

Design Project- Kobes

Design Project - Jason's Journals

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Motivational Case Introduction

Meet the Learner and Environment

Jason is a fourth grade boy. Jason attends a school of choice within his home district. Within this school, there is a Montessori alternative program. There is one kindergarten room, three lower elementary (first-third) rooms, and one upper elementary (fourth-fifth) room. The entire Montessori team is close. He has been a member of a Montessori classroom since preschool. He appears to have a good relationship with his parents and is the only child. Most of Jason's time outside of school is spent on activities that he enjoys such as watching television or playing Minecraft. Jason's peer's have mentioned being on the same football team. With prompting, Jason declares being happy about playing football but seems passive and unenthusiastic about his football team and their opportunities.

Jason seems to have a casual approach to life. He appears mellow when he is last in line for lunch, coming in from recess, and for specials (Physical Wellness, Art, Technology, Spanish, and Music). He appears unaffected when he is the last to complete his part of group projects or his own independent work. He is persistent and will not give up on tasks but is lacking urgency to complete it within a timely manner. This includes work in all content areas. This mentality is apparent as he slowly prepares for recess, lunch, and going home. On the other hand, his anxiety appears to rise when he believes he has lost belongings such as a pencil, assignment, sweatshirt, or his planner. His peers will talk and interact with him, which sometimes is clearly distracting him from his schoolwork, but most of the time he seems indifferent to peer interaction. Many times, his peers will approach him and he will give a brief response and continue with whatever he was previously doing. When involved with peers, he is pleasant and his maturity level and attention to social cues are appropriate, the majority of the time. In our Montessori classroom, students are invited to lessons and are asked to meet me at our lesson table. He is usually the last to join, in all subject areas. It appears as though he just randomly chooses a place to sit, he does not seem to care who he sits by. He does not always physically appear to be engaged but his actions and participation tell me otherwise. From observation, classroom assessments, and benchmark assessments data, he is an average learner in all subject areas. His beginning of the year writing assessment on friendship included an introduction sentence and a brief explanation of his thoughts. It was somewhat developed, which was slightly below average but still within average range. He received primarily A's on his past report cards and has not received below a B+ since second grade. His lackadaisical approach to school work is consistent among all subject areas and time of day. Even when he is verbally excited to get started with a task, assignment, or project, the physical excitement and motivation quickly dissipates.

The Learning Activity and Setting

Jason is a member in a fourth and fifth grade Montessori classroom. It is a double sized room that is fortunate to have a miniature computer lab off the side of the room. The room is very spacious and filled with desks, tables, tables at floor level, low-movie chairs, and lap desk options. The class has 28 students, 1 teacher, and 1 part-time assistant. School starts around 8:40 and concludes around 3:40. Students are given approximately an hour break around lunchtime for lunch and recess. The day concludes with approximately an hour of specials class.

When students enter the classroom in the morning, there is a note on the board for them to read. The note includes a list of supplies and materials that should come to circle for the morning meeting. At this time, the students can also read the schedule for the day. Jason rides the late bus with four classroom peers which means they usually arrive to school right as the first bell is ringing. They are given additional time to get organized before attending circle. Jason has always been the last student

to enter the room and the last student to come to circle prepared. On average, the other late busers arrive to circle about one minute behind the rest of the students and Jason is usually a few minutes after that, with encouragement from teachers. Once Jason has arrived, I provide all students with a quick recap of everything that was previously covered, so that no one feels excluded.

Jason usually arrives to school appearing calm. He typically has forgotten to bring something with him. Although he is usually the last to enter the classroom and the last to come to circle, he does not appear to be naughty, just lacking urgency.

At the conclusion of the morning meeting, the schedule for the day is discussed and the journal topic is introduced to the students. Students are given three topics to choose from, all of the topics are related to the same theme. The first two topics are always more specific and the third option is to write about the theme in their own way. A class discussion results as students begin to think of ideas or questions arise.

Summary of Observation

Jason normally leaves circle to find a workspace. He typically chooses to sit at a full size table, at chair height. Usually he sits by himself but occasionally with a peer. This happens infrequently enough to note if arrangements were made to sit together or if it naturally occurred.

Like clockwork, once Jason has sat down, arranged his belongings, and gotten comfortable, he will either play with his pencil or look around the room. I usually give him a few minutes to think before approaching him. I also want to give him the opportunity to succeed without me checking in first. "Helping behavior can also give students a message that they are perceived as low in ability, and it can undermine the positive achievement-related emotions associated with success," noted Stipek (p.219).

Once an adequate amount of time has passed, about 5 minutes, I will stop by his workspace to ask, "Are you stuck?" or "Is there anything you need from me?" This is a very natural in our room; I stop by workspaces frequently to check in with students. Jason is never hesitant to respond with, "No". As I walk away, I usually try to make some comment along the lines of, "Just let me know if there is something I can do to help". I want students to know I am available and eager to assist.

Once I have circled the room, I will return to Jason's workspace. After the initial contact, I usually try to be more specific while following the basic guidelines of, "I have noticed _____. I would like to help. So let's do ___ together before I leave so then you are ready to get started". He is always polite and does what is asked. Typically, this is the time where we write the date and theme on the top of his paper but occasionally we will start the topic sentence together.

Usually, I will stop by a while after we have completed the heading together. I try to appear very calm and more chatty while asking, "So! I am excited to hear... What are you planning to write about?" He usually responds with a question that implies that he has not thought about it, has not decided, or has forgotten about his task. Then I state something along the lines of, "Well let us try to decide together". It is not like pulling teeth to guide him through deciding his topic; in fact, it feels like a casual conversation. Once the topic is decided, I normally have him tell me his next step and then I leave. Typically, he follows our plan quickly but then returns to fidgeting and looking around.

Since the room is filled with learners that need guidance or are eager to share their journal entry, it is usually about five minutes before I get back to Jason. I want him to become independent. I think the space to see if he will initiate task completion on his own is good. When I return to him, I usually ask, "How's it going?" He normal indicates that he is stuck. I have noticed that once he has something on his paper he is more likely to admit to be unsure of how to continue. Together we work through the current obstacle. This process continues of giving him space and checking in on him until his work is complete.

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There have been days, where Jason has successfully independently completed his journal when working in close proximity to me. I only occasionally had to intervene to help redirect him from outside distractions, but his writing was completed independently. This has occurred 3 times this year.

From informal observations, he struggles to mentally develop his writing ideas, a concrete picture of conversational writing plan helps to get his ideas flowing. He can quickly regurgitate his ideas on paper but then needs to repeat the process for the next sentence.

The Challenge

Jason struggles to persevere with the daily task of completing a journal entry in a timely manner. This lack of determination makes it challenging for him to independently complete his morning 1-2 paragraph journal. He exhibits a combination of mastery and helpless motivational patterns and lacks intrinsic motivation. My goal is for him to independently complete this morning work journal task.

Motivational Assessment

Motivational Analysis

Brophy notes that there are preconditions to help promote motivation. These key components, “will set the stage for motivating your students: make yourself and your classroom attractive to students, focus their attention on individual and collaborative learning goals and help them to achieve these goals, and teach things that are worth learning, in ways that help students to appreciate their value” (p.23). Jason is a member of a supportive classroom where differentiated instruction and individual goals are frequently considered and are the basis to nearly every lessons. His teacher checks in frequently with him to help support his learning needs. Him and his peers are frequently explained the value of their work and it’s correlation to life.

I am trying to motivate Jason using many different strategies. Although I have seen slight improvement, the results are not where I would like to see them. Stipek states, “Teachers need to know their students’ skills and monitor their behavior well to make attributions that are fair, appropriate, and constructive” (p.109). I give him individual support and praise by choosing specific examples within his work. I make the feedback as specific as possible to his current writing but at the same time, I make it a general statement that can be applied to other areas of writing. He rarely receives corrective feedback, occasionally he will be asked to double check the spelling of a word or will be reminded to punctuate at the end of a sentence, but at this time the goal is to motivate, support, and encourage. He has choice within his writing and writing is not directly tied to a grade. Many of his peers receive more corrective feedback than he currently does but it is stressed to all learners that this is a way of waking up our brains while writing about something fun and it is an opportunity to share stories and ideas. There are also frequently connections made to the importance of thinking about one specific topic and being able to zoom in on one idea and this concept has been tied into many different areas of life and different professions.

The TARGET Framework has been designed to be a tool to help assess the motivation structure within a classroom. It examines six key components that encourage and hinder motivation. These main aspects include task, authority, recognition, grouping, evaluation, and time. I have evaluated my classroom structure, concerning journal, while considering TARGET. I found a table to be the easiest way to visualize the changes that need to be changed in my classroom. I believe that this table can serve as a quick reminder for my goals by quickly glancing at this frequently. In the table below, you will find the results.

TARGET Components	Areas of Success	Improvement Areas
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(as defined by the Target Framework adapted from Ames, 1990; Ames, 1992; Brophy, 1998; Maehr & Midgley 1991)	Aspects of TARGET already established in the classroom	TARGET components that need to be incorporated into the classroom
<p>Task “select tasks so as to provide an optimal level of challenge and to emphasize activities that students find interesting and intrinsically engaging”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to complete the work to the best of their ability. • They are encouraged to write 1-2 paragraphs but students are told to ask if they have a different idea for the day. • Students make suggestions for writing topics; I consider them and try to use them the following day or within the next couple of days. • Even within the assigned theme, there is flexibility among specific writing prompt. • Students are reminded frequently that if there is something that they would absolutely love to write about, they should ask, because I love to hear what they are thinking and most days I will allow them to go off topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not always a clear and strong connection to the value of the assignment and its relation to life (other than it getting brains ready for the day, practice with following topics, and zooming in on one idea).
<p>Authority “share authority with students by providing them choice and input on learning activities”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher values their writing topic ideas, which is shown by using them and allowing students to go off topic for the day. • Students are asked to ask me before assuming they can choose their own topic. • Teacher allows students to use alternatives to paragraphs when appropriate. • Students make suggestions for writing topics; I consider them and try to use them the following day or within the next couple of days. • Even within the assigned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have not been asked to consider goals for their journal. • Students are not specifically encouraged to share their journal with peer(s), which may minimize their ownership and pride. However, many students naturally share regularly on their own with peer(s).

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	<p>theme, there is flexibility among specific writing prompt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are reminded frequently that if there is something that they would absolutely love to write about, they should ask, because I love to hear what they are thinking and most days I will allow them to go off topic. 	
<p>Recognition “recognize all students who make progress and show improvement, not just the highest achievers”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are recognized for their individual success privately. • Students are recognized for their progress. • All students receive praise. • All students receive a conversational comment based on the content of their writing. 	
<p>Grouping “group in ways that promote cooperative learning and minimize interpersonal competition and social comparison”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given a chance for whole group collaborative discussion before beginning journal. • Students are allowed to talk while they are working. • Partners and small group formation is based on individual choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not encouraged to discuss journal in partners or small groups before beginning journal. • Partners and small group formation is based on individual choice which could hinder some students.
<p>Evaluation “focus on individualized assessment of progress rather than comparisons of individuals or groups”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are given self-monitoring strategies to help them be successful with their writing. These include C.U.P.S. (proofreading) and O.R.E.O (paragraph formatting). Together these strategies help students to master basic writing composition. • Students are given specific feedback. Most feedback is a reflective opportunity for students to go back and double-check their work. • Feedback is provided in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than verbal feedback there is not a specific evaluation method for journal improvement • Students are not given the opportunity to emotionally reflect on their writing abilities and mentality.

	<p>manageable increments for the individual.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback is given individually to learner while physically adopting my body language to their relative height (ex. sitting next to them rather than towering over them). • Students are encouraged to complete the work to the best of their ability, but between one and two paragraphs are usually expected from most learners. 	
<p>Time “use time in creative ways that ease the constraints of rigid scheduling and allow for more use of valuable learning activities that are hard to fit into shorter class periods”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classroom structure allows students to work on morning work until they have completed it to the best of their ability. Then they naturally progress into morning work time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis is on time is to allow time to be more flexible than the traditional approach; perhaps the classroom structure is too flexible, for students like Jason.

Summary

Jason has shown motivation when he is repeatedly guided. This leads me to believe that he is lacking intrinsic motivation to complete his journal. His self-esteem may be an issue in all areas of his life, which may explain his carefree personality. I am striving to boost his confidence and motivation while giving him small achievable areas to improve on such as punctuation at the end of a sentence or by double-checking a word that, he is capable of spelling. I do not want to give the approach that his work is perfect and that he does not need to double check it because everyone always has something he or she can improve on, but I want him to know he can be successful. This slowly seems to be working. It is evident when I compare the amount of check-ins now to the amount of check-ins at the beginning of the year. I have also noticed that when I am in close proximity his confidence and motivation seems to improve. Ideally, he needs to be independently successful, but I am hoping that once his motivation toward journal raises his confidence in himself and his abilities grows this will happen naturally. TARGET definitely helped to raise some areas of concern in the classroom; the intervention strategies will incorporate and develop some of these areas in the classroom environment and morning work journal task.

Jason struggles to complete his morning journal assignment independently. He is lacking the motivation and drive to finish this on his own. With much guidance, he will complete his journal writing with a few sentences every day. Jason sometimes meets the classroom goal, of 1-2 paragraphs, but once he has a complete idea, he is sometimes allowed to move on. Jason appears to lack motivation toward his morning work journal. This is evident with his frequent avoidance in completing his morning journal without guided teacher assistance. Jason needs to independently complete his morning work journal.

Motivational Intervention

Proposed Strategies

In order to help Jason strive with independently completing his morning work, I am going to focus on trying to help build his intrinsic motivation. Brophy wrote, "Students who were intrinsically motivated showed the highest levels of interest, enjoyment, confidence, and effort" (p.161). Jason can benefit from increased interest, enjoyment, confidence, and effort about morning work journal. My hope is that by nurturing intrinsic motivation the journal, he will be able to independently complete his task.

Jason would strive with increased intrinsic motivation because he has demonstrated the ability to complete his morning work journal. The biggest hindrance is the amount of time it takes him to complete the work because other things distract him, both intentionally and unintentionally. By raising his intrinsic motivation, he will be able to complete the task in a timely manner.

There are four changes; I intend to make to help promote Jason's intrinsic motivation. I know that four changes at the same time can seem overwhelming but I think that all four ideas are cohesive which can allow for nearly simultaneous incorporation.

I try to have personal conversations with each student in my classroom daily. Jason is not an exception. However, Jason and I talk frequently about academics and organization. Proportionally the amount Jason and I talk about school strongly outweighs the amount we talk about him as an individual. I plan my individual conversations during our morning work cycle, which is very achievable. They are not long discussions, just an opportunity for a brief discussion about soccer, dance, a house renovation, or something personal. I am going to plan to also have a conversation with Jason each afternoon. By strengthening our relationship, he may begin to see more value in class assignments. At the very least, it will allow me to learn more about Jason to help insure that I am choosing journal topics that have strong relevance to Jason's life and interests.

As I previously mentioned, at our daily morning meetings our class discusses our journal theme and writing options to help get ideas flowing. Jason may benefit from a more individualized brainstorming opportunity. I have noticed that when Jason talks through his writing plan with me, he will write what we discussed quickly. I believe that when he has a strong idea to write about, he is more motivated to write about that idea rather than internally questioning his thought process. Jason will meet with his fifth grade mentor briefly after our morning meeting to discuss their journal entries. I plan to have their partnership focus on idea formation by talking through reasons and examples that can be incorporated into his paragraph. I will encourage each of them to take notes during their discussion.

Jason had a strong relationship with his lower Montessori teacher (1st-3rd grade). This teacher thought highly of his writing abilities. On Fridays, Jason will be given the opportunity to select his favorite journal entry from the week to share with this teacher. Once he has completed his Friday journal, he can pick his favorite writing, and then walk down to his former classroom to share his writing. Jason appears to have confidence in his writing abilities. However, I could see him becoming

self-conscious if he began to compare his writing with peers which is why I feel sharing with a “teacher friend” might be a better fit for this task. Over time, I would love for Jason to have the opportunity to share his journal with a few of his lower Montessori friends, but for now the lower Montessori teacher would prefer it just be with him.

Jason is also going to begin line graphing his success. For now, this is going to be a place for him graph minutes writing and sentences produced. This will be done in pencil. Then he will go back and look for C.U.P.S., an acronym our classroom uses for basic editing. If he has less than five needed corrections, he will use the “fancy” silver metallic pen to highlight the entry on the graph. Once he has recorded his observations for one week, I will have him begin thinking about a goal for the following week. Since, I want these goals to be meaningful to him; he will decide what his goal should be. If he needs help, I will suggest focusing on an amount of sentences, an amount of time, a goal for mistakes, or trying to incorporate more than one idea. I intend to be open to his idea; it can either be a successful goal or turn into a goal-based learning opportunity. Over time, this will need to be modified in order to help insure high quality writing; but for now, I want it to focus on his desires to try to help increase his intrinsic motivation.

Reflecting Back

Earlier I used TARGET to consider the foundational aspects of my classroom environment and morning work journal entry. I reevaluated TARGET when deciding what specific strategies I could use to help inspire intrinsic motivation for Jason and the journal task. I modified the previous table to help show the changes that would be made to develop the formerly noted improvement areas. Each concern is considered and addressed through these four changes.

<p>TARGET Components</p> <p>(as defined by the Target Framework adapted from Ames, 1990; Ames, 1992; Brophy, 1998; Maehr & Midgley 1991)</p>	<p>Improvement Areas (Previously Noted)</p> <p>TARGET components that needed to be incorporated into the classroom</p>	<p>Motivational Modifications</p> <p>TARGET components that will be addressed through the new strategies</p>
<p>Task “select tasks so as to provide an optimal level of challenge and to emphasize activities that students find interesting and intrinsically engaging”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not always a clear and strong connection to the value of the assignment and its relation to life (other than it getting brains ready for the day, practice with following topics, and zooming in on one idea). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can make sure journal topics are relevant to Jason. By strengthening our relationship and learning more about him, I will be able to better gauge when I am not choosing topics that are relatable for him.
<p>Authority “share authority with students by providing them choice and input on learning activities”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have not been asked to consider goals for their journal. • Students are not specifically encouraged to share their journal with peer(s), which may minimize their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason will be given opportunities to track his progress and to make goals for morning journal. • Jason will share his weekly favorite entry with one of his favorite teachers.

	ownership and pride. However, many students naturally share regularly on their own with peer(s).	
Recognition “recognize all students who make progress and show improvement, not just the highest achievers”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Grouping “group in ways that promote cooperative learning and minimize interpersonal competition and social comparison”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not encouraged to discuss journal in partners or small groups before beginning journal. • Partners and small group formation is based on individual choice which could hinder some students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will brainstorm writing ideas with their mentors/mentees to help build confidence in their ideas.
Evaluation “focus on individualized assessment of progress rather than comparisons of individuals or groups”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than verbal feedback there is not a specific evaluation method for journal improvement • Students are not given the opportunity to emotionally reflect on their writing abilities and mentality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason will be given reflection and goal-setting opportunities for journal. This will be a time for him to consider his successes and areas to work on. This will provide him with a tangible self-evaluation.
Time “use time in creative ways that ease the constraints of rigid scheduling and allow for more use of valuable learning activities that are hard to fit into shorter class periods”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emphasis is on time is to allow time to be more flexible than the traditional approach; perhaps the classroom structure is too flexible, for students like Jason. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hope that through the partner brain storming activity and the individual goals and graphing, Jason will become timelier with his morning work journal. This will allow him more flexibility, without me creating barriers for his creativity and choices.

Rational

I believe that by implementing peer brainstorming, weekly sharing, self-monitoring, and an additional conversation, Jason’s intrinsic motivation toward morning journal will increase. Each of these components will work together to help him become a more successful and independent morning work writer. Jason will benefit from improved intrinsic motivation because he has demonstrated the ability to complete the 1-2 paragraph journal entry with continuous guidance and external motivators (my presence and encouragement). Brophy stated, “Satisfaction of the three basic needs provides the necessary conditions for people to engage in self-determined activity” (p.154). The three basic needs

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are relatedness, autonomy, and competence. By increasing Jason's intrinsic motivation, he will have the needs fulfilled to allow him to be successful.

Jason will engage in weekly sharing with his first through third grade supportive teacher. This will allow him a sense of pride and continued ownership of his work. By sharing his writing with a teacher outside of our classroom this will help to improve his sense of relatedness. This will help to allow him to be more intrinsically motivated toward the task because it will be giving him an additional sense of purpose.

Jason has demonstrated his competence and ability to complete morning work and based on the information he provides to me, he demonstrates the ability to complete this task independently. By providing him with the opportunity to self-monitor his ability and to set achievable goals for him, there will be tangible evidence of his abilities. This process will allow him visual proof of his competence toward his morning work journal.

Jason and I will have two personal daily conversations to help strengthen our relationship. We currently have one per day but since he is receiving a lot of support and we are having many academic conversations, an additional personal conversation may help him to view me more as an individual rather than just a teacher. Stipek noted, "Students who feel that they have caring, supportive teachers are also more engaged in school work than those who do not" (p.153). I believe that Jason believes I care about him; I try to base all of our correctional conversations around what I can do to help him accomplish his job as a student. However, I think a stronger relationship will only help to further support that I am here for him. It will also provide me with more insight into his beliefs and mentality to insure that I am choosing journal topics that are clearly relatable to him.

"The Expectancy X Value model of motivation implies that teachers need to ... make sure that students can achieve success if they apply reasonable effort" (Brophy, p.16). When students believe they are capable of achieving, they become more intrinsically motivated. Jason will have the opportunity to brainstorm his morning work journal plans with his fifth grade mentor after our morning meetings. This will insure that when he begins independently writing since he will already have a strong plan for writing. His mentor and he will be encouraged to take notes during their discussions for them to reference back to once they separate and begin writing. By providing Jason with a writing plan before he begins, this will help him to feel successful and independent which will promote motivation. This will also help Jason to feel a stronger confidence toward his competence.

These four strategies help to address Jason's three basic motivational needs, which will help him to become intrinsically motivated toward his morning work journal. By fulfilling his basic motivational needs, he will confidently be able to focus on the task.

Expected Outcomes

Through the continuation of classroom norms with these new modifications, it is expected that Jason will begin to independently complete the required 1-2 paragraph morning journal in a timely manner. The four new modifications will help to inspire Jason's intrinsic motivation toward the morning

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journal. To begin, I am going to have a morning conversation and an afternoon conversation with Jason about him as a child, not as a student, to help strengthen the relationship. The designated partner sharing time is designed to go beyond the normal class brainstorming time, to help him narrow down his ideas and thoughts prior to writing. The daily tracking of time spent and completed sentences may help him to truly understand the amount of time that is currently wasted. By adding the novelty color of metallic silver on days when careful proofreading has been accomplished, will help to reinforce the importance of quality work. The weekly sharing opportunity with a trusted adult, outside of our classroom, provides him with an opportunity to share and take ownership of his favorite entry from the week and offers a connection outside of our immediate classroom. This opportunity encourages him to reflect on his writing from the entire week. By giving him a time to look back at his work, this will create a higher ownership because he will be revisiting previous writings. Through these four different processes, Jason will become more intrinsically motivated to independently complete his morning work journal.

References

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Stipek, D. J. (2002). *Motivation to learn: integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.