

Motivating Students to Learn

Eighteen eighth grade U.S. history teachers from seven middle class suburban school districts provided the data for Hootstein's research. Hootstein described the widespread trend of student inattention and lack of effort prevalent in today's history classrooms and suggested possible strategies for overcoming these issues. He referred to the research findings of the National Center for Educational Statistics survey of 25,000 eighth graders that found nearly half of those interviewed stated they were bored in school at least half of the time. Hootstein believes this study, and prior studies on student motivation are incomplete as they do not research students' opinions and thoughts about the methodologies and teaching strategies used by their teachers.

Hootstein's report described strategies currently used to enhance student motivation (role playing and products created via projects) as well as teachers' understanding of motivational theories. Additionally, Hootstein's research identified the factors that teachers repeatedly listed as interfering with their attempts to increase student motivation, namely lack of adequate planning time and insufficient funds for resource materials.

Hootstein's research showed that many teachers believe that their endeavors to stimulate student interest by using numerous motivational strategies is more important than their actual subject matter.

Hootstein concluded that both teachers and students rated character role-playing as the number one motivational strategy. However, teachers ranked projects and product creation higher than did students, and while students enjoyed projects, they expressed a desire for more student-determination (ownership) in this area.

Hootstein, Edward W. "Motivating Students to Learn." Clearing House 67.4 (1994): 213-216.