

# Trainer Essentials: Motivation

## Why Motivation is Important

Why is motivation important in training? The answer is simple: motivated people will learn better and faster (Standford Centre for Teaching and Learning, 1998). They are also more likely to take action on what they have learned and incorporate it into their everyday lives. This is always important, but is particularly crucial when teaching about water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) where we need to motivate participants to examine and often change habits and behaviours.

## Types of Motivation

In education, motivation is defined as anything that encourages the student to participate and learn (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001). There are two types of motivation:

- **Intrinsic motivation:** Millar (1897) labelled this type of motivation as “natural” motivation. It involves doing something because it is personally rewarding. Intrinsic motivation is driven by interest in the topic, personal development or enjoyment, and does not rely on external pressures or rewards. The key to creating this type of motivation is making information interesting and relevant to the participant.
- **Extrinsic motivation:** Millar (1897) labelled this type of motivation as “artificial” motivation. This motivation comes from outside of the individual. Grades, rewards and threats of punishment are common forms of extrinsic motivation. The classic example of this type of motivation is using a ‘carrot’ to entice or reward someone or a ‘stick’ to punish someone into compliance.

Ideally, you want all participants to be intrinsically motivated; however, this is not always possible. Somebody may not be interested in a certain topic until they have been exposed to it or understand its relevance to their life. Forms of extrinsic motivation, like competition, can be used to first pique someone’s interest in a topic and kindle their intrinsic motivation.

## Techniques to Create Motivation

Have you ever been inspired by someone giving a speech or telling a story? Certain people seem to have a way with words and have the power to inspire others. Some of the skills of those individuals come naturally, while others can be learned. As a trainer, you can develop the skills to inspire and encourage motivation in your participants. Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) recommend the following techniques to motivate participants:

- **Build Success:** People need to experience success at least 75% of the time to stay motivated (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001). To ensure that participants feel success, you need to engage them at the correct level of difficulty. What you are teaching should not be too easy or too difficult. Participants are more likely to experience success when you teach base

## Trainer Essentials: Motivation

concepts first and slowly build up to more complex concepts. You can also offer assistance when necessary to assure participants that they have the support needed to succeed.

- **Increase Accountability:** Participants will be more motivated if they are accountable to you and their peers. You can build accountability through visibility, consequences and time. Walking around the room to listen to discussions or observe participant work creates visibility. Asking participants to present the results of an activity to their peers or to you also makes their work visible.

Consequences are closely tied to visibility. They are expressed through approval or disapproval of peers or the trainer, and by the level of learning experienced by participants. For example, if a small group does a good presentation they will receive the approval of their peers and enjoy the rewards of knowing their topic well.

Adding a time factor keeps participants focused on their task. Participants are more likely to get the work done efficiently when they know there is a limited time to do it. Use visibility, consequences and time carefully to build enough concern to motivate participants without creating unnecessary stress and worry.

- **Find Connections:** You can create motivation by relating new concepts to the experiences of participants. Sharing the purpose of a lesson is also essential to create these connections. For example, in a lesson on waterborne diseases you can connect to past experiences by asking participants to think about a time when they got sick from drinking dirty water. You can then explain that the purpose of the lesson is to show them the connection between different types of illness and dirty water.
- **Create a Safe Learning Environment:** Participants will be motivated when they feel respected and enjoy the learning environment. Using a variety of teaching methods, responding effectively to participants, and using humour and enthusiasm are all things you can do to create a safe and positive environment in your workshop. To learn more about creating a safe learning environment, see CAWST's *Trainer Essentials: Creating a Safe Learning Environment*.
- **Be Enthusiastic:** Studies have shown that the enthusiasm of a teacher directly affects student's intrinsic motivation (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000). University students who received a lecture which was enthusiastically delivered reported much greater intrinsic motivation. How is enthusiasm expressed? Some ways that you can show enthusiasm are with the level and tone of your voice, eye movement, facial expressions and gestures. You can also highlight your own interest in a topic, and through your enthusiasm you will generate interest among your participants. For more information, see CAWST's *Trainer Essentials: Presentation Skills*.

## Trainer Essentials: Motivation

- **Make it Interesting:** As a trainer, you cannot always control the content, but you can control how you deliver the information. Use humour, vivid ideas, creativity and a variety of active learning methods to create interest in the topic. For example, share an interesting statistic or picture at the beginning of a session; get participants to resolve case studies in small groups; use games or a skit, etc.
- **Provide Feedback:** It is important to tell participants what they are doing well and how they can improve. Try to assess them frequently, monitor their progress and check for understanding. If participants feel that you care about their learning, then they will be motivated to try even harder. For more details on how to effectively provide feedback, see CAWST's *Trainer Essentials: Feedback*.

When participants are motivated it is good for the learning process and makes your job as a trainer much easier. You should first focus on stimulating participants' intrinsic motivation, and when necessary use extrinsic motivators to encourage participants' interest in the topic. You can motivate participants by helping them to feel successful, creating accountability, highlighting connections between them and the content, creating a safe learning environment, delivering content in interesting ways, and providing frequent and timely feedback.

### References

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- Millar, J. (1897). *School Management*. Toronto, Ontario: William Briggs.
- Patrick, B. C., Hisley, J., & Kempler, T. (2000). What's Everybody So Excited About?: The Effects of Teacher Enthusiasm on Student Intrinsic Motivation and Vitality. *The Journal of Experimental Education*.
- Standford Centre for Teaching and Learning. (1998). Capturing and Directing the Motivation to Learn. *Speaking of Teaching*. Retrieved from [http://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/cgi-bin/docs/newsletter/motivation\\_to\\_learn.pdf](http://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/cgi-bin/docs/newsletter/motivation_to_learn.pdf)

# Trainer Essentials: Motivation

## Additional Resources

Bonwell and Eison. (1991). Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No 1. Washington, D.C., D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development . Retrieved from [https://www.ydae.purdue.edu/lct/HBCU/documents/Active\\_Learning\\_Creating\\_Excitement\\_in\\_the\\_Classroom.pdf](https://www.ydae.purdue.edu/lct/HBCU/documents/Active_Learning_Creating_Excitement_in_the_Classroom.pdf)

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