

INCREASING ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT MOTIVATION
THROUGH THE USE OF
INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC REWARDS

Joey Haywood, B.A.
Sarah Kuespert, B.A.
Dani Madecky, B.A.
Abbey Nor, B.A.

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & Pearson Achievement Solutions, Inc.

Field-Based Master's Program

Chicago, Illinois

December, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT 1

 General Statement of the Problem 1

 Immediate Context of the Problem 1

 Local Context of the Problem 9

 National Context of the Problem 14

CHAPTER 2: PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 15

 Evidence of the Problem 15

 Probable Causes 21

CHAPTER 3: THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 43

 Review of the Literature 43

 Project Objective and Processing Statements 47

 Project Action Plan 47

 Methods of Assessment 50

CHAPTER 4: PROJECT RESULTS 51

 Historical Description of the Intervention 51

 Presentation and Analysis of Results 66

 Conclusions and Recommendations 68

REFERENCES 72

APPENDICES 76

 Appendix A: Questions For Administration Survey 76

 Appendix B: Teacher Survey 77

| | |
|--|----|
| Appendix C: Observation Checklist Rubric- Objectives and Criteria..... | 78 |
| Appendix D: Observation Checklist–Objectives | 79 |
| Appendix E: Site A and Site B positive comment postcards | 80 |
| Appendix F: Site A Cooperative Learning Lesson Plan | 81 |
| Appendix G: Site B Cooperative Learning Assignment | 83 |

ABSTRACT

This action research project report examined strategies to motivate students from extrinsically rewarding behaviors to intrinsically motivating behaviors. The action research was conducted in two different schools by four different teacher researchers within the same district. Three teachers in an elementary building (Site A) and one teacher in a high school building (Site B) conducted this research project with 50 elementary and 38 high school students in English-language arts grades 3, 5, and 12. This research project was conducted from December 17, 2008 through May 9, 2008.

The teacher researchers chose the subject of motivation as the focus of their action research project because an underlying lack of student motivation was observed in all of their classrooms. Through the use of a teacher survey, an administrative interview, and an observation checklist, the teacher researchers gathered data to provide evidence of students' lack of motivation. The teacher researchers discovered that their administrator's perspective on student motivation aligned with much of the research that they reviewed as well as their personal experiences and beliefs related to student motivation. From the observation checklist, the teacher researchers deduced that the majority of students needed some prompting from the teacher to participate either in the form of a verbal reminder or a tangible reward. According to data from the teacher survey, of teachers who participated in the survey (n=29; 23%) reported that they used some form of extrinsic rewards to help motivate students in their classroom. Common terms were identified from all three tools including: students' self-confidence and self-efficacy levels, students' active involvement in the learning process, parental support, as well as valuable, individualized praise.

The teacher researchers used the following intervention strategies in order to examine student motivation as related to extrinsic and intrinsic motivators: verbal and written praise, cooperative learning groups, and tangible rewards. Verbal praise and positive feedback has been said to enhance a student's intrinsic motivation (Institute, 1997). Okolo and Bahr (1995) agree that different grouping arrangements in a multidimensional classroom give students a chance to demonstrate competence. Phillips and Lindsay (2006) found in their study that the competitive nature of his students and their receipt of his rewards influenced both their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

The teacher researchers found that most students responded well to all of the intervention strategies as long as the lessons continued to be engaging and best practices were employed. Many students reverted to previous performance levels and the teacher researchers hypothesized this might happen when he or she perceived the reward was not guaranteed or worth his or her effort. Although administrators and teachers supported incentives on a theoretical level, most teachers were on his or her own to develop, acquire, and implement both best practices strategies and tangible rewards in the classroom. This created an expense-related (time and financial) obstacle for teachers.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students in the teacher researchers' classrooms demonstrated lack of academic motivation. This lack of motivation was manifested in students' homework, grades, attitudes, classroom participation, and performance. Though many interventions had been tried by teachers, none seemed successful as a long-term strategy.

Immediate Context of the Problem

The action research was conducted in two different schools by four different teacher researchers within the same district. Three teachers in an elementary building (Site A) and one teacher in a high school building (Site B) conducted this research project. The information presented below comes from the Department of Public Instruction *WINSS Successful School Guide* (n.d.) and each demographic is associated with the respected reference appropriate for that demographic. The following are the demographics of these two schools.

Site A

Site A is one of three elementary schools in a small rural community with a population of approximately 7, 417 people (City of Site A & Site B Website, n. d.). Four-year-old kindergarten through fifth grade is offered at Site A. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Website, the school had 546 students in the 2005-2006 school year. As teacher researchers, we are aware of an increase in student population of approximately 200 students as of the 2006-2007 academic school year. Based on the 2004-2005 school year data, 48% of the students were females and 52% were males.

Table 1

Racial/Ethnic Background by Percentage of Site A

| <u>Caucasian</u> | <u>Hispanic</u> | <u>African American</u> | <u>Asian/Pacific Islander</u> | <u>Native American / Alaskan Native</u> |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 66 | 26 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Table 1 (Great Schools Website, n.d.) shows the breakdown by percentage of student racial/ethnicity within Site A. Of the 546 students who make up Site A, 26% (n=142) were Hispanic. This percentage of ethnicity is markedly higher than the district average which is 19% (n=103) (School Performance Report, 2004-2005). The number of students who come from low-income families is 47%, which is greater than the state average of 29% (Great Schools Website). These students are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch program. The mobility rate in this rural community is 18.27 %. The attendance rate of students attending Site A is 95.8% and the truancy rate is 3.7% (Wisconsin School Performance Report, 2004-2005).

The average teaching salary in the entire district, which includes Sites A and Site B is \$43,721 while the years of teaching experience averages to 10.8. Those holding a master's degree or higher, account for 44% (n=15) of the teachers in Site A's district. The ethnicity breakdown of teachers at Site A is one Hispanic teacher and 31 Caucasian teachers (Department of Public Instruction Website, n. d.).

The average class size for Site A is 17.4 students and the pupil-to-teacher ratio at Site A is 12 to 1 (National Center for Education Statistics, n. d.). Table 2 displays the breakdown of minutes that are devoted to teaching the core subjects in grades three and five. The minutes are based upon the state mandated minute requirements. Note that the average time devoted to teaching the core subjects is fairly consistent between third and fifth grade.

Table 2

Average Time Devoted to Teaching the Core Subjects (Minutes per Week)

| | <u>Mathematics</u> | <u>Science</u> | <u>Language Arts</u> | <u>Social Studies</u> | <u>Health</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Third Grade | 250 | 150 | 600 | 175 | 100 |
| Fifth Grade | 250 | 175 | 500 | 225 | 125 |

In addition to the core subjects, Site A offers classes in music, computers, physical education, art, guidance, and library. Students receive support from special education and ESL teachers as stated per their Individual Education Plan. Additional enrichment classes are offered on a quarterly basis. Academic performance testing at Site A is measured by the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAPS) test. The WKCE is administered to all students enrolled in the third, fourth, and fifth grades at Site A each fall and the MAPS is administered three times throughout the year to all students except four-year-old kindergarten students. The WKCE results are reported by their proficiency categories of Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Minimal performance. These categories were established by determining what all students must know and be able to do at the beginning of grade four in order to be successful by the end of the school year. As Table 3 indicates, each academic content area is treated as a separate test and separate proficiency results are reported. As reported in the School Performance Report, the fourth grade results of the 2004-2005 exam are shown in Table 3. Table 3 makes a comparison between Site A and the State percentiles for each subject including reading, language, math, science, and social studies. It highlights that Site A scored at, or above the State in reading, language, and science. The majority of students at Site A scored advanced or proficient in all academic content areas that were assessed.

Table 3

Fourth Grade 2004-2005 WKCE Results by Percentiles

| | <u>Advanced</u> | <u>Proficient</u> | <u>Basic</u> | <u>Minimal</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>Reading</u> | | | | |
| Site A | 43 | 44 | 12 | 1 |
| State | 43 | 39 | 12 | 4 |
| <u>Language</u> | | | | |
| Site A | 38 | 49 | 10 | 2 |
| State | 36 | 43 | 14 | 4 |
| <u>Math</u> | | | | |
| Site A | 31 | 42 | 13 | 14 |
| State | 32 | 41 | 10 | 15 |
| <u>Science</u> | | | | |
| Site A | 21 | 64 | 12 | 3 |
| State | 21 | 57 | 15 | 4 |
| <u>Social Studies</u> | | | | |
| Site A | 74 | 25 | 1 | 0 |
| State | 64 | 27 | 5 | 2 |

Site A has one principal, one assistant principal, and two administrative assistants. The grade level breakdown by teacher is shown in Table 4. In addition, Site A has one nurse, four custodians, six teacher's aides, and six kitchen staff members. Note that Site A is a relatively large elementary school with each grade-level consisting of several teachers.

Table 4

Number of Teachers Distributed by Grade Level and Area

| Grade Level/Area | <u>4K</u> | <u>K</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>Specials</u> |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Total Staff Members | 2 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 22 |

Site A is a Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) School. SAGE is a program to help reduce class size to no more than 16 students in kindergarten through third grade. This allows these students a better educational opportunity. Along with the SAGE program, Site A offers Lighted Schoolhouse Programs, which entail enrichment activities that

take place after school. Additionally, Site A was the first elementary school in the district to add a four-year-old kindergarten program. This is a half-day program specifically aimed towards four-year-old children, meeting daily throughout the school year.

Site A is an atypical, two-story brick building consisting of 32 classrooms built in 1905. Since the initial construction, the building was converted from two elementary schools in one building, to an elementary and middle school, and finally to its current form, one large elementary school. As a result of joining the two elementary schools, the building layout is unique in that there are four levels of classrooms within the two stories, similar to a split-level home. The school building is located in the center of Site A's community. Recently, to meet student needs, a library media center was added on to the existing structure. The library media center is frequently used by community members such as the Parent Teacher Organization, Girl Scout Troops, and Community Outreach Classes. The main office is located in the center of the building just inside the main entrance to the school. The surrounding grounds include a large playground, a soccer field, a baseball diamond, and a fenced in play yard.

Site B

Site B is the only high school in a small rural community with a population of approximately 7,417 people (City of Site A & Site B Website, n.d.). Site B enrolls students in grades 9 through 12 from the Site B community and surrounding small communities. As reported by Site B district documentation, the school had 1,366 students in the 2006-2007 school year. Of the 1,366 students, 46.8% (n= 639) were female and 53.2% (n=727) were male.

Table 5

Student Racial/Ethnic Background by Percent at Site B

| <u>Caucasian</u> | <u>Hispanic</u> | <u>African American</u> | <u>Asian/Pacific Islander</u> | <u>Pacific Islander/Hawaiian</u> | <u>Native American</u> | <u>Not Reported</u> |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 84 | 12 | 1 | .7 | .1 | .4 | 1.5 |

Table 5 (taken from Site B district documentation) shows the breakdown by percentage of student racial/ethnicity within Site B. Of these students, 92.9% (n=1,268) are English Proficient. Spanish speakers account for 6.8% (n=92), and .04% (n=6) of students primarily speak a language other than English or Spanish. A total of 25.9 % (n=354) of students attending Site B are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches as a result of a low-income socioeconomic qualification. Attendance rates at Site B are 94.5% (n=1,291), with a 3.5% (n=48) habitual truancy rate. The mobility rate of transient families is 18.27% (n=250).

There are 106 teachers on staff at Site B; 46% (n=49) of which are female and 54% (n=57) are male. The following table represents a breakdown of the racial and ethnic backgrounds of teachers at Site B as represented in district documentation.

Table 6

Teacher Racial/Ethnic Background by Percentage at Site B

| <u>Caucasian, Female</u> | <u>Caucasian, Male</u> | <u>African American</u> | <u>Hispanic, Male</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 39.4 | 57.5 | 1 | 2 |

Those holding a master's degree or higher account for 33.8% (n=36) of the staff at Site B. There are four Nationally Board Certified Teachers in the district; two of which are at Site B.

The average class size at Site B is 28 students. The pupil-to-teacher ratio is 13:1. Site B uses a modified block schedule, breaking the week into three days of eight-periods and the other two days with four periods, 90 minutes each. On all days, students are given a six-minute passing

period. All students in attendance at Site B are required to take 24 credits for graduation. Table 7 highlights the specific graduation requirements for each discipline. Note that the majority of the staff at Site B is made up of Caucasian males and females.

Table 7

Graduation Requirements at Site B by Discipline

| <u>Discipline Area</u> | <u>Required Credits</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| English | 4.0 |
| Social Studies | 3.5 |
| Science | 2.0 |
| Math | 2.0 |
| Physical Education | 1.5 |
| Health | 0.5 |
| Computer Course | 1.0 |
| Electives | 10.0 |

Electives courses are available in all disciplines, including art and music. Special education and English as a Second Language students are fully immersed in the curriculum and have support from additional staff. The graduation rate at Site B is 93.1% (n=1,272) (Great Schools Website, n.d.) The WKCE is administered yearly to students in grade 10. The state average for each test is determined by students who score Proficient or Advanced. Site B test scores met or exceeded the state average in each area of the test. The results of the 2006 exam (n= 371) are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Grade 10 Results of the 2006 WKCE Exam by Percentile

| | <u>Advanced</u> + | <u>Advanced</u> | <u>Proficient</u> | <u>Basic</u> | <u>Minimum</u> |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <u>Reading</u> State = 74 | 81 | 48 | 33 | 13 | 6 |
| <u>Language</u> State = 71 | 80 | 19 | 61 | 15 | 4 |
| <u>Math</u> State = 70 | 77 | 25 | 52 | 15 | 8 |
| <u>Science</u> State = 72 | 82 | 43 | 39 | 9 | 9 |
| <u>Social Studies</u> State = 76 | 83 | 47 | 36 | 6 | 11 |

Site B has one principal and two assistant principals. There are two administrative assistants in the main office and two in the attendance office. There are two support staff for discipline and in-school suspension. The library has one certificated staff member and two additional support staff. There are five guidance counselors on staff and two full-time computer technologists as well as one technology director. In addition, Site B has 1 nurse, 7 custodial staff, 20 kitchen staff, and 2 support staff. The eight content areas are led by a department chairperson.

Site B is approximately a 120 room classroom facility that opened its doors in 1958. The building has two gymnasiums, an indoor pool, and an extensive art department. Site B is especially known for its award-winning culinary program and boasts a full-service gourmet kitchen classroom. There are two commons areas, a library/media center, a theatre, and a recital hall. Most disciplines also have an additional computer laboratory for student use. In addition to

teacher-classrooms, Site B has office pods for teacher workspace and meeting areas. Currently, the site is under renovation with plans to add classrooms, a culinary classroom, fitness room, wrestling center, and visual arts space. Renovations will also include updates to the main office to upgrade building safety, as well as improving the accessibility and general façade. On Site B's campus, there is a football stadium and track, soccer and baseball fields, and an extensive greenhouse.

Local Context of the Problem

Sites A and B are located within a small rural town with an approximate population of 7,417 people. These sites are located about 40 miles from Rockford, Illinois and about 40 miles from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Throughout the last 10 years, the population of this area has grown by about 20% with 15% of the growth occurring in the first five years (Sites A and B Profile, n. d.). As a result of the population growth, the schools in the area have grown to a total of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Additionally, there are four feeder schools to the high school (Sites A and B Schools, n. d.). Within the 7,417 people, male residents of the community comprise 48.7% (n=3612) of the population and female residents comprise 51.3% (n=3804). The median age in this community is 36.5 years of age. Table 9 shows the age distribution of community members (U. S. Census Bureau, 2007, *General Characteristics*). As the table shows, the largest percentage, 43.1 of the community falls within the 5-34 years of age. The average household size in Site A and Site B's community is 2.33 people and the average family size is 3.01 people. This is notable because this is the age range that the teacher researchers will be focusing upon during this research project.

Table 9

Age Distribution of Community Members by Percentage

| <u>Under 5 Years of Age</u> | <u>5–34 Years of Age</u> | <u>35-64 Years of Age</u> | <u>65 and Over</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 5.9 | 43.1 | 37.1 | 13.9 |

It is obvious to the teacher researchers that student population is becoming more diverse. However, even though diversity is increasing within the community and the population of the community has grown by 15%, reported data on Table 10 shows that 90.8% of the population is Caucasian (IDecide Website, n.d., *Sites A and B Profile*).

Table 10

Ethnic Background of the Population by Percentage

| Caucasian | African American | American Indian | Asian | Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian | Hispanic or Latino | Some other Race | Two or More Races |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|-------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 90.8 | 0.9 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 0.1 | 14.7 | 5.2 | 1.9 |

The average per capita income is \$21,536, which makes the average median household income \$40,924. In this community, 4.7% of the families live below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The community has 5,772 people that are over the age of 16, with 70% (n= 4,040) of those individuals are in the labor force. Table 11 highlights that nearly half of the work force is employed in the manufacturing and service industries. Of those 4,040 people who are considered in the labor force, 1.9% (n=108) are currently employed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, *Economic Characteristics*).

Table 11

Occupations of Work Force by Percentage (n=3,932)

| <u>MMPO</u> | <u>SO</u> | <u>SOO</u> | <u>FFO</u> | <u>CEMO</u> | <u>PTMMO</u> |
|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 31.8% | 17.1% | 23.9% | 0.5% | 9.6% | 17.1% |

*MMPO = Management, Professional and Related Occupations

SO = Service Occupations

SOO = Sales and Office Occupations

FFO = Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations

CEMO= Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations

PTMMO= Production, Transportation, Material and Moving Occupations.

Table 12 shows that, of the community population that is 25 year of age and over, 83.2%

(n=6,166) hold a high school diploma or additional education.

Table 12

Educational Attainment by Percentage Age 25 and Above

| <u>Less than 9th grade</u> | <u>9th to 12th Grade No Diploma</u> | <u>High school graduate</u> | <u>Some college no degree</u> | <u>Associate degree</u> | <u>Bachelor's degree</u> | <u>Graduate or professional degree</u> |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 6.8 | 10 | 31.3 | 20.5 | 6.3 | 17.7 | 7.3 |

These teacher researchers have found this community to be a safe, comfortable community. However, while theft has been decreasing in this community, there were still 211 incidences in 2004 as opposed to other crime which was significantly less or non-existent (Site A and Site B Profile, n. d. *Law Enforcement Statistics*). It is interesting to note that this area is largely a tourist community. The continuous population of residents, in contrast to the vacation residents also suggest a disparity between lower-income and wealthier members of the community, which may correlate to an explanation for the high rate of theft where there is otherwise little crime evident at all.

The combined area of the sites is a community that was built around a lake that was formed 18,000 years ago after the last of the glaciers in Wisconsin. In 1840, two hotels, two general stores, three churches, and a distillery made up the community. Before the Civil War, the area was used as a port by slaves who were escaping from the south. Following the civil war, the area transformed into a resort community for wealthy families primarily from Illinois. These families began construction of the many mansions on the lake. As a result of the Chicago Fire of 1871, many families moved to their summer homes on the lake while the city was being rebuilt. An industry that was made up of milling and manufacturing was developed to meet the needs of constructing and maintaining these mansions. The arrival of a railroad opened the door for the community to become a primarily tourist town. Today, this town is filled with homes and buildings from these earlier times. Each of the homes stands as a reminder of the frontier, pioneering, and Victorian period (Site A and B History, *A Brief History*, n. d.).

Although the Planning Commission often passes various improvement project plans, the citizens of the area often fight change of any kind. Community members approve projects based upon whether they enhance, detract, or have no impact on quality of life, economics, or appearances. Some recent improvements in the community include: chain restaurants, high-end retail, and warehouse-style shopping stores (Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, 2007).

As a resort town, the area offers many recreational opportunities including sandy beaches, swimming, biking, boat tours, hiking paths, carriage rides, fishing, orchards and winery, health clubs and salon services, festivals, golfing, theatres, skiing, museums, ice sculpting, and much more (Sites A and B Chamber of Commerce Website, n. d.). The teacher researchers have discovered that there are recreational activities offered for all ages throughout the seasons.

There are four feeder schools to the high school in this community (Sites A and B Schools, n. d.). Each of the feeder schools are small in size and have a student population that is similar to Sites A and Site B student populations. The three elementary schools along with the middle school make up one of two districts in the community. The high school itself makes up the second district in the community. Site A is one of the schools in the elementary district. Site B is the high school in the second district. While there is one superintendent for the districts in this community, he has the support of five principals and four assistant principals distributed throughout the schools. The district Mission statement is as follows: ‘Honoring the unique talents of all, WE, the Site A/Site B, Families and Communities, commit to providing EVERY Student [sic] an excellent education that ensures the development of responsible, respectful citizens and inspires life-long learning (Site A and B Schools Website, *District Mission*, n. d.).

The tax base for Site A is \$21.47 million and the tax base for Site B is \$20.17 million (Town of Site A and Site B Regional News Website, *School Tax Looks Good*, n. d.). The per pupil revenue of the district in which Site A belongs is \$10,061 and the per pupil revenue of the district in which Site B belongs is \$13,656 (School Performance Report, n. d.). In January of 1999, an \$18 million addition to Site B was completed (Site A and B Schools Website, *Site B*, n. d.). During the 2006-2007 school year, a referendum was proposed to add on to an existing elementary school and the existing high school in the district. It passed with a favorable vote of 62% (WRA Website, *GAD Reports*, n. d.). The referendum will result in additional classrooms for general instruction, new space for visual arts, new fitness room, and new roofing on existing areas. The teacher researchers believe that the additions and renovations to the different schools will assist local districts in meeting increased student enrollment needs. Students at Site A have access to a total of 231 computers and students at Site B have access to a total of 426 computers (Personal

Communication, July 17, 2007, Director of Technology). Additionally, all teaching staff members in the elementary school and the high school districts are provided with a laptop computer for professional use. Specifically, 38 laptops were distributed to teaching staff members at Site A and 100 laptops were distributed to teaching staff members at Site B.

National Context of the Problem

The literature supports the theory that a problem of student motivation exists. Person (1990) referenced Glasser (1990) citing that humans try to control their own behavior, so that what one chooses to do is most needs-satisfying. While all motivation comes from the inside, what happens on the outside has much to do with the choices made. Research has also shown 'that achievement motivation is not a static trait, but is partially determined by characteristics of the learning environment'(Okolo & Bahr, 1995, p. 279). Student motivation is directly related to whether or not the time and effort invested is worthwhile, and most unmotivated students feel alienated from school (Person, 1990; Barry, 2007). When students experience a lack of recognition or reward, they become frustrated and disengaged from school, resulting in reduced effort and a drop in grades (Ingram, 2000). Many external factors can also impact student achievement and student motivation levels, including neighborhood violence, poverty, and family stress (Akey, 2007).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Evidence of the Problem

The teacher researchers chose the subject of motivation as the focus of this action research project because an underlying lack of student motivation was observed in all of their classrooms. Person (1990) cited Glasser's (1990) control theory suggesting that since humans are motivated by the basic needs of survival, love, power, fun, and freedom, humans will try to control behavior, so that what one chooses to do is most needs-satisfying. While all motivation comes from the inside, what happens on the outside has a lot to do with the choices made. Various motivational problems seem to stem from external factors, issues with self-efficacy, motivational theory, and classroom environment.

The teacher researchers hypothesized that a range of external factors contributed to the lack of student motivation, including state and national assessments, society and culture, socioeconomic status, and community environment. Research has indicated that students become less intrinsically motivated to learn and less likely to engage in critical thinking when rewards and sanctions are attached to performance on tests (Amrein & Berliner, 2003). Often districts place a great deal of weight upon assessment results. Evidence has shown that high-stakes testing can actually decrease student motivation and increase dropout and retention rates (Amrein & Berliner, 2003). High-stakes testing can result in teachers using primarily direct instruction and providing students with minimal opportunity to direct their own learning which can have a negative affect on students' motivation (Amrein & Berliner, 2003). It is suggested that learning is being reduced to a matter of achieving minimal competency via national testing programs, state testing norms, test-driven instruction, and threats of funding cuts based on test results (Burke,

1995). When students focus on how well they are doing instead of what they are doing, they tend to become less interested in what they are doing (Kohn, 1993).

Many factors can impact student achievement and students' motivation levels. These factors include neighborhood violence, poverty and family stress, in addition to disinterest, overconfidence, and ignorance (Akey, 2007; Henderson, 1990). Today's teenagers confront many external factors that deflect their energies away from school. Most of these factors include substance abuse, gangs, and popularity in school activities (Brunsma, Khmelkov, McConnell & Orr, 1996). Research indicates that the task of motivating at-risk students can be daunting due to external psychological, emotional, and physical stressors which adversely affect students' lives (Ingram, 2000). Students' perceived safety at school might also impact students' motivation levels (Akey, 2007). People's perceptions have a decisive influence on people's behavior. Perceptions are a source of behavior; educators need to understand student behavior as influenced by perceptions in order to control specific student behavior (Byer, 2001). Obstacles that inhibit learning are most frequently motivational; when a learner's needs are unsatisfied or when the expectations, such as the learner's security are threatened, defense mechanisms begin to intervene (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, as cited in Burke, 1995).

The goals of educators have been to identify, teach, and measure content, and only rarely apply it to the real world. Content is juxtaposed against motivation causing both sides to lose. This reinforces the ideas that some students are often unmotivated inside of school, yet highly motivated outside (Burke, 1995). The essential interrelatedness of content and motivation eludes much of the instructional emphasis in classrooms, and therefore many optimal learning opportunities for those who would benefit are denied (Burke, 1995). When children enter school, they tend to appear excited about school and the work it entails, but it takes a remarkably short

period of time before many change their mind (Coutts, 2004). Traditionally, school culture provides more encouragement for student athletes than for its scholars (Beckerman, 1996). In addition, Helen Raham (2000) cited Kelley's research (1999) that teachers are driven by expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. These factors express how the level of a teacher's belief that working harder will have positive results, how teachers felt about their own competencies, and the presence of enabling conditions, such as administrative support, professional training, and sufficient feedback on progress toward established goals, and the values, both desirable (such as bonus pay, public recognition, and pride of accomplishment) and undesirable (stress, public criticism, threats to job security, and personal disappointment). The culture of the nation's schools needs to change if motivation and achievement of students is to improve (Maehr, 1992).

Self-efficacy is one influence on motivation (McCabe, 2003). Obstacles that inhibit learning are most frequently motivational when learner needs are thwarted or unsatisfied, or when the expectations are such that the learner's security is threatened, defense mechanisms begin to intervene (Burke, 1995). "Teachers and parents worry that [students] are unmotivated," Raffini (1988) says, "In reality, they are highly motivated to protect their sense of self-worth." (as cited in Renchler, 1992, p. 3). When students do not believe they are good at something they usually have very little resilience to failure (Barry, 2007). Students with a helpless orientation are unable to establish reasonable goals and attain goals that are within their reach (Barry, 2007). When an activity leads a child to view their self-determination or perceived competence as lower, this will undermine their intrinsic motivation (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 2001a). Research suggests that even young children are able to make decisions about what they think is important for them. These beliefs are related to how much effort children put forth on a particular task, their performance achievement, and their self-worth (Barry, 2007). Motivational theories

indicate that individuals need to feel a sense of achievement and are motivated by extrinsic acknowledgements of achievements (Person, 1990).

Educational theorist E.D. Hirsch (1996) writes that one of the greatest barriers imaginable to social justice is the idea that motivation for academic achievement comes from within (Institute, 1997). Research results indicate motivation as a major role in learning (Edmunds & Bauserman, 2006). Student characteristics that affect achievement motivation include students' ability to perform a task, which includes their skills, background knowledge, and prior experiences; the degree to which students value an activity and perceive it as relevant, interesting, and important; and students' beliefs about learning and about themselves as learners (Okolo & Bahr, 1995). Research shows that although feedback, evaluation, and recognition practices are supposed to motivate students to do better academically these measures are proven ineffective as measured by the number of students who are not achieving their academic goals (MacIver & Reuman, 1993). Students' motivational problems stem from the following issues: children's beliefs about ability, children's perceptions of competence and self-efficacy, goals, perceptions of the usefulness of subject matter outside of the classroom, interest in and enjoyment of subject matter, and emotions associated with subject matter (Stipek, Givvin, & Salmon, 1998). Educational applications of needs-press theory have indicated that students who perceive a sense of beneficial advantage from involvement in their classroom learning environments are likely to be environmentally encouraged toward improved learning outcomes, which may include improved academic self-concepts (Byer, 2001). Many studies have been conducted on the effects of extrinsic rewards on performance and at least two-dozen studies have concluded that people expecting to receive a reward for completing a certain task don't perform as well as those who expect nothing (Kohn, 1993). Motivational theories of cooperative learning

emphasize that rewarding groups on the basis of individual learning of all group members creates peer norms and sanctions favoring achievement-related efforts and active helping of peers (Slavin, 1987).

According to Deci, Ryan, & Koestner, (2001b), it seems as though implementing a strategy that is a performance-contingent reward system, for the classroom as a whole, would be the most disastrous to the classroom as a whole. They tend to focus on evaluation, surveillance, and competition, which have been shown to undermine intrinsic motivation as a whole. The education community has not done a good job of articulating the idea that student motivation is a necessary precondition to learning that teachers need to create and foster (Bartholomew, 2007). Students' perceived safety at school could impact students' motivation levels (Akey, 2007). Most students agreed that homework was dull and boring either because it was routine and more of the same or it was just too easy (Coutts, 2004). Lack of challenge cannot only create boredom but a lack of motivation (Phillips & Lindsay, 2006). Classrooms can be organized in ways that facilitate or impede student motivation (Okolo & Barr, 1995). Elementary school instruction that includes low-level assignments and increased teacher control does not contribute to an increase in student motivation (Miller & Meece, 1997). When learning is fragmented and classrooms lack a flow of direction the learning won't be intrinsically interesting or fulfilling to most students (Schaps & Lewis, 1991). District policy often determines whether or how teachers can relate school to the broader world (Molnar & Garcia, 2006). When we give our students feedback, evaluating and recognizing these practices are meant to motivate students to attain better grades, but these tactics are largely ineffective because a large majority of students aren't performing anywhere near their untapped potential (Ingram, 1990).

Motivation to learn can be increased through the use of challenging learning activities. However, activities that are too difficult can decrease student motivation (Miller & Meece, 1997). ‘What we have failed to provide in the professional training of teachers is a realistic understanding that control and compliance will not in themselves create a climate for academic attainment’ (Bartholomew, 2007). A common confusion of teachers and school leaders alike is that classroom management and motivation are basically one and the same. Teachers continue to focus on tight control of the environment and curriculum in the closely held belief that doing so will eventually create motivated students and positive learning outcomes (Bartholomew, 2007). Not one of the top 10 schools of education in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings requires students seeking credentials as teachers or pursuing graduate degrees in leadership to complete a dedicated class in educational motivation (Bartholomew, 2007). ‘Most unmotivated students feel an alienation from the school’ (Person, 1990, p. 27). A student’s motivation is directly related to whether or not he feels that time and effort invested in study are worthwhile (Barry, 2007). It would be beneficial to students if we adopted a view that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors can work together (Burke, 1995).

Students in today’s classrooms are driven by extrinsic motivation which we call grades (DeLisle & Hargis, 1998). Uses of incentives vary, but the most common motivator in most schools is grades (Ingram, 2000). However, many young students do not find good grades or academic achievement to be rewarding (Malala, 2007). When we reward students for their achievements we are teaching them that learning is a chore (Kohn, 1993). Whenever a student is given a reward based on a task performance, the teacher is giving the students a crystal clear indicator that they are increasing their overall competence, which is great, but they are also undermining their intrinsic interest (Ingram, 1989). The reward that teachers should offer to

students is pride and satisfaction that intrinsically comes from doing a job well. As educators, do we do a good enough job of stressing this, or do we instead stress the extrinsic reward? (Ingram, 1989). Students who work hard to strive towards a reward and then never achieve their goal and reward, the experience is likely to be heartbreaking and detrimental to the students that don't receive the reward because it will be perceived as failing. Using rewards at all is a risky proposal and teachers need to ask themselves if it is worth the risk. The reward structure generally operating in schools today gives only a minority of student's external rewards for learning. Ordinarily, the students receiving these rewards are the most likely to be intrinsically motivated already (Brunsuma, et. al., 1996). Currently, a high school diploma does not motivate most students to exert effort to learn. The diploma does not differentiate between various levels of student performance or between difficult and less difficult curriculum. The diploma has no real significance in the occupational world (Brunsuma, et. al. 1996). Sometimes teachers perceive that rewards change students' behavior and increase their motivation to learn, but students perceive the opposite (Malala, 2007). Rewards can be used to produce positive, negative, or no effects at all on intrinsic motivation. It all depends on a multitude of variables, which are continually being debated over and over (Cameron, 2001). Students will respond favorably to a reward if the student feels a reasonable chance for success; he or she is convinced that the risks are not overwhelming; and that he/she believes that the reward is worth the effort (Person, 1990). Research has shown that achievement motivation is not a static trait, but is partially by characteristics of the learning environment (Okolo & Bahr, 1995).

Probable Causes

The purpose of this research was to examine strategies to motivate students from extrinsically rewarding behaviors to intrinsically motivating behaviors. Through the use of a

teacher survey, an administrative interview, and an observation checklist, the teacher researchers gathered data to provide evidence of students' lack of motivation. Three teachers in an elementary building (Site A) with age groups of 3rd and 5th grades and one teacher in a high school building (Site B) with the age group of 12th grade conducted this research project with 50 elementary students and 38 high school students during English/language-arts classes. These teacher researchers completed the pre-documentation portion of the project during the weeks of January 7th, 2008 through January 18th, 2008.

Administrator Interview

In an effort to get an administrator's perspective on student motivation, the teacher researchers at Site A and Site B decided to interview their administrators. The researchers designed and word-processed an interview that was comprised of five open-ended questions. In an effort to give administrators the opportunity to prepare accordingly for the interview, the teacher researchers e-mailed the interview questions to their administrators on January 5, 2008. The three teacher researchers at Site A met with their administrator to conduct the administrator interview on Friday, January 11, 2008. The interview was conducted in the privacy of the administrator's office and lasted approximately 45 minutes. A copy of the administrator survey can be found in the appendix A. The teacher researcher from Site B met with the administrator at Site B on Friday, January 11, 2008, as well. The interviews took place via e-mail and in the privacy of the administrator's office, lasting approximately one hour. A copy of the interview questions is located in Appendix A.

The first interview question stated: *Drawing upon your entire educational experience, what do you think motivates kids?* The administrator's response from Site A included the following: "I believe that building up students with small increments of success motivates

students. When kids feel that they are successful at something, they will continue to strive to do their best. When they feel they can, they do! It is important that teachers set students up for success and that students have an opportunity to feel success. Experiencing their own personal success increases students' self-confidence and motivates students to move further. Students also need specific and individualized praise. Hands-on instruction also motivates students and sparks a natural desire to learn."The administrator from Site B responded to the same question, stating "Todd Whitaker says it best: 'People make Programs'. Kids are directly affected and motivated by great teachers who they connect with and feel care about them and what they are doing. Kids are also motivated by being part of a school community. They have to feel a part of the greater cause by being involved with some school activity or sport. Lastly, kids are motivated by self-goals in their life. These are often related to their career goals or sometimes a financial goal.

The second interview question stated: *Drawing upon your entire educational experience, what do you think motivates teachers?* Site A's administrator responded to this question with a smile and the following response: "Teachers are motivated by a belief in their purpose. They need to feel like teaching is a job worth doing. They need to believe in their own abilities. Teachers need to feel that they are doing well and that their students are growing and developing relationships. Importantly, they also need praise and support from their administration." Site B's administrator responded by saying, "I think teachers want to be a part of a school that supports student success and also supports them as educators to do the best they can. Although money is not the prime motivator to be in education, I am absolutely sure that being paid competitively with other districts or better is very motivating to teachers. Lastly, I think teachers want to feel that they are appreciated and important."

The third interview questions stated: *What differences or similarities do you find in what motivates students and staff, yourself, and fellow administrators included?* Site A's administrator responded to this question by drawing and explaining the following chart:

| <u>Students</u> | <u>Staff</u> | <u>Administration</u> |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Belief in Self | ⇒ | ⇒ |
| Personalized Praise | Belief in Their Praise | Role/Purpose Praise |
| Success | ⇒ | ⇒ |

The administrator explained that, "Students, staff members, and administrators are all motivated by a strong belief in themselves. Similarly, they are motivated by success, a feeling that their efforts matter and that they are successful. Finally, students, staff members, and administrators are motivated by praise, but a little bit of a different kind of praise. Students are motivated by personalized and specific praise. Staff members are motivated by praise that they truly believe in, and administrators are motivated by the belief that they play a key role in providing staff members and students with valuable praise." Site B's administrator responded stating, "I think everyone wants a school they can be proud of. We all want a school that is accomplishing good things through academics, music, activities or athletics. We want to read in the paper that our school is one of the top achieving schools in the area or even larger, the state. We want to be a school where we celebrate each other's successes. Most administrators handle the change needed to accomplish this more than either the students or the staff. This would be a major difference. Many times, people want change, so that they can achieve the desired results, but are not willing to go through the painful change process."

The fourth question was divided into two parts. The first part stated: *In your opinion, what is the #1 issue that impedes student success and/or learning?* This question was answered by the Site A administrator with the following comment, “When students feel an overwhelming feeling that they can’t achieve or they lack confidence, this impedes student learning. Once students have a sense that they can’t do something, it can be difficult to overcome this feeling. I think that this sense can be something that students develop over time.” Site B’s administrator responded to the first part of the question by referring specifically to attendance concerns. “Attendance is always the number one reason. We have in the last 15 years begun to deal more with parents that do not hold their students’ accountable to getting home on school nights, sitting and doing some homework, or attending school. Kids fall behind and have a hard time catching up. Just general laziness that was always there with kids or people for that matter, but now few people at home are holding students accountable.”

The second part of question four stated: *In an ideal situation, how would you propose to address this issue?* The Site A administrator responded to the question with the following response: “When kids don’t believe in themselves as people, it’s hard for us to get them to believe in themselves as students. Teachers need to give students small achievable goals so that students’ confidence levels can be built up. It is important for teacher to set students up for success and by giving students’ choices, establishing clear expectations, and demonstrating what is expected of students. It is important for kids to know exactly what they need to do to be successful. Parents are a huge factor. They need to also give kids choices and provide students with the structure that they need at home.” For the second part of the question, the administrator at Site B responded, “Ideally, we would have a better system to educate parents on being parents. [We need] more laws to hold parents accountable for their student’s attendance at school.”

The fifth, and final, interview question was also a two-part question. The first part of the question stated, *What kinds of incentives would you find effective and/or worthwhile to fund?* The second part of the question stated, *What resources/grants are you aware of that we could work with you to apply for?* Site A's administrator answered these questions by stating the following: "The kinds of incentives that I believe are effective are those that are experiential. The incentives need to get students involved with their learning and their teacher. Activities such as an after school program that gets students involved are very powerful incentives. Also, incentives that build confidence such as a game those students will be successful while playing is a powerful incentive because it builds students' belief system in education and it increases their self-confidence. In response to your question about resources and grants related to incentives, there is so much out there. In honesty, we don't take advantage of all that is available to us because of the time that it takes to weed through what is available to us. You might want to visit the Internet and take a look at what is out there." Our administrator suggested that we talk to a couple of our colleagues who have applied for, and received grants in the last few years.

Site B's administrator suggested that "probably the best thing to work on is a program that recognizes positive actions from students and staff. One time incentives are not sustaining and are often here today and gone tomorrow. Programs that continuously cause students and staff to strive for excellence tend to be the best. I like programs that recognize academic improvement, benchmarks, good attendance and good behavior. I don't believe in over rewarding for things students should be doing anyway, but only for them changing their behavior or achieving excellence. As far as grants, there tends to be some that come across my desk, but none of them last and there are often stipulations that tie them to things a school may not want."

The teacher researchers found obtaining their administrator's perspective on student motivation to be eye-opening and informative. The teacher researchers discovered that both of their administrators' perspectives on student motivation aligns with a great deal of the research that they reviewed as well as their personal experiences and beliefs related to student motivation. Specifically, the research that we reviewed on student-motivation, our respective administrators, and our research team, identifies the following factors as key factors related to student motivation: students' self-confidence and self-efficacy levels, students' active involvement in the learning process and in school culture, parental support, as well as valuable, individualized praise. The administrators' responses to questions one, two, three, and four indicate that providing students with specific praise and working to increase students' levels of self-confidence will contribute to increasing students' motivation levels. The teacher researchers feel as though their administrator's responses support the interventions that they have decided to implement as a part of their research project. In interviewing their administrator, the teacher researchers at Site A feel as though they have gained valuable insight about student motivation as a school-wide topic instead of a classroom-specific topic. They feel as though their administrator supports their decision to target student-motivation as the focus of their action research. Site B's administrator's values also corresponded to the researcher's beliefs and theories studies.

Observation Checklist

One tool that the teacher researchers used for pre-documentation was the observation checklist. The purpose of the checklist was to observe the following daily behaviors related to student motivation: participates freely, achieves proficiency (or above), respects classroom rules, is prepared with materials, completes class work, and has homework turned in on time. The teacher researchers at Site A used the checklist during a language arts class on January 18,

2008, the week prior to beginning their first intervention strategy. The teacher researcher at Site B also used the checklist on January 18, 2008 during an English class. There were 17 third graders and 33 fifth graders observed at Site A. At Site B, 38 twelfth graders were observed for the study. Students were evaluated on a total of six criteria. Students at Site A could score a 1 (lowest), 2, or 3 (highest) on the checklist, while students at Site B scored a $\sqrt{+}$, $\sqrt{}$, or $\sqrt{-}$ with the same criteria and depending on what was observed during that class. The observation checklist was used to denote the amount of change in student behaviors related to motivation by comparing the checklist data from pre and post-documentation checklist data. Please refer to Appendix D for a copy of the observation checklist.

The first behavior that the teacher researchers observed was participation (verbally, physically, and/or cooperatively) in class. Twenty-eight percent (n=14) of the students scored a 3 for class participation at Site A and 42% (n=16) scored a $\sqrt{+}$ at Site B. These scores meant that the student did not require prompting to participate in class and led the teacher to believe that there was some intrinsic motivation already there. Students requiring some prompting to participate, either from the teacher, classmates, or due to a tangible reward, made up 54% (n=27) at Site A and 42% (n=16) at Site B. Those students who demonstrated minimal to no participation in the class assignment made up the remaining 18% (n=9) at Site A and 16% (n=6) at Site B.

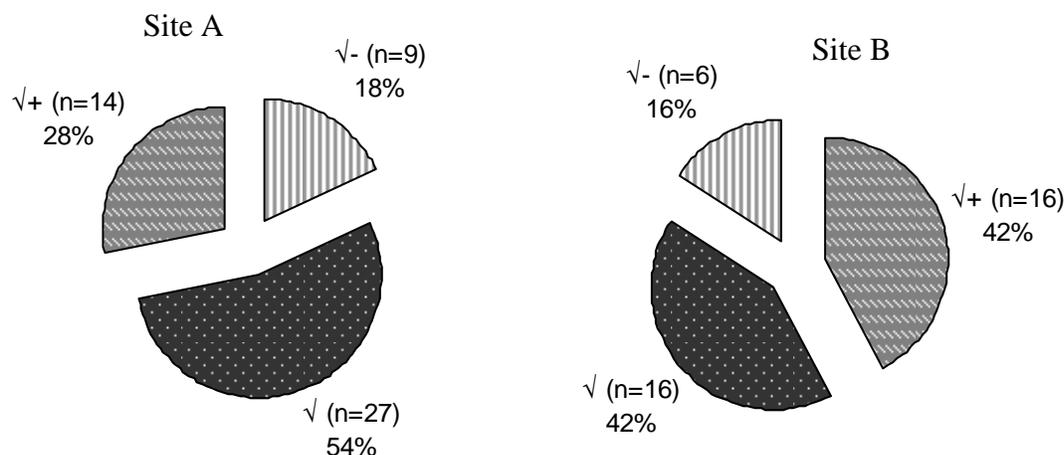


Figure 1: *Participates Freely* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

The second behavior that was observed by the teacher researchers was student proficiency. Students who scored a 3 or a $\sqrt{+}$ in this category exceeded the established expectations/criteria for the assignment. Forty-two percent (n=21) of the students observed scored a 3 in this category at Site A and 18% (n=7) scored a $\sqrt{+}$ at Site B. Students who met the established expectations/criteria for the assignment made up 48% (n=24) of the data at Site A. At Site B, 64% (n=24) met the established criteria. Those students who did not meet the established expectations made up the remaining 10% (n=5) at Site A and 18% (n=7) at Site B.

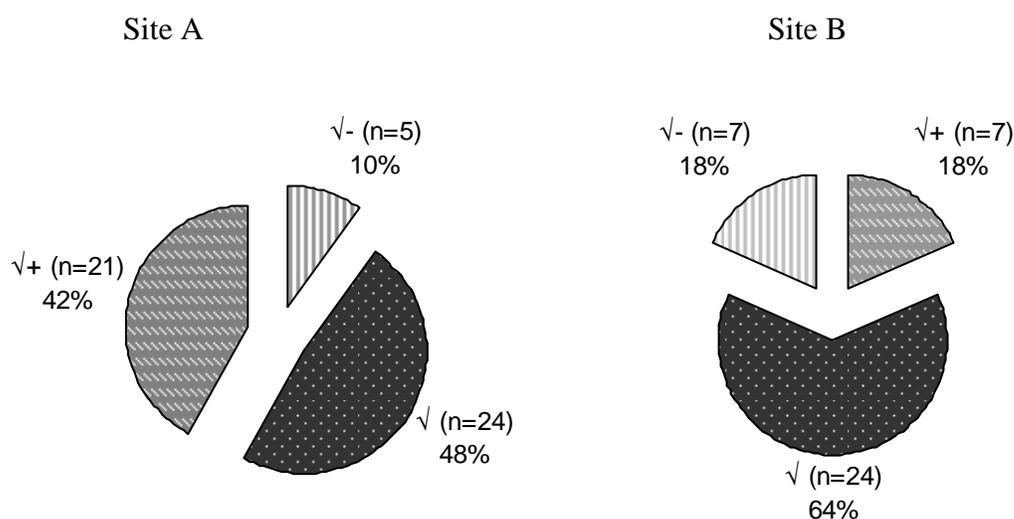


Figure 2: *Achieves Proficiency* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

Respecting classroom rules was the third behavior that the teacher researchers observed through the checklist. Students scoring a 3 or a $\sqrt{+}$ demonstrated a value for established classroom rules. This meant that the students respected the classroom rules, their classmates, as well as themselves. Those students made up 60% of the data at Site A and 29% at Site B. Another 30% of the students observed at Site A scored a 2 and 55% scored a $\sqrt{}$, which showed that they demonstrated a regard for established classroom rules. Ten percent of the students at Site A demonstrated a lack of awareness for positive classroom behavior, while 16% of the students at Site B demonstrated a lack of awareness for positive classroom behavior.

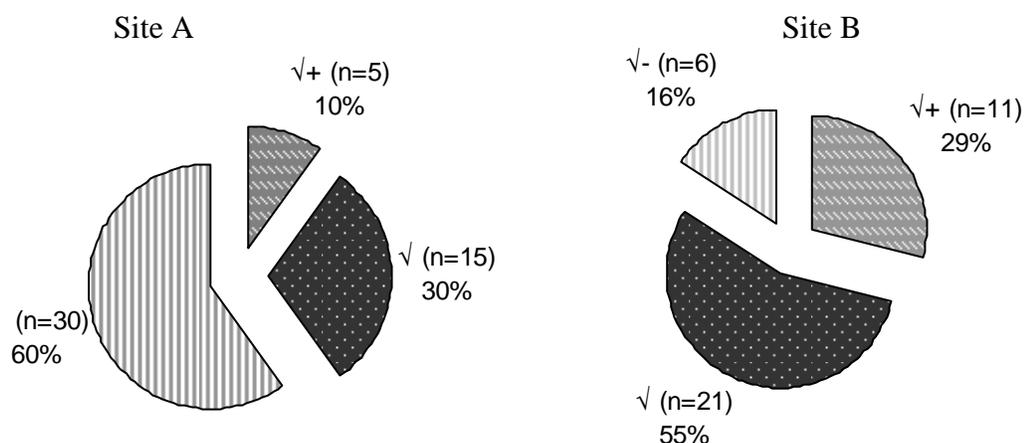


Figure 3: *Respects Classroom Rules* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

Students were also observed on how prepared they were for class. The teacher researchers observed that 90% of the students at Site A attended class with all required/requested materials. Sixty percent of students at Site B attended class with all required/requested materials. Those who attended class with some required/requested materials at Site A made up 8% and 32% at Site B, while those with little to no materials made up the remaining 2% at Site A and 8% at Site B.

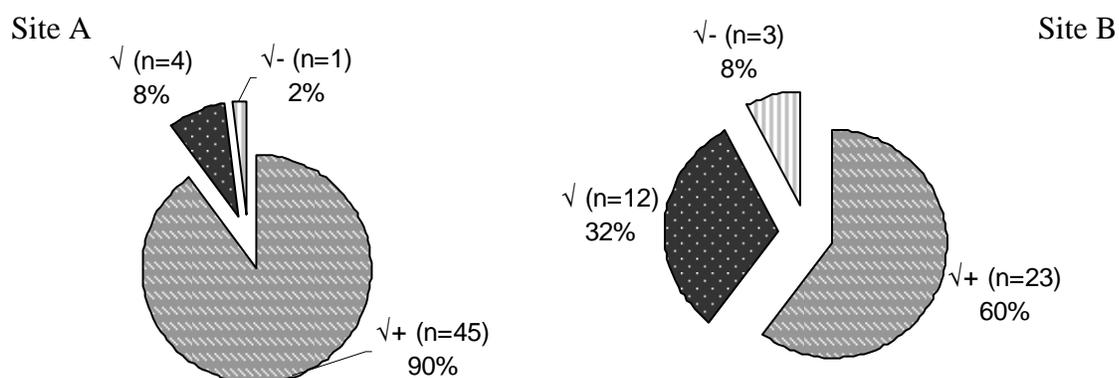


Figure 4: *Prepared with Materials* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

The teacher researchers observed completed classwork as a behavior on the checklist. Seventy-eight percent of the students observed at Site A had a completed assignment at the end of the class and 66% of those observed at Site B had a completed assignment at the end of class. Those with the assignment somewhat complete at Site A made up 20% of the students and 26% of the students at Site B, while those with an incomplete class assignment at Site A were the remaining 2% of the students and at Site B, the remaining 8%.

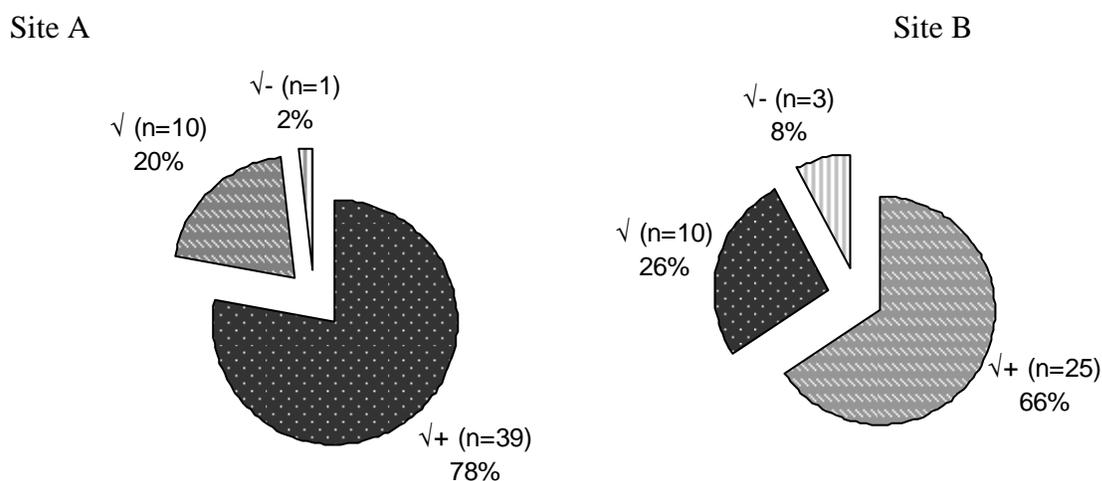


Figure 5: *Classwork Completed* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

The final behavior that the teacher researchers observed was homework being turned in. Students who handed in the assignment on time at Site A made up 74% of the students, and at Site B, 76% of the students handed the assignment in on time. Those who handed the assignment in late at Site A made up 16% of the students, and at Site B, those students comprised 13%, while those who did not hand in the assignment at all made up the remaining 10% of all students observed at Site A and 11% observed at Site B.

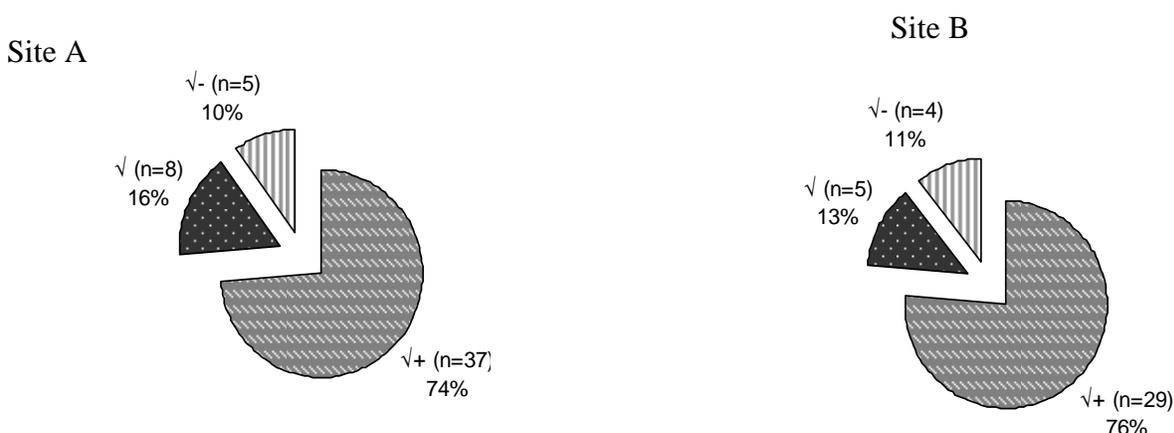


Figure 6: *Homework Turned In* (Site A n=50) and (Site B n=38)

Teacher Survey

The teacher researchers decided to use a teacher survey to get a clear idea of how the entire staff at Sites A and B felt where motivation is a concern. The entire Site A staff, 36 teachers, received the teacher survey, and from that total 28% (n=10) of the teachers completed and returned the teacher survey. From Site B, 106 teachers received the surveys and 19 were completed, an 18% return rate. The teacher surveys were distributed during the week of January 7-January 11, 2008. These surveys were collected during the week of January 14-January 18, 2008. The teacher surveys were placed into individual teacher mailboxes and teachers were instructed to fill out the survey and then return the completed survey to the mailbox of one of the

teacher researchers by January 18, 2008. There were a total of six questions asked. The first question was a multiple choice question with a total of seven possibilities and an “other” answer possibility. The second question asked the teacher to explain how the answer to his/her first question impacted their teaching and/or lesson plans. The third question used a Likert scale with a continuum that ranged from being frustrated on a daily basis all the way to being frustrated less than one time a month. The fourth question was also a multiple choice question with a total of eight possibilities and an “other” answer option. The fifth question used a Likert scale with a continuum that ranged from *I do not use extrinsic rewards* all the way to *I frequently use extrinsic rewards*. The sixth, and final question was an open-ended question that asked teacher how they use extrinsic rewards and how they have found it to be successful. A copy of this test can be found in Appendix B.

The first question on the teacher survey stated: *Which of the following classroom behaviors have you observed in your classroom? (Please circle as many as apply.)* There were a total of seven possible responses to circle, not counting an eighth item with a blank line titled *other*. The teachers circled anywhere from one to seven items. At Site A, 17% of the teachers filled in the line titled *other*, and at Site B, 26% added *other* behaviors. The number one issue at Site B seemed to be tardiness followed by missing assignments, not doing homework, poor grades, behavior issues, poor attendance, and finally credit for late work. The three other issues that were marked on the survey were disrespect, not doing quality work, and temper tantrums. At Site B, the major issue was not doing homework, followed by poor attendance and tardiness, poor grades and behavior issues, and last, credit for late work. At Site B, teachers cited apathy, insubordination, disorganization, and not bringing materials to class amongst their other concerns.

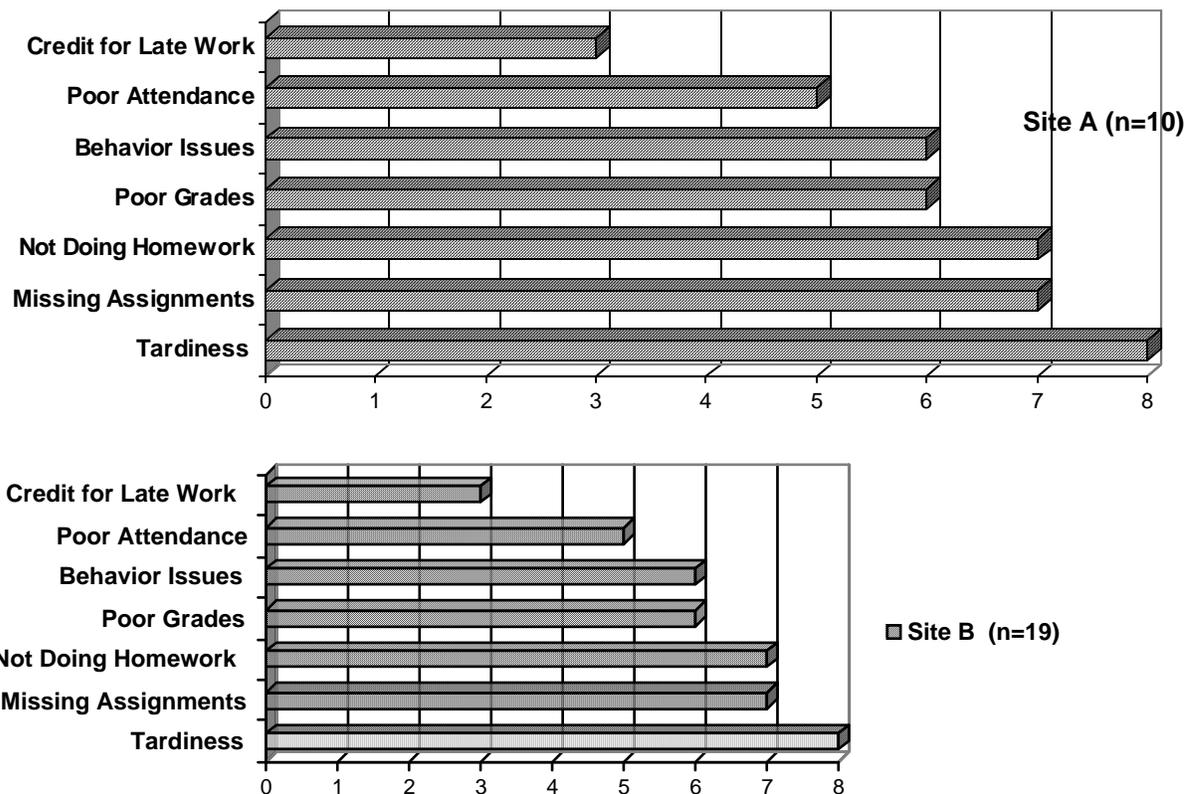
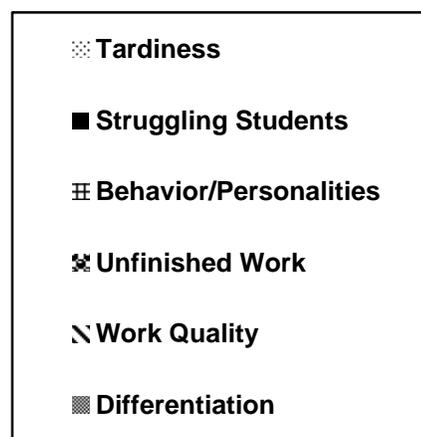
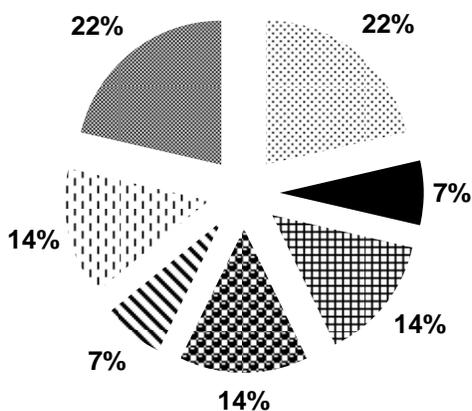


Figure 7: Classroom Behaviors Observed by Teachers (Site B n=19) and (Site A n=10)

The second question on the teacher survey asked: *Please explain how the above-circled issues impact your teaching and/or lesson planning.* The teachers at Site A wrote that “tardiness eats away at valuable instruction time.” Students that lag behind make it difficult to enrich and challenge students that understand the topic because of the need to reteach various concepts over and over again to students struggling. Students’ behavior/personalities require a lot of movement around the room; differentiation is a must between different ability leveled students. In addition, unfinished work and quality of work is a constant discussion in the classroom. At Site B, teachers wrote of attendance related issues, such as “It is difficult to move ahead when so many students aren’t in class or are burdened with missing work.” Teachers stated they felt as though

they were in a constant state of catch-up, working with below grade-level students, and feeling frustrated about being able to meet the expectations of their job. In turn, teachers responded with apathy, behavioral problems that disrupt classroom learning, failure to submit assignments, and more absences, despite efforts to differentiate instruction.

Site A



Site B

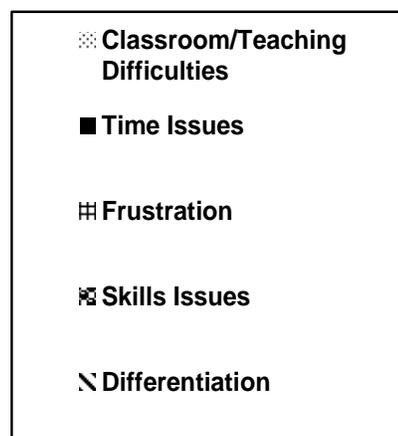
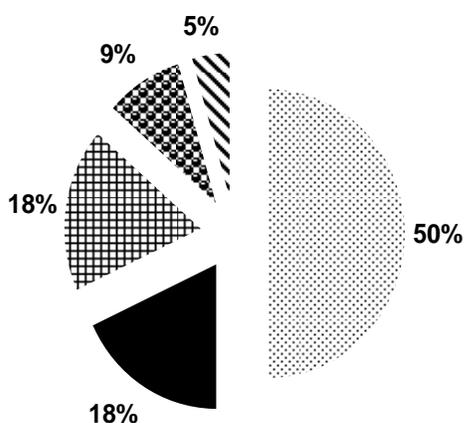


Figure 8: *How Circled Issues Impact Teaching and/or Planning* (Site A n=10) and (Site B n=19)

The third question on the teacher survey asked: *Using the scale, rate your typical classroom experience, by marking an "X" on the most appropriate descriptor.* Out of 10 possible responses, zero percent of teachers at Site A responded that they are frustrated on a daily basis, 30% of teachers responded that they are frustrated 3-4 days per week, 40% of

teachers responded they are frustrated 1-2 days per week, 10% teacher responded that they are frustrated a few times per month, and 20% of teachers responded that they are frustrated less than one time a month. Ten percent of teachers did not answer the question. Ten percent referred to the increasing level of expectations related to testing, frustrated 3-4 days per week, and 10% related to the students they teach, frustrated less than one time a month. At Site B, zero percent of teachers responded that he/she was frustrated less than one time per month. Thirty-two percent of teachers marked the continuum between 1-2 days per week and a few times per month. Thirty-two percent of teachers marked 1-2 days per week, and 5% marked a few times per month. Sixteen percent of teachers marked that they felt frustrated 3-4 days per week, while another 16% marked that they felt frustrated on a daily basis.

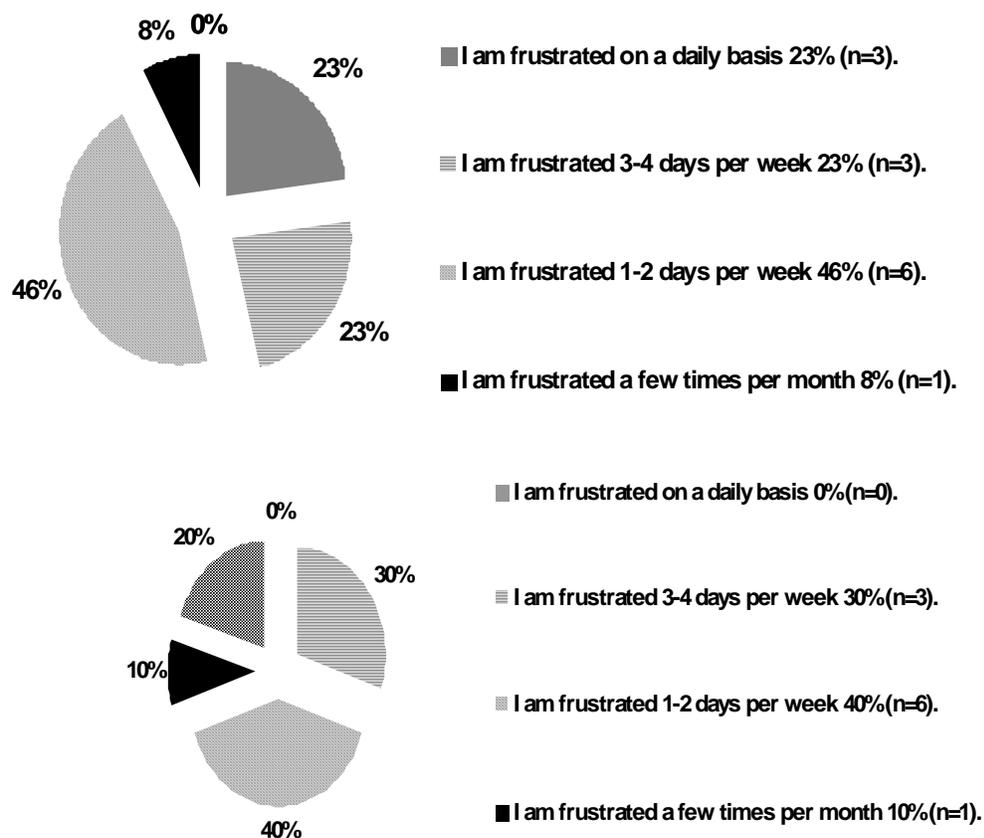


Figure 9: *Typical Classroom Experience* (Site A n=10) and (Site B n=19)

The fourth question on the teacher survey asked: *Which of the following extrinsic rewards do you use in your classroom to celebrate success? (Circle all that apply.)* There were a total of eight potential responses to circle not counting a blank line titled "other." Forty-five percent of teachers from Site A responded to this survey question. Eighty percent of teachers from Site A responded that they use candy/treats, 50% of teachers use give-away items, 90% of teachers use comment cards/notes, 90% of teachers use certificates, zero percent of teachers use ribbons, 10% of teachers use verbal praise, 80% of teachers use whole-class acknowledgement, and 70% of teachers use school-wide acknowledgement. Only 10% of teachers filled in the other blank with the word coupons. At Site B, 18% of teachers completed the survey. Ninety-five percent of teachers completing the survey frequently use verbal praise, followed by 74%, who use whole-class acknowledgement. Forty-three percent of teachers at Site B also implement strategies of candy/treats, 26% use cards/notes, 21% use giveaway items, 5% gives certificates, and 5% offers school-wide acknowledgement. There was not a single response from Site B for a reward using ribbons. Teachers at Site B also cited calls home, academic medals, homework passes, awards for winning classroom competitions, extra credit, extra work time, and one-on-one attention as other options for extrinsic rewards used in the classroom.

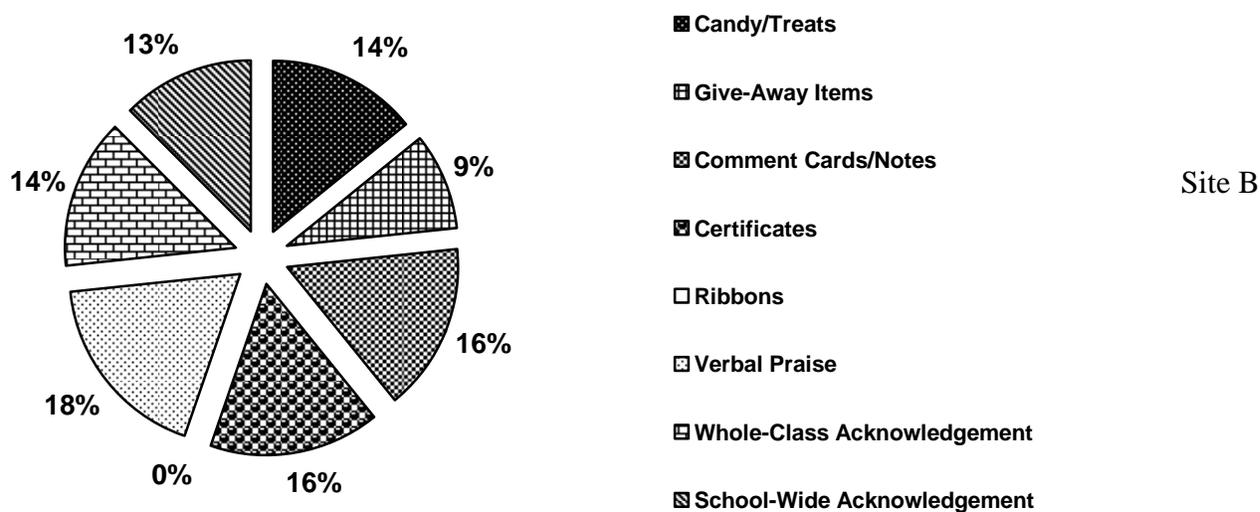
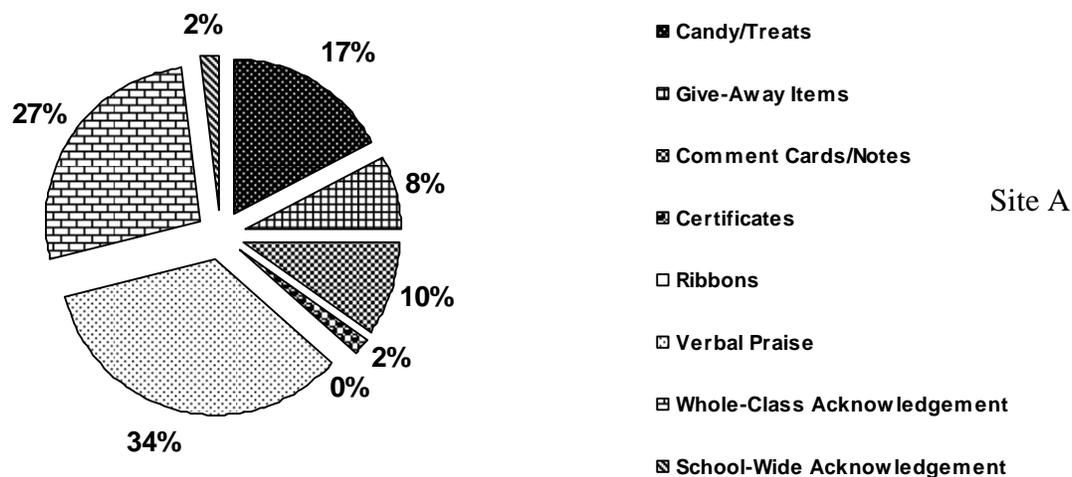


Figure 10: *Extrinsic Rewards Used by Teachers* (Site A n=10) and (Site B n=19)

The fifth question on the teacher survey asks: *Using the scale, rate the usefulness of extrinsic rewards by marking an "X" on the most applicable descriptor.* Out of ten possible responses, zero percent of teachers at Site A responded that they do not use extrinsic rewards; zero percent of teachers responded that they seldom use extrinsic rewards; 60% of teachers responded that they sometimes use extrinsic rewards; 30% of teachers responded that they often use extrinsic rewards, and 10% of teachers responded that they frequently use extrinsic rewards. At Site B, zero percent of teachers responded that they do not use extrinsic rewards. Forty-two

percent teachers sometimes use extrinsic rewards, and 32% of teachers seldom use them, while 21% of teachers often use them. Five percent of teachers marked the continuum between sometimes use and often use, and 53% of teachers frequently use rewards.

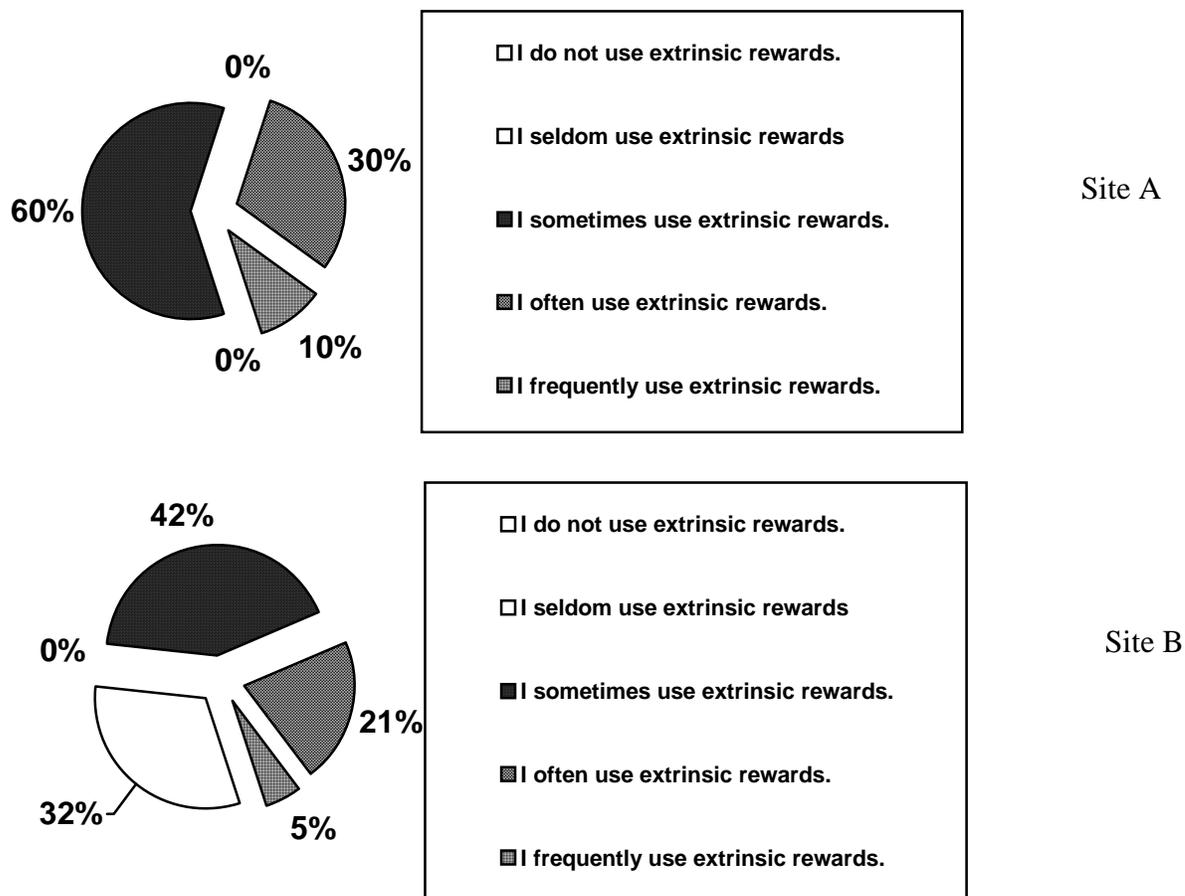


Figure 11: *Usefulness of Extrinsic Rewards* (Site A n=10) and (Site B n=19)

The sixth question on the teacher survey asked: *When you use extrinsic rewards in your classroom, comment about what you have found to be successful.* Teachers at Site A responded that they have found the following extrinsic rewards successful: candy, positive notes home, verbal praise, dolphin rewards, a prize box, and stickers. Teachers at Site B interpreted the question differently, and 89% offered more suggestions, negative philosophies, or results from using extrinsic rewards. Of those who responded positively to the question, 42% of teachers

claimed that students enjoy getting rewards. Teachers felt successful, since kids responded positively for food or treats. In addition, teachers commented that smiley faces and positive comments on student's work made the students feel special and helped them to look forward to future learning opportunities.

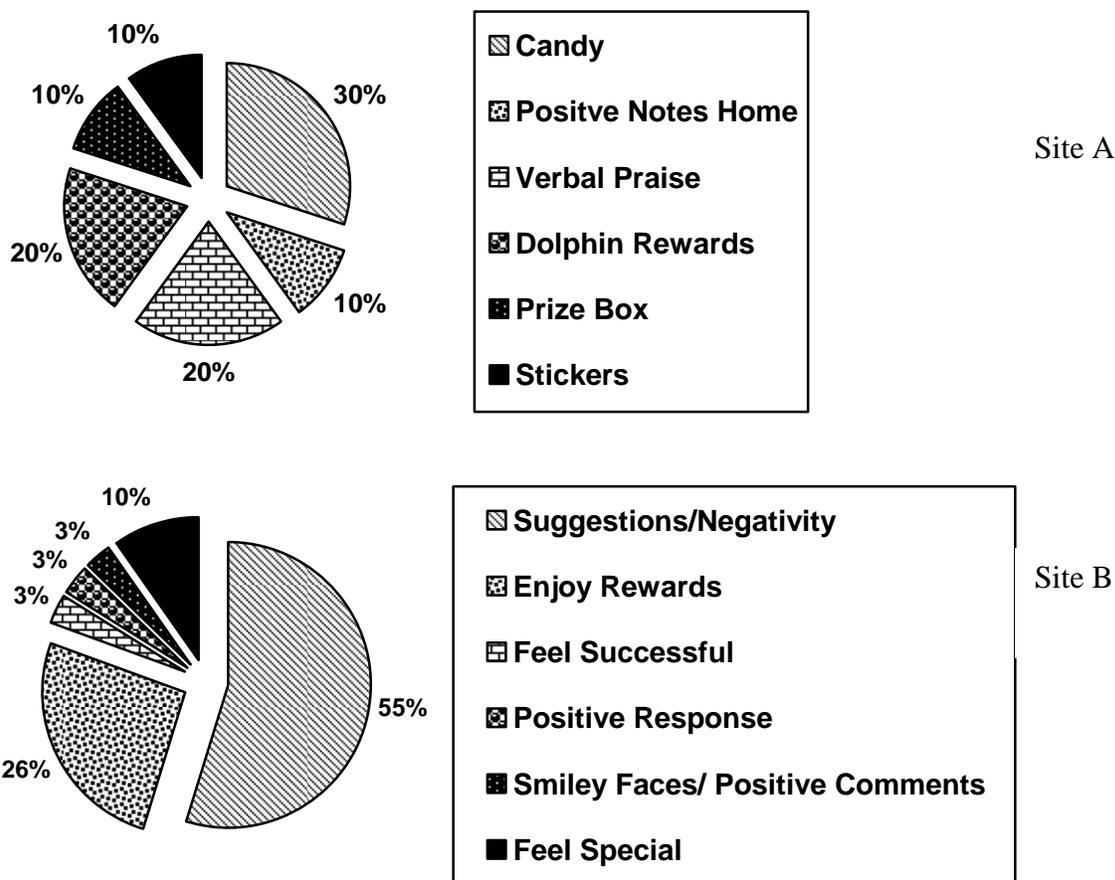


Figure 12: *What Extrinsic Rewards Have Been Successful* (Site A n=10) and (Site B n=19)

Summary

The teacher researchers saw a correlation between the data we gathered with the research tools and our research topic. From the observation checklist, we deduced that the majority of our students needed some prompting from the teacher to participate either in the form of a verbal reminder or a tangible reward. Also, data from the observation checklist showed that 29% (n=15) of the students observed at Site A simply met the established expectations/criteria for the

observed language arts assignments. This correlated with our research topic in that students' participation and the need to provide students with a reward are both potential elements involved in increasing student motivation. According to data from our teacher survey, all of teachers who participated in the survey (n=29; 23%) reported that they used some form of extrinsic rewards to help motivate their students in their classroom. The top three extrinsic rewards used were candy, dolphin rewards that were written notes of praise, and positive notes home. This finding supports our decision to use verbal and written praise as well as tangible rewards as two of our action research interventions. The two key items that our administrator identified as underlying factors in student motivation included students' self-confidence levels and the powerful role that teachers play in students' levels of success. Common terms were noticed among all three tools and the teacher researchers' research. These common terms include: students' self-confidence and self-efficacy levels, students' active involvement in the learning process, parental support, as well as valuable, individualized praise.

Reflections

After reflecting upon the tools that we created for this action research project, we now realize that our data could have been more meaningful and easier to interpret, had our tools correlated better with each other. Questions from the teacher survey and the observation checklist were similar to the topic of motivation, but they addressed different aspects of motivation. Specifically, teachers were asked on their survey to think about the extrinsic rewards that they use on a daily basis. They were also asked to indicate whether or not they find themselves frustrated on a continuum. Interestingly, we did not specifically state, "Rate how frustrated you feel as a result of a lack of student motivation." Therefore, it is difficult to determine what is frustrating our fellow colleagues. The teacher researchers acknowledge that it

could be a lack of student motivation that results in teachers feeling frustrated, or it could be a number of other factors that were not addressed in our teacher survey. In contrast, the teacher researchers used the observation checklist to observe specific daily behaviors such as classroom respect, participation, and completion of work. These behaviors were not mentioned or tied into the teacher survey in any way. We feel that analyzing the data that we gathered from the both the observation checklist and teacher survey would have been more valuable if the tools would have aligned with one another. One interesting conclusion that we noted while analyzing our pre-documentation data was that the interventions that we chose to implement in the project were similar to the extrinsic rewards that our fellow colleagues indicated that they are currently using to increase student motivation on a daily basis.

To our surprise, the overall data from our pre-documentation tools indicates that motivation may not be as large of an issue as we had anticipated. We question, is it possible that teachers use motivational issues almost as an excuse for those students who lack effort on a daily basis and do not meet proficiency expectations? This is an aspect of motivation that the teacher researchers had not considered prior to reviewing the literature and analyzing our classroom data. The collected data showed that the majority of the students in the teacher researchers' classrooms were meeting proficiency standards which suggests that they were motivated to succeed. The teacher researchers found that motivation is a quality that is hard to measure because of the broad range of factors that affect student motivation.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Despite the current conflict of opinion regarding theories and interventions with regard to motivation, teachers and students continue to respond positively to extrinsic rewards. While intrinsic motivation is more valuable and permanent, society has built itself on an extrinsic system. Specifically, adults perform, to differing degrees, for the extrinsic reward of a paycheck. Students need incentives to perform, often in excess of what they inherently desire.

In the educational setting, one major goal of teachers is to instill motivation while enjoying the educational activities assigned. Student achievement can be improved by providing students with tangible rewards (Akey, 2007). Students who are more extrinsically motivated, and especially those students with low self-efficacy, crave reinforcement—a tangible sign that they can be successful (Barry, 2007). Students should be recognized with tangible incentives for achievements in ways that other students can witness and appreciate (Beckerman, 1996). External rewards, behavioral researchers argue, such as cash incentives, can increase performance at work and school (Bishop, 1989). Brunsmas, et al. (1996), suggested that one way to motivate students to take more classes or to spend more time studying is to implement a system of monetary rewards. Rewards can be used to increase a student's motivation and one's overall performance when it is related to low interest academic activities (Cameron, 2001). Chance (1993) as cited in Deci (1995) states that external rewards can be as simple as a note of praise, a smile, a wink, or many other motivational gestures. When using extrinsic rewards a good rule of thumb is to use them with daily routines and when there is little or no intrinsic motivation on the part of the students (Deci, 1995). When a student receives clearly stated

positive performance feedback this will likely enhance his intrinsic motivation (Deci, et al., 2001a). When students feel a sense of competence and have self-determination in their environment, this is when their intrinsic motivation is maximized (Rovai, Ponton, Wighting, & Baker, 2007).

Elementary and high school teachers regularly use extrinsic incentives as part of their classroom management strategies and to encourage academic achievement (Ingram, 2000). Incentives can motivate students and impact students' behavior (Shanker, 1990, p. 355 as cited in Person, 1990). Extracurricular activities encourage peer interaction and connect students to school. This interaction can result in increased student motivation because it increases the opportunities students have to meet peers who have positive attitudes towards school. Research has found that students who participate in structured activities that are supervised by positive-adult role models are more likely to be motivated to excel academically (Holloway, 2002). Motivation can be increased by positive comments from a powerful leader (Lowman, 1990). Glasser wrote that a good lead manager, i.e. teacher, will create a situation of cooperative action, which will allow the students to satisfy their need to belong and feel powerful. A sense of teamwork should be created in order for the students to feel important (Person, 1990). No matter the type of incentive, it is important to give all students the opportunity for success and recognition. Opportunity, along with praise and encouragement will give students more of a chance to increase their academic achievements (Ingram, 2000).

Extrinsic rewards promote student motivation and learning (Schaps & Lewis, 1991). It is essential to build intrinsic motivation that goes beyond the classroom setting (Malala, 2007). This intrinsic motivation building can be achieved through a combination of educational strategies (Malala, 2007). A number of studies suggest ways to encourage intrinsic motivation

indicative of the idea that in order to remain interested in learning, students must feel challenged and receive feedback on their progress. Verbal praise and positive feedback have been said to enhance a student's intrinsic motivation (Institute, 1997). Studies show that giving students an opportunity to choose learning activities increases internal motivation (Lowman, 1990). When planning instruction, teachers should not rely exclusively on important academic objectives, but should also attend to and nurture the development of student self-efficacy. When a teacher understands critical elements or processes involved in developing motivation, she is better prepared to react to the problem of unengaged students. Rather than dismiss an unengaged student, a more effective approach is to identify and evaluate some of the processes involved in motivation (McCabe, 2003). Providing students with the opportunity to work collaboratively with peers can increase motivation. Collaboration is beneficial because it often minimizes competition and increases task-mastery focus (Miller & Meece, 1997). Okolo and Bahr, (1995) agree that different grouping arrangements in a multi-dimensional classroom give students a chance to demonstrate competence. They further suggest that achievement motivation is a product of the interaction between student personalities and instructional practices. Schools should be designed to use teamwork to achieve established goals (Person, 1990). If students are to be intrinsically motivated to learn and to complete their homework, it would be beneficial if the task itself was valued and viewed as interesting and engaging (Coutts, 2004). Furthermore, providing students with the opportunity to work toward a common goal can increase their motivation (Brunsma et al., 1996).

Most educators agree that students who are motivated to learn are those who pay attention to the teacher and maintain interest in academic activities, volunteer answers in class, ask for guidance when needed, persist in trying to solve problems themselves, complete activities

above and beyond those required for the grade, and take risks in order to improve their own skills (Okolo & Bahr, 1995). Achievement motivation is partially determined by the learning environment, which is a positive for teachers, as this implies that they can increase achievement motivation by simply considering their own students and their own needs (Okolo & Bahr, 1995). Learning in a classroom that is challenging and interesting builds on children's natural desire to make sense of the world (Schaps & Lewis, 1991). Schaps and Lewis (1991) also state that a school culture and classroom environment should meet students' needs for belonging and prompt student participation.

The combination of school assessment with school-based performance awards may transform school culture to raise student and teacher productivity (Raham, 2000). Educational outcomes should involve content and motivation as being mutually inclusive, imperative, reasonable, and attainable, making both interrelated and essential to the learning process (Burke, 1995). Making academic work relevant to a student's future life is a strong motivator for adolescence. Creating opportunities where students can see the relevance of school to community life can motivate them both to engage in learning and to work toward personal goals (Brunsma, et. al., 1996). Recognition from peers and the community in general gives children an incentive to perform well (Brunsma et al., 1996). Phillips and Lindsay (2006) found that the competitive nature of students and their receipt of rewards influenced both their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Time invested talking with students and, especially, listening to their ideas about themselves, can yield great rewards. Teachers can gain better understanding of their students and what motivates them through brief conversations about their goals and interests, including their likes and dislikes. Even social topics such as their school activities, hobbies, and favorite books

and movies may provide great insight into the student's self-efficacy and motivation (Barry, 2007). By combining this individual knowledge of the student and professional insight, teachers can develop teaching strategies to motivate all learners (Barry, 2007). The more educators learn about their students, about praise and other methods to increase motivation for learning, the more likely it becomes that all students will achieve to their fullest abilities (Witzel & Mercer, 2003).

Project Objective and Processing Statements

As a result of administering verbal/written praise, cooperative learning, and tangible rewards to students during the period of January 7, 2008 through May 9, 2008, the students of the four teacher researchers were to build motivation through a succession of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

To implement this action research project the teacher researchers needed to engage in the following three processes:

- Articulate specific verbal comments and written communication that constituted affirmation
- Articulate the expected behaviors and outcomes for cooperative learning
- Develop the type and quantity of tangible rewards for classroom distribution

Project Action Plan

The following is a list of tasks the teacher researchers needed to complete each week for the action research project to be implemented.

Pre-Week December 17–December 21, 2007

- Mail home parent consent forms
- Make copies of teacher survey
- Make copies of observation checklist

Pre-Documentation

Week 1 January 7–January 11, 2008

- Interview administrators
- Distribute teacher surveys
- Complete research project PMI

- Create a student inventory

Week 2 January 14–January 18, 2008

- Collect teacher surveys
- Observe and collect data with observation checklist
- Distribute and analyze student inventory

Intervention

Week 3 January 21–January 25, 2008

- Create student written note form
- Establish criterion for progress awards
- Complete research project PMI

Week 4 January 28–February 1, 2008

- Implement first strategy–increased verbal/written praise
- Complete research project PMI

Week 5 February 4–February 8, 2008

- Continue to implement first strategy–increased verbal/written praise
- Complete research project PMI

Week 6 February 11–February 15, 2008

- Continue to implement first strategy–increased verbal/written praise
- Complete research project PMI

Week 7 February 18–February 22, 2008

- Continue increased verbal praise
- Continue to implement first strategy–increased verbal/written praise
- Complete research project PMI

Week 8 February 25–February 29, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Implement second strategy–cooperative learning
- Complete research project PMI

Week 9 March 3–March 7, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue to implement second strategy–cooperative learning
- Complete research project PMI

Week 10 March 10–March 14, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue to implement second strategy–cooperative learning
- Complete research project PMI

Week 11 March 17–March 21, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue to implement second strategy—cooperative learning
- Complete research project PMI

March 24–March 28 No School–Spring Break

Week 12 March 31–April 4, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue cooperative learning
- Implement third strategy—tangible rewards
- Complete research project PMI

Week 13 April 7–April 11, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue cooperative learning
- Continue to implement third strategy—tangible rewards
- Complete research project PMI

Week 14 April 14–April 18, 2008

- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue cooperative learning
- Continue third strategy—tangible rewards
- Complete research project PMI

Week 15 April 21–April 25, 2008

- Observe and collect data with observation checklist
- Continue increased verbal/written praise
- Continue cooperative learning
- Continue third strategy—tangible rewards
- Complete research project PMI

Post Documentation

Week 16 April 28- May 2, 2008

- Collect and analyze data from observation checklists
- Compare teacher researcher journals
- Complete research project PMI

Week 17 May 5–May 9, 2008

- Complete research project PMI
- Continue to analyze data
- Post-project analysis

Methods of Assessment

The tool that the teacher researchers used for post-documentation was the observation checklist. The purpose of the checklist was to observe the following daily behaviors related to student motivation: participates freely, achieves proficiency (or above), respects classroom rules, is prepared with materials, completes class work, and has homework turned in on time. The teacher researchers at Site A and Site B used the checklist during language arts classes from April 28, 2008 to May 2, 2008 for a total of four observations. There were approximately 17 third graders and 48 fifth graders observed at Site A and 69 twelfth graders observed at Site B. The observation checklist was used to denote the amount of change in student behaviors related to motivation by comparing the checklist data from pre-documentation checklist data. Please refer to Appendix A for a copy of the observation checklist.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

The purpose for this research project was to examine whether extrinsic rewards combined with intrinsic motivation created additional motivation for the students. This research project was developed to increase student motivation through the use of increased verbal/written praise, opportunities for cooperative learning, and the use of tangible rewards. There were 17 third graders and 48 fifth graders observed at Site A and 69 twelfth graders observed at Site B. The four teacher researchers gathered individual data from January 7, 2008 through May 9, 2008.

Historical Description of the Intervention

During the pre-documentation weeks of January 7, 2008 through January 18, 2008, we interviewed our administrators at both Site A and Site B to inquire about their personal experiences and opinions relating to student motivation and learning (Appendix A). We distributed and collected teacher surveys from staff members at both Site A and Site B (Appendix B). Teachers were asked questions relating to student motivation in their own classroom as well as their use of extrinsic reward systems. We collected and analyzed these surveys. Each of us conducted an informal student inventory within our own classrooms in an attempt to find out what would motivate students at each of our age and grade levels. Additionally, each teacher researcher used an observation checklist to identify strengths and weaknesses within their classroom (Appendices C & D).

During the first week of intervention, January 21-25, 2008 we created a student note that would be used for the first strategy. The design of this note was the same at both Site A and Site B, however the mascots were changed to match each location (Appendix E). We also informally established criterion for progress awards. This meant that each of us would all be looking for

similar behaviors, such as participation, cooperation, and academic excellence to occur within each of our classrooms in order for a student to receive an award.

During the second week of intervention, January 28-February 1, 2008, we increased verbal and written positive comments. We also began handing out our specially designed mascot-spirit promotional comment cards. At first, the students laughed and joked about them because we were making such a determined effort to increase what was already a lot of praise in the classroom, but their individual eagerness to earn a comment or a card overwhelmed their incentive to tease us for it. It did occur to us during this stage that perhaps we were totally overdoing it. Our behavior, while positive, was completely over-the-top for a normal classroom teacher, even a highly motivated one. The students were eager to participate in the research, so their initial cooperation was very positive and reflected everything we, as teacher researchers, expected to see. Students worked to accomplish in-class tasks and complete homework on time for the simple reward of some positive verbal acknowledgement from us, their teachers, or for a clever postcard with a nice note on it. Even more precious was the comment card that we would send home, rather than hand out in class. This card was coveted because not only would the students' classmates at school (and teachers) acknowledge his/her efforts, but also the students' parents would be able to recognize the students' efforts. At the time, we asked ourselves if this interest and success would last, which ended up being the greater question for us all throughout the remainder of our research.

The third week of intervention, February 4-8, 2008, proved to be much the same. We continued with the increased verbal/written praise. Although all of the teacher researchers used positive praise on a daily basis, this was something that the students still viewed as new. They became more conscious of their positive behavior and were very interested to know who in the

classroom was getting the cards. At Site A, students had a school-wide incentive program where half of the note got turned into a box in the office. Each week, the administrators at Site A drew five names from the box. Those students received a tangible reward and were featured on the televised morning announcements.

In the fourth week of intervention, February 11-15, 2008, we continued increased verbal/written praise. The novelty of the notes began to wear off during this week for each of the classrooms at Site A and Site B. We found it to be interesting that the students continued to want more praise. Students at Site A asked about the other incentive awards that could be turned in to the office and questioned when those would be given out instead. We also felt as though they themselves were becoming much more aware of the positive behavior going on around them. It was as though they were searching for it within their own classroom, just waiting to give out the positive praise. One of the teacher researchers felt as though she had always been pretty good about recognizing positive behavior, but after a few weeks of this strategy she second guessed just how natural it was to her. We agreed that these praise notes were effective in the fact that they heightened the awareness of positive behavior in the classroom, but were also just one more thing to keep up with on a daily basis.

The fifth week of intervention, February 18-22, 2008, proved to be much the same. The teacher researchers at Site A kept track to make sure that all students at this time had received at least one positive written note. The teacher researcher at Site B acknowledged that recognizing every student during the course of the research may have been more effective than randomly recognizing positive student behavior, as was the case at Site B. Using these positive cards proved to be effective as it was easy to track whose efforts were being acknowledged and rewarded, as well as those few students who were possibly overlooked. We all agreed that there

are always a few students who seemed to quietly escape teacher acknowledgement and consistently met classroom expectations. These were the students who perhaps benefited from the written praise notes. At Site B, a few benefits were those students whose performance was often less than satisfactory, resulting in a short-lived, but nevertheless effective, boost in motivation and effort.

In the sixth week of intervention, February 25-29, 2008, we implemented our second strategy, cooperative learning. Working in cooperative groups was something that all four of us had done in our own classrooms prior to this research project. By implementing this as a strategy, we were hopeful that all students working together would feel success at some academic level throughout the intervention time period. This taste of success would in turn build intrinsic motivation. Students were encouraged to be actively involved in all cooperative activities taking place in all four of the classrooms. In one classroom at Site A, students were asked to brainstorm a list of characteristics of a character in a piece of literature. Then, students used their lists to work together as a team (4-5 per group) to create a word picture that summarized the strength of the character. The teacher researcher of this particular classroom found it interesting that students supported and encouraged one another without being prompted to do so. The word pictures that students created in their groups far exceeded the project expectations. The students at Site B worked together to produce presentations that shared and explicated various poetry from the 19th Century and the Romantic Period. Students were specifically grouped according to personal preference and skill level. The teacher researcher at Site B observed students helping each other to achieve at the highest levels of expectation. As a result of no student being allowed to fail, group effort grades were not affected. The traditional student leaders were forced to step out of the role he or she was most accustomed to. Young

leaders in school-based group activities tend to dominate the procedures and work independently to secure an excellent grade for all on behalf of his or her own expectations. These students were now responsible for encouraging group mates to participate and for validating his or her input to the group effort. The teacher researcher at Site B observed this process to be effective in that a true level of cooperative effort was achieved, and the group members themselves raised the expectations for success. In addition, various individual student talents were revealed as students gave each other the support needed to succeed at the task. Students were intrinsically motivated to cooperate and accomplish a common goal.

In the seventh week of intervention, March 3-7, 2008, we continued our second strategy of cooperative learning. Although many of the daily activities remained consistent, student groups were changed and arranged in a variety of different ways. Students had the opportunity to assume different roles, including leadership and non-leadership responsibilities, when switching up the groups. At Site B, students presented the poetry projects from the week before to the class.

The eighth week of intervention, March 10-14, 2008, proved to be much the same. Students seemed to become more motivated and grew more comfortable within their cooperative groups. This student behavior didn't necessarily come as a surprise to us; however, it suggested that there might be a correlation between motivation and comfort level. Reflective writing assignments accentuated the value of cooperative grouping in that students commented how each individual had a strength or talent to contribute and how specific weaknesses or concerns were dealt with by the student group. Students commented that they felt more successful and had a greater understanding of the material than if they had to research and present alone. Ultimately, the support that the group provided resulted in behavior suggestive of intrinsic motivation. Since

cooperative grouping was considered a privilege, the initial behavior was extrinsic, while the resulting behavior became intrinsic.

The ninth week of intervention, March 17-21, 2008, was our final week to implement our second strategy of cooperative learning. While major cooperative grouping activities had been exhausted for the time due to curricular scheduling, we found many instances where cooperative learning was inherent in the classroom. We observed students acknowledging each other more often and supporting each others' efforts in the classroom. At Site B, students were observed encouraging reluctant students to participate in discussions, requesting input or digressing in order to accommodate less verbally aggressive classmates. This intrinsic behavior suggested that students may have been more motivated to share, and thus succeed, as a result of the comfortable and familiar atmosphere created by the extrinsic strategy of cooperative grouping. The success of the strategy did seem to hinge on the characteristics of the groupings and the value of the assignment for all students.

For the tenth week of intervention, March 31-April 4, 2008, we implemented our third and final strategy, tangible rewards. We agreed that we had a hard time handing out tangible rewards, as it seemed to go against what some research had to say about building intrinsic motivation. The students at Site A were thrilled with the small prizes (pencils, stickers, notebooks, erasers, candy, etc.) and seemed to be motivated to earn one. The students, while much older, were equally thrilled at Site B. Students immediately set to task and even the students who typically participated the least put in a good effort for a treat or prize. In only the first week, the teacher researcher at Site B observed markedly improved participation; students readily participated in the hopes of some form of tangible acknowledgement, despite the fact that students were awarded only once in the first week. Unfortunately, this behavior reinforced the

concern in our minds that students would perform any task for a given reward (extrinsic) that they would not repeat given a lack of an externally produced reward (intrinsic).

The 11th week of intervention, April 7-11, 2008, proved to be similar to the previous week. We found it interesting that those students who normally did not participate in classroom activities would now do so in order to receive a tangible reward. Students at Site A began to take pride in their collection of prizes and worked harder to get them on a daily basis. Students at Site B began to question when the teacher researcher would be giving out more treats. Most students at Site B continued to participate in an accelerated manner, even when treats were handed out only twice during the week.

During the 12th week of intervention, April 14-18, 2008, we all observed a decrease in student participation. For example, some students had recently contributed more in an effort to obtain a prize, but had now reverted to waiting to see if his or her effort would be rewarded before participating. At Site B, the teacher researcher gave a prize only to those who had turned in homework on time for two occasions that week. The results of the first effort were greater than those of the second effort. During the times when no prizes were given, students at Site B questioned when the teacher researcher would hand out prizes and began to negotiate academic behavior for extrinsic reward. We observed that in many cases where a reward was offered, an increase in academic behavior was present. However, without the security of the reward, most students failed to change his or her behavior.

The 13th week of intervention, April 21-25, 2008, was our final week to implement tangible rewards. It seemed as though the initial reward was exciting for the students, however, the novelty of the small prizes quickly wore off. That suggested that intrinsic motivation was not markedly enhanced with the use of tangible rewards for the majority of the students at both Site

A and Site B. Behavior at both sites did not deteriorate overall, but the students who were initially motivated to participate as a result of the extrinsic reward eventually reverted to his or her original behavior and did not seem to be additionally motivated by the promise of a prize or reward for academic progress or behavior.

The 14th week, April 28-May 2, 2008, was the first week of post documentation for this action research project. We collected and analyzed data from the observation checklists and met to discuss researcher journals. We all completed project evaluations throughout the intervention time period. Those evaluations and journals highlighted that there were many similarities regarding the increase and decrease of student motivation observed at both Site A and Site B. This was surprising to the teacher researchers as there were three different grade levels represented in the action research project.

The 15th week, May 5-9, 2008, was the final week of post documentation. We met once again to analyze data and discussed the post-project analysis. Once again, we were surprised to see a connection between the results of the research at each site and grade level, despite the differences in assignments and age. We became increasingly frustrated that our research seemed to support most of the literature we read that both matched and were defeated by our own research. We agreed that this topic deserved a more extensive effort than what could be achieved during the average action research project or that had been previously provided by other research. While we decided that much of the research against using extrinsic rewards to motivate students intrinsically had some validity, as proven in our own classrooms, the contrary research was also given some weight as a result of the behavior observed in our classrooms. In talking to the students at Site B, the teacher researcher found that students believed that if school were to be regarded as his or her job, as many teachers imply, there was simply no tangible motivation

for them. Adults who perform tasks at his or her job received a paycheck in return for his or her efforts, but students in the classroom are expected to perform because they are expected to enjoy school and because they are expected to participate in this job without tangible compensation. Some students claimed they would participate towards a higher academic standard if the reward were worth it. Despite this belief, the students who were acknowledged both verbally and in writing by teachers and by their peers did perform better and without the expectations associated with the prizes. These factors were a major part in the dilemma we faced while discussing the success of the research.

The first intervention we used was increased verbal and written praise. For this intervention the teacher researchers made a point of verbalizing approval and pride in students' classroom achievements. We also praised efforts to participate and improve. Secondly, we created a comment card for each site that was used to praise individual students in writing and was handed out in the classroom or sent home to surprise students. Samples of the comment cards are provided in Appendix E (altered to protect the confidentiality of the sites). Verbal praise and positive feedback has been said to enhance a student's intrinsic motivation (Institute, 1997). Ironically, we all commented that he or she felt silly as if the praise was being overdone. The students responded favorably with some increasing their own behavior in an attempt to win praise. This showed us that while teachers may feel self conscious of exaggerated praise in the classroom, many students tend to respond favorably to the attention. In the future, we will continue to consider additional verbal praise and will continue the use of the comment cards, despite the extra time and effort entailed in the process.

The second intervention we implemented was extending cooperative learning activities. Cooperative learning activities allowed for differentiation, student choice, and peer support.

Studies showed that giving students an opportunity to choose learning activities increased internal motivation (Lowman, 1990). An example of Site A and Site B's cooperative activity assignments may be found in Appendices F and G. As a result of this intervention, we learned the true potential of using cooperative student learning and differentiation to increase motivation. We realized that students who are appropriately grouped and motivated by what they believe is a valuable task will work together successfully to achieve at the highest levels of expectation, regardless of ability or previous performance. A student's motivation is directly related to whether or not he feels that time and effort invested in study are worthwhile (Barry, 2007). We developed additional lessons that utilized both cooperative learning strategies and differentiation to encourage student choice and participation. We also provided more opportunities for students to assist each other, providing some accountability for leadership and mutual effort.

The third intervention consisted of rewarding positive academic and classroom behavior with various incentives, prizes, or treats. Educational applications of the needs-press theory have indicated that students who perceive a sense of beneficial advantage from involvement in their classroom learning environments are likely to be environmentally encouraged toward improved learning outcomes, which may include improved academic self concepts (Byer, 2001). Motivational theories indicate that individuals need to feel a sense of achievement and are motivated by extrinsic acknowledgements of achievements (Person, 1990). Some of the incentives received by students included pencils, gel and glitter pens, bouncy balls, glow bracelets, snack items or drinks, notebooks, stress balls, stickers, bookmarks, and spirit items. Due to the successful intervention, the teacher researchers have continued to consider options for incentives and extrinsic rewards. Though not entirely effective or reliable, we found some credibility to the idea of rewarding student success, especially in front of their peers.

Reflections: Site A

As a final reflection on the project, the teacher researchers felt as though the three different strategies enabled them to support students in discovering what it is that they love to do and encouraged them to do it. On a professional level, we feel as though our action research project was successful and valid. However, we discovered that it is hard to find one way to increase student motivation because all students are unique and student motivation levels vary depending upon many internal and external factors. Motivation is also a hard quality to measure in a consistent manner. After completing our post-project analysis, the teacher researchers felt the same frustration they felt while reading previous documentation on the topic of motivation. We were searching for solutions that other researchers suggested would be successful and came up with very little. This action research project has helped us to understand why the literature is so vague and offers few suggestions for increasing student motivation.

I, Teacher Researcher A, was excited when we decided to focus on motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. I knew that I would not only benefit as an educator, but my students would benefit even more. I expected to see monumental gains, even though articles that I had read should have convinced me otherwise. Implementing the interventions in my classroom helped me to continually focus on motivation and my use of extrinsic motivators. It also fine tuned my thinking on how to assist my students in developing intrinsic motivation deep within their souls--not an easy task. This was my focus, but the actual outcome was not nearly as exciting as what I had eagerly anticipated. It was good seeing the overall outcomes of growth, but they paled in comparison to the huge strides and gains that I had envisioned in my mind. Throughout this entire process I have gained a much better understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. I find myself constantly pondering the question, "Am I helping to develop

my students' intrinsic motivation?" I also have been awakened to the fact that I use extrinsic motivators much more than I thought I ever did. Throughout this process I have forever been changed and will think twice about offering a piece of candy, gum, or a chintzy toy to better my students' academic performance. I still have not found the magic definite intrinsic motivator, but will continue to relentlessly pursue it in my quest to become a better teacher tomorrow than I already am today.

I, Teacher Researcher B, found my participation in this action research project to be a valuable learning experience that has contributed to my personal and professional growth. As a direct result of my experiences in working with students and reflecting upon our research project, I feel as though I have discovered the power of consistent praise that celebrates the strengths of each student and I was reminded of the importance of establishing a positive relationship with each and every student. I found that it was easiest for me recognize and reward students through verbal praise and most difficult through written notes of praise. At first, I found writing the notes of praise to be rather time consuming and a bit awkward. However, I quickly observed that my time was well spent because students treasured the notes and were very receptive to them. Students' positive responses to the written notes of praise gave me a first-hand experience, which highlighted the value of a positive teacher-student relationship. In reflecting upon the cooperative learning strategy and working collaboratively with my research team, I have gained a new-found appreciation and value for differentiation and cooperative learning. I have already planned, and would like to continue to plan, numerous cooperative learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to make personal choices and encourage students to work together to achieve a task, foster mutual respect, allow students to take on a leadership role, and promote the increased performance of all students. I feel as though the combination of our

intervention strategies provided me with a novel and varied plan for motivating students. As each student is complex and unique, I have learned that it is essential that I implement a variety of strategies to reach and motivate all learners. Finally, while participating in this research project, I have gained a new-found appreciation for the reflection process. As the last piece of a puzzle is the most important one, I feel as though my personal reflection and reflecting with my group members was the most important piece of our research project. It was through my personal reflection and reflecting with my group during the post documentation analysis that I gained a great deal of insight into my teaching practices and truly grew on a personal and professional level. Importantly, the growth that I experienced as a result of the reflection process has motivated me to improve upon providing students with the opportunity to reflect upon their own learning. I am confident that the reflection process enabled me to make immediate improvements in my classroom, but that it will be most beneficial for my future growth as an educator. I wholeheartedly believe that my participation in our action research project has been a valuable learning experience. It has improved my abilities as a teacher and will ultimately have a positive impact on my future students. As learning is a lifelong process, I am looking forward to continuing the effective strategies that we implemented during our action research project and continuing to reflect upon my daily experiences in an effort grow as an educator.

I, Teacher Researcher C, feel as though my participation in this action research project has really provided me with a much better understanding of what motivation exactly is and how easily it can be affected. My eyes have been opened to how valuable the feeling of success is for my students and how important it is that all of them get the opportunity to feel it. I had always felt as though recognizing the positives had been one of my strengths as a teacher but after this project, perhaps it was not as natural to me as I had thought. The strategies that we implemented

throughout the semester were somewhat time consuming, yet proved to be somewhat effective. The students in my class were most driven by the notes sent home and were always very curious as to who was getting them. I use cooperative learning in my classroom quite a bit so I didn't see as many changes during those weeks of intervention. The extrinsic rewards seemed to work for my students for a few weeks, and then the overall interest was lost. The three strategies that we implemented gave me the perfect opportunity to change things up a bit in my classroom and try new incentives, rather than the same rewards each week. It was the variety of incentives that kept the students in my classroom interested, so that in itself is a lesson to me. As a teacher, I often get into my routine and find myself in a rut from time to time. This was a great example of why students need change just as much as they need their routine. One of the greatest benefits for me professionally throughout this action research project was the chance for me to work so closely with three other colleagues. The time that we spent reflecting on lessons we had taught in our own classrooms and the similar experiences we laughed about together really created a safe and wonderful friendship between all of us. On our very first night of class for this program our professor guaranteed to us that we would miss our Monday nights together when this was all said and done and I kind of chuckled to myself, but he was exactly right. Surrounding yourself with people that all hold the same educational values and portray so many different strengths can be a beautiful thing, and in our action research project group, it was.

Reflection: Site B

This process has impacted my performance as a teacher and as a human being mostly as a result of deep reflection from which I have realized that my own insecurities as a teacher and person are reflected in my performance, regardless of my success in the classroom. The easiest way to recognize students is through verbal praise, and yet, I felt silly or found increased verbal

praise as awkward or ridiculous. The reactions of my students reinforced these feelings. However, my observations of student progress indicated that these increased comments were beneficial and meaningful to my students. The comment cards were a real strain on personal teacher time, as are many of the responsibilities of a teacher. The students were especially proud of and receptive to these little note cards. In the future, I will try to make a point of implementing this strategy on a regular basis. As a result of learning more about differentiation and cooperative learning techniques, and as a result of my experience with my students in the classroom, I have developed a strong sense of value for these strategies. Since implementing this strategy during the action research process, I have continued to develop lesson plans that include both differentiation for student choice and cooperative learning aspects to encourage mutual support, encouragement, and learning development for all students. My ability to reflect was enhanced throughout this process, and the value of that was revealed to me in full through the post documentation discussions with my group as we learned more about our students and our classrooms. These discussions and moments to myself for the consideration of lesson effectiveness and areas for improvement may not have provided an opportunity for immediate change during the process of the action research project, but did provide me with valuable knowledge which will benefit my teaching in the future. Since participating in this action research project, I have implemented lessons that are more valuable to students and that capitalize on a student's ability to choose activities. This illustrated his or her strengths and allowed cooperation with peers to the increased performance of all. As a result of this action research project, I will continue to implement the positive strategies developed for this process and continue to reflect on the successes, failures, and interesting moments, qualities of lessons, or the classroom environment in order to improve my skills and successes as a classroom

teacher. I realize that the effort required by me, personally, to achieve this goal is hefty, but the rewards for myself as an educator, and especially for the students who pass through my classroom door, are greater than any expense of personal time or effort. I do believe this project has improved my abilities as a teacher, and thus, the performance of my students both during the course of the project and in the future.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The teacher researchers chose the subject of motivation as the focus of their action research project because an underlying lack of student motivation was observed in all of their classrooms. Person (1990) cited Glasser's (1990) control theory suggesting that since humans are motivated by the basic needs of survival, love, power, fun, and freedom, humans will try to control their behavior. Thus, what humans choose to do is most needs-satisfying. While all motivation comes from the inside, what happens on the outside has a lot to do with the choices people make. Various motivational problems seemed to stem from external factors, issues with self-efficacy, motivational theory, and classroom environment. The post documentation supported that the classroom environment was a key factor in student motivation as the interventions implemented in the classroom varied the environment and overall student behavior improved. Since student participation was an area of notable growth, the teacher researchers felt as though students' heightened comfort levels played a role in increasing their self-efficacy. The teacher researchers felt that there was a relationship between an increase in students' self-efficacy and the increase in all observed behaviors, including achieving proficiency, respecting classroom rules, being prepared with materials, completing class work, and getting all homework turned in. As the literature suggested, self-efficacy was a key influence on motivation (McCabe, 2003).

Teacher researchers at Site A noted that there was an improvement in all observed behaviors from pre-documentation to post documentation data. In Figure 13, the teacher researchers chose to focus on those students who earned a score of three on the observation checklist during pre and post documentation. Earning a three on the observation checklist was the target goal for all classrooms involved in the action research project. The areas with the most improvement were Student Participation (n=26), Achieves Proficiency (n=30), and Respects Classroom Rules (n=39). Although these were the areas with the greatest increase, the teacher researchers felt that the improvements overall were encouraging. A summary of these findings can be found in Figure 13.

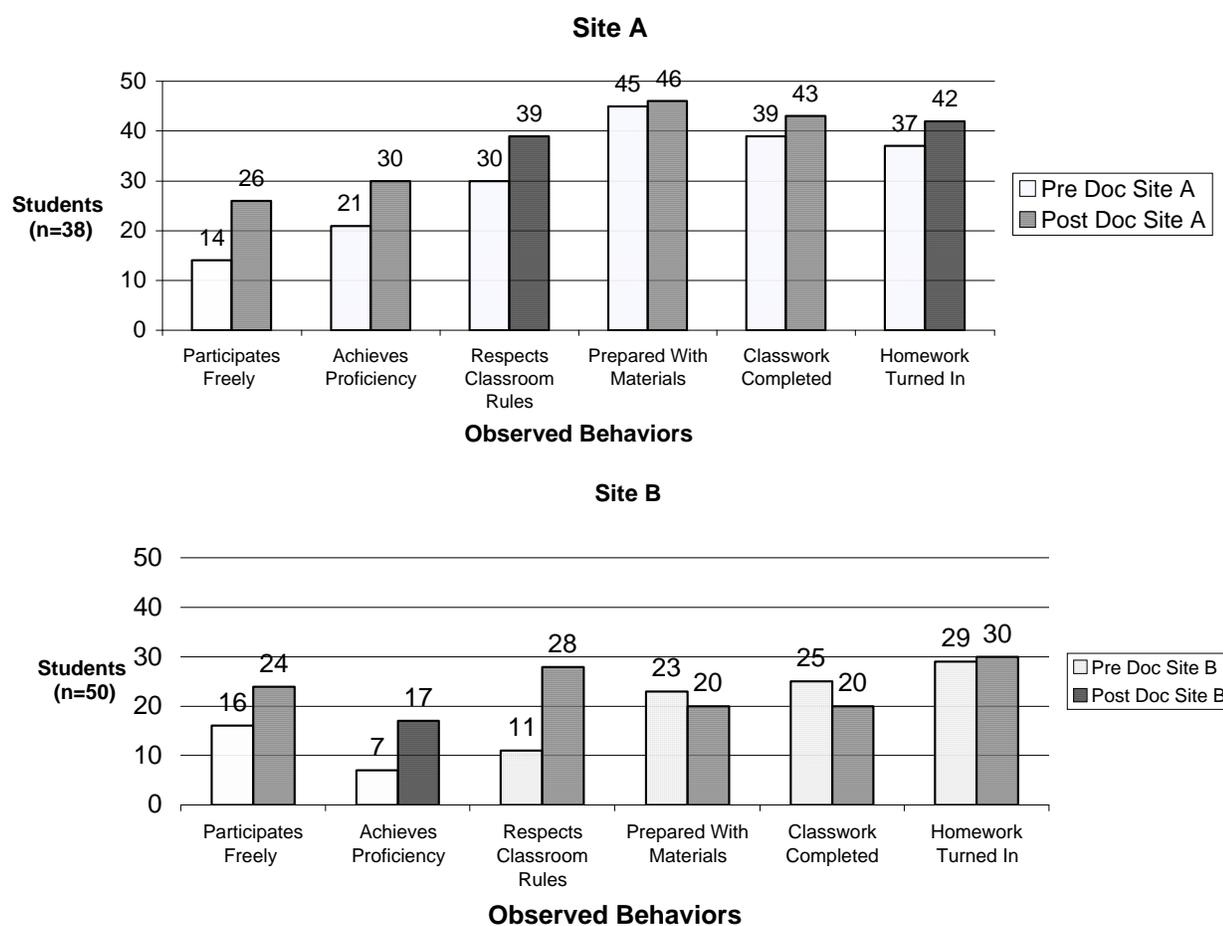


Figure 13: *Changes in Student Behaviors* (n=50); (n=38)

As summarized in Figure 13 above, teacher researchers observed from pre to post documentation that three of the six observed behaviors had a greater than 15% increase. The data revealed a 24% increase (n=12) at Site A in Participating Freely and an 18% increase (n=9) at Site A in Achieving Proficiency. Even though most of the students were prepared for class, as noted in pre-documentation, the data still shows growth in this area.

At Site B, the data revealed a 21% (n=8) increase in Participating Freely and a 27% (n=10) increase in Achieving Proficiency. Additionally, Respecting Classroom Rules was Site B's greatest area of growth with a 45% increase (n=17).

The teacher researchers thought it interesting to note that while student behaviors improved in all areas for the younger grades at Site A, students at Site B completed less class work properly and had only minimal growth in completing homework on time, though the older students gained dramatically in academic participation and level of proficiency.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Student behavior improved in all areas at both sites as a result of the interventions. We saw remarkable improvements in student participation, student achievement, and student respect for the classroom (Figure 13). The environmental changes in the classroom evident from this data suggested that students' self-esteem was improved and overall motivation increased due to the praise recognition and cooperative learning strategies. Even the give-away items proved effective to increase overall performance (Figure 13). Students' test scores and semester grades improved along with the complimenting behaviors. We noted the most dramatic increase in the area of participation (Figure 13): 24% at Site A and Respects Classroom Rules (Figure 13): 45% at Site B. Student participation was directly connected to student performance, so it made sense that student levels of proficiency also improved. As students became more confident in their own abilities, they began to

participate more in class. They began to take risks to obtain praise from the teacher and respect from their peers. Students also received reinforcement and support from the teacher and their peers through collaborative learning activities, thus increasing their self-concepts. A high self-concept has been connected to greater levels of performance, and the changes noted in our classrooms supported this idea.

We also noticed a 13% (n=5) decrease in the quality of class work received at Site B during this time (Figure 13). The students at Site B were 17- and 18-year-old senior high school students who were beginning the final quarter of the year during the research. At Site B, I noticed that many students complained of having “senioritis,” or a lack of educational focus, and asked me often if we could just skip the assignments for that day. Many times, the give-away incentives helped maintain student participation throughout the assignment (Figure 13). However, the quality of the participation was reduced in the students’ hurry to complete the assignment and their overall lack of interest in the classroom activities. I also noticed that despite this, most students continued to turn in their homework on time and maintained a grade of “C” or better. This suggested that senior high school students have difficulty taking classroom time seriously during the fourth quarter. They seemed more concerned with graduation and their upcoming adventures in adult life, including college and jobs. It also suggested that while senior high school students tend to disregard and devalue written class work during this time, they did appreciate the opportunity to participate in mature discussions and understand the respect given by society for good to excellent grades. Many students at this level perceived themselves as adults and too mature for the high school environment. Many students at Site B requested to graduate early so they could get a head start on college or work full time to save for college. In some cases, students were already fending for themselves and needed to work full time to pay rent and living expenses. Gaining respect for themselves and from their

peers through collaboration and performance was more important than some independent classroom activities that they felt may not be valuable or meaningful in their lives.

As a result of the action research, we will continue to implement most of the strategies and interventions defined. We do not plan to continue the extrinsic incentives, as we felt that these prizes were not as effective on an individual, small scale as they could be on a larger scale. The incentive proved to be short-lived, as many students eventually reverted to their previous states of motivation, despite the initial increased interest and/or performance observed by us in our classrooms. This strategy was also not cost effective for the individual teacher. We spent a lot of money out of pocket trying to provide give-away items that our students would perceive as worthwhile rewards for their efforts.

If we were to do the project again, we would consider replacing or modifying the use of extrinsic rewards as an intervention strategy to cut down on cost. We believe that a program on a larger, whole school scale may work more effectively. We felt that one key to the success of extrinsic support for intrinsic motivation was public recognition. Jostens, an educational-based company who provides achievement and affiliation products, has developed an incentive program called *Renaissance* that we are working to implement at Site B. This program has a lot of potential to support the theory that extrinsic motivators can enhance intrinsic motivation. We will continue to explore this idea in the new format.

We will continue to use the first two strategies of increased verbal and written praise and collaborative groupings. There are a few modifications we will try to maintain the efficacy of the intervention strategies and to improve them. The first modification will be to not monitor how many times we give a student verbal praise or a comment card, as it took an excessive amount of our time to document that information and proved mostly unnecessary to our overall goals for the

intervention. We will also understand that verbal and written praise is very meaningful to all students, regardless of a student's reaction to our recognition. We will use this understanding to persevere in our compliments and recognition, even when we feel silly or unappreciated for our efforts. We will also use the knowledge we have gained from this research project to improve our collaborative lesson planning.

We have found that the keys to successful collaborative groupings include valuable lesson activities and differentiation, allowing for student choice. While we did not recognize a problem with our collaborative grouping intervention and deem it a success, we found that this strategy works best when we chose the groups for students, ensuring that all skill levels and motivation levels would be supported. In order to do this effectively, we also considered students who would willingly support other students and/or cooperate with them. We did not group students simply by ability level, but we considered personality type, learning style, and talent base. Though we found this to be another time-consuming process, the results were rewarding, substantial, and long lasting. Any teacher considering using these strategies should consider his or her personal commitment to the time involved for implementing these strategies; how well that teacher knows his or her students, and should be sure to consider best practices for collaborative grouping and differentiation to maximize the success of group activities. We also found that individual assignments needed to be deemed valuable and meaningful to students as much as it is within the group activities. As a result of the findings of this action research project, we will continue to implement the strategies developed for study and evaluation. We feel these interventions are valuable and contribute to student learning and success in an academic setting.

REFERENCES

- Akey, T. M. (2007, April). Using positive student engagement to increase student achievement. *Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement*, 4, 1-4.
- Amrein, A. T., & Berliner, D. C. (2003, February). The effects of high-stakes testing on student motivation and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 60(5), 20-25.
- Barry, N. H. (2007). Motivating the reluctant student. *American Music Teacher*, 23(5), 23-27.
- Bartholomew, B., (2007). Why can't we always get what we want. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88(8), 593-598.
- Beckerman, L. (1996, July). Worth their while. *The Executive Educator*, 18(7). 31-32;39.
- Bishop, J. H. (1989). Motivating students to study: Expectation, rewards, achievement. *NASSP Bulletin*, 123, 27-38.
- Brunsma, D. L., Khmelkov, V.T., McConnell, E.E., & Orr, A.J. (1996). Increasing the Motivation of secondary school students. *American Secondary Education*, 25, 10-15.
- Burke, D. J. (1995, Winter). Connecting content and motivation: Education's missing link. *Peabody Journal of Education* (70)2. Teacher effectiveness: A look at what works. pp. 66-81.
- Byer, J. L. (2001). The consistency of correlation between student's perceptions of classroom involvement and academic self-concept in secondary social studies classes. University of West Alabama: The Educational Resources Information Center. (EDRS #ED 457 207). 18.
- Cameron, J. (2001, January). Negative effects of reward on intrinsic motivation—a limited phenomenon: Comment on deci, koestner, and ryan (2001). *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1), 29.
- Chamber of Commerce Newsletter, 2007. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.chamberofcommerce.com/public/index>.
- Chance, P. (1993). The hidden treasures of extrinsic rewards. *Education Digest*, 58(9), 42-46.
- City of Site A and Site B Website, (n.d.) Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.idicide.com/citydata/state>.
- Coutts, P. M. (2004). Meanings of homework and implications for practice. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(3) 182-188.
- Deci, E. (1995). *Why we do what we do*. New York: Penguin Group.

- Deci, E., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. (2001a, January 1). Extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivation in education: Reconsidered once again. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(1), 1.
- Deci, E., Ryan, R., & Koestner, R. (2001b, January 1). The pervasive negative effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation: Response to cameron (2001). *Review of Educational Research, 71*(1), 43.
- Delisle, R., & Hargis, J. (1998). The big fish. *Education, 125*(4), 702.
- Department of Public Instruction Website, (n.d.) *WINSS successful school guide: Enrollment by disability*. Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://data.dpi.state.state.us/data/questions.asp>.
- Edmunds, K., & Bauserman, K. (2006, February). What teachers can learn about reading motivation through conversations with children. *Reading Teacher, 59*(5), 414-424.
- Great Schools Website, (n.d.) Retrieved July 16, 2007, from <http://www.greatschools.net/city>.
- Henderson, J. (1990, January 1). Money in the classroom. *College Teaching, 38*(3), 102, 104.
- Hirsch, E. D. (1996). *The schools we need & why we don't have them*. New York: Doubleday.
- Holloway, J. (2002, September). Extracurricular activities and student motivation [Electronic version]. *Educational Leadership, 60*(1), 80-83.
- IDecide Website, (n.d.) *Sites A and B Profile*. Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/state>.
- Ingram, M. A. (2000). Extrinsic motivators and incentives: Challenge and controversy. (EDRS #ED448127). 23.
- Institute for Academic Excellence, I. (1997, November 1). Toward a balanced approach to reading motivation: Resolving the intrinsic-extrinsic rewards debate. Report. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED421687) Retrieved July 19, 2007, from ERIC database.
- Kohn, A. (1993, January 1). Rewards versus learning: a response to paul chance. *Phi Delta Kappan, 74*(10), 783.
- Lowman, J. (1990). Promoting motivation and learning [Electronic version]. *College Teaching, 38*(4), 136-139.
- Maehr, M. L. (1992). Transforming school culture to enhance motivation. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (EDRS ED#350668), 20.

- Malala, J. (2007, March). *The use of rewards in instructional digital games: An application of positive reinforcement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Academy of Business Disciplines, Orlando, FL.
- McCabe, P. P. (2003, September). Working with the textbook: How to enhance student motivation [Electronic version]. *Social Education*, 67(5), 274-278.
- Miller, S., & Meece, J. (1997, May). Enhancing elementary students' motivation to read and write: a classroom intervention study [Electronic version]. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90(5), 286-299.
- Molnar, A., & Garcia, D. (2006, April). The battle over commercialized schools. *Educational Leadership*, 63(7). Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 78-82.
- National Center for Education Statistics, (n.d.) *Search for Public Schools*. Retrieved July 16, 2007, from http://www.nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/school_detail.asp.
- Okolo, C. M., & Bahr, C. M. (1995). Increasing achievement motivation of elementary school students with mild disabilities. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 30(5), 279.
- Person, P. (1990, March). *Motivational theories as applied to ways to improve school attendance of high school students*. Paper presented at the National Dropout Conference, Nashville, TN. (RDRS #ED322465) 27.
- Phillips, N., & Lindsay, G. (2006, June 1). Motivation in gifted students. *High Ability Studies*, 17(1), 57.
- Raham, H. Cooperative performance incentive plans. (2000). *Peabody Journal of Education*, 75(4), 142-158.
- Renchler, R. (1992, July). School leadership and student motivation. ERIC Digest, 71. Retrieved July 19, 2007, from www.eric.ed.gov.
- Rovai, R., Ponton, M., Wighting, M., & Baker, J. (2007, July). A comparative analysis of student motivation in traditional classroom and e-learning courses. *International Journal of E-Learning*, 6(3), 413.
- Schaps, E., & Lewis, C. (1991, April). Extrinsic rewards are education's past, not its future. *Educational Leadership*, 48(7), 81.
- School Performance Report 2004–2005 Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.dpi.state.state.us/sig/index.html>
- School Performance Report (n.d.) Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.dpi.state.state.us/sig/index.html>

- Site A and B Chamber of Commerce Website (n.d.) Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.chamberofcommerce.com/public/index>
- Site A and B History. *A Brief History*, (n.d.) Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/state/>
- Site A and B Profile (n.d.) Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/state/>
- Site A and B Schools (n.d.) Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.sites.k12.state.us>
- Site A and Site B Profile (n.d.) *Law Enforcement Statistics*. Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.idcide.com/citydata/state/>
- Site A and B Schools Website (n.d.) *District Mission*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.sites.k12.state.us>
- Site A and B Schools Website (n.d.) *Site B*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.sites.k12.state.us>
- Site B district documentation (n.d.) *Page title*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.sites.groupfusion.net/>
- Slavin, R. E. (1987). Developmental and motivational perspectives on cooperative learning: A reconciliation. *Child Development*, 58, 1161-1167.
- Stipek, D., Givvin, K. B., & Salmon, J. M. (1998, Summer). Can a teacher intervention improve classroom practices. *Journal of Experimental Education*. 66(4), 319-338.
- Town of Sites A and B Regional News Website (n.d.) *School tax looks good*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.regionalnews.net/>
- Wisconsin School Performance Report, 2004–2005. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from <http://www.sites.k12.state.us>
- Witzel, B.S., & Mercer, C.D. (2003). *Remedial and Special Education*, 24(2), 88-96.
- WRA Website. *GAD Reports* (n.d.) *Page title*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from http://www.wra.org/pdf/government/GAD_reports/
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2007. *General and Economic Characteristics*. Retrieved July 17, 2007, from <http://www.uscensusbureau.org>

APPENDICES

Appendix B Teacher Survey

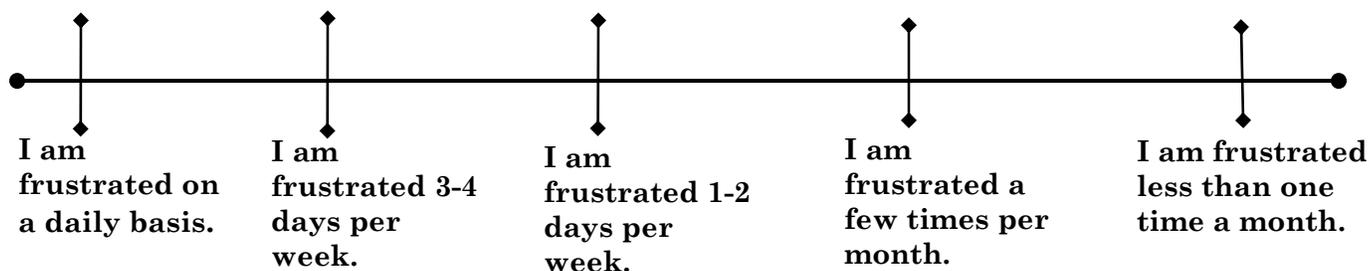
1. Which of the following classroom behaviors have you observed in your classroom?
(Please circle as many as apply.)

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Poor attendance work | Tardiness | Poor grades | Credit for late work |
| Missing Assignments | Not doing homework | Behavior issues | |

Other (Please list): _____

2. Please explain how the above circled issues impact your teaching and/or lesson planning?

3. Using the scale, rate your typical classroom experience, by marking an "X" on the most appropriate descriptor:

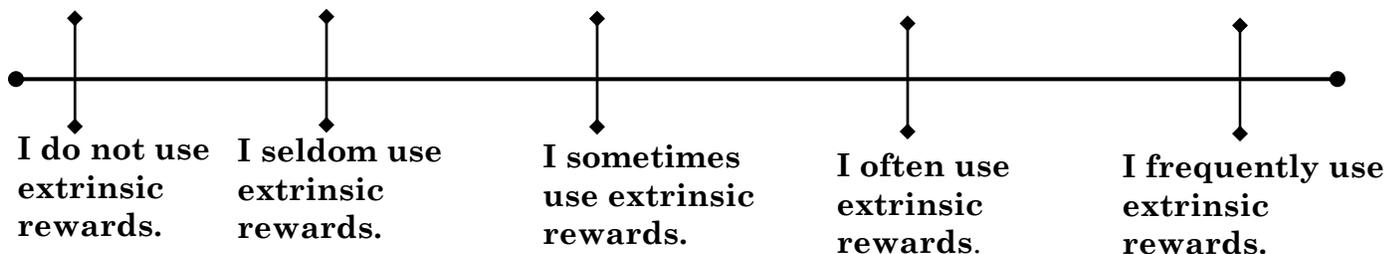


4. Which of the following extrinsic rewards do you use in your classroom to celebrate success? (Circle all that apply.):

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Candy/Treats | Give-Away items | Comment Cards/Notes | Certificates |
| Ribbons | | | |
| Verbal Praise | Whole-Class Acknowledgement | School-Wide Acknowledgement | |

Other: _____

5. Using the scale, rate the usefulness of extrinsic rewards by marking an "X" on the most applicable descriptor.



6. When you use extrinsic rewards in your classroom, comment about what you have found to be successful

Appendix C

Observation Checklist Rubric – Objectives and Criteria

Participates Freely

3 (✓+) =

- Student does not require prompting to participate; intrinsically motivated
- Students demonstrates participation verbally, physically, and/or cooperatively

2 (✓) =

- Student requires prompting to participate, either from the teacher, classmates, or due to tangible reward.
- Student demonstrates some participation verbally, physically, or cooperatively.

1 (✓-) =

- Student may or may not participate when prompted by the teacher.
 - Student demonstrates minimal to no participation in the class assignment.
-

Achieves Proficiency (or above)

3 (✓+) =

- Student exceeds the established expectations/criteria for the assignment.

2 (✓) =

- Student meets the established expectations/criteria for the assignment.

1 (✓-) =

- Student does not meet the established expectations/criteria for the assignment.
-

Respects Classroom Rules

3 (✓+) =

- Student behavior demonstrates a value for established classroom rules.

2 (✓) =

- Student demonstrates a regard for established classroom rules.

1 (✓-) =

- Student demonstrates a lack of awareness for positive classroom behavior.
-

Prepared with Materials

3 (✓+) =

- Student attends class with all required/requested materials.

2 (✓) =

- Student attends class with some required/requested materials.

1 (✓-) =

- Student attends classes with little to no required/requested material.
-

Classwork Completed

3 (✓+) =

- Student assignment is complete.

2 (✓) =

- Student assignment is somewhat complete.

1 (✓-) =

- Student assignment is incomplete.
-

Homework Turned In

3 (✓+) = Student assignment is handed in on time.

2 (✓) = Student assignment is handed in late.

1 (✓-) = Student assignment is not handed in.

Appendix E

Site A and Site B positive comment postcards:



Congratulations!

You have been recognized for your achievement and have earned this

Site A Stripe!



Site A

Mascot



Congratulations!

You have been recognized for your achievement and have earned this

Site B Stripe!



Site B

Mascot

Appendix F
Site A Cooperative Learning Lesson Plan

Lesson Topic: Reading—Applying the “evaluate” comprehension strategy to a piece of literature

Lesson Overview:

While engaging in a whole-group discussion, reading aloud the story, “Black Cowboy Wild Horses” by Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkey, and completing an independent practice assignment, students will review key vocabulary terms in the selection and increase comprehension by evaluating the author’s descriptions. This lesson is the second of six lessons that will explore concepts related to wild horses and life on the open range in the American West.

During a previous lesson, students completed a vocabulary activity in which they associated each of the new vocabulary words with a particular movement and practiced the different movements and they watched a United Streaming video-clip about mustangs and herding wild horses.

Lesson Objectives:

I will know the lesson has been successful when the following objectives have been achieved:

1. Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to apply the “evaluate” comprehension strategy to a piece of literature in an effort to evaluate how well an author describes the setting, events, and the characters in the piece.
2. Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to identify figurative language in a piece of literature.
3. Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to describe the life of a cowboy who lived long ago in the American West.
4. Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to explain the process of bringing a herd of mustangs from the open plains into a corral.
5. Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to work collaboratively with others in a mature and respectful manner.

Lesson Assessment:

1. Informal Observation (during the lesson discussions, the whole-group read aloud, and independent/partner work time)
2. Completion of the Partner Discussion and Project Card

Partner Discussion and Project Card

Please work with your partner to answer the following questions.

1. The author tells a true story using words to create pictures in a poetic way. Based upon what we've read so far, evaluate how well those word pictures help to tell the story. After discussing this with your partner, circle one of the phrases below:

So far, I would say that the author's descriptions have:

Really helped me to understand the story

Helped me to understand the story a little bit

Not helped me to understand the story

2. Identify your favorite use of figurative language in the story so far. Write the sentence or the sentences below and explain what the phrase means to you or what the phrase reminds you of.

3. Choose one of the two projects:

*Bob Lemmons has begun the process of bringing in a herd of mustangs. Make a list of things Bob does to accomplish this task. Then, use your list to write a how-to guide for cowboys who want to become successful mustang catchers. Your guide should have at least four steps or actions that a cowboy must do to successfully catch a mustang.

*While the cowboys were waiting at the ranch for Bob Lemmons, they might have tried out some tongue twisters. Use the list of vocabulary words on page 520 to write a tongue twister that describes what might have been like as a cowboy in the American West. While you create your tongue twister, look back at the pictures and think about your story evaluations.

Reminder- Remember that a tongue twister uses words that start with the same letter or end with the same sound. Here is an example: *The creepy crawly creature crept cowardly away.*

Appendix G
Site B Cooperative Learning Assignment

Renaissance Sonnet Presentation

1. Choose a group with whom you can work in an academically successful manner.
2. Read/Review the historical context for the Renaissance period and for sonnet poetry.
3. Read the background information for each poet (as you read his poems).
4. Read all of the poems in the handout (and as indicated from your textbook).
5. Select a poem to analyze and teach to the class; confirm teacher approval.
6. Use the study guide question for your poem to guide and assist you. Asking for teacher assistance or researching the poem is also acceptable (and encouraged!).
7. Identify (*Show* using specific examples) the following:
 - Form/Type and Structural features of the poem
 - Sound devices used in the poem
 - Literary devices used in the poem
8. Explain:
 - The overall meaning of the poem (briefly summarize–*What does it say?*)
 - The historical, social, political context of the poem (*What does it mean?*)
 - Use specific examples (identify words/“quotes” to support your ideas)
 - How devices emphasize and/or add to the meaning of the poem
 - Your overall impression of the poem (*Why does it matter? How is it significant?*)
9. Present your poem to the class by teaching what you have learned
 - Use visual examples to clarify your points
 - Practice your individual presentation skills (teach *and* entertain)
 - Share the responsibilities of the workload = cooperate!
10. Have pride in your academic work, in your own excellence, and in your group-mates efforts. Be proud of your accomplishments.