“Did you put your name on your paper?”:

Increasing Student Independence During Routine Task Completion

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April 23, 2008
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Description of the Teaching Context

As a Professional Development Intern through Penn State University, I have worked in a third and fourth grade multiage classroom at Park Forest Elementary School in the State College Area School District during the 2008-2009 school year. The composition of my third and fourth grade multiage classroom is diverse both socially and academically. The class is composed of eleven looping forth grade students and ten third grade students who are new to my classroom. Of the twenty-one total third and fourth graders, eleven males and ten females make up the class. The class is composed solely of Caucasian students.

For the purposes of describing the behavior patterns and social relationships, I have divided my twenty-one students in four groups. My first group of students includes high achievers and social leaders in the classroom. These students are a positive influence to their peers, as well. Three of my students fell into this category, two girls and one boy. The second of my four groups of students is composed of students who are easy to get along with but have trouble getting work done. These students are very positive, likeable, and have many friends. This group includes six students, four girls and two boys. The third group is composed of the students in my class who are behaviorally quiet and socially anxious to conform. Because of their quiet nature, these students are seldom the cause of any behavior problems in my classroom. Six students compose this group with an even split of three boys and three girls. My final group is composed of students who are nonconformists in regards to their social interaction in the classroom. However, these students, as well as the rest of the students in my class, do not seclude themselves from social interaction. Behaviorally, these students all represent some challenges. All four of these students are oppositional and require additional attention.
Academically, the students in my class encompass a wide range of ability levels. There are six high-achieving students who produce high-quality work that often exceeds expectations across all academic subjects. There are eleven students who are of average ability, with grades averaging from a low A to a high C. Additionally, there are four below grade-level students whose work often does not meet expectations.

Two of the students in my classroom have learning differences for which they qualify for learning support services. One of the two students is in the low-achieving academic group. He has a TSS and requires significant one-on-one attention. The other is of average ability. (See Appendix A for full Inquiry Brief) Very thorough context, which relates to your inquiry!

**Wonderings and Questions**

**Main Wondering**

As we entered the second half of the school year, I observed that many of my students continued to need reminders while completing routine tasks. I wondered what I could do to facilitate their independence during these routine tasks. Through my main wondering, I sought to discover what interventions I could put in place to increase student independence and decrease teacher reminders during routine morning responsibilities.

*How can I improve student independence during routine task completion?*

**Sub-Wonderings**

- How often is teacher intervention necessary during routine task completion?
- How can I decrease distractions during routine task completion?
- How can I increase students’ motivation to complete routine tasks?
- What is the correlation between independence during routine task completion in school and routine task completion at home?
- Excellent questions which all relate to your wondering!
**Data Collection**

**Clear Description of Data Collection**

I conducted several different types of data collection throughout my inquiry. It was my goal to explore the effects of the interventions I introduced on students’ independence during routine task completion. I focused my in class data collection on four specific tasks. These tasks included students putting their names on their morning DOL slips, signing-up for lunch, appropriately participating in morning sharing, and not bringing distracters to the carpet during morning meeting. I also involved parents via a parent survey.

**BEFORE**

Before introducing any interventions, I collected baseline data. For two weeks, I collected baseline data for each of the tasks mentioned above. One of the routine tasks on which I focused was turning in one’s paper without a name. Because I feel that the act of turning any paper in with one’s name is a routine task, I created an activity for students to participate in on a daily basis. Each morning my students complete DOL (Daily Oral Language) sentences in their word study journals. When I began my baseline data collection, I printed the DOL sentences on slips of paper that I placed on students’ desks each day. Students were directed to complete the slips and turn in to the finished basket. *(See Appendix B for Example DOL Slip #1)*

Additionally, I created and sent home a parent survey. The questions focused on the types of responsibilities students in my classroom have at home. The questions also asked parents if they provide incentives or rewards for their child completing his/her responsibilities. Parents were asked to describe how they feel about their child’s independence level at home when completing his/her responsibilities. It was my goal to compare the parents’ responses with the data I collected in the
classroom to see if there was any correlation between student independence at school and at home when completing routine tasks. *(See Appendix C for Parent Survey and Appendix D for Sample Parent Survey Transcription)*

**DURING**

The majority of my data collection took place while I conducted my inquiry project. Because I was focused on routine task completion, much of my data centered around recording the number of students who did and did not complete the tasks correctly and independently. For my data collection, I chose to focus on four routine tasks that students are expected to complete independently, each day. The tasks on which I chose to collect my data included students signing-up for lunch, putting their names on their morning DOL slips, appropriately participating in morning sharing, and distracters brought to the carpet during morning meeting.

In our classroom, students sign-up for lunch as they enter the classroom. There is also a lunch helper who records the lunch sign-up and reminds students who have forgotten. Teacher reminders occur prior to the lunch helper’s reminders, after the lunch helper’s reminders and if the lunch helper has forgotten to complete his/her job. Each day of my inquiry data collection, I recorded the number of students who needed to be reminded by either a teacher or the lunch helper to sign-up for lunch. The intervention I implemented with the goal of fewer students needing reminders to sign-up for lunch consisted of a whole class discussion on classroom responsibilities and jobs.

Each day, I collected the students DOL slips and recorded who did and who did not include a name on his/her paper. The first intervention I conducted was one meant to increase students’ motivation in putting their names on their papers. Intermittently, I used the student’s DOL slips to line them up for a fun activity such as recess or special. The students who did not write their names
on their papers were called last to line up. The students were made aware why they were called last and what they could do to not be called last the next time. The second intervention I conducted for this task was simply providing a space for students to include their names on the DOL slip. (See Appendix E for Example DOL Slip #2)

One of the sub-wonderings on which my inquiry focused involved the desire to minimize distractions that may hinder independence during routine task completion. Throughout my data collection, I kept track of how many objects my students brought to Morning Meeting that could be a distracter. I classified a distracter as any object that was not needed during Morning Meeting that was also not going to be shared during sharing time. Great idea! By defining it, you are more focused in gathering relevant data. I scanned the circle for distracters and recorded the number two minutes after I began Morning Meeting. After collecting my baseline data, I began implementing a Morning Meeting countdown. First, I would warn students when we were one or two minutes from beginning morning meeting. When I was ready for everyone to join me on the carpet, I announced, “By the time I get to 1, I need everyone to meet me on the carpet in a circle with nothing in your hands, unless you’re sharing.” I continued collecting data for the duration of my inquiry.

Three students are allowed to sign-up for sharing each day. While the student is sharing, other students may ask questions or make comments, but they must be called on by the person who is sharing. They cannot call-out and interrupt the person sharing or have their own conversations during sharing time. Through the progression of my inquiry, I recorded how many call-outs occurred during sharing time. After two weeks of collecting baseline data, I implemented the use of a sharing microphone to our Morning Meeting. I explained to the students that the person who is sharing has the microphone and if you are not holding the microphone, you may not be speaking until it is passed to you.
AFTER

After implementing all of my interventions, I continued my data collection with the goal of comparing the before intervention and after intervention data. I recorded the number of students prompted to sign-up for lunch by either teacher or student reminder. I announced a one-minute Morning Meeting warning. When students came to the circle, I noted the number of distracters present. During sharing, students continued to use the sharing microphone as I recorded the number of sharing call outs. You were very clear in describing your methods for collecting data – all of which were directly related to your wondering and questions.

Data Analysis

Steps Taken to Analyze the Data

Through my data collection, I chose to collect data on tasks that I felt were routine, everyday responsibilities. As I collected data, I focused on two questions for which I was most interested in finding solutions: (1) How can I improve student independence during routine task completion?; (2) What is the correlation between independence during routine task completion in school and routine task completion at home?

The survey I distributed to parents was very useful to help answer my second question. Because only 35% of the parent surveys were returned, I recognized that my analysis would not be representative of my whole class. However, I continued analyzing the data looking for common themes when speaking of their student’s independence level when completing routine tasks at home. I noticed that 5 out of 7 parents mentioned their sons/daughters needing reminders to begin the tasks.

Each day I recorded data during my six week data collection, I tallied how many students needed reminders to remember to sign-up for lunch. Regardless if this was a teacher or peer reminder, I included that reminder in my data. At the end of my data collection period, I compiled
all of these daily checklists into one chart that represents the number of reminders given for lunch sign-ups for each day of the six-week data collection. (See Appendix F for Lunch Sign-Up Reminders Chart)

I analyzed my data from the DOL slips as the students completed the task each day. I used a class list to check off first any students who were absent or not required to participate in DOL completion. After students had completed and handed in their DOL slips, I checked the names off of students who remembered to include his/her name on the slip. At the bottom of each class list, I noted how many students had not included a name on his/her slip. After I collected all six weeks of data, I compiled my findings into a chart that shows the progression of the percentage of students who included names on their papers each day I collected data. (See Appendix G for Percentage of DOL Slips with Names Chart)

Prior to my interventions, students often came to the Morning Meeting circle with distracters. When I began my data collection I tallied how many distracters were present in the circle (books, erasers, pencils, toys, etc.) two minutes after I began Morning Meeting. I continued this data collection through the continuation of my inquiry project. Like my other tasks, I compiled my records into a chart that shows the total number of distracters present each day of my data collection. Additionally, through similar data collection, I recorded the number of student call-outs during Morning Meeting sharing each day I collected data. Following my data collection, I compiled this information into a comprehensive chart that shows the students progression over time in regards to call-outs during sharing. (See Appendix H for Morning Meeting Carpet Distractions Chart and Appendix I for Morning Meeting Sharing Call-outs Chart)

Analysis clearly and concisely explained!

Explanation of Findings
Following my data analysis, I explored many trends and patterns demonstrated by my data. Using these trends and patterns, I have made two claims that are strongly supported by the data I collected.

Claim #1: Student independence during routine task completion can be increased through the use of consistent interventions.

Through my main wondering, I sought to discover what interventions I could put in place to increase student independence and decrease teacher reminders during routine task completion. During my data analysis, I was able to see that all five of the interventions I put into place (a class meeting, lining up with students who put their name on their DOL slip first, including a space for students’ names on DOL slips, a Morning Meeting countdown, and the sharing microphone) were effective in increasing student independence during routine task completion; however, some interventions were more successful than others. Prior to introducing any interventions, the data collected from lunch sign-up reminders, DOL slips, Morning Meeting Carpet Distractions, and Morning Meeting Call-outs showed that students in my classroom needed significant support when completing these tasks.

After collecting baseline data for how many students needed reminders to sign-up for lunch, I found that an average of 4.5 students needed a reminder to sign-up for lunch each day. After introducing the intervention of a class meeting where we discussed classroom responsibilities and expectations, an average of 2.8 students needed a reminder to sign-up for lunch each day.

Following the introduction of students completing their DOL on slips that would be turned in to the finished basket, I found that an average of 71.4% of students remembered to include their names on their slips. After my baseline data collection, I began implementing an intervention that I hoped would increase student motivation when completing this task. I lined the students up for
special and recess based on those who remembered their name. However, I did not conduct this intervention daily. From my data, I found that this intervention was only successful when it was used on a consistent, everyday basis. Even with my own inconsistency, I found that 86% of students remembered to include their names. The second intervention that I implemented for this task was far more successful. After including a space for their names, I calculated that 100% of students in my class remembered their name.

My third routine task, minimizing distractions on the carpet during Morning Meeting is one through which I experienced an increase in independence after the introduction of my Morning Meeting countdown intervention. However, I am not sure this was a necessary task on which to focus. Through my baseline data collection, I found that there were an average of 2.2 distracters brought to the carpet by students. After my intervention, an average of .7 distracters were brought to the carpet.

I observed the biggest increase in student independence during Morning Meeting sharing. Call-outs during morning meeting went from an average of 8 per day to an average of 2.6 per day after the intervention was implemented. However, I feel that most success was demonstrated as students showed ownership and comfort using the sharing microphone. Students understood the purpose of the microphone and used it to facilitate their sharing. One morning, after one student was done sharing, I prompted the second sharer to begin. She turned to sharer one and said,

“Can you pass me the microphone? It’s my turn to share.”

Another morning, a student who wanted to comment interrupted a student who was actively sharing. The student who was sharing waited to answer the student who had called out until he had been passed the microphone. You have strong evidence from multiple sources to support your claim=😊
Claim #2: There is a positive correlation between students’ independence during routine task completion at home and students’ independence during routine task completion at school.

In my data analysis of parent surveys, I noticed that five out of seven parents mentioned that their sons/daughters need consistent reminders or prompting when beginning a task at home but work well after getting started. This correlated positively with the data I collected in my classroom and the basis of Claim #1. As I mentioned above, I observed students experience increased independence during routine task completion through the use of consistent interventions. From the parents’ responses, I am told that students need similar prompts at home in order to commence the desired behavior. With that consistency, students experience success during routine tasks at home and school.

While an overwhelming 71% of participating parents’ surveys support my claim, I must mention that the returned surveys represent only 35% of the whole class. The data that I have collected supports this claim. However, I wonder what the results would look like if they were representative of the entire class. Your evidence would be stronger if you had all parents return your survey, which would have made this claim stronger. You do acknowledge this above!

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

This inquiry has many implications for my own future practice. Many of the interventions I implemented were suggested by veteran teachers or found while conducting educational research. I think this inquiry showed me the value of collaborating with my colleagues to see what works in their classroom, what they have learned through their experience, and how I might use that information to better my own teaching practices. Additionally, it showed me the value of educational research, and how I can translate what is discovered through research into my classroom. *(See Appendix J for Annotated Bibliography)*
I believe that this inquiry has also enhanced my classroom management practices. When consistent interventions are used to remind students of tasks and responsibilities, students are aware of expectations and are less likely to need redirection. Consistent interventions not only help increase student independence, but also establish a routine.

While conducting this inquiry, I have made many personal discoveries about teaching, student behavior, and student learning. I have learned some tools that I can use to increase student independence and student motivation while completing routine classroom tasks. I have also experienced the positive effects of increased student independence. When I provided my students with consistent interventions such as a space for their name on paper, a sharing microphone, and a Morning Meeting countdown, I was able to prompt students in a way that was less teacher-centered than the individual reminders I was giving prior to my inquiry. I am looking forward to utilizing these strategies and all that I have learned through my inquiry in my future teaching.

In reflecting upon this experience, you have been able to think of how this process and your findings will impact you as a teacher in the future. This section is very well-written!
Appendix A

Inquiry Brief

Vanessa Tomasko

Inquiry Brief

28 February 2009

Inquiry Brief

I. Context

As a Professional Development Intern through Penn State University, I have worked in a third and fourth grade multiage classroom at Park Forest Elementary School in the State College Area School District during the 2008-2009 school year. The composition of my third and fourth grade multiage classroom is diverse both socially and academically. The class is composed of eleven looping forth grade students and ten third grade students who are new to my classroom. Of the twenty-one total third and fourth graders, eleven males and ten females make up the class. The class is composed solely of Caucasian students.

For the purposes of describing the behavior patterns and social relationships, I have divided my twenty-one students in four groups. My first group of students includes high achievers and social leaders in the classroom. These students are a positive influence to their peers, as well. Three of my students fell into this category, two girls and one boy. The second of my four groups of students is composed of students who are easy to get along with but have trouble getting work done. These students are very positive, likeable, and have many friends. This group includes six students, four girls and two boys. The third group is composed of the students in my class who are behaviorally quiet and socially anxious to conform. Because of their quiet nature, these students are seldom the cause of any behavior problems in my
classroom. Six students compose this group with an even split of three boys and three girls.

My final group is composed of students who are nonconformists in regards to their social interaction in the classroom. However, these students, as well as the rest of the students in my class, do not seclude themselves from social interaction. Behaviorally, these students all represent some challenges. All four of these students are oppositional and require additional attention.

Academically, the students in my class encompass a wide range of ability levels. There are six high-achieving students who produce high-quality work that often exceeds expectations across all academic subjects. There are eleven students who are of average ability, with grades averaging from a low A to a high C. Additionally, there are four low-achieving students whose work often do not meet expectations.

Two of the students in my classroom have learning differences for which they qualify for learning support services. One of the two students is in the low-achieving academic group. He has a TSS and requires significant one-on-one attention. The other is of average ability.

II. Inquiry Rationale

As an intern in the Professional Development School program, in my third/fourth grade, multi-age classroom, I have had the opportunity to observe the students develop and grow as learners through this year. While many students have grown to be independent workers and thinkers, several students continue to require frequent teacher redirection. These students are not proficient at routine-task completion. Daily expectations continue to be a challenge for these students.

As I began to notice the frequency with which teacher redirection occurred in my classroom, I observed what I believe to be a correlation between teacher redirection, lack of
independence, lack of responsibility, lack of motivation, and distractibility. Since realizing the presence of these types of issues in my classroom, I have become very passionate about trying to help students develop independence during routine task completion.

Through my research, I have gathered several ideas I plan to use as interventions. First, I plan to introduce the presence of a speaker’s microphone to our morning meeting carpet time. Accompanying this intervention will be a discussion on responsibility and a class meeting about what we are seeing, the behaviors we would like to see, and how that will look. The students will also be instructed how the speaking microphone will be used, during our morning meeting. I also wonder how simply bringing the students’ behavior to their attention will affect their motivation to be more responsible and independent. I’m wondering how simple rewards (such as being called first to line up) will affect the students’ motivation to increase their independence when completing routine tasks.

III. Wonderings

• Main Wondering
  o How can I improve student independence during routine task completion?

• Sub-questions
  o How often is teacher intervention necessary during routine task completion?
  o How do distractions impact task completion?
  o What kinds of distractions impact task completion?
  o How can I increase students’ motivation to complete routine tasks?
  o What is the correlation between independence during routine task completion in school and routine task completion at home?

IV. Data Collection Ideas
• Question 1: How often is teacher intervention necessary during routine task completion?

  o Collection methods: observations using a checklist (checklist will include each student’s name as well as a whole group category)

  o During routine task completion or after a students have been given directions to complete a task, any teacher intervention or redirection will be recorded by placing a check mark beside the student’s name or next to the whole group category.

• Question 2: How do distractions impact task completion?

  o Collection methods: documents using students work from both my mentor’s lessons and my own

  o I will be collecting samples of a selection of student work for DOL, (Daily Oral Language) a task students routinely complete each morning after they enter the classroom.

  o I will be taking pictures of student work to judge level of completion after students have been given directions and expectations have been set. For example, I will be collecting writing samples, reading group work, worksheets students complete, etc.

• Question 3: What kinds of distractions impact task completion?

  o Collection methods: observations using anecdotal notes

    ▪ I will be making anecdotal notes of whom or what a student is doing/playing with/looking at/talking to/listening to when he or she appears visibly distracted.

  o Pictures

    ▪ I will be taking pictures of the students, as they are engaging with a distraction.

• Question 4: How can I increase students’ motivation to complete routine tasks?

  o Collection methods: student survey

  o I will be creating a survey to where I will attempt to judge each student’s level of motivation when it comes to task completion.
• Question 5: Is there a correlation between independence during routine task completion in school and routine task completion at home?
  
  o Collection method: parent survey

  o I will be creating an optional survey that will be sent home to parents/guardians. Through the survey, I will attempt to gather information about each student’s level of independence at home (chores, homework completion, responsibilities). I will compare this information to the evidence I collect for other questions in regards to routine task completion at school.

V. Projected Timeline

**Week 1 (February 2-6)**

• Finalize wondering

• Compose sub-questions

• Brainstorm data collection for each sub-question

**Week 2 (February 9-13)**

• Write inquiry brief

• Research

• Write annotated bibliography

• Create observation checklist

• Give observation checklist to my mentor; ask if she would record any instances of individual or whole group teacher redirection on checklist when she is teaching small group or when I am out of the classroom

**Week 3 (February 16-20)**

• Implement observation checklist in the classroom

• Take anecdotal notes of distractions
  
  o As the students arrive on the carpet for morning meeting and writing
During independent work time after students have been given directions and expectations have been set

- Collect and take pictures of student work (baseline data)
  - DOL Monday-Friday
  - Writing samples
  - Worksheets completed by students
- Create student survey and parent survey

**Week 4 (February 23-27)**

- Continue collecting baseline data
- Ask my mentor and the principal for approval for my parent survey
- Send home parent survey

**Week 5 (March 2-6)**

- Continue collecting data
- Give student survey
- Begin interventions

**Week 6 (March 9-13)**

- Spring Break

**Week 7 (March 16-20)**

- Continue Collecting Data
- Interventions
- Create parent survey and ask my mentor and the principal for approval

**Week 8 (March 23-27)**

- Continue collecting data
• Interventions
• Send home parent survey
• Re-administer student survey

Week 9 (March 30)

• Finish collecting Data: Collect and take pictures of student work
  o DOL Monday-Friday
  o Writing samples
  o Worksheets completed by students

• Analyze Data
• Begin writing inquiry paper

April 6:

• Analyze Data
• Continue writing inquiry paper
• April 11: Submit rough draft for peer editing
• Peer edit
• Prepare for Inquiry Conference

April 13:

• Revise paper
• Prepare for Inquiry Conference

April 20:

• Prepare for Inquiry Conference
• April 22: Submit final draft
• April 25: Inquiry Conference
April 27:
  • Complete any extraneous requirements

May 4:
  • May 9: Submit electronic copy to PDS Webmaster
Appendix B

DOL Slip #1

1. I hope the twins don't cry, or mother won't let them come along.
Appendix C

Parent Survey

Dear Parents,

My name is Vanessa Tomasko, and I am Mrs. Hartman’s PDS intern in your child’s classroom. I am currently doing a study on student independence. If you could take a few moments to briefly answer the questions below, it would be of great help to my study. All answers are confidential and no names or identifying characteristics will be included in my analysis.

Please return by Thursday, March 5.

1. Tell me about your child’s responsibilities at home.
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

2. Does your child receive incentives or rewards for completing his/her responsibilities?
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

3. Tell me how you feel about your child’s independence level at home when completing his/her responsibilities.
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
Appendix D

Sample Parent Survey Transcription

Dear Parents,

My name is Vanessa Tomasko, and I am Mrs. Hartman’s PDS intern in your child’s classroom. I am currently doing a study on student independence. If you could take a few moments to briefly answer the questions below, it would be of great help to my study. All answers are confidential and no names or identifying characteristics will be included in my analysis.

Please return by Thursday, March 5.

1. Tell me about your child’s responsibilities at home.
   
   Daughter* helps keep her room clean.
   Daughter* helps feed and walk our two dogs.
   Daughter* helps with the guinea pigs. She loves to help!

2. Does your child receive incentives or rewards for completing his/her responsibilities?

   No, she does these things (above) because she is a part of our family.

3. Tell me how you feel about your child’s independence level at home when completing his/her responsibilities.

   She is motivated by herself—sometimes needs reminding to do them at first—get started. She* is a terrific helper and part of our family!

*Name changed
Appendix E

DOL Slip #2

Name: 

1. that baseball hitted me on the head exclaimed sarah
Appendix F

Lunch Sign-Up Reminders

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**Lunch Sign-Up Intervention 1:** Class Meeting
Did you put your name on your paper?

Appendix G

Percentage of DOL Slips with Names

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**DOL Slip Intervention 1:** I lined students up by calling those who remembered to put their names on their papers first.

**DOL Slip Intervention 2:** I provided a space for students to include their names on the DOL slip.
Appendix H

Morning Meeting Carpet Distractions

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Morning Meeting Carpet Distractions Intervention 1: Two-minute warning/countdown from
Appendix I

Morning Meeting Sharing Call-Outs

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Morning Meeting Sharing Call-Outs Intervention 1: Sharing microphone
Appendix J

Annotated Bibliography


Promoting Effective Task Interpretation as an Important Work Habit is an article that focuses on the benefits of developing and executing work habits in the classroom. In this article, the authors show situations that demonstrate how successful learning is dependent upon students using and developing a consistent approach to task completion that reflects the expectations and demands of that particular task. The strategies and research presented in this article lends itself well to my focus of independence during task completion. Most helpful to me is the importance placed on student-centered routines.


In this book, the author, Ron Clark, uses his childhood experiences and experience, as a teacher, to describe the fifty-five rules he believes students must follow to achieve success. The majority of the rules lend themselves to real world skills, thus encouraging students to become good citizens. Many have underlying moral themes and could be easily incorporated into any classroom. However, because of its rigid guidelines and emphasis on teacher-centered control, I do not believe that the book’s premise aligns itself with my personal beliefs as a teacher. Overall, the author’s rules appear to be effective tools in garnering respect and encouraging student success. Therefore, I will be employing a few of the rules in my classroom to encourage student success and independence.


In this study, the authors discovered that authentic tasks and assessment tools provided elementary school students with more independence. Additionally, the authentic work was linked to better retention of information as opposed to more traditional tasks. This study provided me with useful evidence. This showed me that instead of streamlining or making assessment more straightforward for students who have difficulty with
“Did you put your name on your paper?”

indpendence during task completion, these students not only benefit from the authentic assessment but also grow to be more independent through its use.


*Control Theory in the Classroom* explores what traditional schools are doing wrong and what they can do to help increase the levels of success for their students. The author uses the metaphor of a sports team to explain how a classroom should run. These learning teams allow students to collaborate, have fun, and experience success. When I first picked up this book, I was skeptical of its place in my inquiry. I am pleased to say that the positive views of teamwork and responsibility were a tremendous help.


Brenda Hartman, my mentor, is a third and fourth grade multi-age teacher in Park Forest Elementary. She has extensive experience not only with the age group with which I am working, but with the inquiry process, as well. She has provided me with numerous ideas for interventions as well as methods of data collection. One intervention that Brenda presented that I plan to use revolves around the routine task of students becoming proficient putting their names on their papers without several reminders. In this intervention, I will be using the student’s paper that have been placed in the finished basket to call the students to line up for a desired activity, such as recess or special. Students who have remembered to put their names on their paper will be called to line up first. Through this intervention, I hope to increase students’ awareness of this routine task as well as increasing motivation.


Providing Support for Student Independence through Scaffolded Instruction focuses on providing steps to students with learning disabilities that lead to their achievement. This article showcases the benefits of scaffolded instruction and how it is integrated into a special education classroom. Despite having only two students in my class who receive special education services, this article lends itself well to the over-all goal of student independence. I plan to incorporate some of the steps of scaffolding instruction, in order to encourage independence during task completion for my students.

Lim, C. (2008, November 1). Spirit of the game: Empowering students as designers in
In this article, the author explains how incorporating computer games that feature the practice of academic concepts can increase engagement. One aspect of this article that appeals to me is the correlation the author found between engagement and intrinsic motivation, attention, and success. Most helpful to my inquiry is the evidence of this type of engagement producing an extended and genuine interest and commitment to new, challenging tasks. During these tasks, students have the opportunity to learn through authentic, meaningful tasks.


In this article, the author, Patricia McCormack discusses the link between home and school development of spiritual, psychological, intellectual, and emotional identity. Described in the article is the conflict between what parents expect from schools and what schools expect from students. The underlying belief of this article is that students form the foundation of all parts of their identity at home. When students come to school, it is a teacher’s job to foster the development of their identity. The author’s research strengthens my belief that there is a link between a student’s independence at school and the independence they experience at home.


In Rekindling Success, the author explains the importance of students feeling successful. Sanders discusses the tactics used by the Star Academy to promote such feelings. The Star Academy aligns itself with the beliefs of a student-centered curriculum that is relevant to a student’s present and future, instructional strategies that focus on individual learning styles, technology and collaboration between parents and teachers. The idea of encouraging students to find value in their learning thus experiencing success is one I would be interested in enacting in my classroom. I believe these strategies would assist with student motivation and independence.


In this article, the author, Terri Cooper Swanson, describes twenty ways to provide structure for children with learning and behavior problems. Divided into the categories of environment, schedules, starting and finishing, activities, rules and changes in routine, and providing choices, Swanson introduces many useful ideas to promote student independence. Because this resource focuses primarily on organization of student and classroom materials, it lends itself well to my sub-question regarding distractions. This will be a useful tool when making interventions based on the data I collect.


As the title suggests, the authors of this article offer fifteen strategies for enhancing attention and managing attention problems. Included in this article are many. Explained is the reasoning behind each strategy and the context in which it is best used. The article is most helpful to me because of its inclusive nature. These strategies are places to begin when considering the issues of motivation, attention, and distractions. Each strategy focuses upon the best interest of the students while encouraging organization and cooperation.