Key Stage 5 - Incentives

Notes for teachers

At a glance

In this activity students consider what incentives motivate people to modify their behaviour in the context of studying how people can be persuaded to change their electricity consumption.

They study a research project being carried out at the University of Oxford before choosing their own research question and designing a study to investigate it.

Learning Outcomes

- Students can define extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and give examples
- Students can choose a suitable research question and design a study based on it.

Each student will need

- Copy of the pupil worksheet
- Extracts from research papers (optional)

http://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/content/people-power
Possible Lesson Activities

1. Starter activity
   - Ask the class: what motivates you? What incentive would work best in order to do well in your next exam? Money, a meal out, a competition with a friend to see who could get the highest mark (extrinsic motivations), or just the satisfaction of doing well (intrinsic motivation)? Ask students to share their thoughts.
   - Introduce the context for the lesson by showing the class the animation 'Power People'.

2. Main activity
   - Give each student a copy of the pupil worksheet and ask them to read through the information on the first page.
   - Show the class the video from the METER website (see weblink below) which explains the study being carried out at the University of Oxford.
   - Set the task. Students will design a study based on the research question of their choice. Their study should help researchers at the University of Oxford to find out what incentives work best to get people to change how they use electrical appliances.
   - Use the discussions in the starter to help students formulate ideas for research questions. You could ask students to read through the conclusions from the journal articles given in the weblinks below or discuss ideas as a class, giving them suitable examples such as:
     - Are men more motivated by competition than women?
     - Does the size of the monetary reward matter?
     - Is moral motivation enough to change people's electricity consumption?
     - Are people more motivated to compete against someone they know or a stranger?
     - What type of extrinsic reward is the most successful?
   - Students then fill in the boxes on page 2 of the pupil worksheet to help them plan their study. This asks them to describe variables, write a hypothesis and discuss how their study will be repeatable and valid.

3. Plenary
   - Ask students to pair up and swap their plans. They should explain to each other how their study will help Dr Philipp Grünewald at the University of Oxford in his research.
   - Students should peer assess their partner's work and give written feedback on the design of their study.

Weblinks

http://www.energy-use.org/
Website of the METER project being carried out at The University of Oxford. This contains a video explaining the project as well as information on why the research is important.
Teachers and student's families can sign up to be part of the project and contribute real data about energy usage.

http://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/content/people-power
http://rady.ucsd.edu/faculty/directory/gneezy/pub/docs/jep_published.pdf
Journal of Economic Perspectives, Volume 25, Number 4, Pages 191–210

Do women shy away from competition? Do men compete too much? M. Niederle and L. Vesterlund
The Quarterly Journal of Economics, August 2007 Pages 1067 - 1101