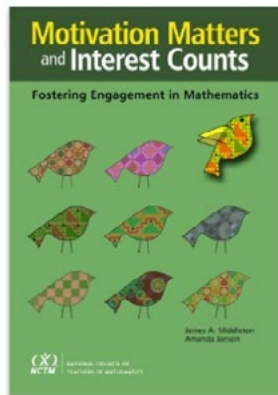


BOOK REVIEW

Motivation Matters and Interest Counts

Reviewed by Cassie Gannett, CCTM Treasurer

Motivation Matters and Interest Counts by James A. Middleton and Amanda Jansen (2011) is a must have for any educator looking for ways to engage students in learning mathematics. The compilation of research-based strategies acknowledges all types of learners and how they may see themselves as mathematicians. Middleton and Jansen begin with the presupposition that we are all innately inquisitive and motivated to learn: beginning with the child who is exploring the world for the first time and continuing through the adolescent discovering what type of adult he/she will become.



This book is practical and useful for educators because it offers case studies of real students who are either motivated or uninterested and offers everyday solutions to capture the student's atten-



tion. Every chapter begins with a story of a student or students as they interact with mathematics education, either with them reflecting on their own experiences and feelings or with a narrator in a classroom situation. This situation is then referred to throughout the chapter as the author describes various strategies that teachers can use to support student motivation and interest in mathematics.

One such chapter is "Motivation is Social." This chapter is prefaced by a story of a 7th grade student who begins to experience success in the math class and tells a friend, "Math's my thing." The vignette continues to outline the way that a teacher can introduce a task about raising funds for a charity. The students begin to discuss the charity of their choice. Although the discussion was not grounded in mathematics, the author illustrates that by allowing the students to consider the task in terms



of a context that is of interest to them, they are more motivated to complete the task. The students then work in groups to complete the task, collaborating and supporting one another in their learning. Throughout the chapter, the author discusses ways that students interact with mathematics socially in terms of how they see themselves and how others might see them, with considerations for the positive implications of this relatedness. While offering several strategies to promote the positive effects of students learning socially, the author concludes the chapter with the statement, "Rather than assuming that socializing should be kept to a minimum in the mathematics classroom, we can instead capitalize on students' interests in socializing to promote their learning" (p. 83).

This book is a valuable resource for middle and high school teachers who often encounter students who have already developed views about them-

selves as mathematicians and the expectations for learning. In order to motivate students to continue persevering and working through challenges, the strategies in this book are practical and useful. They help us work towards our goal of having every student enter our classroom excited for the learning of the day.

