

How do you keep your students interested in the subject matter?

Maintaining interest in the subject matter is clearly one of the best things you can do for your teaching. If you are asked to give a speech, you want the audience to be receptive to the content of the speech. As a teacher, you must have an audience who listens and is interested in what you do. If you don't, then you are in for a very long and miserable year. Or two years. or a long career. So we must come up with things that we can do that will help to encourage and actively promote a high level of interest from the pupils we teach. What are some of these specific things you can do to help them be more interested?

1. **Relate the content to their lives!**

Why do I have to learn this?" If you are ever asked that question and don't have an answer for it, other than, "because I said so," then you have lost credibility. Why do we need to know grammar? Because it will help you be successful in life. Why do we need to know math? So people don't cheat us out of our money! Why do we need to learn about the arts? To gain a greater understanding of cultures and history. And on it goes.

2. **Relate your life to the content!**

Learn to be a story-teller. Although I strive to minimize talking, I still believe that an appropriately timed story can work wonders in encouraging and increasing interest in your subject. I make it a point to share with my classes whenever my kids do funny things. Sometimes I am able to relate music to it, but other times, it's just me telling a story. One of the Language Arts teachers at my school came up to me at the end of the year and told me about how his students were all writing a few paragraphs about their electives and sharing them with him and with each other. He said that a lot of them wrote wonderful stuff about band and about me and my kids.

3. **Have fun!**

This will make you enjoy your job more. When you enjoy your job, interest levels will go up with the students. When you have fun, you'll go home happier at the end of the day. That's a great thing.

4. **Smile!**

Smiling is a result of having fun. I get too serious some of the times and don't smile. I've had students ask me if I'm upset or tell me to smile more. It's good for your health.

5. **Laugh and get them laughing!**

Young pupils love laughing. Adults love laughing. Laughing is good for your health too. Be funny. If you can handle it, make fun of yourself. Come up with nicknames for the students. Let them help you make up nicknames. One of the best ways to reduce tension in a stressful situation is to add levity. Because I don't smile enough, I was told by a handful of students this year that they knew I wasn't mad only after I would use one of their nicknames. It works.

So, some of these things will help to raise student interest. Some of them will also help to raise teacher interest. The more interested you are in doing the job, the more likely they will be interested. And the more you will enjoy going home at nights and looking back on the accomplishments of the day.

End

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