

Motivation and Joy

Why engagement and a sense of success drive achievement

Skill and knowledge matter, but a student who is not engaged will not use them. Motivation is not a soft extra, it is a driver of achievement, and the research shows that when students feel capable, have some choice, and find real interest in the work, they learn more and stay with it longer.

What fuels motivation

Self determination theory identifies three needs that fuel motivation, competence, autonomy, and relatedness, a sense of being capable, of having some choice, and of belonging (**Ryan & Deci, 2000**). When instruction meets those needs, students are drawn into the work rather than pushed through it.

Engagement raises achievement

Engagement is not just pleasant, it pays off in learning. An approach that deliberately built engagement through interesting content, hands on experiences, and student choice raised both reading comprehension and motivation (**Guthrie et al., 2004**). The engaged reader reads more, and the reader who reads more improves.

A student who feels capable and finds joy in the work is a student who keeps going, and keeping going is how skill is built.

What this means for Teach BIG

This is why joy is on purpose in our program, from the songs to the characters to the small, winnable challenges that let students feel success early and often. Choosing joy is not a slogan, it is a strategy, because a motivated, confident student is the one who does the work that turns into achievement.

References

- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., Barbosa, P., Perencevich, K. C., Taboada, A., Davis, M. H., Scafiddi, N. T., & Tonks, S. (2004). Increasing reading comprehension and engagement through concept oriented reading instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(3), 403 to 423.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68 to 78.