classes with differing degrees of knowledge in the discipline and different levels of interest. Therefore, in order to capitalise on what exists in their students, educational practitioners should make conscious efforts to establish the background knowledge that students in their classes bring to the course. As Robbins (2007) notes, students

bring with them a variety of motivations, and effective lecturers will tap into these so as to promote learning. This practice articulates well with Wagner's (2002) view that one of the richest resources for learning in tertiary education is the learner him/herself.

One technique the researcher finds effective is simply asking students at the start of the semester or year information relating to their level of preparation, the kind of courses they have already taken in the field and why they are taking the current course. A more elaborated version of this is a form of classroom assessment suggested by Stanford University Newsletter on Teaching (1998), called a background knowledge probe. The advantage of getting information from the students at the outset is that it can provide useful data not only about students' knowledge of the topic but also about their skills in communicating what they know (Shaid and Safaya 2005). This way, the lecturer acquires useful information which helps him/her to give students a familiar starting point or a 'hook to hang new information on' (Svinicki 2004; Harris 2010).

The issue of making learning relevant to real life is underscored by Christenson and Sheidan (2001) who assert that lecturers should create learning activities that are based on topics that are relevant to students' lives. This is important as it fosters intrinsic motivation. One strategy of translating this idea into practice includes using local examples in teaching, connecting the subject with the students' culture, outside interests or social lives. Reflecting on this idea, Knowles (1998) add that when learning, adults bring along their own experiences which are an important factor in their ability to create, retain and transfer knowledge. It is therefore important that student experiences be respected and incorporated in the learning process as these are a form of capital that facilitates learning.

A lecturer can help students become reflective about their interests and knowledge, by asking them to relate or adapt course information to their concerns or interests in their assignments and in the classroom. According to the Stanford University Newsletter on teaching (1998), new materials can never be effectively learned or mastered without relevant student engagement. Therefore, engaging students' interest remains key to effective learning since interest serves as a directive force for learning.

Therefore, in order for teaching to be motivational, lecturers should relate concepts and theories to students' background and experiences. In terms of Bhengu's (2005) argument, effective learning is nothing other than the discovery of personal meaning and relevance of ideas. In his *Sociology of Education* lectures, the researcher always invited students to make the learning materials their own, by encouraging them to adapt new material to their personal contexts and interests. In this way, the researcher realised that many students took his *Sociology of Education* Classes for very different reasons, and so the researcher tried as far as possible to be aware of their diverse interests and ultimately gearing presentations accordingly. The end result was that their motivation to learn and ultimate mastery of the content depended largely on their ability (and the researcher's) to try to make the *Sociology* content their own while studying it. A simple but effective strategy offered by Sallis (2002) is that lecturers can highlight their own interest in a topic and, through their own enthusiasm or fascination, generate heightened interest in their students.

Instil Skills for Independent Learning in Students

Psychological studies such as that of Robins (2007) and Schultz and Schultz (2006) have shown that maintaining motivation depends on a feeling of control over challenges in order to progressively master required skills. In the same breadth Sallis (2002), adds that this feeling of control is more likely to occur if skills are introduced gradually, if timely feedback on the use of skills is offered and if students are encouraged to apply their skills in active problem solving. In this case the lecturer's role should transcend the obvious role of providing content to students, but also concentrating on how to find and master knowledge outside the classroom. This idea easily found expression in the researcher's theory of education classes, when students were assigned independent work on projects and research related activities. By offering students opportunities to develop learning skills through the application of course content to research projects and papers, lecturers thus encourage students to examine their goals, motivational methods and learning methods (Steyn and Niekerk 2002).

It is important to point out that in assigning projects, lecturers should provide clear guidelines and suggestions about how to proceed, the expected outcome and the assessment criteria that will be used in evaluating the students' worth. The result of such an approach to teaching is that learners are motivated to persist at authentic problems, meld prior knowledge and experience with new learning, and develop rich domain-specific knowledge and thinking strategies to apply to real-world problems. Importantly, lecturers should promote self-regulated learning in their students which according to Furnham (2001) involves the active, goal-directed, self-control of behaviour, motivation and recognition for academic tasks by an individual student. It is therefore crucial to point out that although traditional university education focuses principally on mastery of skill and theory, without opportunities to experience some kind of personal control and meaning in learning, students' enthusiasm will often fade.

CONCLUSION

Motivation has been depicted in this paper as a potent directive force that has a self-propelling effect on students learning. Lecturers in HE today face a crisis of generating and sustaining the students' motivation to learn so that students succeed in their studies. In this paper the researcher explored instructional strategies that lecturers in HE could use so as to improve student motivation in the teaching and learning trajectory. Reflecting on both theory and practice the author has argued that lecturers can stimulate the students need to pursue their study goals by incorporating various instructional strategies. While conceding that no particular strategy is by any means a 'sure cure' for all motivational problems in class, it can be argued that incorporating a variety of motivational strategies is likely to improve student desire for learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that teaching and learning development centres and other units within universities, design and offer in-service training programmes to academic staff on how to motivate students who are less prepared for studying in HE. Lecturers equipped with such

skills will be more effective in assisting students to succeed in their studies. It is further recommended that teaching and learning development centres should revitalise existing programmes on student development and support initiatives so that students' chances of excelling in HE are enhanced.

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