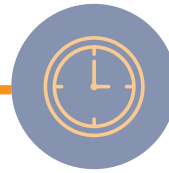


# HOW TO USE CURIOSITY TO BOOST STUDENT MOTIVATION

SHORT-TERM  
MOTIVATORS

CURIOSITY



**Curiosity** is a universal motivator to the brain. The brain is constantly searching for meaning, understanding, completion, answers to questions they've thought of themselves, or ones you've prompted.

## CURIOSITY INFLUENCES LEARNING AND MEMORY

- ✓ Curiosity activates the brain's reward system. Dopamine is released as a "pleasurable biological prompt" when there is chance for perceived or anticipated success or reward.
- ✓ Curiosity enhances neuroplasticity factors in the hippocampus (which activates new explicit learning).

**PRO TIP!** The brain quickly desensitizes to dopamine, as evidenced by the drug addict who craves a bigger dose or stronger drug. This is why a strategy might work a few times, but then its impact wears off. **USE A VARIETY OF STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN A STATE OF CURIOSITY.**

### STATEMENTS

#### THAT CAN EVOKE CURIOSITY

- "You might be curious about ..."
- "I can see that some of you are curious about ..."
- "What do you notice?"
- "I wonder ..."
- "Have you ever thought about why ..."
- Thought-provoking question – "Why do think ..."
- "What do you think would happen if ..."

### STRATEGIES

#### THAT CAN EVOKE CURIOSITY

- Place an object on a table in front of the room (Why is that there?)
- Place an item in a box (or covered with a towel) in front of the room (What's in there?)
- Write a statement on the board that is incomplete (ie. "The #1 most used app by teens is \_\_\_\_\_.")
- Storytelling (What will happen in the story AND why you are sharing it?)
- Hang a partially completed content poster on a wall
- Wear a costume that relates to your lesson for the day (Why is she wearing that?)
- Create a mystery for students to solve that relates to the lesson
- Alter your room set-up for the day (Why does our classroom look different today?)

Kidd, C., & Hayden, B. Y. (2015). The Psychology and Neuroscience of Curiosity. *Neuron*, 88(3), 449–460.

Lloyd, K., & Dayan, P. (2015). Tamping ramping: algorithmic, implementational, and computational explanations of phasic dopamine signals in the accumbens. *PLoS computational biology*, 11(12), e1004622.