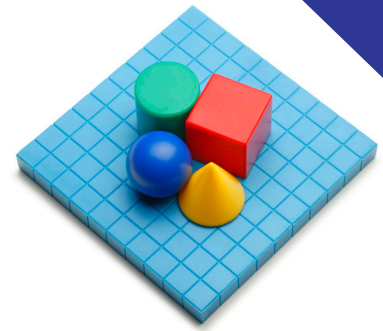


How Teachers Are Motivating Students To Learn STEM

Here's what teachers say they learned about what motivates their students, according to 102 open-ended responses to an EdWeek Research Center survey.



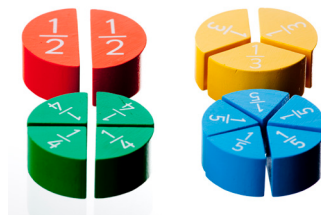
Hands-on/project-based learning

Many teachers, at all grade levels, mentioned that their students enjoy hands-on activities and projects more than listening to a lecture. For instance, in math, this could mean allowing students to use manipulatives, such as clocks, rulers, calculators, base-ten blocks, number bingo, and geometric shape kits. In science, this could be making rockets or mixing chemicals.



“They want to do hands-on projects where they can find the answers for themselves. I incorporate this whenever I can.”

ELEMENTARY TEACHER IN OREGON



Real-world connections or applications

Teachers know they have to answer what might be students' most-asked question: When am I ever going to use this in real life? To motivate students to work hard in their STEM classes, teachers say they're making the lessons relevant to students' daily lives, by incorporating pop culture, memes, and real-life events.

“They told me that they are motivated when math is applicable to their life so I have started using situations that they encounter.”

MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH TEACHER
IN VERMONT

Real-time feedback

Students told their teachers that they like seeing their progress and getting immediate feedback. They also like getting praise and rewards for good work, according to teachers' responses to the survey.

“All some students wanted was acknowledgment of their effort and a job well done.”

HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER IN
MARYLAND

Working with other students

Along with hands-on or project-based learning, students like working with their peers. Sometimes students are better suited to explain topics to their peers because they can do it from the same level of understanding, teachers say. And if a student can explain it, then they really understand the topic.

Fun activities

Teachers said that students want a lot of fun activities, such as games, videos, field trips, and cool tech tools.



“Students like to have fun while learning as they are living in an instant gratification world. I have implemented more challenges in class with various games and students enjoy the competitiveness.”

HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEACHER IN TEXAS

More study resources

Some students have told teachers that what would motivate them to work harder are study guides and more one-on-one help.

Student choice/agency

Teachers heard from students that they want more choices and control of their learning. This could be in the form of picking what topic to do a project on, being part of creating classroom rules or assignment rubrics, etc.

“It is important to listen to your students. They are in a way your customer. Customer service only gets better if you listen to your customers.”

MIDDLE SCHOOL BILINGUAL
EDUCATION TEACHER