

CREATING A REWARD SYSTEM THAT WORKS: INCENTIVES AND MOTIVATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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Rewards play a critical role in shaping behavior and motivation in the classroom. An effective reward system can encourage positive behavior, enhance student engagement, and foster a sense of accomplishment. Teachers are essential in shaping the future generation, and their efforts should be respected and valued. A thoughtfully designed reward system helps teachers manage classrooms effectively and create a positive learning environment.

Reward systems can be broadly grouped into tangible and intangible rewards. Tangible rewards include stickers, small toys, or certificates, while intangible rewards encompass praise, privileges, or extra recess time. Combining both types of rewards can cater to diverse student preferences and needs. For instance, younger students may respond well to tangible rewards, while older students might like intangible rewards that acknowledge their efforts and achievements.

An effective reward system begins with setting clear expectations and consistently recognizing positive behavior. Students should understand what behaviors are rewarded and the types of rewards they can earn. Consistency in this regard helps build a sense of fairness and predictability, which are essential for maintaining order and motivation. Teachers should also ensure that the rewards are attainable and meaningful to the students.

Incorporating student input in the design of the reward system can increase its effectiveness. Allowing students to suggest rewards or vote on preferred options can

make them feel involved and invested in the system. For example, a class might vote on whether they prefer extra recess time, a homework pass, or a small party as a reward for meeting a collective goal.

Implementing the reward system requires clear communication and consistent application. Teachers should regularly monitor student behavior, recognize achievements, and distribute rewards promptly. Celebrating individual and collective successes is crucial to fostering a sense of community and shared goals. For example, a teacher might use a points system where students earn points for positive behaviors, and once the class reaches a certain number of points, they earn a group reward.

While rewards can be powerful motivators, it's crucial to also encourage intrinsic motivation alongside them. Students should understand the value of positive behavior and learning beyond earning rewards. Encouraging self-reflection and emphasizing the personal satisfaction of achieving goals can help students internalize positive behaviors. For instance, after distributing rewards, a teacher might discuss on how the behaviors that earned the rewards contribute to a positive learning environment and personal growth.

Lastly, creating a successful reward system requires understanding the types of rewards, designing the system thoughtfully, and consistently implementing it. Teachers who excel in this method can effectively manage their classrooms, motivate their students, and create a positive and productive learning environment. Balancing rewards with efforts to foster intrinsic motivation can help teachers inspire their students to develop lifelong positive behaviors and a love for learning.

References:

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