

## Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning

Hello there. I want to welcome you, my fellow teachers, to this talk. By being here with me, you are also demonstrating that you are explorers, continuously searching for ways to have an ever-greater impact. I am excited to be sharing my thoughts with you on your journey. So, welcome!

Today, I want to talk to you about why creating enthusiasm for learning is vital, not only for your students' academic success but also for their personal growth and development.

When students are enthusiastic about learning, they are more engaged, motivated, and interested in what they are learning. They are more likely to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and take an active role in their own learning. In addition, enthusiasm for learning helps students develop a sense of curiosity and creativity. They are more likely to explore new ideas and perspectives, think critically and independently, and come up with innovative solutions to problems. This enthusiasm also translates into better academic performance, as students are more likely to retain information and apply it to their work.

Moreover, creating enthusiasm for learning helps students develop a love of learning that will stay with them throughout their lives. This is because enthusiasm is contagious. When students see their teacher's passion for a subject, they are more likely to develop an interest in it as well. This can lead to lifelong learning, as students continue to seek out new knowledge and experiences.

Let me add that enthusiasm for learning isn't just important for academic success. It also plays a crucial role in personal growth and development. When students are enthusiastic about learning, they are more likely to develop a growth mindset, which is the belief that intelligence and abilities are developed through hard work and dedication. This mindset fosters resilience, perseverance, and a willingness to take on challenges.

So, as teachers, it's important that we do everything we can to create enthusiasm for learning in our classrooms. This can involve using engaging teaching strategies, incorporating real-world examples, and fostering a positive and supportive classroom environment.

Remember, when we create enthusiasm for learning, we are not only helping our students succeed academically but also setting them up for a lifetime of personal growth and fulfillment.

**Let me tell you about how I like beginning my first class of the term. I gaze across my class, seeing some gazing intently toward me, with others having sort of a hazy look about them, with still others not yet pulling their gazes from screens. Still others have decided to leave earbuds on, seemingly at-the-ready for tuning in – or tuning out- at will. So, I begin with something unexpected, by letting everyone know, that I know, there are three kinds of mindsets in the room.**

**First, I tell students that I know that some feel like prisoners. Invariably, this gets everyone's attention! We then talk about qualities of being a prisoner – it becomes my first opportunity to engage with students, a time where they begin to feel safe in my classroom.**

**Second, I tell my class that some of them have come into my class as tourists. Once again, we talk about what this means. Third, that some in the classroom feel like explorers. I then**

## **Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning**

**share a few thoughts about being an explorer, along with talking about my hopes for each and every student in the room. I'll talk with you about each of these, prisoners, tourists, and explorers, next.**

### **Qualities of a Prisoner**

It is useful to understand the qualities that are associated with feeling like a prisoner. As teachers, when we understand how these mindsets can happen, we can create classroom environments that free students from these conditions. For students, once they understand that they have the choice – in everything they do in life – to choose another way of thinking than that of being a prisoner, they can break from habits that might otherwise be hindering them from reaching their potential.

While being a prisoner is an obvious mindset for those actually in prison, it is a mindset that can be felt at work, or, as we are talking about, in school or in a particular class. This is a challenging and distressing experience that can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and well-being.

One of the key qualities associated with feeling like a prisoner is a loss of control. This can be due to external factors such as being compelled to join groups or when attendance is mandated, or internal factors such as feeling trapped in a situation. This loss of control can lead to a sense of powerlessness and helplessness, which can be difficult to overcome.

Another quality associated with feeling like a prisoner is isolation. Feeling alone, with no perceived means of gaining community, can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. This can be exacerbated by a lack of social support or interaction with others, which can contribute to feelings of distress.

Boredom is another quality that is associated with feeling like a prisoner. Being “trapped” in a classroom can lead to feelings of boredom and restlessness. This may be due to a lack of mental or physical stimulation, or a lack of variety in daily activities. This can also contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety.

Lack of autonomy is also a quality that is associated with feeling like a prisoner. This can be due to strict rules, or a lack of autonomy and a lack of feeling empowered. This can lead to a sense of frustration and a feeling of being trapped in a situation that one cannot control.

Finally, limited opportunities are another quality associated with feeling like a prisoner. This can be due to a lack of access to choices of engaging in the class, or feeling like there is a lack of personal growth opportunities. This can lead to a sense of hopelessness and a feeling of being stuck in a situation with no way out.

Overall, feeling like a prisoner, is a difficult and distressing experience that can have a significant impact on an individual's mental health and well-being. It is important for teachers to realize there are prisoners in the classroom. It is also important for teachers to create opportunities for students

## **Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning**

to feel they can be 'set free' from being prisoners. Once students realize that they have a choice in the mindset they bring into a class, opportunities abound for them.

It might even be useful to offer students an example of someone who, despite being in prison, was not imprisoned at all, Nelson Mandela. Mandela spent 27 years in prison, most of them on Robben Island, a notorious prison off the coast of South Africa. Despite the harsh conditions, Mandela chose a path for his mind and heart that kept him from being a prisoner in the sense of what being a prisoner can do to the spirit. He devoted himself to learning, both through books and by engaging in political discussions with his fellow inmates. He learned several languages, including Afrikaans, the language of his oppressors, and he read widely. He also wrote letters to his family and supporters, many of which were smuggled out of the prison and published. Mandela shows us that we have a choice for how we engage our minds and hearts. Breaking from a mindset of a prisoner frees us.

***Mandela once said that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."***

## **Qualities of a Tourist**

Let's talk about the joys of being a tourist. As someone who loves to travel and explore new places, I believe that being a tourist is one of the most rewarding and enriching experiences that one can have.

First of all, being a tourist allows us to experience new cultures and traditions. When we travel to a new place, we are exposed to different customs, languages, and ways of life. This can be a transformative experience, as it opens our minds to new perspectives and ways of thinking.

Another joy of being a tourist is the opportunity to try new foods and flavors. Every place has its unique cuisine, and being a tourist allows us to sample the local specialties and indulge in new tastes and flavors. This can be a fun and exciting way to broaden our culinary horizons and expand our palates.

Being a tourist also allows us to see some of the world's most iconic landmarks and attractions. Whether it's the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Great Wall of China, or the Taj Mahal in India, these famous landmarks are often at the top of many people's travel bucket lists. Seeing them in person can be awe-inspiring and create memories that last a lifetime.

Another joy of being a tourist is the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. When we travel, we often encounter locals and other tourists who share our interests and passions. This can lead to new friendships and connections that can last long after the trip is over.

Finally, being a tourist can be a great way to relax and recharge. Traveling to a new place allows us to escape the stresses and routines of our daily lives and experience new adventures and

## Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning

experiences. It can be a chance to disconnect from technology and reconnect with ourselves and the world around us.

As you can see, being a tourist is a wonderful and fulfilling experience that allows us to explore new cultures, try new foods, see iconic landmarks, meet new people, and relax and recharge. Frankly, I encourage everyone to embrace the joys of being a tourist and explore the world around us.

### Transition to explorer mindset

**Notice, I just mentioned that part of the joy of being a tourist is exploration.**

I now want to talk about why it is even better to have the mindset of an explorer than that of a tourist. While being a tourist can be an enjoyable experience, I believe that adopting an explorer's mindset can be even more rewarding and enriching.

### Qualities of Explorers

Let's take a few minutes to think about the qualities of being an explorer. Explorers are willing to venture off the beaten path, take chances, and step outside of their comfort zones. This can lead to new discoveries and experiences. If we consider the personal qualities that drive explorers to explore and discover new territories, ideas, and knowledge, the most commonly mentioned FIVE qualities would be:

1. **Curiosity:** Explorers are naturally curious and have a thirst for knowledge and adventure. Explorers seek to understand and uncover the mysteries of the world around them, rather than simply scratching the surface of a place as a tourist might. This leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the places they visit and the people they encounter.
2. **Resilience:** Explorers face many challenges and obstacles on their journeys, including physical and emotional hardships, financial constraints, and societal barriers. They must be resilient and tenacious, with the ability to persevere through difficult times and bounce back from setbacks.
3. **Creativity:** Explorers often have to think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions to problems. They need to be creative and adaptable, with the ability to think on their feet and make quick decisions.
4. **Courage:** Explorers must be willing to take risks and step outside their comfort zones. They need to have the courage to face the unknown and overcome their fears.
5. **Open-mindedness:** Explorers are open to new ideas and perspectives, and are willing to challenge their own beliefs and assumptions. They are curious about other cultures and ways of life, and seek to understand and appreciate diversity.

Having an explorer's mindset can lead to a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment as well as opportunity for personal growth and development. Explorers are often faced with challenges and obstacles that require problem-solving skills, adaptability, and resilience. This can lead to increased confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

## **Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning**

Explorers are often driven by a desire to make a difference and leave a positive impact on the places they visit. This can lead to a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life.

As teachers, consider what is being created in our classrooms when students are growing these personal qualities within them. I always encourage students to become excited explorers. I tell them that I fully understand that they may enter some of their classes – perhaps even mine - feeling forced to be there due to requirements for graduation, or because they could not get into a preferred class. But I also tell them that only by being an explorer can they choose to take advantage of the moment. I encourage all students to value their time and that by entering each day – let alone each class – with the eagerness of an explorer, that they will be advantaged in life.

### **Transition to Big Questions we should ask ourselves.**

Teaching in ways that transitions students from being extrinsically motivated to becoming intrinsically motivated is one of the most rewarding things that you can do as a teacher. It is not an easy task, and I want to encourage you to keep pushing forward and to never give up.

You've likely heard these terms, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation bandied about. It is important to understand that extrinsic motivation involves engaging in a task or behavior in order to receive a reward or to avoid a negative consequence, rather than for the inherent pleasure or interest in the task itself. When extrinsically motivated, students are mainly focused on factors such as rewards, grades, or punishment. Intrinsic motivation is something that comes from within and it is driven by personal interests, curiosity, and a desire to learn and grow.

As teachers, we have a powerful influence on our students' motivation. We can create a classroom environment that fosters intrinsic motivation by helping students connect their interests and passions to what they are learning, providing them with meaningful and challenging tasks, and by giving them autonomy and control over their own learning.

To start with, try to find out what motivates each of your students. Talk to them, listen to them, and try to understand their interests and passions. Then, connect their interests to the content you are teaching. For example, if a student is interested in music, you could encourage them to explore the science of sound waves, or the history of music.

Next, provide your students with challenging and meaningful tasks that are aligned with their interests. Encourage them to take risks, make mistakes, and to learn from their failures. This will help build their confidence and self-efficacy, which are essential for intrinsic motivation.

Finally, give your students control over their own learning. Allow them to make choices, set goals, and to take ownership of their learning journey. This will help them feel more invested in their learning and will increase their intrinsic motivation.

## **Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning**

Transitioning students from being extrinsically motivated to becoming intrinsically motivated takes time, patience, and perseverance. But, it is worth it. When your students are intrinsically motivated, they will be more engaged, more curious, and more likely to succeed in the long term.

As a teacher, I often reflect on motivating my students. When reflecting, I always ask myself two BIG QUESTIONS, questions that force me to reflect on each and every class and how I conduct myself when teaching. First,

**❑ Why should students care about the class I am about to teach?**

Second,

**❑ How will I take students from ME being the only person excited about this topic to WE being excited about this topic**

As teachers continuously seeking to become better at our craft, we all love times that, as we look across our class, we see our students excited, eagerly engaged in the learning moment. In those moments, students have taken a personal interest and their curiosity abounds. Whenever this happens, we have every reason to know that there can, indeed, be magic in a classroom. It is moments like this that make teaching ever so worthwhile.

During the first class of any term, I let students know that I know they are tuned into a radio station – the station is called WIIFM. This stands for WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

Students, believing that they will be changed in a positive way, engage differently, often becoming explorers themselves as they seek the key to understanding. Once teachers have the trust of students – a trust based on their belief that teachers are acting in their best interest – magic can happen in a classroom.

### **What do I mean by being trusted?**

From a student's perspective, trust in a teacher means believing that the teacher has their best interests at heart and will act in their best interest.

Trust enables students to feel safe, comfortable, respected, and valued in a classroom, which in turn allows them to take risks and engage in meaningful learning experiences. To build trust, teachers should be consistent, respectful, and honest with students. Teachers can also create a culture of collaboration and community by encouraging students to share their ideas, listen actively to their peers, and work together towards common goals. Additionally, teachers can acknowledge and validate students' emotions and perspectives, and create opportunities for students to express their feelings and concerns. By building trust in a classroom, teachers can help create a supportive and nurturing learning environment that fosters student growth and success.

## Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning

I often bring up my radio station example. In fact, throughout a term I will often begin a class by asking a student or two, “What radio station are you tuned into today?” It never fails to make students smile. It always reminds me of one of my central purposes when preparing for classes.

Ultimately, catching students, by sparking their interests, then holding students in purposeful ways so that they become active engaged learners, developing and growing, are within our charges as teachers.

There was a time that I was on a national team, in a sport I dearly loved. It was at that time that I gained an understanding of the importance of great coaching. Since then, I’ve read inspirational books about coaching, along with seeing quotes that stay with me.

“A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are.”

– *Ara Parasheghian; Notre Dame Coach*

“I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that was previously hidden within an individual (and which invariably finds a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable).”

– *John Russell; Managing Director of Harley-Davidson Europe*

“Good coaching is good teaching and nothing else.”

– *Pat Conroy author*

Just as students need teachers, teachers need to think of ourselves as coaches. Players need coaches for several reasons. Firstly, coaches have the expertise and knowledge necessary to teach and guide players in their sport. Coaches can help players develop technical skills, tactical strategies, and physical fitness, and can provide feedback and correction to help players improve and reach their potential.

Secondly, coaches can provide motivation and support to players. Coaches can help players set goals, stay focused, and maintain a positive mindset, even during challenging times. They can also provide emotional support and encouragement, which can be especially important for younger or less experienced players who may lack confidence.

Thirdly, coaches can provide a sense of structure and organization to a team or individual player. Coaches can create training plans, game schedules, and practice routines that help players develop their skills and prepare for competition.

Finally, coaches can act as role models and mentors for players. Coaches can demonstrate good sportsmanship, teamwork, and leadership skills, which can help players develop these same

## **Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning**

qualities. Coaches can also provide guidance and advice on important life skills, such as time management, goal-setting, and decision-making.

Overall, coaches play a critical role in helping players develop their skills, achieve their goals, and grow as athletes and individuals. As far as I am concerned, by thinking of ourselves as coaches, and developing within ourselves the means to be better coaches, then we are more likely to “catch” our students by sparking their interests, then “hold” our students as they put effort to the task of developing their abilities, receiving feedback all-the-while so they know the path they are taking and the opportunities for improvement still remaining on that journey.

The rest is the nuts and bolts of engaging, whether it is the purposeful material used in the class, the varied methods we use to engage our students, and, of course, ourselves – the teacher coach in the room seeking to engage and enthrall our student players to reach their potential.

### **Transition to: Provoking Effort via Authentic tasks.**

We hear a lot about choosing tasks for students that are AUTHENTIC. Authentic tasks are tasks that are designed to replicate real-life situations and challenges, and which require learners to use the knowledge and skills they have learned in a meaningful way. These tasks are often complex and multi-faceted, requiring learners to apply critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills to complete them successfully.

As a teacher, incorporating authentic tasks into your teaching can help to motivate and engage your learners, as they are more likely to be interested in and invested in tasks that are relevant to their lives and experiences. Authentic tasks also help learners to see the practical applications of the knowledge and skills they are learning, which can increase their motivation to learn and their retention of the material.

Furthermore, authentic tasks can help to develop learners' communication and collaboration skills, as they may need to work together to solve complex problems or complete a task. These skills are essential for success in many areas of life, including the workplace, and so incorporating authentic tasks into your teaching can help to prepare your learners for their future careers.

Using authentic tasks in your teaching can be a powerful tool for motivating and engaging learners, developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and preparing them for success in their future careers.

It is also valuable to allow students choice when possible. Choice – or, more precisely, choosing for oneself, is empowering, provoking greater commitment to goals. Let me provide an example of giving choice – choice without compromising the intent of the task being given to students. Let's say we are teaching a literature class. Now, the teacher could assign a project where students must create a creative writing piece based on a theme or idea from the course material, telling them to write an essay of a certain length for the task. For sure, the teacher should consider ‘why’ this activity is of value, sharing the value with students. Then, the teacher should reflect on the question



## Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning

‘Is there any reason the work product needs to be an essay?’ Instead of mandating a specific type of writing (such as an essay), What if students were given the option of making it a poem, short story, or play, and even whether it could be a visual presentation or written)? Perhaps, the teacher could allow students to choose which type of writing they want to do.

Giving choice can easily engender a lot of excitement, as students seek their own ways to create meaningful work product. Doing this also gives students the opportunity to play to their strengths and interests while still meeting the learning objectives of the assignment. Additionally, it encourages students to take ownership of their learning and to engage more deeply with the material.

As teachers, we are with our students but for a moment. Teachers are responsible for imparting knowledge, skills, and values to their students, which is crucial for their academic, social, and personal development.

Apart from our education role, teachers also provide guidance, support, and inspiration to our students. We help students develop critical thinking skills, improve their communication and collaboration skills, and encourage them to explore new ideas and perspectives. Teachers also play a significant role in shaping their students' attitudes and beliefs towards learning, success, and life in general.

Overall, teachers provide students with the tools and resources they need to succeed academically and beyond. When magic happens in the classroom, students realize they have potential within themselves, finding themselves empowered and becoming lifelong learners and leaders in their communities.

Nelson Mandela once said that "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Once our students truly believe in themselves, the challenges of any given moment are just another of many learning and growing moments. Students learn to rise, and rise with more strength, each and every time they fall, becoming stronger through the process.

### Transition to: **Useful rules for teaching**

1. **If I don't enjoy it, my students won't enjoy it.**
2. **Explain why I teach how I teach.**
3. **Believe that I make a difference.**

Each of you are taking the time to listen to my thoughts about creating enthusiasm for learning because you are committed to being explorers, searching for understanding, trusting that you make a difference and because you are always searching for opportunities for improvement. You realize that, while, yes, you are teaching to impart knowledge and skills, you affect students lives in other

## Transcript for Creating Enthusiasm for Learning

ways as well – and you are committed to doing so, purposefully. You are also teaching because you have a living breathing role in inspiring, motivating, and supporting your students.

One of the most powerful ways that we can make a difference in students' lives is by showing that we genuinely care about them. When students feel valued and respected by teachers, they are more likely to be engaged in learning, more willing to take risks, and more likely to persevere through challenges.

Research has shown that when students feel a sense of belonging in their classroom, they are more likely to be motivated, have better academic outcomes, and engage in positive social behaviors. Teachers who demonstrate care and concern for their students create a safe and supportive environment where students feel empowered to learn and grow.

Moreover, caring about students is not just a one-way street. When teachers invest time and energy into building positive relationships with our students, we also benefit.

- We become more invested in our work,
- We find greater fulfillment in our teaching, and
- We are better able to address the diverse needs of our students.

Caring, creating a trusted learning environment, accompanied with truly enjoying what we are teaching, can envelop students in a learning environment where they become excited learners – losing the mental shackles of feeling like prisoners, aspiring for more than they thought possible. Becoming explorers, themselves.

Teachers – yes, each of you – truly make a difference. Believe it. Trust it. Commit yourself to making a difference. If you used to believe it but have long since forgotten it, find this belief once again. Look into the eyes of the ever-so-important students in your classroom and help them know they are valued.

Then, tell students why you teach the way you teach. Let students know you are focused on them and that you are bringing your energies to the classroom for them.

You are taking a journey with your students. Each of your students has so much potential, so much capacity awaiting to be released. Each student is capable of growth and development. A teacher – a teacher just like you – helps make this a reality.