

Motivation Formula

15. Synergy

Spatial Requirements: Classroom with moderate space required

Activity Type: Movement/group

Grades: 3-12

Group Size: 4 or more

Time: 25 minutes

Introduction: There are two things that help increase motivation: First, a passion or interest, and second, plugging in to a “support system.” This activity is designed to help students see that their abilities can be increased by learning from the passions, interests, and strengths of the people in their support system. They will learn that by working together, they can accomplish much more than they could on their own.

Materials:

- Timer
- 1 pen or pencil per team
- 1 piece of paper for each team

Activity:

Divide the class into teams of four or five and have them sit in a circle. Give each team a writing utensil and a piece of paper. Explain to the students that the object of the activity is to work as a team to create the longest list of answers possible from the categories that you give them. They are to pass a piece of paper around the circle with each person adding one answer to the list. A team may not have any duplicate answers. As the paper is passed around, they are not allowed to talk. If one person cannot think of an answer, they must write the word “skip” on the paper and then pass it to the next person. They continue to pass the paper around the circle for 60 seconds. When time has expired, each group will report their total number of answers (skips do not count). Then have each team read their list. Repeat a couple of times using new categories and starting with different people.

Next, play a few rounds where the group is allowed to talk, brainstorm, and suggest answers to the player who has the piece of paper at the moment. Explain that the paper must still be passed from person to person, with each student writing down an answer before it is passed on to the next person. The “skip” rule may still be used, but with the group helping, no one will likely have a need for it.

Suggestions for categories:

1. Animals with four legs
2. Major league baseball teams
3. Breakfast cereals
4. Television shows
5. Countries around the world
6. States in America
7. Sports
8. Musical instruments
9. Food served at restaurants

Processing the Experience:

- How many more answers did your team get in the “talking” rounds than in the “no-talking” rounds?
- How did being able to talk to each other (brainstorm) help?
- Why were some team members good at some categories and not others?
- What role does a person’s passions or interest play in what they know?

- How does working together help make a problem easier to solve?
- How can having a varied background, interests, and experiences make it easier to solve a problem?