Morning Work:
Meeting Needs While Maximizing Everyone’s Time and Energy
Emily Seigfried
An Inquiry Into Morning Work

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The Teaching Context: A Well-Oiled Machine

For my inquiry, I focused on the first twenty minutes of the day, otherwise known as Morning Work. A normal day tends to start like this: A student walks in the door and makes his or her lunch choice. The student then gets his or her coat and backpack off at the cubbies, pulls out his or her daily take home folder, and gives it to the teacher stationed by the door. While the student is taking a seat at his or her desk, the teacher checks the folder and puts it in the child’s mailbox where it resides for the remainder of the school day. The student needs to check the whiteboard for the morning message.

At the beginning of the project, this message was: “Good Morning! 1. Lunch choice 2. Blue folder 3. Finish work or Math book.” We explained to students that finishing work comes first before working in the math book. While all this is going on, the other teacher circulates around the room. By the end of the project, the morning message changed daily in order to add variety to the morning routine.

The original morning routine seemed to work well in my first grade classroom of twenty-five students: thirteen girls and twelve boys. The academic levels represented span across the levels of achievement, including seven students in Title I for reading, the lowest achieving reading group. One student in particular is being placed on an IST (Instructional Support Team) for academic and behavior difficulties. He requires a teacher by his side in order to get any work done. In general, the class is well behaved. The most common behavior problems relate to the chattiness of the group.

At the beginning of the school year, we implemented various structures in the classroom to help things flow smoothly. While these components are very useful, a few changes to the morning routine began during this inquiry. My PDA observed Morning Work and made this comment, “It was like watching a well-oiled machine in this first grade classroom. The teachers were ready and prepared for the day to begin…. This enables the student to get off to a great start and to be successful for the day ahead.” (See Appendix B)
Wonderings and Questions

This inquiry into Morning Work came as the result of papers taking many trips between the Needs Work basket and the desks before considered complete. My main wondering started out as “How can I encourage students to remain on task while they quietly socialize during Morning Work?” By the end of the study, I felt that a better question was “What changes can I make to the morning routine so that I’m still meeting needs and yet everyone is maximizing his or her time and energy?”

Under the surface of this wondering lies an important component; the challenge of making Morning Work interesting and enjoyable.

An issue that the teachers faced was monitoring progress in the math workbooks, the standard assignment for Morning Work. These books that are kept in the students’ desks contain pages of addition and subtraction problems with related coloring activities. It may take two or three work periods to complete one page. Because of the varying paces of student work, setting a number of problems to finish in this unconventional math workbook does not accurately display student work habits.

Sub-questions

What are good indicators of on-task behavior during independent work time?

Will students be able to accurately monitor their on-task behavior? Will this change their behavior patterns during morning work time?

What can I do or say to encourage on-task behavior?

What are appropriate consequences for students who do not remain on-task?

What are appropriate and feasible motivators for students to remain on-task?

What is the purpose of morning work time and how does it affect my expectations?

How do students view the purpose of morning work time? Do they enjoy morning work time?

What are the students’ and teachers’ needs during this time of the day?

Data Collection

I wanted to create a baseline of data and observations prior to implementing anything, so I would have something with which to compare the ending results.
**Colored Circles in Math Book**

Because we didn’t collect or check the morning work math books on a regular basis prior to this inquiry, I didn’t feel that I knew how much students were accomplishing. For a little over a week, I had students put a circle of a particular color (different color for each day) around each problem that they worked on that day. By compiling the results into a chart, I was able to see the average amount of work accomplished on a daily basis. This information helped me develop a reasonable number of problems that I should expect students to complete each week. I then made a different chart highlighting students that are not meeting the required number of problems each week. These charts have helped me monitor the students that have low-productivity. (See Appendices M and V)

**Student Survey #1**

On the first student survey, I asked the same set of questions of each of the groups and then other follow-up questions depending on what responses a group gave. I got a wide range of responses that were surprising to me. The main questions that I asked were: What do you like about Morning Work? What don’t you like about Morning Work? What is the purpose of Morning Work? I then used this information, along with information from other sources, to develop a new schedule for Morning Work that would be enjoyable for them. It was essential for me to understand what the students thought about the purpose of Morning Work. (See Appendix D)

**Student Survey #1+**

After looking over the results of the first student survey, I felt that I was lacking a key piece of information: whether students enjoyed morning work time or not. I felt this was important since it is a main part of my inquiry. (See Appendix D)

**Seating Chart Observations**

At first I wanted to get a baseline of what students were doing during Morning Work. Were they talking? Were they working? Were they doing both? Were they out of their seats? By forcing myself to focus on their behavior, I observed some interesting tendencies among students that I had not previously noticed. This kind of observation forced me to step back from my role as an involved teacher and see the class as a whole. Prior to this, my attention was on the blue folders and lunch
choices. It was also on helping the lower achieving students and helping them accomplish work during this time.

I drew a map of the classroom with empty desk-sets. On the page, I kept track of the number of papers in the Needs Work basket before school, number of papers in the Needs Work basket after morning work, number of breakfast eaters, and the breakfast choice. I saw the seating chart as a means of note-taking set up from *The Reflective Educator’s Guide to Classroom Research* by Dana and Yendol-Silva (2003, p. 72). During subsequent observations, I wrote down some key pieces of information that might affect student performance. For example, on 2.20.08, we had new additions to our aquariums, so students were interested in looking at these for many days during Morning Work. On 3.20.08, JC got glasses and everyone wanted to see them, so they were out of their seats. From these observations, I was able to link tendencies of certain students with their interest in Morning Work. I then formed my first claim based on the notes I took. (See Appendices A, D, and E)

*Seating Chart Observations as a means for Timing*

I used the seating chart paper for recording time observations of each of the students. I recorded three times for students that were not eating breakfast (what time he or she got to the cubby, what time he or she sat down, and what time he or she started working), and five times for students that were eating breakfast on that day (what time he or she got to the cubby, sat at the breakfast table, started eating, sat at his or her desk, and started working). It was a little difficult to record all of this information on each student; however, it worked well on this already developed recording system and there were only a few interruptions. From these observations, I was able to evaluate the self-monitoring system responses from students for accuracy. This also helped me pinpoint which students I need to encourage to move faster through the morning routine. (See Appendices G and J)

*Parent Surveys*

While the first parent survey didn’t yield any usable information for my inquiry, I felt it was interesting to read what parents had to say about their child. I sent home a second parent survey a month later. An aspect of this second survey was to find out whether the change in the Morning Work
schedule was significant enough to be mentioned by students to the adults at home. I used the results of this survey, the second student survey, and sentiments of the teachers to determine whether the new Morning Work schedule is enjoyable. It helped me gauge whether the changes I had made were answering the wondering of “What changes can I make to the morning routine so that I’m still meeting everyone’s needs and yet everyone is maximizing his or her time and energy?” (See Appendix H)

**Student Survey #2**

The second student survey focused on students’ thoughts about the new schedule for morning work time. I asked questions about their preferences between games and working in their math workbook. The results of this were interesting to compare to the first student survey. It provided me with more proof of what I had been seeing and hearing: students enjoyed the new schedule. (See Appendix I)

**Teacher Reflections and Surveys**

Throughout the study, the teachers in the classroom reflected on situations in the room. These reflections and conversations illustrate the thoughts and feelings most people in the room were having associated with the changes we saw occurring in the classroom. I used these reflections as snapshots to help build the fourth claim.

**Self-Monitoring**

The self-monitoring system was introduced during the end of the study. The purpose of the system is to help students improve their morning work behavior by evaluating it. This data collection method took place twice, once under the old schedule and once under the new schedule for Morning Work. The old schedule involved finishing work from the previous day and then completing math problems in their workbooks. The new schedule involved a rotation schedule of completing problems in the math workbook for two days and finishing work for three days. Students that do not have work to finish are encouraged to play math games that have been set out or read with a friend.

The desired affect of this tool is for students to evaluate their own behavior and make changes to it. The article, “Increasing on-task behavior in the classroom: Extension of self-monitoring strategies,” provided plenty of previous research studies to support the notion that self-monitoring is a
useful tool for increasing on-task behavior. It stated that “self-monitoring procedures can decrease reliance on external agents (e.g., teachers, parents, peers) for behavior change, thus facilitating generalization to untrained settings and maintenance of acquired skills.” I found this quite encouraging to know that self-monitoring can be a very useful management strategy. Because I would have the whole class self-monitor, no students felt singled out as the article suggested. Thus, the self-monitoring system, if used more consistently in the future, will hopefully have positive effects on productivity and on-task behavior in the classroom.

The system was introduced during a class meeting where the paraprofessional and I role-played appropriate and inappropriate morning work behaviors. Part way through the role-playing, we mentioned the slip of paper that each student would find on his or her desk, containing three questions to be answered by coloring in the correct face reflecting the child’s behavior. Students were to fill out the paper after the pledge bell rang and when everyone was seated. The three questions were: Did I follow the voice-o-meter? Did I quickly get my coat off and get seated? Did I get down to work? For each question, a set of three faces is available for coloring: a smiley face, a straight face, and a frown face. A student made a comment about wanting a classmate to sit down because they needed to mark their papers. I used this particular comment to gauge the effectiveness of the self-monitoring system and to substantiate my fourth claim. (See Appendix J)

Explanation of Findings

Claim #1
Those who do not like certain aspects of Morning Work tend to display certain negative behaviors.

Evidence
The Seating Chart Observations show the negative behaviors that were occurring during Morning Work time. On the specific day I observed to create a baseline, I found that 17% of students were out of their seats, 37% of students were talking and not working, and 3% of students were sharpening their pencils. These behaviors can be described as distracting others at desk-set, talking to others at desk-set, out of seat to talk to other students or teachers, and sharpening pencils. I then cross-
referenced these tendencies with the students that indicated that they didn’t like Morning Work in the Student Survey #1 and Student Survey #1+.

As you can see in Student Survey #1 Yellow, Blue, and Green Groups students who do not like Morning Work admit that they do enjoy talking to others at desk-set, eating breakfast, and going to the bathroom during morning work time.

A quick survey of the class, Student Survey #1+, shows that 87.5% students don’t particularly enjoy some or all aspects of Morning Work prior to the schedule changes. This survey helped me match students who admit to not enjoying certain aspects of Morning Work with the negative behaviors I observed from each of these students. (See Appendices D and E)

The following surveys compare the thoughts of the three adults in the classroom in regard to students work habits. The Teacher Surveys show which students are talking and distracting others at desk-set, and those that are easily distracted, in addition to other behaviors. These teacher surveys show which students display the negative behaviors observed in the Seating Chart Observations. It was not only my observations that pointed to certain students that do not seem to enjoy Morning Work, but also the two other adults in the room. This gives validity to my observations and thus supports the claim. (See Appendix K)

The Seating Chart Observation for Timing shows which students are out of his or her seat, at his or her cubby for a long time, and taking a long time to eat breakfast. I also kept track of how long it took students to get down to work once they got seated. I paired this information up with which students do not enjoy certain aspects of Morning Work. Students that do not enjoy Morning Work tend to take longer to get down to work. (See Appendix G)

My PDA’s first observation is that some of the students are perpetually distracted. She writes, “‘L’ seems to be doodling a great deal. Does she have issues with independent work? Every time I am in your classroom, she gets my attention because she is staring into space and not on task.” This shows some of the behaviors that students display when they do not enjoy the task at hand. (See Appendix B)
**Claim #2**

Effects of these distracting behaviors have numerous negative outcomes and are felt by everyone in the room.

**Evidence**

The Seating Chart Observations show low productivity and high noise level. Part way through this particular work session, my mentor stopped the class to tell them it was too loud. Overall, 57% of students were not working during this particular observation. (See Appendix E)

During the Student Survey #1 with the Blue Group, I heard three very thought-provoking pieces of information about the high noise level, headaches, and stress. I asked what they didn’t like about Morning Work. Some students responded that they didn’t like the noise level because it gives them a headache. The student that made this statement about getting headaches from the noise level was our loudest student by far and has since moved out of the district. In addition to noise level problems and related headaches, all 7 students mentioned that they feel stress during this time of the day. (See Appendix I)

The Student Survey #1+ indicates 21 out of 26 either were neutral or did not like Morning Work. The fact that this many students are not particularly interested in Morning Work tells me a lot. Some students exhibit certain behaviors—as mentioned in claim 1—because they don’t like Morning Work, which in turn affects the atmosphere of the classroom for the other students, causing them to not enjoy morning work time very much. (See Appendix I)

As you can see in Teacher Survey #1 Seigfried, Glass, and Sheehan, there is agreement among the three teachers in the room that there is low productivity during morning work time. Seigfried and Glass also go on to comment on the high noise level in the room. (See Appendix K)

I asked my PDA to come observe the Morning Work routine prior to the new schedule, so that an objective, outsider to the classroom would be able to give an unbiased set of observation notes. My PDA’s notes show that there is low productivity, high noise level, and a potential for not liking Morning Work. (See Appendix B)
After one particular Morning Work session, I was not pleased, so I reflected on these feelings in Teacher Reflection 3.25.08. This journal entry shows that I was stressed, drained, and that things felt chaotic. This shows that the feelings of not liking Morning Work were not just coming from the students, but from a teacher as well. (See Appendix L)

The Math Book Results shows the effect of the behaviors of the distracted/distracting students. This can be seen by comparing the numbers from the “normal” workdays and the no-talking workday. On regular days, students typically completed 5 math problems. On the no-talking day, students completed 15 math problems. The fact that talking affects productivity is obvious. The question then becomes how to combat the low productivity and still allow students to socialize. (See Appendix M)

**Claim #3**
Using resources can help develop ideas that can be implemented in the classroom.

**Evidence**
I asked my mentor for help in knowing what to do, what steps to take, and where to turn for information in regard to my inquiry into Morning Work. She suggested a new schedule for Morning Work and rewards for getting work done. (See Appendix N)

Before implementing any new ideas, I wanted to develop my own thoughts about the purpose of Morning Work. Morning Work has been a part of the day since the beginning of school, but I never stopped to consider why. (See Appendix O)

I met with two PDAs to discuss my progress with the project. Two suggestions were most helpful: to have a goal number of problems to get done each week and to role-play desired behaviors. (See Appendix P)

In order to get a good sense of what Morning Work was like in other first grade classrooms, I observed in the two other first grade classrooms. This was very beneficial to get a sense of what I should expect of students. Through observing Mrs. Bryan’s room, I decided to implement a voice-o-meter and sporadic silent work times. The voice-o-meter is a chart with silent, hushed voices, and medium voices. The teacher adjusts the pointer to the desired voice level for a specific activity. From
Mrs. California’s room, I got an idea for rewards for completing work. While Mrs. California’s room is quite similar to mine in terms of behavior, Mrs. Bryan’s room is not. It was interesting to note the differences. (See Appendix Q)

I observed in Miss Cowan’s kindergarten room and found that students in kindergarten are able to complete the same amount of work as my first graders. I also interviewed Miss Cowan to get a sense of a week of Morning Work in kindergarten. She allows students to read quietly on the carpet with a friend as a reward for getting work done. (See Appendices A and Q)

I interviewed Mrs. Lawrence about her weekly first grade Morning Work schedule and how she holds students accountable. From this came a new schedule for Morning Work. (See Appendix A)

In a webpage for educators, I found a section on “bell work.” Students put the date on the page they are working on during morning work time. At the end of this time period, “I mark it or I assign someone to mark it.” I used this idea in a similar fashion. I initial the workbook at the beginning of each week. Students then complete a specified number of problems and I have to sign it. I like this visual reminder to the students of the accountability that exists during Morning Work. (See Appendix A)

An article, entitled, “A study of self-monitoring intervention to increase on-task behavior and productivity” was useful to me in thinking about a self-monitoring system. Initially, students score themselves higher than the researcher would, which is an important factor to keep in mind. This is why I made observations on those days to help me pinpoint students that are not accurately scoring their behavior. (See Appendix A)

At the beginning of my inquiry, it was interesting to compare students’ thoughts on the purpose of Morning Work. The Student Survey #1 Red, Yellow, Blue, and Green Groups provided me with some unexpected information about Morning Work. I expected to hear that this time of the day is meant for students to have busy work, so that teachers can get the morning chores done. Instead, I got thoughtful answers, regarding how Morning Work helps prepare our minds and bodies for the day. I
also received some good insight into what things students would like to see change for Morning Work. In addition to consulting the researchers and practitioners in the field, I thought it would be extremely beneficial to consult some of the people whose lives would be affected by my inquiry project. The wondering is how can I meet needs while maximizing everyone’s time and energy, and that includes the students. (See Appendix D)

While increasing productivity and on-task behavior is an important part of my inquiry, it became the main focus. It took a survey of my mentor (Teacher Survey #1 Sheehan) to help me rethink the purpose of Morning Work in terms of socialization. This crucial survey helped me to re-evaluate my thinking and figure out what direction I wanted to go with the inquiry. (See Appendix K)

**Claim #4**

When students are given a goal, clear directions, and some variety, there is a positive outcome.

**Evidence**

In the Seating Chart Observation for March 20\(^{th}\), the voice-o-meter was set to hushed voices and the actual noise level met the goal. This shows that there was a lower noise level than before the voice-o-meter system was started. On this particular day, there were five teacher directions given verbally that helped remind students of their morning responsibilities. Because of these comments from the teachers, students adjusted their work habits. Prior to the teacher directions, 27% of the students are off-task. After the teacher gives directions, 0% of students are off-task. (See Appendix E)

On March 17\(^{th}\), the noise level was appropriate and I felt relaxed with the atmosphere in the room. This shows that when students are settled and accomplishing a task, even the teachers feel at ease. (See Appendix S)

Using the previously developed seating chart observation system, I kept track of the time it took for each student to get his or her coat off, get seated, and get down to work. One unexpected response was from a student that has the most trouble staying seated. The first day of the self-monitoring, I overheard her say to a nearby classmate, “Sit down because we’ll have to mark our papers!” I was surprised that this comment came from this student. These time observations, along
with the student’s comment, show that some students were monitoring their own behavior and aiming to make the best use of their time. (See Appendix G)

I conducted a quick survey to get a sense of student interest in the new schedule. Twenty out of twenty-five students gave me the thumbs up that they enjoy the new schedule for Morning Work. The response was encouraging to me that students are excited about the new schedule and that they do enjoy it. On days when students can play math games, they rush in and quickly take care of the morning routine. Sometimes I have to remind them that if they don’t get cleaned up quickly for Morning Meeting, they won’t be able to play math games when they come in the classroom. This demonstrates that students are interested in the new activities and are excited to participate in Morning Work. (See Appendix T)

My mentor teacher and I made a quick comment (Conversation with mentor 4.1.08) to each other in passing toward the end of Morning Work one day that the climate in the classroom was relaxed and fun. It seemed to the both of us that this new schedule for Morning Work was off to a promising start. This shows that when students enjoy the activities in which they are engaged, the atmosphere is more pleasant for everyone, including the teachers. (See Appendix T)

Noting progress in Reflection 4.1.08, I wrote that things felt relaxed, there was a lower noise level, and things seemed to be more fun. The new things I implemented had a positive effect on maximizing everyone’s energy and we still felt refreshed at the end of Morning Work. (See Appendix T)

I had a conversation with my paraprofessional that illustrates the difference in student performance on activities when a clear goal and consequence are presented to them. When students know the expectation from the beginning, they work hard to complete the task, thus there is the positive outcome that productivity is definitely higher. (See Appendix U)

During the second student survey, I asked specific questions, targeting the students’ sense of enjoyment and fun during Morning Work. Their responses point to an interest in the new schedule and
the games, while maintaining a moderate interest in working in the math books. This was important for me to hear that they like the games, but enjoy the math books so that I can hit those needs as well in an enjoyable way for the students. This shows that the variety the new schedule brings was enough to increase student interest in Morning Work and they enjoy the tasks during this time of day. (See Appendix I)

I developed a spreadsheet (NotMeeting10aWeek) to show the progress students are making toward improving their productivity. Before I started the goal of ten problems a week, only 16% of my students completed that many. The first week of the challenge 64% of students met the goal. This increased to 76% the second week. This shows that by having clear and defined goals that hold students accountable there are positive outcomes, including increased productivity. (See Appendix V)

**Reflection and Implications for Future Practice**

I have realized that some students will do anything to avoid work and make it look like they are getting something accomplished. When clear goals are put before students with appropriate consequences, students are motivated to get the work done. Students and teachers need a little variety to motivate them. I will definitely use what I have learned here in my future teaching. No matter what grade I teach, the first twenty minutes will still be the first twenty minutes of the day. The question is this: will I meet the needs of everyone by providing meaningful and fun activities that allow for every person in the room to make the most of his or her time and energy? It takes a little extra planning and careful consideration, but the time is well spent and it pays off to have a peaceful climate to start the day.

I believe the findings from this inquiry process will aid in my teaching methods for years to come. The process of stepping back to evaluate an aspect of my teaching proved to be extremely helpful. It was more than just reflecting; it was making a clear and deliberate study of my practices in the classroom with the intent to improve them. The exercise of doing this seemed unnatural and difficult at first; however, as I adjusted the inquiry and became accustomed to this kind of reflection, I found myself going further into this process.
Appendix A: Inquiry Brief and Annotated Bibliography

Inquiry Brief
Emily Seigfried

Context

My first grade class consists of twenty-six students: fourteen girls and twelve boys. The academic levels represented span across the levels of achievement from seven students in Title I for reading, the lowest achieving reading group, to six students that are reading chapter books at the independent level, the highest achieving reading group. One student in particular is being placed on an IST for academic and behavior difficulties. He requires a teacher by his side in order to get any work done. On the whole, the class does well behaviorally. The most common behavior problems relate to the chattiness of the group. On occasion, the students have to be reminded that they are getting too loud. There are typically five students who buy and eat breakfast during the morning work period.

Rationale

This particular wondering speaks to me because of a certain level of frustration that I experience in the classroom on a daily basis. I do not have a problem with students quietly socializing during morning work time as long as they are getting an adequate amount of work accomplished. The on-task behavior during this independent work time at the beginning of the day has been a little lacking; therefore I am eager to address this situation. Two accessible components of the classroom are a “Needs Work” basket and a “Finished Work” basket. The teachers pull out the papers from the “Needs Work” basket everyday, placing the papers on the students’ desks to finish during Morning Work time. These papers make many trips between the basket and the desks before considered complete.

Another issue that the teachers face is monitoring progress in the math workbooks. These books contain pages of addition and subtraction problems with related coloring activities. It is difficult to know how much students accomplish in these books during morning work time because students keep the books in their desks. Sometimes, completing the problems on the page and coloring the corresponding area creates a picture. It may take two or three work periods to complete one page. Another issue to consider is that not all of the students work at the same pace. A student may take longer to complete a task, though the task is developmentally appropriate and right on his or her level. Because of the varying paces of student work, setting a number of problems to finish in this unconventional math workbook does not accurately display student work habits.

In addition to being an excellent study in relation to the current situation, I believe the findings from this inquiry process will aid in my teaching methods for years to come. No matter what grade I teach in the future, there will always be a morning work or independent work time. The skills I learn during this project in regard to encouraging quiet work habits and managing concurrent activities will be extremely beneficial.

Main Wondering

How can I encourage students to remain on-task while they quietly socialize during morning work?

Sub-questions
What are good indicators of on-task behavior for my class due to the different pace of work among students?

Will students be able to accurately monitor their on-task behavior? Will it change their behavior patterns during morning work time?

What can I do or say to encourage on-task behavior?

How can I effectively and feasibly monitor on-task behavior during this extremely busy time of the day?

What are appropriate consequences for students who do not remain on-task?

What are appropriate and feasible motivators for students to remain on-task?

What is the purpose of morning work time?

How do students view the purpose of morning work time? Do they like morning work time?

Is this an appropriate time for students to sharpen pencils for the day?

**Timeline**

*February*
- February 4-25: Baseline observations using seating chart observation sheet
- February 25-March 3: Observe morning work time in the other two first grades and in Jess Cowan’s kindergarten
- February 5: Interview Jen Lawrence
- February 26: Interview Jess Cowan
- February 29: Survey of students thoughts on morning work time
- February 29: Survey of parents of their student’s work habits and work ethic at home

*March*
- March 24-31: Data collection continues with seating chart observation sheet
- March 3: Introduce self-monitor system
- March 3: Talk with class about expectations for morning work time
- March 17: Introduce incentives for completing work
- March 17: Start new schedule for morning work time (two days of catch-up work, one day for word study work, and two days of work in math book. Students who don’t have catch-up work will be on computers or playing double compare)

*April*
- March 24-April 4: Data collection continues with seating chart observation sheet
- April 4-15: Assess changes in behavior patterns, attitudes
- April 11: Survey of students thoughts on morning work time
- April 11: Survey of parents of their student’s work habits and work ethic at home (any changes)
Data Collection Ideas
- Surveys of parents
- Surveys of students
- Students self-monitoring
- Reflection journals
- Seating chart observation sheets

Method
One teacher will greet students as they walk in the door. This teacher will help students make lunch choices and turn in take-home folders. The other teacher will have different roles depending on the week. One week, this teacher will be seated off to the side of the class, observing the activities of the room. She will use a blank seating chart of the classroom to make quick notations during each two-minute sweep of the classroom. Other weeks, she will be circulating around the room to manage behavior, help students, and chat with them. Half-way through the morning work time, the roaming teacher will play a bell or chime to remind students to make note of their on-task behavior on the chart found on each students’ desk. The roaming teacher will make note of which students require some disciplinary action and will aim to redirect them to the task at hand.

This insightful look at self-monitoring has confirmed in my mind that this is a useful tool. It has also made me question whether I want to use the self-monitoring system everyday. As Levin and Nolan mention, the system can be cumbersome and can be seen as punishment. A suggestion in the book is to wean the student off the self-monitor system as a means of building self-esteem. A question that I have for my own inquiry is this: How can I keep track of these statements made by each of the students and use the tool in an effective way.


I will interview Jess Cowan, a kindergarten teacher at Gray’s Woods Elementary School, about her expectations for morning work time. Students in her classroom accomplish much after they arrive at school and I am interested to see how this happens. How do her students view morning work time? How does she monitor their on-task behavior? What consequences are in place? What motivates the children to stay on-task?

I interviewed Jess Cowan, a kindergarten teacher at Gray’s Woods Elementary School, about morning work time in her classroom. She explained to me that her students come in and find a book that they then read on the carpet. It is okay for students to look at a book with a friend if they whisper. Students are motivated to stay on task because this is a reward to whisper to a friend while reading. Cowan said that on Tuesdays, they have a special at 9 am, so they start the day with Writer’s Workshop instead of reading. Morning work time is typically pretty quiet. There are four or five students that eat breakfast at a specified breakfast table. If students are goofing around instead of eating, they are moved to a separate table. This is something that I am considering trying. Since morning work time in her classroom is for reading, I asked when students catch-up on unfinished work. She said that “Quiet Time” is when students work on that or morning work time. Cowan mentioned that the class is doing really well because she took time at the beginning of the year to convey her expectations and “train” them. This was also something interesting to note that time well-invested pays off in the end.

Lawrence, J. (Expert). (n.d.). *Interview with Jen Lawrence* [Interview].

The interview with Jen Lawrence, a first grade teacher at Gray’s Woods Elementary School, gave me insight into a scheduled rotation of activities during morning work. I discussed this weekly schedule with her, in addition to monitoring student work. She suggested a way of keeping track of how much is accomplished on days when students work in their math books. Lawrence also assured me that I know my students work habits and what things are accurate measures of on-task behavior. I am planning on implementing the suggested weekly schedule in my current classroom.


This article provided plenty of previous research studies to support the notion that self-monitoring is a useful tool for increasing on-task behavior. It stated that “self-monitoring procedures can decrease reliance on external agents (e.g., teachers, parents, peers) for behavior change, thus facilitating generalization to untrained settings and maintenance of acquired skills.” I found this quite
encouraging to know that self-monitoring can be a very useful management strategy. Because I would have the whole class engage in this activity, no students will feel singled out as the article suggested. Thus, the self-monitoring system will hopefully have positive affects on productivity and on-task behavior in the classroom.


This article helped me to draw parallels to my students in the following areas. Initially, students score themselves higher than the researcher would, which is an important factor to keep in mind. I saw evidence of this at the fall parent-teacher conference time when reviewing self-assessments. The research subject has trouble starting assignments, completing and turning in work, and being distracted by environmental factors in the room, which is quite similar to my students with the most common off-task behaviors. The subject used an object of fixation to avoid work; my students use fun erasers. One of the appendices has suggested statements for self-monitoring that I might use.


Some things in this article echoed one of my wonderings of whether I would taint my research. My concern is will I act differently with my students now that I know what I want to do to encourage more on-task behavior. It is essential to set students up for success by reminding them of the rules. I tend to call attention to misbehavior and skip over the good behavior. The idea of this article is the opposite; remind students of the rules, ignore misbehavior, and make statements about good behavior. This says to me that rather than telling students that they need to sit down and get to work, just ignore it and make comments to those close by such as, “I like the way you are working at your seat.”


This article defined characteristics of five high-needs student categories. Some students who have attention problems need to be taught “basic concentration, study and thinking skills.” The writers of the article suggested that students be separated so they can have a quiet work area. Students with attention problems tend to “fidget, leave seat frequently, interrupt, and talk excessively.” As I read this, I thought of a few students in my room that have difficulty concentrating and getting work done during morning work time. Separating students from the rest of the class could be an interesting option to try, so they are able to accomplish more during the beginning of the day. I would like to encourage them to socialize while working, but if they have trouble getting anything done, I will remove them to the quiet table. I may come up with a fun name for the table, so that there isn’t a negative connotation with sitting at the table.


Retrieved February 11, 2008, from Multisearch database.

The writers of this article presented some interesting ideas for helping students improve their independent skills. One suggestion was to teach students to take a “trip down memory lane” and look through previous pages in their work book for how they solved the problem before. Another idea was Ask 3 Before Me. My favorite suggestion was about rescuing students. One student in my class requires a teacher by his side in order to do work, particularly math work. This would be tremendously difficult in a room by myself; thankfully there are three adults in the room. One thing the article says is to not rescue students because students “can end up feeling dependent on us and underconfident about their own skills. But when we help students learn how to utilize their own knowledge and
available resources, we give them the chance to take pride in what they can do on their own….gently remind them that you are not going to tell them how to do the problem, but you are happy to listen to the ideas they have so far.” This will take some training on my part and his. In the end it will be extremely helpful to both of us because he will have the tools necessary for success during independent work time that can generalize to other subjects and grades. This is also helpful to me because my attention can be more evenly spread across the whole classroom and I can do a better job of monitoring the whole class’s independent work time, not just that of one student.


In this article, Stright and Supplee share their findings about children’s self-regulatory behaviors. One of the self-regulatory behaviors is monitoring, which seemed to be higher during seat work time than teacher-directed time due to the proximity of other students. It occurred to me that this is true; students realize that they need to help when they see that other students have different answers or are working at a different pace. Talking is an essential part of self-monitoring because it helps students detect errors in their work.

Website

This website submission shares a tip from one experienced teacher about “bell work.” She has students put the date on the page they are working on during morning work time. At the end of this time period, “I mark it or I assign someone to mark it. It prevents many disruptions and lets the children realize that they come to class to work.” This is much like what I spoke about with Cole and Jodi in regard to putting a color line across the page of where they pick up for the day. I like this visual reminder to the students of the accountability exists during morning work.
Appendix B: PDA observation
Emily Seigfried
Morning Routine
Tuesday, March 25, 2008 @8:35
PDA – Jodi Kamin

Observation Notes

+Mrs. S. was at the door greeting the students and taking their folders from them.
+Mrs. G. was checking in with the students as to the lunch they were ordering for the day.
+Ms. S. was circulating the room reminding the students of what their seatwork was for the day and answering questions.

+++It was like watching a well-oiled machine in this first grade classroom. The teachers were ready and prepared for the day to begin. They were all set to greet the students and to engage them in their morning routine. This enables the student to get off to a great start and to be successful for the day ahead. The collaboration that exists in this classroom is fantastic!

+Mrs. S. asked a student what he should be doing right now. She asked him if he read the whiteboard? The student shook his head and went back to his seat to get to work.

+Having the directions on the white board is a great way to assist the students.

Blue Stars

+Several students were working on coloring their fish. I asked how they knew what to do and this was the response from three students. “Ms. S. told us before we went home yesterday.” I then asked, “What if you forget?” They all pointed to the whiteboard where the seatwork is written. It is clear from asking several other students, what they are to be doing when they come in to school in the morning.

Green Stars

‘K’ and ‘M’ were coloring their fish without saying a single word. I asked ‘K’ if she liked morning work and her response was this: “Yes because you get to work in your math book and do a little bit of activities.”

Yellow Stars

~’L’ seems to be doodling a great deal. Does she have issues with independent work? Every time I am in your classroom, she gets my attention because she is starring into space and not on task.

‘J’ finished his fish, put it in the finished basket, and then took out his math book and started to work quietly. He said he likes his math book when I asked him what he was working on.

Breakfast Table
+There were five boys sitting at the table eating breakfast. As I walked over to the table, you rang the bell, which I did not hear. Mrs. S. had to tell the boys to show me what to do when the bell rings! They all stood and put their right hands on their hearts. One student had his left hand on his heart.

+After the pledge, you walked over to the table and told the boys they had about three more minutes to finish up. It was enough time for them to do so, and reminding them to eat and not dawdle is always a good idea.

Blue Stars

~At the blue table, some of the students, especially ‘L’, ‘M’, and ‘T’ were having a difficult time staying on task. ‘L’ hadn’t colored much of her fish and was given several reminders to finish. Have you ever considered moving a student to a table alone to finish morning work? How do you think the table arrangements/seating is contributing to the productivity of morning work?

Green Stars

+‘J’ finished his work and then went to look at wetland books on the carpet? When are the students able to stop working in their math books and read?

In general, your teacher presence is obvious. The students clearly know the expectations for the morning work. Some questions I have:

Do you correct the morning work? How often?
Do the students have a certain amount of math to accomplish every day, or do they complete whatever they can in the amount of time they have?
When did you decide to circle the math problems they complete in yellow? Is that new since beginning your inquiry project?
How do measure productivity in the morning? Is it possible?
Could you rearrange seating every so often to mix up the groups?
Have you ever removed someone from the group to work at another table?
How much talking is acceptable?

Morning Meeting

+You told the students to clean up, put their work in the finished basket, and meet you on the carpet by the time you count down from 5. Great strategy! Not too long of a count, not too short, it was clear and concise. When you arrived at 1, you said, “We should all be ready to go!”
+You asked the students to sit criss-cross applesauce with hands in their lap. Good set up for success!

You said, “Good Morning!” Then you asked the students to say it back to you again because the first time they said it, there was only about half participation. Good strategy as well!

+Next was sharing and many hands went up.
~How can you narrow down the people sharing? Have you ever had them share based on their sets? It seems like it would be more manageable and the students would have less time to become distracted.
+You give genuine comments for the students when they share. You are demonstrating good listening skills! You asked how the pipe lowers a lake and the student could tell you. Then you also added(a teachable moment) another method to lower a lake! Excellent!!!
~’S’ was talking with you and was picking his nose a bit. Could you have asked him to get a kleenex and wash his hands?

😊 Excellent job, Emily! Let me know what else I can be looking for when I do this again for you next week.

Follow-up question of Jodi Kamin (PDA)  
4.3.08

Me: How did you feel when you were in my room during Morning Work? What was the climate like? Was it fun?

JK: It was fun, but it would be boring to have the same morning work everyday. It seemed to be a serious atmosphere; it wasn’t exactly “light.”
+I arrived and Ms. Seigfried was greeting the students as they walked into the classroom. She was cheery and warm.

+She was collecting the students’ folders and telling them to read the board so they knew what to do once they hung up their backpacks and told Mrs. Glass their lunch choice.

+On the board, there was information written about how to write a ‘thank you’ to the PTO. It was very self-explanatory. It was a sample the students could follow easily.

+Students were doing various activities around the room.

+At the breakfast table, there were 7 boys and 1 girl eating breakfast. One of the boys was pretending to poke another with a utensil of some sort. The others were eating while engaged in light conversation. Unfortunately, it seemed as if a few were rushing because they were stuffing those healthy powered sugar doughnuts into their mouths while talking. The boys finished a few at a time and went to do an activity.

+There were 4 girls playing nicely with the bear counters on the carpet. They were talking quietly and others who finished, stopped by to watch for a few minutes.

+At the green table, as always, the boy and girl (‘M’ and ‘M’) were sitting there working on their ‘thank you’ card without saying a word. One student was humming ever so softly.

+The girls at the blue table, 3 of them, were working on their cards and talking about songs. One was singing and the other said, “I like that song!” Another said, “Me too!”

+At the yellow table, ‘L’ and ‘S’ were talking while working on their card. ‘L’ was talking about seeing baby Noah and how the baby talks. She mimicked the baby’s voice. ‘S’ just listened and the laughed.

+At the red table, most of the girls/boys were playing with the bear manipulatives or the hand held calculators on the carpet. The group of girls, playing with the bears, were all playing together and talking with a quiet voice.

+The two boys who were playing with the calculators were sitting and then standing over by the windows, but not necessarily together. They showed each other something on the calculator and then went back to playing on the calculator separately.
At one point, Ms. Seigfried walked over to the voice o’meter and moved the hand from the quiet voice to the hushed voice without saying anything to the students. (I am not sure if I got the voice o’meters’ terminology correct).

Ms. Seigfried told the students, after a reminder of a couple minutes left to finish, to clean up and meet her on the carpet for morning meeting. All of the students came to join her and made a great circle. She said, “Good Morning girls and boys” and they replied, “Good Morning!” She walked them through the schedule for the day and talked briefly about the show they saw the day before.

All in all, I was very impressed with the work ethic of the students. All of the students were working on some activity and seemed to be engaged. The conversation was not inappropriate and the voice level was appropriate. I can see a difference in their maturity and independence.

Questions/Thoughts:
Can you see a difference in their work patterns?
Does giving them a choice make a difference?
Does the voice o’meter help keep the students in check with their voices?
Have the strategies/changes you have implemented made a difference?
What should morning work look like? Did it look different before?
Can the students work more independently at this time of the year as opposed to the beginning?
Appendix C: Parent Survey 1

Dear Parents,

I hope this note finds you well after a few snow days this month! As part of my classroom experience through Penn State, I am required to conduct an inquiry project. This project has interns focus on an element of classroom life in order to improve as educators. My area of interest is the morning work time that happens when students first arrive at school. As a part of my research, I would greatly appreciate your input by filling out the attached survey. I realize that this will take time out of an already hectic schedule, so any information you provide will be extremely helpful. Please return by Thursday, March 6, 2008.

Thank you!
Miss Seigfried

My Name ____________________

My First Grader’s Name ____________________

Please return by Thursday, March 6, 2008

Read the statements below and circle the option that is best in your situation.

1.) At home, my first grader is independent with getting dressed, brushing his or her teeth, etc.

   Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

2.) When working on homework, my first grader is easily distracted.

   Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree
3.) If I ask my first grader to do something, he or she responds quickly. (Ex: take out recycling or make bed)

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

4.) My first grader follows a regular routine at home. (Ex: bedtime, mealtime, or after school)

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

5.) I feel that my first grader is responsible. (Ex: remembers blue folder or remembers to do daily chores)

Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

6.) If there is anything else you would like me to know about your first grader, feel free to write it here.

Thank you so much for filling this out!
My Name _______________________

My First Grader's Name _______________________

Please return by Thursday, March 6, 2008

Read the statements below and circle the option that is best in your situation.

1.) At home, my first grader is independent with getting dressed, brushing his or her teeth, etc.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2.) When working on homework, my first grader is easily distracted.

   Strongly Agree:   Agree:   Disagree:   Strongly Disagree:

3.) If I ask my first grader to do something, he or she responds quickly. (Ex: take out recycling or make bed)

   Strongly Agree:   Agree:   Disagree:   Strongly Disagree:

4.) My first grader follows a regular routine at home. (Ex: bedtime, mealtime, or after school)

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

5.) I feel that my first grader is responsible. (Ex: remembers blue folder or remembers to do daily chores)

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

6.) If there is anything else you would like me to know about your first grader, feel free to write it here.
Reflection on Parent Survey #1

3.1.08

Facts:
- Of 26 students (27 sent out: One student received two for established family agreement), I received 22.
- Sent surveys home on Tuesday, February 26, 2008. Requested return date: Thursday, March 6, 2008. (7 school days)
- Received: 10 on Feb. 28, 6 on Feb. 29, 1 on March 3, 2 on March 5, 1 on March 6 (requested return date), and 2 on March 17 (first day back after spring break: One had a note from the parent with an apology for being late).
- Didn’t receive back from one student in each of the reading groups: RK, JC, SM, EW

Looking at the surveys, I realize that the questions are interesting in getting a picture/view into life outside of school. The question on the survey that I found most interesting was “when working on homework, my first grader is easily distracted.” I found myself reacting to the parent/guardians’ responses. Some responses seemed to an accurate reflection of what I see in the classroom. Other responses surprised me; either a parent rated their child more harshly or lenient than I would have.

*=marked “strongly” by parent/guardian

The ones marked as easily distracted were:
T.B.
M.S.
M.L.-I disagree; he is very focused, productivity is high. Ex: first day at GW, he finished 2 pages in the math book…a lot!
T.K.
L.J.
A.B.

The ones marked as not easily distracted were:
C.U.
E.K.- I strongly disagree; distracts others very often
*Z.E.- I agree with parents
B.N.
L.H.-I strongly disagree; distracted easily, distracts others
J.A.-I strongly agree
*L.R.-I disagree with parents; sometimes is distracted
*K.B.-I strongly disagree; distracts others and is easily distracted. Often out of seat, talking with other students.
*M.S.-I agree with parents
Me.L.-I disagree with parents; easily distracted by a certain student. Ex: twice last week, name on the board, lost 5 minutes of recess both times for being loud, silly, and off-task
E.P.
L.B.-I sort of disagree; she doesn’t get much done.
*S.F.-All teachers agreed that she can talk and work (See SeigfriedMWSurveyGlass, SeigfriedMWSurveySeigfried, SeigfriedMWSurveySheehan)
K.H.
K.F.
J.K.-marked as both. Nature of why he is receiving help. How much are his issues and how much is something he can control, but doesn’t?

Interesting to see how the twins were marked.

New question for next parent survey:
Does your first grader distract others when trying to get something done?

Ask same questions again, see if there is a change
I wanted to hear their thoughts before I changed anything.

Questions:
- What do you like about Morning Work?
- What don’t you like about Morning Work?
- What is the purpose of/why do we have Morning Work?

[Asked some groups questions based on responses.]

**Red Group** (CU, RK, ZE, MS, SF, ML)

00:30-8:40 8 minutes

Like
CU-like to do math (closer get to finish, the more excited I get)
Me: “Do you ever get bored working in your math book?”
RK-Quiet math time
MS-I like math
ZE-Learn more things, get to finish work like Super Star
SF-“It’s not just all about fun; you get to spend time with your teachers and your friends.”
[Response makes me think that she isn’t quite sure what we’re talking about, so I reiterated what morning work is.]

Don’t Like
RK-Sometimes if you have a lot of things out, it takes some of our recess away because it takes a long time to clean up.
SF-You have to just sit. You can’t talk. You can’t do whatever you want. That’s at recess. And you can’t eat.
CU interjects-If you’re hungry, unless you get breakfast.
Me: Now if you get breakfast, what does that do then? How does…
CU interjects-It takes away your math time.
Me: It takes away your math time. And so do you wish you had more math then?
CU-I wish that morning work was a bit longer.
ML-I wish that morning work was recess. In the morning you do your work; if you didn’t have anything to finish you would just go and play.
Me: What kind of play would you want to do? Anything or would you want to do something in particular like working on the computer or…
ML-Anything…like you could go to the computer lab.

Purpose
*CU-Work on things that you’re not going to work on at the end of the day. [My guess referring to Word Study paper.] Finish up stuff you didn’t do. Math book is if you are finished with everything.
*MS-Finish up things you didn’t finish and practice math.
ML- I wish I could take work to lunch.
RK-Basically, everyday we do something different [surprising to me because we don’t.] like not the same exact thing we did yesterday, so that way you still have something to work on… [finish work]
*[Start new schedule. See Interview with Jen Lawrence.]*
*[Compare Purpose to Teacher Thoughts on Purpose]*

**Yellow Group** (JA, AB, LB, KH, JC, MS, LH)
8:40-16:05 7.5 minutes

**Like**
AB-Because I like when you work in your math book?
[Discuss when morning work is]
LB- Papers to finish
JC-I like breakfast.
JA-I like to work in my math book, too.

AB-I like about morning work that I get to talk to my friends a little bit and since I love math, I get to work in my math book and do math.
[This doesn’t surprise me because she is out of her seat a lot. See Seating Chart Observations.]
MS-So I can finish up work

**Don’t like**
JC-Working in my math book
MS-I don’t like working in my math book either
JA-I do not like anything about it.

Me: So, you like morning work.
JA-Yeah.
LB-I don’t like working in my math book.
LH-I don’t like working on this page I am.

Me: In your math book?
LH-Yeah.
AB-I don’t like working on the page I’m on; it’s a snake page and it’s very hard, but I like everything else.

**Purpose**
*JA-Catch-up on work
*LB-To get your mind ready for school
*JC-Get your brain in school-mode, not home, so you can remember all the school stuff
*[Compare to Teacher Thoughts on Purpose]*

**Blue Group** (KF, LR, BN, EK, SM, TB, KB)
16:05-26:30 10.5 minutes

**Like**
LR-Sometimes doing a Super Star if there is one
KB-Coloring a Super Star paper
Me: Do you like coloring? Thumbs up.
*6 out of 7 like coloring.
EK-Talking to your friends. [No surprise there. See Seating Chart Observations and Teacher Thoughts]
BN-Doing the Super Star
KF-Working in the math book
Me: Thumbs up for working in your math book.
*4 out of 7.

**Don’t like**
BN-That it has to be really quiet. [We fixed the voice requirement on 3.18.08]
EK- I don’t like I when it’s loud. It gives me a headache.
LR-The noise
KB- I don’t like when people are talking to me whenever I’m trying to work.
KF- I don’t like morning work.
Me: What don’t you like about morning work?
KF- Coloring. Finishing up papers [We then discuss what happens when you don’t finish]
Me: Do you feel pressured to get your work done?
KF- Yeah.
Thumbs up if you feel pressured to get work done.
7 out of 7. [EK asks me to explain what it means.]
Do you feel like Mrs. Sheehan, Mrs. Glass, and I are really trying to get you to get work done and you
don’t feel comfortable with having to do that?
Whole group.
TB- I’m a person who likes to move, not just sit there. [Find interesting because he’s a breakfast eater
and spends less time than many other students at his desk actually working. Maybe this is why he gets
breakfast.]
Me: Does anyone else not like the fact that we have to stay in our seats? And not able to get up and
move around? Thumbs up.
7 out of 7.
Me: If you could get up and more around, what would you want to do?
KF- Recess!
TB- Go outside!
EK- Do recess the whole day as soon as we get in we can go outside and move around as much as we
want!
Me: Like P.E.?
They begin to chant “Scooterville, Scooterville”
SM- I don’t like to do work at morning work; I just like to do recess.
LR- Instead of morning work, do math.
Me: Math books or quilts?
LR- Quilts
Me: Maybe if we had some other types of math activities, you would like morning work time better?
LR- nods her head yes.

Purpose
KB- So we can learn
LR- To learn a little bit in the beginning of school. It helps our body learn more. The tools at the top
desk help us learn more.
EK- Working in our math book [voice is bored and unenthusiastic]
*Group is bored by the end of survey…

Green Group (JK, LJ, TK, EP, EW…ML not present)
26:30-39:00 12.5 minutes
TK comments on recording
JK asks to go to the bathroom
Like
LJ - You can go to the bathroom. [Redirection required] That you can work…in your math book and
sometimes Super Star
Me: Do you like both or is there one that you like more than another?
[Can’t hear answer]
TK makes a comment about the exercise balls on top of cupboard
TK-Doing math and going to the bathroom
EW-Working in my blue math book and almost getting it finished

Don’t like
TK-Doing the lunch choices
[Go into a discussion about wishing we could get whatever we wanted for lunch. Tacos.]  
LJ-I don’t like to turn in my folders because I forget sometimes
*TK-Super Star. Doing my math [Maybe why he is easily distracted and distracts others. See Seating Chart observations. See Teacher Thoughts. See Parent Survey]
EP-Putting down my chair.
[Distracted comments about tacos, recording, drinks]
JK-I just don’t like school…because the only thing I like is recess and I like gym [begins making repetitive comments]
[Prompting]
*TK-I don’t like reading when done with blue math book [We have not read during morning work time for a few months!!!]
JK-Putting down my chair
*LJ-I don’t like when we’re done with morning work because I love morning work; my math book.  
[Surprising. Compare to MW Math book results and MW observation 3.26.08]
Me: Do you like talking to friends?
LJ-Yeah.
Me: Sitting in seat?
LJ-Don’t like.
EP- Sit on desk
Me: Would you rather do work at the carpet with lapboard?
[Off task about laptop]

Purpose
TK-Start off our day on the right foot
Me: Does it help us?
TK-Yes.
Me: How?
TK-Doing your math and our work at our desk, even at our home, even at our dog
[Inappropriate comment about dog]
LJ-To make us smart
EW-Makes us good at math
EP comments about coats falling down and knocking down the classroom
JK [comments on riding skateboards in the hallway] I would not [can’t hear] pictures
TK gets up to sharpen pencil

Reflection 3.1.08
Red group:
-cooperative and took it seriously
-like working in math book (3 said)
-don’t like to sit
-breakfast cuts into math time
-wishes: morning work could be longer, have indoor recess during morning work unless have to finish something
-purpose: finish up and math
Yellow group:
- some like math book (2)
- some don’t like math book (3)
- like to talk with friends
- purpose: finish up, math, prepare mind

Blue group:
- First to say like Super Star (I found this surprising. I figured most would say that.)
- wish: recess
- Purpose: So we can learn…aka Don’t know, work in math book
* A little silly, not as helpful, but gave answers that I expected. I expected them to like Super Star.
* How compare to Seating Chart observations and Teacher Thoughts

Green group:
- silly and inappropriate
- easily side-tracked
- 2 like math book (EP and EW)
- The rest don’t like to work and were off-task
* How compare to Seating Chart observations and Teacher Thoughts

Class:
Most don’t like to sit and be quiet
Most feel the purpose is to finish work and do math

Surprises:
- LH-Get our minds ready for the day
- EK-Doesn’t like it when it’s loud; she’s our loudest one!
- Length of survey increased; I figured it would be the reverse, but the lower ability level had more trouble focusing and got side-tracked easily.
- KF-I don’t like morning work. This could explain why he is out of his seat so much.

Claims beginning to form:
- Students that like working in their math books are more inclined to sit and do work during Morning Work time.
- The more trouble there is with a group of students with staying on task, the more trouble there will be with them staying on task independently.
- The higher the ability level, the higher the number of students interested in math books.
- The lower the ability level, the higher the number of students interested in coloring.
Student Survey 1: Additional Questions

Present for survey: 26
Me: Do you like Morning Work?
   Y  3
   N  6
   Semi  15

Me: Do you feel like you get a good amount done during Morning Work?
   Y  8 (RK, ML*, LJ*, MiS, JA, TK, BN, LH*)

* indicate surprises because I don’t feel that they accomplish hardly anything at all during the morning work time. See math book results.

Appendix E: Seating Chart Observation
Morning Work Observations

Date: 1
Observer:

✓ = on task
X = on task + talking
W = work on desk
O = out of seat
T = talking & not working
P = sharpening pencil
C = long time at cubbies

# of papers in Needs Work basket before school:

# of papers in Needs Work basket after Morning Work:

# of breakfast eaters:
Breakfast choice:
Morning Work Observations

Date: 3.10.08
Observer: E-S

Other factors:
- Starting M.M. early by drill today
- Everyone got glasses.

Task: Finish Super Star
or
Math book (put black circle around problems)

Teacher directions:
- Get your stuff from PBIS
- Check whiteboard
- Please check the whiteboard (first said this ever)
- Emma & Leah hurry
- Mallory sit down
- Score meter (handout)
- Noise level okay

Needs Work Basket:
- Work basket before school = 27
- Work basket after morning work = 52

# of papers in needs work basket:
- Before school = 27
- After morning work = 52

# of breakfast eaters = 4
- Breakfast choice: Cereal bar

V = on task
W = on task + talking
D = out of seat
W = work on desk
T = talking & not working
P = sharpening pencil
C = long time at cubbies
Date: 4.9.08
Observer: E.S.

Morning Work Observations

Voice-o-meter showing: Neutral level, quite.

# of papers in Needs Work basket before school: NA
# of papers in Needs Work basket after Morning Work: NA

Breakfast choice: Cereal

# of breakfast eaters: 5

Legend:

T = talking & not working
W = work on desk
O = out of seat
P = sharpening pencil
C = long time at cubbies

Done w/10

She's done w/10

Done w/10
### Seating Chart Observation Results

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<th>3.20.08 changes</th>
<th>3.20.08 /#45</th>
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Appendix F: Survey Math
Survey of some students after a very productive math time
2.28.08

Task: Copying their quilt pattern onto a large quilt paper.

Why did you get so much work done today?
AB: I wasn't talking and I was just getting my work done.
JA: Yeah. I wasn't talking and I was just getting my work done, too.

Did you like what we were working on?
AB: Yes
JA: It was kind of challenging to make it over and over again.
CU: I liked coming up with a way of copying my quilt pattern.
JK and TK: It’s fun and you get to color.

Reflection on this quick, informal survey
My thoughts on this: For JK and TK who struggle academically, this was something that they can do with success. There were 7 or 8 students who were very focused; just coloring the whole time without talking. They were asking for quilts faster than I could put them out on the counter!
Appendix G: Seating Chart Observation Timing

**Time Prior to:** on first day of self-monitoring

1. Walk to cubby
2. Sit down
3. Start working

**Breakfast Clean Up Bell:** 8:47

**Legend:**
- V = Not talking
- W = On task + talking
- T = Work on desk
- C = Out of seat
- P = Sharpening pencil
- E = Long time at cubbies

**Absence:**

- # of papers in Needs Work basket before school:
- # of papers in Needs Work basket after Morning Work:
- # of breakfast eaters:
- Breakfast choice:
Dear Parents,

I hope this note finds you well as the weather gets nicer. I am continuing my research in first grade with my interest in morning work. Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out the first survey that I sent home. This second survey will be the final one. I would appreciate your help as I develop my understanding of what it is to be a teacher through this project. Please return by Wednesday, April 9, 2008.

Thank you!
Miss Seigfried

My Name _____________________

My First Grader's Name ___________________

Please return by Wednesday, April 9, 2008.

Read the statements below and circle the option that is best in your situation.

1.) My first grader interrupts me while I am working or talking.

   Strongly Agree            Agree            Disagree            Strongly Disagree

2.) My first grader has mentioned a new schedule for morning work.

   Yes                     No

3.) My first grader enjoys doing school work at home. (Ex. Word Study homework, math homework, reading, or practicing sight words)
Reflection/Analysis of Parent Survey #2  
4.10.08

Question #1  
Surprises:  
-MaL’s mom said Strongly Agree that MaL interrupts while talking. I say Strongly Disagree.

Agreement:  
-TB’s mom said agree. I would have to agree with her.
-KF’s mom said Strongly Agree. I would say Agree because he does interrupt when he is upset, and then he’s hostile.

Out of 21 responses:  
Strongly Agree: 3  
Agree: 14  
Disagree: 4  
Strongly Disagree: 0

I was thinking along the lines of inquiring about your first grader distracting you when you are trying to complete a task. Maybe I didn’t word it exactly right on this parent survey. It does point to something else though. A lot of kids interrupt.

Question #2  
TK and CU are the only ones that said anything about the new morning work schedule.

Question #3  
I’m not sure about question 3. There aren’t any responses that stand out to me.
Appendix I: Student Survey 2
Student Survey #2
4.4.08

On days when we have games instead of math books, do you feel more relaxed and happy?
Y:
  KH  TB
  BN  JC
  LJ  JK
  MeL  KB
  AB  LH
  ZE  MiS
  RK  MaS
  JA  KF
  SF  LR

Thumbs up if you like games more than math book work.
  KH  SM
  BN  JC
  LJ  TB
  MeL  JK
  AB  LR
  TK  LH
  RK  MiS
  JA  KF
  EP  MaL
  EW

Do you like the new schedule for morning work more than working in your math book everyday?
  KH  CU
  BN  JC
  LJ  KB
  MeL  LH
  AB  MiS
  TK  MaS
  RK  EW
  JA  SM
  EP

When we work in math books, how do you feel?
*KH: Fine
*BN: Good
*LJ: Alright
*RK: Okay
*EP: Bored….takes a long time at breakfast table
*SM: Not happy….takes a long time at breakfast table and doesn’t do the work properly
*CU: Good…top reading group
*JC: Excellent…surprising because in first survey said he didn’t like working in math book
*TB: Bored…eats breakfast at school
KB: Okay  
LH: Fine  
MiS: Okay  
MeL: Tired…easily distracted  
ZE: Really, Really Good…top reading group  
JK: Bored…has to be redirected, struggles with focus issues  
*LR: Okay

* indicates which of the students that offered their thoughts are the ones that didn’t complete the minimum of 10 problems during the first week of the new schedule.

*When talking during Morning Work, what do you talk about?*

(Yellow Star) SF: What the numbers equal.  
CU: Talk about new math book  
MeL: What people do

(Blue Stars) EW: Movies…interesting because he doesn’t talk to the people at his desk-set as far as I can see  
LH: stuff, anything  
LJ: Stuff  
BN: Stuff

(Green Stars) KB: Disney  
AB: Getting a puppy

(Red Stars) SM: Talk to EP about Star Wars

Reflection/Analysis
It seems as though students do not mind working in their math books, but they do like to have a bit of variety in their morning routine. The things that they talk about are as I suspected. It was my guess that their conversations generally did not relate to the activity.
Appendix J: Self-Monitoring

Did I follow the voice-o-meter?

Did I quickly get my stuff off and get seated?

Did I get down to work?
Did I follow the voice-o-meter?

Did I quickly get my stuff off and get seated?

Did I get down to work?

Had to be redirected 4 times to sit down & get to work.
Self-Monitoring #1
3.27.08
Task: Finish Super Star and then work in math book (old schedule)

Number of self-evaluations that I completely disagree with: 2 (LB and JK)
LB- She took 6 minutes to get her stuff off and get seated, and then 4 minutes to get down to work; despite marking smiley faces for all 3 questions.
JK- He marked himself as smile on all three questions, even though he took five minutes to get to the breakfast table, and took five minutes to eat his breakfast.

Number of self-evaluations that I partly disagree with: 3 (SM, RK, and EP)

Number of self-evaluations that I slightly disagree with: 2 (MeL and KF)

Honest about poor behavior: 1 (LJ)

Number of straight faces: 3 (TK, LJ, RK)

Self-Monitoring #2
4.1.08
Task: Catch-up work and then games (new schedule)

I had trouble with this survey because I wasn’t timing the students or writing down specific observations, so I wasn’t watching each student’s actions. I don’t feel that I can say whether I agree with their markings or not, except for LJ’s self-monitor sheet. She marked herself for smiley faces for all three questions, even though she was redirected four times to sit down and get to work. I can comment, however, on the number of straight faces.

Number of straight faces: 6....3 from KF, 1 MaL (Did I get down to work), 1 RK (Did I get my stuff off and get seated), and 1 EW (Did I get my stuff off and get seated)

*TK on first survey colored in smile and straight face of first question and skipped the second one, but completed the third question. For this survey, he colored in all three faces for the first question, the rest are blank.
Appendix K: Teacher Survey 1  Seigfried, Glass, and Sheehan
Survey Emily Seigfried, intern in Colleen Sheehan’s first grade classroom
2.28.08

How is the noise level?
-too loud

How many independent workers? 11
-MaS, BN, EW, MiS, JA, MaL, CU, SF, ZE, EP, KH

How many are easily distracted or distract others?
-JK, LH, KB, EK, MeL, TK, LJ, JC, AB, and LB

Productivity?
-Depends on the student. For some it is high for what I expect from a first grader; others it is low for what I expect from a first grader.

Survey Kelly Glass K-2 Failsafe Para in Colleen Sheehan’s first grade classroom
2.28.08

How is the noise level?
-Sometimes too loud. Typical of every class we’ve had so far.

How many independent workers? 6
-MaL, MiS, JA, BN, RK (depending), ZE; others can be independent, but they’re chatty. Independent, but easily distracted.

Who is easily distracted or who is distracts others?
-JC, JK, SM (sometimes), [LH, KB, EK—we discussed these three. About EK “She just can’t stop talking!”] “There aren’t many that can sit and get work done.”

Who can talk and work?
-ZE, MiS, RK, CU, JA, SF, KF (when he sits down)

Who are the workers that don’t talk?
-ZE and MiS

Lunch problems: It was difficult figuring out where to move kids to if needed a seat change because there are problems wherever I move people.

TB can get crazy.

On-task indicators:
“When the noise level goes down, more people can actually focus. There’s always somebody chatting, even if a teacher is talking.”

“With coloring or things they enjoy more (math survey questions), they are more focused.”
“J* is more focused with things he can easily succeed at.”

Teacher Survey of Colleen Sheehan  
3.6.08 by Emily Seigfried

Noise level?
-Don’t feel like it’s too loud. Like lunch, they need to socialize. They’re excited to see each other.
Our day is constantly structured

Independent workers
Red Stars: ZE; everybody, but EP
Yellow Stars: ML, CU; everybody, but Jamie
Blue Stars: Everybody, but TK and LJ
Green Stars: All

Distracted or distracters:
-JK both
-JC both
-TB both……[I didn’t think of him]
-AB distracted
-EK both
-CU distracter
-LJ distracted

Talk and work
MS
SF
KB …..[I feel differently]
MS
RK

Quiet workers
MS
ML
EW
ZE…..she didn’t say, but I brought up
KH is quiet, but don’t know how productive is
MS likes to get things done; she’s a doer

What she would like to see:
Get in the room quicker
Get stuff away
Get settled
Get a little bit done
“At this age, they are very social. Depends on the student; some get work done and some do not.”

“I need them do something independently. I have papers that I need to sort out. They don’t need to do a lot, but some work. The kids who need to do work are the breakfast eaters.”
Appendix L: Teacher Reflection  3.25.08
Emily Seigfried

I feel like all I do is walk around the room looking for things that I should tell students.
‘Sit down’
‘Get to work’

I feel like a broken record. It’s sometimes stressful to get everything done and manage the behavior. It’s draining. It’s chaotic. It’s morning work time.
Appendix M: Math Book Results

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<th>3.5.08 Purple Line/Circle</th>
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Per Day

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Goal per week: 10
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### Average Per Day

Compiling Morning Work math book problems:

- I calculated averages based on the number of days they marked.
- For coloring, each section per color marked counts as 1 problem. Ex: Marked that they colored green parts of picture. I counted there are 4 green parts of picture = 4 problems.
- Breakfast eaters on a regular basis, not necessarily everyday; so I marked them as breakfast eaters
- “Not clear” on days when it was hard to tell how many problems done
- SS = Super Star Students supposed to color Super Star, something that for most can be easily finished during morning work time.
Appendix N: Conversation with Mentor
2.1.08

Colleen gave me some possible ideas of what to do today. She mentioned talking with Jen Lawrence. She also mentioned that we could use some sort of incentive to help students be motivated to finish their work.
Appendix O: Reflection on Purpose of Morning Work
2.27.08

What is the purpose of morning work time?

There are a couple of purposes for morning work time in the classroom. An important part of morning work time is starting the day off well. However, in Room 27, I often feel at this scenario will never play out. Two difficult times of the day for me as a teacher are morning work time and silent reading because I am consistently getting on the kids about making sure that they are doing what they need to be doing. This constant nagging does not start the day off well for me or for the students who aren’t on-task. But what do they really need to be doing?

The purpose of morning work from a teacher’s point of view is to keep the students busy while he or she takes attendance, records the lunch count, and checks students’ folders for notes from home. The teacher feels pressured to complete the morning routine in a timely fashion. “Morning Work” would look like the following: students would be seated at their desks with workbooks or unfinished work in front of them. Students’ pencils would be going across the page at a not rushed, but constant pace. No one would be out of his or her seat. The sounds of the classroom would be hushed voices and the gentle scratching of pencils on paper. This gradual start to the day is helpful for setting a good tone. By having a task for students to complete, they are more settled and self-controlled than if left to their own devices. I experienced this at summer camp as a puppetry teacher. If I set the campers to work right away, they were easier to manage and had more on-task time than when I let them do their own thing until all the members of the puppetry class arrived.

The purpose of morning work from a student’s point of view is probably quite different than that of a teacher. A student would more than likely say that they enjoy socializing with friends and that they wish they could talk to people at other desk-sets too. One thing they probably wouldn’t like is all the “shushing” that goes on and nagging from the teacher. The noise level of chatting and an occasional shriek would probably be thought to be okay among students.

The purposes of morning work are varied depending on with whom one speaks. Is one view more important than another? Personally, it is nice to have a quiet environment to work in during this hectic part of the day. It is also important that students complete any unfinished work during this time so that they don’t have to do it at recess. I do realize that students like to be able to talk with friends after being apart for half a day. A balance can be struck if both parties are willing to make a few sacrifices. The teacher must be willing to allow some socializing and students must make the effort to get an appropriate amount of work done.
Appendix P: Meeting with building PDAs
2.11.08

Ideas:
- Seating Chart Observations: Observe a few days a week
- “When I’m wearing sunglasses, you can’t see me” in other words, you can’t talk to me when I have sunglasses on.

Math Books:
- Mark what accomplished using a colored pencil
- Date where start and finish
- Tell them that at the end of the week, please be on pg. ____

Incentives for being done:

Voice-o-meter: I want to try it

Jodi can take notes for me

Morning Meeting
- Explain what’s happening and looking for
- What does on-task behavior look like and sound like
- Make a chart with one side have an eye at the top and the other an ear at the top
- Role-play behaviors

Self-monitoring
- Walk past off-task students and help them accurately rate themselves
Appendix Q: First grade and Kindergarten observations
Observing Morning Work in Kim Bryan’s first grade classroom
2.27.08

Number of adults in classroom: 4- Kim Bryan (teacher), Mike Dissen (intern), Kelly Lloyd (K-2 Failsafe para), and a para with a specific student
Kelly Lloyd does lunch choices

Mike Dissen circulates, talks to kids

Morning chores: lunch choice, turn in yellow folder, finish work

They eat breakfast at their desk (4 students). Everyone is at their desks.

Some are silly.

No one is up. Noise level is fairly low. This is surprising to me because teachers are talking.

Kim Bryan says, “Okay breakfast bunch, let’s go!”

“Working” she says to a student, who is off-task and distracting another student

Only a handful are actually working. These few are quiet, writing on a page. [Indicator of on-task behavior] Some have workbooks actually out, but they are talking and making exaggerated facial expressions.

[Bell rings]
Kim says, “First graders, I’m putting the voice-o-meter on no talking. I want 2 minutes of quiet work. Breakfast eaters, finish up.”

Student starts to talk. Kim says, “______, there’s no talking.” “Shh.” As she works at a near-by computer.

Kim says, “I love how my tables are all working quietly.”

Kim at the computer, Mike at table with folders.

If students have trouble working at their desk (i.e. get distracted), she moves them to a quiet spot.

Routine: Morning workbook everyday.

8:50 Kim says, “Bell Ringer.” A student goes up to the front of the room and rings a bell.

Kim says, “Breakfast away. Get morning work out.” The rest of the class to carpet for Morning Meeting.

Thoughts from observing in Kim’s room:
- It was very quiet. Quieter than I expected it would be.
- I like the voice-o-meter.
- I like the idea of two minutes of silent working toward the end of morning work time.
- I’m not sure about having breakfast eaters work while morning meeting is going on.
-I like that the breakfast eaters are at their desks.
-I like the idea of having students who have trouble working move to a quiet spot.

Observing Morning Work in Mary California’s first grade classroom
2.28.08

Number of adults in classroom at the time: 1-Mary California (teacher). Lisa Wagner (K-2 Failsafe para) came in as I was leaving.

Teacher checking folders, doing things around room

Students talking, eating breakfast (3) at the breakfast table, some read the morning message, math work to finish up (don’t have to do it during recess, although Mary says otherwise toward end of observation time)

Student gets up and starts to ask a question. Mary says, “P*, you need to sit down and get to work.”

12 are out of seat, but Mary doesn’t speak to them.

Noise level is high. Students talking loudly. Only 8 at desks. 4 are on-task. (2 are discussing the task).

1 student at breakfast table talking to desk-set behind him, not eating.

8:42
Now 6 at breakfast table

“Gentleman, C*, M*, lunch choice!”

8:43
“Mi*, you have many papers on your desk. Sit down and get to work”
“Put those in backpack”
Now noise level drops. 10 at desk.
Breakfast eaters seated, eating, talking.
4 out of seat.

“Mi*, you need to get a quilt pattern done.”

“Ni* this bag needs to go in backpack”

“N*…”

“You need to be at your desk. There is work! (He was on the carpet, doing something else, which is what they’re supposed to do if done and is apparently what some students desire to do. He was looking at a book with N*. His work was not done, obviously.)

At desks: 10 on-task. 2 off-task.
8:46 “Freeze please. I’m going to double check the lunch choices.”
Mi* is partially working, but is really talking to A who is eating while talking.

If done with work, you can look at a book on the carpet with a friend.

8:47
Noise level is okay. Some regular talking, but not too loud. Some students are talking about the task, about book (those on carpet); some off-task shrieks and chatter.

On-task students: looking at paper, writing or coloring on it, quietly talking about task.

8:50
“C*, you will be doing this during recess because you did not get this done.”
To class: “Give me your papers. Get cleaned up.”

My thoughts about Mary’s room:
- I felt that she was trying to get everything done that needed to be done and in the process couldn’t watch her class. How is one adult supposed to manage everything?
- I felt that her room was similar to mine. There wouldn’t be as many out of seats in my room because we have three adults to monitor.
- Why are Mary and my classroom so much alike in terms of behavior and Kim’s room so different? There were the same number of students on-task between the rooms and the on-task behaviors were the same. The noise level was a lot different though. Rather than have loudness, hectic, and out of seats; Kim’s room was calm, fairly quiet, and everyone was seated, including the teachers.

- I think I would like to have background music during morning work time, maybe it would have a similar affect as writer’s workshop?

MW Observation in Jess Cowan’s Room on 3.3.08
Emily Seigfried observing

Number of adults in room: 2, Jess Cowan (mentor), Alicia Motta (intern)

E sits with a book
“Nice job, E!” –Ms. M

More come in; chatting and giggling.

“Look, E already has his book!” –Ms. C

“If you’re eating breakfast, could you eat over there?” Referring to a specific table. Five students eating.

“J, get your jobs done!” –Ms. M
“Ja, get your jobs done!” - Ms. M

“Check for Friday folder and get your stuff done.” – Ms. C

8:32
“Shh!” – Ms. C

J giggling.
“J!”
“J, Ja, and L. Let’s see if you can be done and on the carpet by the time the bell rings!” – Ms. C

“I can hear you all the way over here. I don’t see much eating.” – Ms. M

8:35
“I have friends who are trying to read and you’re too loud.” – Ms. M

8 are on the carpet quietly reading in special spots.
5 getting things away or picking a book quietly.
4 eaters. 1 is loud.

Teachers doing things and talking with students.

Other than breakfast eaters, it is pretty quiet.

By 8:38
4 more comments to breakfast eaters

“J’s done! He’s gonna make it!”
8:39
Ms. M moves over to breakfast table

“My friends on the carpet, you are doing a very nice job today.” – Ms. M

Readers: Whispering and looking at books.

Former breakfast eaters are now on the carpet and distracting others.

“Look how nicely everyone is looking at a book today. Nice job!” – Ms. C

8:41
Noise level is at talking

“Let me shake your hand for doing a nice job with eating breakfast today.” – Ms. M

My thoughts:
It seems as though the class enjoys being able to pick out a book to look at, if they can do it quietly with a friend. Maybe on occasion, I can include this into morning work time. We don’t really make a lot of comments to the breakfast eaters in our class. Maybe we should make more comments, which might speed them along; however, the point of my project is how can we free the teachers up and have the kids be independent. If we’re constantly checking up on the breakfast eaters, it seems that that would defeat the purpose.
Appendix R: Voice-o-meter and Class Meetings

- quickly getting their coats off
- looking at papers or math book
- writing the answers
- at your desk
- at the breakfast table
- counting on fingers
- see people getting down to work

Consequences:
- stay in for recess
- do for homework
- put it into Neats Work Basket to do tomorrow
- give 1 reminder
  move to a quiet table (table by edge the window)

- quiet (whispering or hush voices)
- hear zippers of coats coming off
- hear pencils on the paper
- quietly turning pages
- chairs tapping as they come down
Notes and Reflections on Class Meeting and Aftermath  
3.4.08

On 3.3.08, we had a class meeting during which we discussed what morning work time should look like and sound like to someone walking in the room from Mrs. Bryan’s classroom. Students came up with really good things for what it should look like, but I felt that the “sound like” was setting an environment up that was too quiet and that we would never attain. The consequences that we came up with for not adhering to the suggested characteristics of morning work were: 1 reminder, move to a quiet table, stay in from recess, do for homework, do during next morning work time. I wondered if having this class meeting would really have an effect on their morning work habits. I kind of hoped that it wouldn’t because Colleen would be out of the classroom and I wouldn’t get to make any formal observations using my seating chart observation sheet. After school on the day of the class meeting, I copied the notes from the whiteboard to a chart and hung it in the room. On the whiteboard this morning, I wrote the list of things to do and at the bottom I wrote, “See if you can find the morning work poster.” During morning meeting, we discussed where the chart was hung (most kids had already located it by morning meeting, though they made no mention of it to me) and that I hope it works as a reminder.

Notes/Reflection on Re-evaluating the Morning Work Chart  
3.18.08

During Morning Meeting, we re-evaluated the Morning Work indicators. The main change was with the “what we should hear” portion of the chart. Most students agreed with changing the voice level from whispering and hushed voices to medium and hushed voices.

When I went to take “hear zippers of coats coming off,” “hear pencils on the paper,” and “quietly turning pages” off the list, one student, CU in the Red Group, spoke up.

“But what if our zippers are loud?” CU

“Well I don’t think we’d be able to hear it over medium voices. Do you?” I said.

He continued a little bit.

I said that the “what we should see” is good.

TK Green Group, pointed to the consequences section, “What about these?”

“I think these are pretty good.” (After I reminded them of them and asked if they agreed)

CU spoke up again. “Couldn’t ‘stay in from recess’ be ‘take home for homework’? Like if it’s the end of the day, after recess, on…Friday?”

“Well, this chart is about Morning Work.” I said.
Role Play Skit for Monday, 3.24.08

[Yellow and Red Stars are at their seats. The Green Stars are on the Gray carpet with their chairs. The Blue Stars are by the mailboxes with their chairs. Kelly Glass and Emily Seigfried go over to their cubbies with their stuff. Kelly gets her stuff off quickly, but Emily dawdles. Kelly comes over to the table and gets to work. Emily eventually comes over and they are seated at the table by the sink. Kelly is working in her math book and Emily is looking around. She gets up a lot to go stand by the cubbies and talk to someone in the Red Stars. Occasionally, she sits back down and chats with Kelly.]

Kelly (as coloring): Did you watch Hannah Montana last night?

Emily (loudly): Yes! Did you?

Kelly (looks up): No, I had to go to bed.

Emily (still not working): Well, you missed a good one! Oliver…

Emily: Oh, there was the bell. Don’t forget to fill out the sheet of paper Miss Seigfried gave us. What were the questions she wanted us to answer?

Kelly: Did I follow the voice-o-meter?
   Did I quickly get my stuff off and get seated?
   Did I get down to work?

Emily: Oh yeah. Let’s see… Did I follow the voice-o-meter? No, I think I was a little too loud, so I’ll color the straight face. Did I quickly get my stuff off and get seated? [ask class] Frown face. Did I get down to work? [ask class] Straight face. [Look over sheet of paper] Gee, I guess I better work on these things.

Kelly: Let’s see…Did I follow the voice-o-meter? Yeah, I’ll color a smiley face. Did I quickly get my stuff off and get seated? Yeah, I’ll color the smiley face. Did I get down to work? Yeah, I’ll put a smiley face.

Emily (to class): What differences did you see in Mrs. Glass’ behavior during Morning Work compared to my behavior? Who was honest when answering the questions? We both were honest! That’s an important part of this. It won’t work otherwise. What do you think I want you to do when you come in the morning? We will begin using the smiley faces on Thursday, so I will give you the sheet of paper with the faces and questions.

Follow-up thoughts to Role-Play on 3.24.08
Emily Seigfried

Interesting to me that the ones who I have trouble with during morning work were the ones to suggest the right answers.

Colleen said that at this age, they can tell you the right answers; it’s just the application of it that is difficult.
Appendix S: Teacher Reflection 3.17.08
Emily Seigfried

My room: Word search for St. Patrick’s Day (right after Spring Break)
Medium voices
Everyone seated

I feel more relaxed. This is nice. I feel like I can breathe.
Appendix T: Quick Poll of the Class 4.1.08

Me: Did you like the new set-up for morning work of being able to play math games if your work was done?

[I did not ask for thumbs up for this, but I got many. 20.]

Conversation with mentor Colleen Sheehan 4.1.08

In a quick conversation, I mentioned that the atmosphere felt very relaxed and the kids seemed happy on the first day of being able to play games. Colleen sincerely agreed.

Self-Reflection 4.1.08
Event: First day those with completed work can play math games around room.

I say it definitely feels relaxed. The noise level is okay. The kids are excited about the new schedule.
I’ve noticed that when I put a goal in front of them, they are more focused and determined. As opposed to the math book where there is no obvious standard to meet. (See seating chart observations for behavior comparison.)

**Examples**

1.) 2.28.08 My reading station  
**Goal:** Write 3 sentences about the Super Star during my 15-minute reading station.  
**Consequence:** Finish sentences during recess  
**Number that finish during recess:** 4  
-LJ,  
-JK,  
-TK,  
-EW  
**Task appropriate given time:** Yes. Only one or two students that typically don’t complete task. For JK, he requires direct teacher help. When working with the green group, only EP and EW work independently. It is difficult to work one-on-one with JK when there are 3 others that need at least some help.

2.) 2.29.08 Morning Work  
**Goal:** Color/finish coloring Super Star  
**Consequence:** Finish during recess  
**Task appropriate given time:** Yes. The only students that might not be able to finish in time are the breakfast eaters. Out of this group, only two needed to do work during recess.  
**Number that finish during recess:** 8  
-LJ: off-task, easily distracted, and slower during morning work time  
-EP: breakfast eater  
-SM: breakfast eater  
-MeL: off-task during morning work; easily distracted  
-EK: off-task during morning work; easily distracts others  
-ZE: on-task but a little bit slower worker because very precise  
-JK: had finish writing portion during morning work time  
-MaL: comes in later  
**Even though a large number had to finish their Super Star during recess, they worked on it quickly so that they would be able to join the other boys and girls during this indoor recess time. They were at their desk-sets by themselves, the other boys and girls are not allowed to talk to recess workers. These students are more inclined to on-task behavior, and they are in the same room as their friends who are playing, so they keep working so they can join their friends.
Conversation with paraprofessional Kelly Glass
4.4.08

“When you tell them they need to play at least one game or they can’t got out for recess, they get started right away. They usually end up playing two or three games, rather than messing around and not completing a game. Even S* gets right down to work!”

The conversation on this day was in regard to a particular student, mentioned here as S* and not wanting to stay in from recess to finish work. It just so happens that this conversation illustrates the difference in student performance on activities when a clear goal and consequence are presented to them.
Appendix V: Not Meeting 10 a Week

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