Cheat Sheet: Motivate Disengaged Students in Virtual Instruction

1 Intrinsic motivation works 7x better than extrinsic motivation in engaging students in their virtual learning. However, most educators are more likely to rely on extrinsic than intrinsic motivators in their virtual classrooms.

2 Intrinsic motivation requires students to feel a balance of **autonomy** (choice), **relatedness** (frequent, meaningful connection with teachers and peers), and **competence** (able and challenged). All three are required simultaneously to maximize student motivation.

3 Select and integrate at least one strategy from each category into your virtual teaching. These strategies are designed to collectively recapture disengaged students throughout virtual teaching.

4 **Strategy 1** to increase *autonomy*: Apply the "Plus 1" rule in your virtual classes. This means always providing at least one extra option for an assignments and participation points. To do this virtually, use The Differentiator or EAB's "Build Your Grade" choice form.

5 **Strategy 2** to increase *autonomy*:. Use language that emphasizing student ownership of a challenge, rather than compliance. For example, replace "I want you to__" with "your challenge is__" to promote internal motivation. Fast forward to 5:12 in the video for a full list of language examples that increase autonomy.

6 **Strategy 3** to increase *relatedness*: Use 5 trust-building questions when meeting with students, which include: what did you like about your learning this month? What didn't you like? How many times did I help you this month? How can I better help you succeed next month? What should I know about your life today? To do this virtually, use EAB's Student Pulse Survey template.

7 **Strategy 4** to increase *relatedness*: Because meaningful student-to-student interactions are necessary for motivation, yet rare in virtual settings, it's important to assign each student a consistent learning partner with whom they can discuss their learning. To do this virtually, plan 1 synchronous meeting per week for learning partner break-outs and provide students with an agenda & reflection questions.

8 **Strategy 5** to increase *competence*: Benchmark your homework & asynchronous assignments against 4 research-based requirements that are proven to increase student confidence. These include:

- Explicit demonstration of the skill during direct instruction
- At least 1 opportunity for live practice & answering questions
- At least 1 check for understanding (exit ticket, thumbs up/down, etc.)
- No required tasks needing additional skills/content knowledge

If one of these requirements is not met, provide one additional option for support—such as a demonstration video or linked resource– which are proven to boost assignment completion rates.