

Intrinsic Motivation

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Goal for Quantel

Quantel is a junior in English 3 (American Literature). He is classified as an “at risk” student. That means the teachers struggle to make sure he will graduate. In fact the whole community seems to have no hope/goal for a better future. The students don't see the purpose of working hard because they know they are not getting out--and they won't with that attitude. It is very frustrating. Quantel fluctuates between an F and some kind of D. Quantel is capable of being at the C range, but he is not interested in putting enough effort. He wants to put in the minimum.

Quantel is very social and popular—a basketball star. Other students see him as a role model. This is a useful tool in controlling his behavior. Michelle tells him the other students look up to him and if he behaves badly, so do they. He seems to understand that. He respects Michelle and listens to her—the struggle is getting him to do his work. He is currently failing because he just doesn't turn in any work. Often he will put his head down in class. He doesn't argue any more, he just excuses himself from the proceedings.

In this unit there are a couple of motivational goals. One goal is to get Quantel to engage in the activity and complete the assignment. Another goal would be for Quantel to show interest in the topic. With the jigsaw (see additional files) we open up more choice (autonomy), leadership, and interest (relatedness). An additional goal is for Quantel is to see the relatedness of the activity. He needs to understand the reason it is important to participate in this activity, and in school on a whole.

Autonomy

The idea to create a jigsaw activity to introduce the Frederick Douglass content in the course and also aid in motivating Quantel in class was stumbled upon once the group reasoned that if Quantel was given more autonomy in class he would feel more motivated to complete material. In the jigsaw activity he, along with the rest of the class would have the option to choose their initial task that they would be required to report back to the group. Understanding that you are solely responsible for the group's success in this area, and that you also were the one that chose to be responsible for this information is very powerful in motivating one to do his or her part. Therefore, the choice to incorporate the jigsaw activity in class was to give Quantel the feeling of autonomy over the part that he chose to do in this activity and to see himself as the teacher and owner of this piece of information. With this important role and high stakes we felt he would be more motivated to complete his part of the activity and participate in class.

It has been proven that when people believe that they are choosing to learn something out of their own free will rather than being forced to learn it (**autonomy**), they will feel a greater desire to learn. No one enjoys being forced to learn or to do something, but if you engage in an activity because you have chosen to, then you will feel more control over the situation and will probably find the activity more enjoyable, therefore be more intrinsically motivated to learn. Stipek writes that "...the very same activity can be more motivating and pleasurable when one chooses to engage in it than when it is done for some external purpose" (p.126). It was found that students that learned in an autonomy-driven classroom showed more curiosity, desire for challenge, and other evidence of mastery motivation. In the classroom, it is also important to offer students choices in pursuing alternative methods to meet the course requirements. It seemed that this statement about the importance of autonomy describes a solution to the situation that Michelle is finding with Quantel. With the ability to choose topics that are more suited to his interests, and giving him a feeling of control over his own learning it may spark curiosity that will drive him to be challenged and active in completing assignments.

In order to specifically target the suggestion to provide Quantel with more autonomy in order to increase motivation, our group decided to create a jigsaw activity that would give Quantel a choice and then make him responsible to his group for collecting this

information and becoming an expert on this topic. A cooperative learning activity such as Jigsaw provides students with **autonomy** by giving them choices in which role they choose to complete. When students are allowed to choose which of the tasks they will do, they will be able to complete something which is more interesting to them, and feel like they have more power over their learning. It is our hope that by providing Quantel with this personal choice he will feel that he is more responsible for his part in the group (since he is the one that chose it) and be more motivated to show his understanding and knowledge of the topic he chose and was most interested in.

Relatedness

In addition to providing autonomy, the Jigsaw activity will address the need for relatedness. Stipek writes that “People do not function effectively in environments in which the need for relatedness... is not met” (p.152). Students feel more comfortable and motivated to learn in classrooms where they experience a positive learning community. Participating in a Jigsaw is one way to create this type of classroom climate. Students depend on each other to get the assignment done and therefore must support and value each member.

Quantel is a very social student and well liked by his peers. We believe that he will enjoy working in a group and will be motivated to complete his part of the assignment so that he doesn't let his classmates down. “The group product cannot be completed unless each member does his or her part, just as a jigsaw puzzle cannot be completed unless each piece is included” (Brophy, p.203). We believe that Quantel will recognize the importance of his role, and will hopefully put forth the effort needed to complete the assignment. Acting as an expert and a teacher for his mixed group should positively affect his self-esteem and increase his motivation to learn. In addition, being a teacher to others helps you to develop a deeper understand for the material being learned.

We hope that the Jigsaw activity will help Quantel and the rest of Michelle's class to realize that each of them is important and that by working together they can be successful. On the Jigsaw classroom website it states that "If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential; and that is precisely what makes this strategy so effective." Our goal is for Quantel to see himself as an essential member of his group and begin to put forth more effort towards his learning.

<http://www.jigsaw.org/overview.htm>

Rationale

Finding a strategy that will begin to increase Quantel's intrinsic motivation is crucial. According to Michelle, Quantel is motivated by reward and punishment. He has motivation to complete assignments when his mother takes away the privilege of playing basketball. However, when he shapes up and completes his work in a timely fashion, he goes back to incomplete assignments. In order to keep the goal for completing assignments, he needs to see more value in completing them. The use of the Jigsaw activity is just one way in which this student can begin to shape his intrinsic motivation and will be a more interesting way in which to motivate him to learn the material being presented to the class.

Quantel is a social student, and therefore, will benefit from the ability to share in this activity with his classmates (relatedness). He will also be able to be in charge of what he is learning for the activity, and he also responsible for the learning of others. Giving him some choice and responsibility in the lesson will give him some autonomy in the classroom. If he is successful in this lesson, and his intrinsic motivation grows, he will then begin to build on his competence in the classroom as well. These are all things

that Quantel is likely to feel when he is playing basketball, and likely motivate him in this arena. Giving him the same sense when he is working in the classroom will hopefully motivate him to continue to perform at the level that he has shown with other in-class activities and readings.