ENGAGING, MOTIVATING AND EMPOWERING

LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

As Head of Primary and Early Years Teacher Education at the University of Warwick, **Des Hewitt** places teaching and learning at the heart of his work. With over 25 years of teaching experience in schools and universities, he has been recognised for his national and international profile in Teacher Education. He was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship by the Higher Education Academy and is a Professorial Teaching Fellow at Warwick.

Des has experience of promoting and evolving the model of placements for trainee primary school teachers, in England and in other countries. He has also been involved in advising UK government organisations on developing English and reading for university Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers. In addition, he has led universities in developing practice in special education needs and disability. He also sat on a steering group in the Department for Children, Schools and Families, evaluating the impact of training for inclusion in teacher education.

Working with schools and the Teacher Education sector in Tanzania has been a focus for Des in recent years. Collaborative projects with researchers and educators in Finland, Germany, India and Hungary have also provided the opportunity to share ideas about teacher education, partnership development and research skills, internationally. Des supports emerging researchers through the European Educational Research Association.

Publications include a focus on innovation, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Effective Learning, mental health and mindfulness, matching his research interests. Recently, he has lead research evaluation of educational practice in the arts and agricultural sectors. He is a Director of several multi-academy trusts. Through these he is able to support school improvement and the development of a good education for children and professionals. Des is always committed to working in partnership with others.

Brittany Wright is a Teaching Fellow at the Centre for Teacher Education at the University of Warwick. She previously worked in secondary education. Although her most recent role was as Head of English in a large

secondary school, Brittany has also led on provision for higher-ability learners and co-ordinated widening participation programmes focused on supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds in pursuing further and higher education. Since moving into initial teacher education, Brittany has also worked with schools in North London, supporting professional development of teachers, as well as teaching across Primary and Secondary PostGraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION TO ENGAGEMENT, MOTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Chapter guide

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- Why this book, why now?

- Teachers and pupils: Why we need to consider the development of both together

- Key concepts: Engagement, motivation and empowerment

- Who would find this book relevant?

- Case study examples and how the chapters are organised

- Making the links to school-based training for teachers

- Overview of the chapters

Learning matters in society. It is the life force that flows through the past, the present and the future. Without a good education, we have no learning. Without learning, we have nothing.

We write this book as a positive statement to explain the concept of a good education and the role of engagement, motivation and empowerment. We believe in the rights and responsibilities of all learners to experience a good education. We make no apologies for emphasising democracy, agency and the right to flourish. These are the roots of this book.

Whilst learning can happen anywhere, it is principally in early years, primary and secondary settings that education in a more formal sense takes place. Of course, universities and professional settings also provide keystones in the education system. But here, our focus is on schools. Schools very much reflect society in terms of the value and characteristics of education.

We believe that a good education can only be achieved by engaging, motivating and empowering all learners in school. This way, everyone will flourish as individuals whilst making a positive contribution to society. Whilst there are individual, institutional and societal factors in both pupils and teachers that have an impact, the content structure and experience of education is critical. This book will examine the issues.

Why this book, why now?

A good education recognises different levels of learning in the classroom. This includes knowledge, skills and understanding. Moreover the development of social, emotional and, perhaps critically, core values are central to a good education. These are inextricably linked. Without knowledge and the skills to discuss the world, how can we generate strong values? Without strong values, how can we learn about the world in an ethical way, applying knowledge and working with others appropriately? Life is as much about doing the right thing as it is about doing things right. There is therefore no opposition between the development of strong core skills and strong core values. We cannot have a good education without developing the various aspects of learning – knowledge, skills, social, emotional and ethical learning – in both pupils and teachers. Both teachers and pupils deserve a good education.

Teachers and pupils: Why we need to consider the development of both together

Writing a book about learning is as much a process of self-discovery as articulating the current landscape of learning in schools. We hope that reading this book, however you do that, will facilitate your own journey of discovery. You will find in this book a review of current thinking around 'engagement, motivation and empowerment' of learners in school. By 'learners', we mean children and young people as learners, as well as teachers as learners. The central tenet of the book is the need to consider, in parallel, the development of both teachers and pupils. There is always an interaction between the lives of pupils and the lives of teachers in the classroom, at cognitive, social, emotional and moral levels. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development captures the interaction between the learner and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). It recognises the interconnectedness of the teacher and the learner. It is useful to consider who is the learner and who is the teacher. It is not quite as simple as you would think. In the work of Loris Malaguzzi, the role of

the teacher is to discover the way in which the very young child learns, to understand the 'hundred languages' of the child (Edwards et al., 1998). In a very special way, the teacher learns from the child and the child teaches the teacher. But even in more formal learning settings, there is always a sense that the teacher can only be effective if they pitch a lesson at the current level of the learner. This means knowing the learner.

We take this model further to consider this at the level of engagement, motivation and empowerment. These concepts are introduced and referenced to recent educational theories. What are the principles underlying successful development of both pupils and teachers, and how might parallel processes, needs and concerns manifest in the classroom? We explore these principles and practices with reference to relevant theory, exemplifying them with authentic case studies from primary and secondary schools. Teachers and pupils are inextricably linked. This is why we need to consider their learning as being linked, and why this book is about the learning of pupils and the learning of teachers. We have a particular commitment to teachers at the early stages of their career. How did we learn to be teachers? What can we do to support new and early career teachers? Likewise, we have a responsibility to ensure that the next generation of learners has a great experience in schools, invested with all the knowledge and attributes to become and lead the next stage in our society. Only great teachers with a good education can provide the context, leadership and passion needed for a good education in schools. If we do not engage, motivate and empower teachers, how can we possibly do the same for children and young people? Disaffected, demotivated and disempowered professionals do not make good teachers.

Key concepts: Engagement, motivation, empowerment, mutuality and agency

In this book, you will be introduced to different aspects of engagement, motivation and empowerment. Whilst these will be explained, analysed and problematised in more detail throughout, it is useful to introduce them as broad concepts:

> **Engagement:** This is the degree to which a learner pays attention to or takes part in an activity. Often, linked to a degree of interest and degrees of motivation, it is also worth noting that learners can engage or not at different levels. For instance, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2003) distinguish between behaviour, cognitive and motivational engagement. Learners can look like they are engaged in learning, but in reality, they just appear to be without developing their thinking and knowledge in a lesson.

Motivation: This involves working towards a chosen goal in a sustained way (Zimmerman and Schunk, 2008). The principal distinction is between 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivation. But, as we will see in the work of Ryan and Deci (2000), this is an oversimplification.

Empowerment: Learners have the right to influence their learning, to have ownership of their past, present and future. They have the right to make their voices heard in education. These are enshrined as rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Detrick, 1999). We see empowerment as more than a political process: as an act of flourishing and the right to achieving one's potential.

Mutuality: This refers to how teaching and learning and teachers and pupils are inextricably linked in the classroom.

Agency: This is the way the learner actively participates in and makes choices that influence their education and the education of others. Everyone has a right to a good education. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a good education. Again, this principle stands for teachers as well as pupils.

Who would find this book relevant?

We have written this book with new teachers and early career teachers in mind. We do not believe in the novice–expert dichotomy between new and experienced teachers. Everyone has something to bring to the profession. Sometimes, the youngest and least experienced teachers have creative, innovative and breathtaking learning experiences. Although a teacher may have worked in the same school for 20 years, we value the wisdom but also the desire to learn something new for their own benefit as well as for that of their classes.

For the new teacher, coming to terms with all the activities of the classroom can be a difficult but rewarding time. Often, making sense of this experience follows early periods of training – for instance, in England, by completing a Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Making sense of the pupils' learning is critical. But actually, this can only be achieved by a process of self-examination and self-discovery. Understanding the principals of teacher learning are just as important. We need to learn how to become a teacher in order to learn about a good education.

The process of learning for a new teacher, we believe, is based on the same principles as those for a pupil. Knowledge, skills, understanding, together with social, emotional and ethical development, are at the root of the education of a new teacher. Of course, the language, the activities and the motivations might be different. But becoming a more advanced

learner takes commitment to understand explicitly what others might understand only implicitly. Learning really is a journey for both teachers and pupils at so many levels.

Case study examples and how the chapters are organised

At the start of this book, we said that reading is a process of self-discovery. We also see the act of reading as a dialogue between the writer and the reader. Sometimes we talk directly to each other. Sometimes you might agree. Sometimes you might disagree. Sometimes we ask questions to help you learn about education. Sometimes we ask questions to help you learn about yourself. In order to make learning explicit in this book, we have adopted a fairly structured approach in each chapter:

- A chapter guide with a synopsis of the learning focus in the chapter introduction: you will know how the chapter is organised and what you will learn about in the chapter.
- Case studies of fictionalised school examples from both primary and secondary schools. The case studies will help you relate the chapter to your own educational setting and you as a learner. The examples may well be different from or similar to your own experiences, but we want to use them to help you think more deeply about education and your role as a teacher.
- Reflection points explicitly ask you questions about yourself as a teacher and your understanding of key concepts in this book. Reflection can be useful in two ways: understanding what your starting position is before being introduced to new areas; and to reflect on new information after the event. We use both approaches, but of course, you can read this book in different ways. You can come back to the reflection points to perfect your understanding. You might change your perspective as you read this book.

Our aim is to engage, motivate and empower you as a learner.

Making the links to school-based training for teachers

For teachers who are new to the profession and at the stage of gaining their initial qualifications, you will be able to use this book to support your academic and professional studies. In England, the framework that governs the work of teachers is called the Teachers' Standards (Department for

Education (DfE), 2011). They are issued by law. You must follow them unless there is a good reason not to. They define the minimum level of practice for trainees and teachers to achieve qualified teacher status. You can also use them to assess the performance of all teachers with qualified teacher status who are subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012.

In England, only graduates can become qualified teachers. In other countries, the requirement is a Master's-level qualification. There are arguments for and against the level of qualification, but there is strong agreement in most governments that teachers should at least have a university degree. Likewise, there is seldom disagreement that much of the early career development to become a teacher should take place in a school. Both schools and universities can contribute to the academic and professional development of the new teacher. As you will see in this book, we do not agree with a false dichotomy that pits schools and universities against each other in the education of new teachers.

To this extent, then, we believe that new teachers, those in their initial training, will benefit both professionally and academically from reading and engaging with this book. It will help you to become a better teacher. It will also help you in your academic essays, professional reflections and development of pedagogical knowledge to become a teacher.

The following overview will help you to understand how the book is organised by chapter, with a summary of the areas covered.
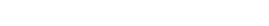
Overview of chapters

Chapter 2 **Staying the course** explains some of the reasons why teachers choose to pursue teaching as a career, and the external and internal factors influencing teachers in the classroom. The role of core reflection in teacher development is explained in the context of the challenges that both trainees and qualified teachers face today. How do teachers achieve a balance in their work and their well-being? What are the practical ways of overcoming some of the key challenges facing educators today?

Chapter 3 **Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation** introduces the traditional distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These are related to self-actualisation, autonomy and connectedness for both teachers and pupils. The chapter ends with a discussion of the balance between internal and external reward.

Chapter 4 **Better learning, better behaviour** considers the influence of the relationship between teacher and learner on classroom behaviour. An important factor is the modelling of positive behaviours and the key steps

that help to make modelling work in practice. Linked to the last chapter is a discussion of the importance of praise and how the fundamentals of positive psychology can be applied to encourage positive classroom environments. Throughout, there is an explanation of practical ways of dealing with negative behaviours, without compromising the positivity of your classroom ethos. Overall, we reinforce the importance of positivity on a wider level with colleagues and within your broader context.

Chapter 5 **Well-being and safeguarding pupils and teachers** explains the problematic and complex aspects of well-being and safeguarding of pupils and teachers. Risk factors such as accountability without responsibility, isolation, basic needs and cultural needs are all considered, alongside protective factors for well-being and safeguarding in pupils and teachers. The roles of teachers and other professionals in safeguarding is explained.

Chapter 6 **Professional engagement** proposes a framework for engagement, motivation and empowerment that builds a culture of engagement, challenge, interest and self-determination for teachers. Strategies for engaging teachers and developing engaging schools are discussed.

Chapter 7 **Motivating all learners** identifies the learner as an individual and the importance of valuing this individuality. The academic needs of pupils and how to differentiate effectively are balanced with the emotional and pastoral needs of the learner. The potential sociocultural contexts of the learner and how these link to inclusion are suggested as important principles in motivating children and young people.

Chapter 8 **Motivating teachers** explains the current context for initial training and professional development for early career teachers. We should recognise the need for different models of professional development for teachers at different stages of their career. Whilst motivating the teacher is important, we also see the institutional context as being important. What are the characteristics of motivating schools?

Chapter 9 **Active learning** identifies the key concepts at the heart of active learning. These are related to cognitive psychology, with key strategies and how to implement them in your practice. Active learning for pupils and teachers is a critical factor in developing a good education. It is at the centre of engagement, motivation and empowerment.

Chapter 10 **Empowering learners** provides a definition of empowerment as a lifelong learning experience, building learning for life in pupils in empowering school structures. There are suggestions on how to improve and maintain learning through pedagogies of empowerment. Importantly, we suggest that responsibility and accountability are shared between teachers and pupils, for instance by including pupils and teachers in school decision-making.

***Chapter 11* The future: What do we stand for in education?** concludes with a discussion of how our values as early career teachers help build resilience and flourishing in school. The concept of mutuality between pupils and teachers is reinforced as a key principle. Only through this balanced view of the education of both pupils and teachers can we develop a good education.

Chapter summary

- This chapter explains the purpose and readership for this book.
- Key concepts of engagement, motivation, empowerment, agency and mutuality are defined.
- The organisation of each chapter is explained to support early career teachers in engaging with this book: for instance, how case studies and reflection points can be used to develop understanding of schools and you as a teacher.
- Each chapter is summarised to explain key concepts and to preview the content of the book.

Further reading

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992) *Ecological Systems Theory*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
A seminal theory of the interaction between the learner and their environment is provided here. It is relevant here because this is exactly the same process for pupils and teachers.

Linnenbrink, E.A. and Pintrich, P.R. (2003) 'The role of self-efficacy beliefs in student engagement and learning in the classroom', *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19: 119–37.
This provides an excellent introduction to the concepts of engagement, motivation and self-efficacy as they appear in the classroom.

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Zimmerman, B.J. and Schunk, D.H. (2008) 'Motivation: An essential dimension of self-regulated learning', in D.H. Schunk and B.J. Zimmerman (eds), *Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.