

Oversleeping Alex

- **Learner-** Alex is a 9th grade student who has been diagnosed with a learning disability in reading decoding and math computation. Alex was diagnosed in the 4th grade.
- **Learning Setting-** Alex goes to a fairly large high school, about 1,200 students. His schedule consists of six class periods a day that last about 52 minutes each.
- **Learning Activity-** Alex's schedule consists of team-taught English 9, resource room Algebra, team-taught World History, Health, Strength-training, and Biology.

Motivational Problem:

To begin, I completed the motivational checklist which is in appendix 2A of Stipek's text. The assessment was broken up into two different categories: performing adequately on basic school tasks that will lead to mastering school curriculum and motivational issues. The first 12 tasks indicate an issue that the student is having difficulty mastering the school curriculum. The last 11 indicate that there may be motivational issues. Here are the results:

1. NO Pays attention to the teacher
 2. NO Begins to work on tasks immediately
 3. NO Follows directions on tasks
 4. NO Maintains attention until tasks are completed
 5. NO Completes work
 6. NO Turns in assignments on time
 7. NO Persists rather than gives up when work is difficult
 8. NO Works autonomously
 9. NO Volunteers answers in class
 10. NO Test performance reflects skill level determined on assignments
 11. NO Seeks help when needed
 12. NO Asks for help that will enable subsequent autonomy (rather than asking for the answer)
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13. NO Is not upset by initial errors or difficulties
 14. NO Enjoys challenging work
 15. NO Works intensely (very focused)
 16. NO Asks questions to expand knowledge beyond immediate lesson

17. NO Engages in learning activities that are not required
18. NO Is reluctant to stop working on tasks when highly engaged
19. NO Engages in learning activities after the assignments are completed
20. NO Appears happy, proud, enthusiastic, and eager
21. NO Strives to improve skills, even when performing well relative to classmates
22. NO Initiates challenging learning activities on own
23. NO Works hard on ungraded tasks

After completing the assessment, the results really surprised/confused me. The assessment indicated that Alex is struggling in both areas. He is struggling to master the school curriculum and there are motivational problems.

Summarize the Problem:

When Alex is in the classroom setting, he is not a disruptive student. Part of the problem is that Alex is frequently absent from class. He misses 2-3 days a week. When Alex returns to school after the absences he seems overwhelmed by all of his missing work and seems to give up. Alex is repeatedly reminded that he is gone too much, and it needs to change. When Alex is in class he is continually trying to leave the room to go to the bathroom or use his inhaler. When told he cannot leave the room he gets very upset and will not participate for the rest of the class period. There has been a system implemented in some of Alex's classes where he can have two bathroom passes per week in each class. This seems to help the problem.

When the teacher is giving whole class instructions, he seems to be listening and paying attention. When it comes time for small group work, he kind of sits back and does not really participate. When it comes to individual work, he just seems kind of lost. He will not complete the work on his own. If he does not know the answer he will get frustrated and just give up. He will put his head down or just doodle. When he has assistance, he does the bare minimum needed to scrape by. His tests and quiz scores reflect his lack of effort. He is getting D's or F's in all of his classes. There have been times that Alex has participated positively in class and he seemed to really enjoy the positive attention. This does not happen often though. He is a likable kid and enjoys talking with the teacher and other staff members.

Brief Observation of Alex:

Alex is in English class and it is time for SSR (sustained silent reading). While the students are reading they are to fill out a packet on character traits about different characters in the novel. Alex gets out his MP3 player to listen to the chapter. Alex then gets up and asks to use the restroom. When Alex returns he fiddles with his MP3 player and papers. When the teacher comes over to redirect Alex he puts his head down. With five minutes remaining in class Alex finally gets his MP3 player working and his packet out. The bell soon rings and he is yet to start his packet. The

following day there is a quiz over what they were supposed to read and Alex fails the quiz.

Motivational Analysis:

Currently, there are not any strong strategies in place to help to motivate Alex. The only motivational approach I see is getting good grades and passing his class. This does not seem to be working. He seems to be giving up on school and not caring about his grades. He seems to be getting more negative attention than positive. Maybe some individualized motivational strategies need to be implemented so that he is more successful.

- **TARGET Analysis**- I went through and commented on each feature of TARGET and gave suggestions on how they could be implemented:
 1. **Task**- The task that Alex was engaging in was silent reading. He did have an MP3 player because his is reading significantly below grade level. Once he was done reading he was instructed to complete a packet of worksheets. Maybe if Alex had some freedom to choose and extension activity he would take more ownership over the activity and want to be successful. We could give him options (i.e. complete a Power Point about important character attributes, create a fake Facebook page for different characters in the novel) on assignments to help motivate him.
 2. **Authority**- The teacher is dictating all that is going on in the class. She selected the novel and gave out the pre-made packet. As I mentioned above, maybe we could give Alex some choice in his extension activity.
 3. **Recognition**- Alex is never recognized in class for good grades or attendance. He is not really praised all that often. Maybe Alex needs to establish some goals and earn some recognition if he makes progress towards them. The recognition does not even need to be class wide; it can be individual for Alex. Positive reinforcement could go a long way with Alex.
 4. **Grouping**- The class is organized as an independent environment. There is little to no group work. Maybe more cooperative groups with flexible grouping strategies would be beneficial. It may be beneficial for him to learn with and from his peers.
 5. **Evaluation**- Alex is evaluated almost exclusively in the traditional manor. He takes pen and paper tests throughout the day. Alex does get them read aloud when necessary, per his IEP. Maybe if there was a variety in assessment Alex would be more motivated to be successful. He often becomes frustrated during assessments, so altering this may be helpful.
 6. **Time**- Alex's teacher is struggling to squeeze the entire curriculum into the time she has. She is often piling on work just to get through it. This is in part why Alex becomes overwhelmed. Alex does received extra time per his IEP, but it still is not enough. It would be nice to have some flexible time to re-teach if necessary.

After reviewing the TARGET model it seems that each feature could be addressed and altered in Alex's situation.

Conclusions:

After looking over all of the information on Alex it is very clear that he is not motivated by grades or passing classes. There really are not other motivational strategies put in place to help him be successful. Alex does seem to respond positively to positive attention and praise. Something as simple as saying "good job", or "we are really glad you are here today" could really motivate Alex to put more of an effort into school. I would also suggest getting Alex more involved in his assignment choices so that he will have more interest into completing them. We need to know what type of activities Alex likes to do. If he is a whiz on the computer maybe we can involve more technology into Alex's assignments or assessments.

At this point I feel that Alex is not motivated at school for several reasons. First of all, I feel that Alex is struggling with the actual content. I think that he may need more support to be successful with the curriculum. Since he is so behind, he skips school so he does not have to feel stupid. Maybe if we offer him more support he will get a taste of success and that will motivate him. I also think that Alex may need some positive feedback. He is always getting negative feedback. I would also like to involve Alex's parents so that we can ensure he is getting to school on a regular basis.