# Motivational approaches

#### **(Taken from the Times Educational Supplement Great Minds booklet)**

#### Available online from:

#### <http://www.lancashireadultlearning.net/pluginfile.php/109188/mod_resource/content/0/Great_Minds_1_.pdf>

# Motivational approaches

#### What would it take to get you to do the worst job imaginable? Maybe you are not motivated by money, perhaps helping people is more important to you, or recognition of your skills. But what motivates your students?

#### You might think that some subjects have an advantage; boys can’t wait for PE, so they can play football, or science attracts them with promises of explosions and Bunsen burners. Motivation is a complex process. In the Eighties, John Keller produced the ARCS model for the motivational design of learning.

* Attention – this can be gained by a stimulating question, a thought-provoking reading or a video clip.
* Relevance – establishing relevance increases student motivation. For example, use language and examples with which the learners are familiar. Tell students how the new learning will be useful to them.
* Confidence – make sure that the content is not too challenging. Students need to feel confident that they can achieve some degree of success in activities.
* Satisfaction – at the end of the learning experience, students need to be rewarded, with a sense of achievement, or recognizing that a skill. Is beneficial, for example. Keller based his ideas partly on Abraham Maslow’s work in the Forties and Fifties. Maslow defined a hierarchy of needs, which basically says that a person’s behaviour will be dominated by those needs which have the greatest influence.

## What’s Maslow’s hierarchy of needs about?

#### Maslow’s hierarchy is often represented as a pyramid with basic biological needs (food, drink, warmth etc.) at its base. Next level up is safety and security, moving on to belonging, such as friendship, being part of a group, affection etc. The fourth level is the need for self-esteem, competence, adequacy, attention and recognition. At the top of the pyramid is the need for self-fulfillment or self- actualization.

#### Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theorises that each of these levels must be adequately satisfied starting with physiological needs and working toward self- actualisation. You cannot successfully move up to the next level without fulfilling the level below.

## Maslow’s original hierarchy has been revised to seven levels:

1. Physiological
2. Safety
3. Belonging
4. Esteem
5. Cognitive
6. Aesthetic
7. Self-actualisation

## How can you put the theory into practice?

If your students’ basic physiological needs are not being met (for example, for food, warmth, shelter, sleep) they are not going to be able to learn or participate in lessons. Students who do not feel a sense of belonging in school or lessons, or do not feel they are capable of achieving or having a reasonable degree of self-esteem, are unlikely to have a strong motivation to learn or to be creative and open to new ideas. While home life will impact on all students, the climates fostered by and within schools can overcome some of these difficulties. Breakfast clubs and the provision of good healthy menus in school canteens will meet a range of basic needs a welcoming classroom, and students’ work on the walls in corridors and classrooms, improves self-esteem and self-worth. The first impression of your classroom, how it looks and is arranged, can also promote belonging and self-esteem, putting student at ease and making then feel valued and respected as individuals.

## How motivational approaches can improve your lessons

What motivates students is a sense of achievement, recognition of the things that they do, interest in the task they have been set, being given responsibility and moving up to more demanding tasks. These are all things that you can strive to routinely incorporate into your lessons, but certain motivators are more difficult to achieve, such as responsibility. To stimulate interest in a task, try taking students to a new location to do something routine. When studying a history topic, provide the students with props and artefacts from that period. Encourage them to role-play the key characters and provide them with dressing up opportunities. Use the school hall rather than the classroom to act out the role-play. If local historical venues have education facilities, you may be able to teach the history immersed in the buildings of that period.

Outside speakers who have first-hand experiences of things that students are studying will also help to motivate them, so think about inviting specialists in to talk about how they do their job, or experiences they had of living through historical events – this also gives the activity under study a “real” context. In food technology, students could construct a menu designed for an old people’s home after talking to some of the people who live there. They could then provide a special lunch or tea party. This responsibility could be rewarded with a local newspaper article celebrating their achievement. In art, students could produce a show to raise money for a charity of their choice, with the more artistically challenged students getting involved in the planning and staging of the event, acting as publicity officers and designers deciding where and how the artworks can be displayed.

## Abraham Maslow 1908–1970

Abraham Maslow, the son of Jewish Russian immigrants, was born in Brooklyn, New York, the first son of seven children. He attended the City College and began by studying law. Maslow graduated in psychology from the University of Wisconsin.

He married Bertha Goodman, his first cousin, and they had two children.

Early in his career, he studied human motivation and personality. His work upset strict behaviourists, whose explanations of motivation and personality failed to account for what Maslow called the whole person. His theory of the hierarchy of needs, which leads to the “self-actualised” individual, was a strong vehicle for the founding of humanistic psychology graduated in psychology from the University of Wisconsin.

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### For further information

[www.arcsmodel.com](http://www.arcsmodel.com/)

### <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/conation/maslow.html>