Ready for 3rd Grade?
Building Independence in a Primary Classroom

By: Lauren O’Shea
2009-2010 2nd Grade Lemont Elementary Intern

ldo5006@psu.edu

May 2, 2010
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**Context:**

As a Penn State Professional Development intern, I have been working in a second grade classroom at Lemont Elementary School, within the State College Area School District. Lemont Elementary School is a small school located in Lemont, Pennsylvania. This kindergarten through second grade school is made up of three kindergartens, three first grades, three second grades, and one autistic support classroom. Although small, the teachers, staff, and students have created a close-knit community of learners. After completing grades K-2 at Lemont Elementary, students travel down the road to Houserville Elementary School, sister school to Lemont.

In my particular classroom, adults include a teacher, an intern, a paraprofessional, and two aids that assist autistic students individually. There are 21-second grade students, 9 girls and 12 boys. One female student recently joined our class in January. Of these 21 students, 2 have autism and are in and out of the room all day. Their total time in the regular education and special education classroom is split about evenly. There are also three boys that receive Title I services for about 40 minutes per day. These students, as well as a few others, often express feelings of self-doubt. They seem to believe that they simply cannot do the same things other students do, mostly related to academics. Two students have expressed social and emotional distress due to issues from outside of the classroom environment. Two students have ADD/ADHD. Three students have anxiety when it comes to stressful situations with academics or completing tasks on time. One student struggles to properly express his feelings, especially anger. We have developed a checklist to monitor his behaviors, which has proven to decrease outbursts and class disruptions thus far. Four students are consistently off-task and need attention in order to refocus and get back on track. Finally, two students have been identified as often putting down other students, usually those whom struggle academically or socially.
In this second grade classroom, we strive to help students improve academically, socially, and emotionally. We try to teach students the importance of responsibility and respect through activities, games, class jobs, and assignments. We have seen progress thus far in the classroom. However, we believe that there is room for even more development and growth.

**Main Question:**
How can I increase independence in my second grade classroom?

**Sub-questions:**
- Does increased independence lead to improved self-esteem/confidence?
- Does increased self-esteem attribute to higher independence levels?
- What factors affect independence in elementary students?
- How can the addition of new teaching strategies improve classroom independence?
- How does the level of independence within the classroom affect environments outside of the classroom?
- How can community building affect independence levels in a second grade classroom?
Data Collection and Analysis:

Student Survey:

At the start and conclusion of my inquiry I had my students fill out a survey concerning self-esteem, independence, responsibilities, home life, and personal favorites (Appendix A). Due to the wide variety of reading and writing levels within my classroom, I created a short and simple survey using checkmarks, happy faces, and simple multiple-choice questions.

Following the first survey, I calculated the results and found that most students had a positive self-image, enjoyed receiving compliments, and 2/3 of the students felt that they received compliments often. Moreover, most students responded that they had household responsibilities and received a moderate amount of help from adults at home. A majority of students had two siblings while the birth order of students was fairly evenly spread. Finally, the favorite subject was reading and no least favorite subject appeared to be overwhelmingly agreed upon.

I distributed a survey to students at the conclusion of my inquiry project with a few revisions to better fit the direction the star system had taken (Appendix B). These revisions included questions about our put-ups (peer letters that include positive aspects of the person), our morning reminder chart, and what things teachers did to help them complete their work and jobs more efficiently. I found the results to be similar to those of the first survey. Most students felt good about themselves and the person that they are. I was happy to see that several more students noted that they received compliments often. Approximately 80% of students reported being very happy or happy when they received a put-up from a peer. Moreover, 75% of students reported that the morning reminder chart was helpful in completing tasks independently. While the data
concerning personal feelings and home life did not change drastically, I did find that classroom procedures and activities that had been implemented with the system were helpful in moving toward more independent 2nd graders. The student survey results displayed clear evidence of that.

**Parent/Guardian Survey:**

I sent out a survey to parents and guardians of the students in my class at the beginning of the inquiry process (Appendix C). This survey included questions about household responsibilities and consequences, homework time, and frustration levels of the students. Approximately 75% of parents responded to the survey. Survey results revealed that most students are responsible for completing household chores and receive consequences if the chores are not done or rules are broken. A majority of parents responded that their child “sometimes” asks for help when completing homework, while 64% of parents often sat with their student while completing homework. Finally, nearly all students were reported as “sometimes” getting frustrated with tasks they were unable to complete.

I was surprised to learn that so many parents/guardians sat with their student during homework time, whether the child had asked for help or not. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the majority of students only “sometimes” asked for help. The homework is always a skill that had been taught and reviewed during the school day, therefore it should be able to be done independently at home. These results tell me that students may not have to use skills of independence at home in the academic sense. Therefore, this may translate into classroom behavior.

**Daily Observations/Data Collection:**

My inquiry began because I had noticed that students were not completing simple, daily tasks without adult help or reminders. I wanted to change this. Thanks to communication with 3rd
grade teachers, I learned that many of the daily tasks and activities that my students were not completing, will be expected to be completed without help or reminders in the next grade level. Such tasks include selecting a lunch choice, writing your name at the top of the paper, lining up quietly, keeping your desk and general area clean, having quiet and efficient transitions, and following directions. Previous to and at the start of the inquiry, I collected daily data concerning these simple tasks. I found that, on average, 25% of students were not selecting their lunch choice, 14% were forgetting their name at the top of their paper, and noisy transitions occurred about 3-4 times per day. Quiet reminders were required for most tasks including lining up and walking down the hallway. Students were completing assignments incorrectly or having to ask many questions because they did not listen to or read directions. In addition, students did not earn a star for a productive and quiet writing time during the first week and a half of the system.

Throughout the process, I noticed small improvements as students became comfortable with some classroom changes. Stars were given when all students handed in homework, selected their lunch choice, were quiet during transitions, had their name on their paper, and so on. I saw students helping each other, for we had discussed that this was a team goal. I noticed students giving verbal and visual quiet reminders, telling others to hand in homework or select their lunch, and holding up “shhh” signs. This teamwork has made positive changes in our classroom.

As the process grew to a close, I continued to make daily observations of student behavior. On average, 95% of students were selecting their lunch choice, 95% of students wrote their names on their papers, noisy transitions occurred about 1-2 times per day, and lining up and walking down the hallway was considerably less noisy and can done in about half the time as before (Appendix D). I began to notice approximately twice during each transition or quiet time students using the “shhh” signal, for they soon figured out that saying the noise only made the
room louder. During the middle of the inquiry process I took note of a student that made a “QUIET” sign, which he held up to remind his classmates of their goal. I had seen none of this behavior previous to or even at the start of the inquiry process. Furthermore, students earned about 4 stars per week during writing time for being quiet and productive in the final weeks of the inquiry process.

Student Interviews:

At the conclusion of the inquiry process, I interviewed a group of students. I selected students ranging in age, ability level, behavior, and overall personality in order to get a dependable sample. The survey contained 8 different questions concerning the star system, classroom expectations, community building, self-esteem, independence, and teamwork (Appendix E). Students were told that they did not have to answer any question they did not wish to answer.

I found that 80% of students expressed positivity concerning the star system and morning reminder chart. Moreover, students expressed their enjoyment of community building activities with comments such as “it is a nice break from work and its fun to play with the other kids”, “I give it two thumbs up”, and “awesome”! Finally, all of the interviews revealed that the students thought that they had really worked as a team to earn stars, giving each other reminders and helping others complete tasks.

Claims and Evidence:

Claim #1: Visual guidance builds independence in a 2nd grade classroom.

I have discovered, through this inquiry journey, that 2nd graders are more independent
when they are guided with visual cues or signals. The introduction and increased use of this tool was monumental in guiding the students toward increased classroom independence.

Evidence #1:

On the second student survey that I conducted, I inquired about the morning reminder chart. This chart contained written reminders to hand in homework, select a lunch choice, hand in bus notes or lunch money, and to do their job. The chart hung on the front board each morning for students to reference and mentally check off. If different or new tasks needed to be accomplished, the chart would indicate that.

In the second student survey, 75% of students noted that they found the chart helpful in completing morning tasks, some of which led to earning stars. 80% of students interviewed agreed that the chart was a helpful resource that assisted in getting their morning tasks completed. Additionally, I have noticed students checking the chart each morning to see what they needed to complete. This demonstrates my claim that visual reminders can help improve and increase independence in a 2nd grade classroom.

Evidence #2:

Throughout the inquiry process I took daily observations and notes. I noticed that the use of visual signals among students increased while verbal signals decreased. Since quiet writing periods, transitions, and walks down the hallway earned stars, students realized that visual, rather than verbal signals, were more beneficial toward earning their goal. My observations revealed that these visual signals from peer to peer occurred about 8-12 times per day.

Claim #2: Independence and efficiency is supported when a teacher verbally explains his/her behavior expectations and/or academic goals for an activity.
Through my research, I have found that when a teacher introduces a lesson with clear, verbal goals, students are more independent and efficient. These goals may cover academics, behavior, social, physical, and so on. Yet, no matter the type of goal, it must be stated clearly and understood by students in order to have a positive outcome.

Evidence #1:

When I began this process with my students I set some of my very own goals as a teacher. I wanted to ensure that my teacher language was not getting in the way of students increasing classroom independence. Therefore, I watched footage of myself from earlier months in the school year. I noticed that I was not reminding students of the rules or giving them a goal for specific activities. I thought that if I reminded them of rules and expressed the goal of each activity their independence would increase because directions and expectations were clearly stated. My daily observations illustrated that students were noisy and disruptive during activities that required quiet and structure. As I slowly began to integrate the words “how should this activity look and sound like?” into my lessons, I noted fewer questions from students during activities, much less talking, and about 12% more work completed. Students knew that I was looking for specific behaviors and work completion. Therefore, it is evident that setting children up with verbal expectations and goals leads to increased independence and efficiency.

Evidence #2:

Interviews with students at the conclusion of the inquiry revealed that most students felt better about activities when I gave them clear directions regarding behavior and academic goals. Comments such as “yes I like that a lot”, “it really helps me”, and “I feel better about what I am doing” corresponded with the question concerning how a teacher sets up an activity. Therefore, both student comments and actions have displayed that clear expectations from teachers can set
children up to be more independent and efficient on tasks.

**Reflection and Future Implications**

Throughout this process I have learned an immense amount about children, the skill of teaching young students, and myself. This process started out as a simple observation, which led to discussion, and eventually a star system promoting independence in second grade students. I was a bit nervous to take on the task. However, I knew that it would benefit my students as they prepared to be third graders and also myself as I prepared to run a classroom of my own.

My first step was to take a deeper look at the challenges in my classroom. When I attempted to sit back and observe my classroom, I found it rather difficult. I was constantly reminding students to complete daily tasks, helping with student jobs, or collecting homework from students who had forgotten to hand it in. Not only was I running around to assist students, but also my mentor and paraprofessional in the room were doing the same thing. I knew that in third grade it was very likely that students would be in a classroom with only one adult. Therefore, I knew that this was a great task to take on.

I found it really helpful to talk with my mentor, paraprofessionals, other teachers in the building, other interns, and my PDA to see how they would go about increasing independence in a second grade classroom. I got many ideas from just listening to other’s experiences, including their successes and failed attempts. Having meetings with my mentor and/or PDA also helped to lay out my ideas and hear another person’s opinions on my progress and new thoughts.

Overall, I really enjoyed the experience and learned a lot from it. Although the process did not pan out exactly as I thought it would, I was happy with its results. I got to know my students on a deeper level and had some time to try new and different teaching strategies. I was
happy to see that my students did earn their reward of a pajama day, taking a little longer than expected, but it was well worth it! Students looked forward to earning stars and showed me how they could put aside their differences to work as a team.

In the future I would love to take this experience and knowledge and put it to use within my own classroom. I believe that a system like this could work effectively in a variety of settings. Students in all elementary levels could use this system, from kindergarten through sixth grade. Some minor adjustments would have to be made to align with ability levels. Moreover, the system could aim at different goals, not just increasing independence.

There are some aspects of the system that I would change. I would have stars be rewarded more often and would take some more classroom time to spend looking at the chart and discussing the importance of its goals. Furthermore, I would have students place stars either on their own individual charts or on the large class chart to make the board more interactive and make students feel more apart of the system.

I would still start off the process with a large group meeting discussing the things that need to be worked on, why they need to be worked on, what our goal is, and what the class will earn if they reach that goal. Also, I would include the math aspect in my chart. I had students review the tens and ones columns by trading in ten small stars for one large star. The math aspect of the chart could be adjusted according to grade level.

In conclusion, I would most definitely use this type of system in my future classroom with a few adjustments. I think that this was a learning experience for both myself and for my students. Overall, I observed a positive outcome in my second grade classroom.
Appendix A: This survey was distributed to my 21-second grade students at the start of my inquiry process. Students were given 15 minutes to complete both sides of the survey and were allowed to ask questions and leave blanks if they did not wish to answer a question.

Name:________________________ Date:_________________

I feel good about myself most of the time.

I am happy with the person that I am.

I like when I get compliments.

I get compliments often. Yes_______ No________

I like when adults help me in school or at home.

I think that I can do most things in the classroom on my own, with no adult helping me.
I am responsible for doing chores or helping around the house when I am at home.

I get a lot of help at home from adults.

I receive consequences when I do not follow rules or complete chores at home.

How many siblings do you have?______
Are you the oldest child in your family?______
Are you the youngest child in your family?______
Are you in the middle of the children in your family?______

My favorite subject in school is…… (circle 1)
Math    Writing    Reading    Spelling    Unit Activities

My least favorite subject in school is…… (circle 1)
Math    Writing    Reading    Spelling    Unit Activities
I feel good about myself most of the time.

I am happy with the person that I am.

I like when I get compliments.

I get compliments often. Yes  No

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I think that I can do most things in the classroom on my own, with no adult helping me.
I feel good about myself most of the time.

I am happy with the person that I am.

I like when I get compliments.

I get compliments often. Yes ______ No __________

I like when adults help me in school or at home.

I think that I can do most things in the classroom on my own, with no adult helping me.
Appendix B: This survey was distributed to my 21-second grade students at the conclusion of my inquiry process. Students were given 15 minutes to complete both sides of the survey and were allowed to ask questions and leave blanks if they did not wish to answer a question. A few questions were changed from the first survey to better fit the needs of the inquiry process.

Name: __________________________ Date: __________________

I feel good about myself most of the time.

I am happy with the person that I am.

I like when I get compliments.

I get compliments often. Yes_______ No_________

I like when adults help me in school or at home.

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I am responsible for doing chores or helping around the house when I am at home.

I get a lot of help at home from adults.

When I received a put-up from a friend in the class, I felt…

Does our morning reminder chart help you to get your morning responsibilities done?

Yes_______    NO________

What things do teachers do to help you work better on your own?
I feel good about myself most of the time.  

I am happy with the person that I am.  

I like when I get compliments.  

I get compliments often. Yes  No  

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I get a lot of help at home from adults.

When I received a put-up from a friend in the class, I felt...

Does our morning reminder chart help you to get your morning responsibilities done?

Yes ☑ NO

What things do teachers do to help you work better on your own?

being my best teachers in the hotwind world
Appendix C: This parent/guardian survey was distributed at the start of the inquiry process. Parent/guardians were not required to complete the survey or answer questions they did not wish to answer. About 75% of parents completed the entire survey.

February 19, 2010

Parents and Guardians,

As part of my internship through Penn State’s College of Education, I am required to conduct an inquiry project. I have chosen to look deeper into independence levels in second grade students. As part of my data collection process, I have developed a survey for parents to fill out and send back to school. This will supply me with further insight into your child’s independence outside of the classroom environment. Thank you so much for your time. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email at ldo11@scasd.org.

Sincerely,

Lauren O’Shea
2nd Grade Intern, Lemont Elementary School

Parent/Guardian Survey:

Child’s Name:_________________________________________

1. My child is responsible for completing household chores:
   Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

2. My child has consequences for not following rules or not completing chores
   Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

3. My child often asks for help when completing homework
   Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

4. I sit with my child while he/she completes homework, even when they do not ask for help
   Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never

5. My child gets frustrated when he/she does not understand or is unable to complete a task
   Often       Sometimes       Rarely       Never
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Sincerely,

Lauren O'Shea
2nd Grade Intern, Lemont Elementary School

Parent/Guardian Survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s Name: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. My child is responsible for completing household chores:
   - [ ] Often
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Rarely
   - [ ] Never

2. My child has consequences for not following rules or not completing chores
   - [ ] Often
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Rarely
   - [ ] Never

3. My child often asks for help when completing homework:
   - [ ] Often
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Rarely
   - [ ] Never

4. I sit with my child while he/she completes homework, even when they do not ask for help
   - [ ] Often
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [ ] Rarely
   - [ ] Never

5. My child gets frustrated when he/she does not understand or is unable to complete a task
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Sincerely,

Lauren O'Shea
2nd Grade Intern, Lemoore Elementary School

Parent/Guardian Survey:

Child's Name:

1. My child is responsible for completing household chores:
   
   Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

2. My child has consequences for not following rules or not completing chores:
   
   Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

3. My child often asks for help when completing homework:
   
   Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

4. I sit with my child while he/she completes homework, even when they do not ask for help:
   
   Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

5. My child gets frustrated when he/she does not understand or is unable to complete a task:
   
   Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never
Appendix D: This chart represents the progress made by my class from February until April. Two morning tasks are displayed.
Appendix E: At the conclusion of my inquiry process I interviewed 5 students. I selected 5 students whom differ in gender, age, academic and social skills, and behavior.

Student Interview Questions

1. How do you like our star chart system?

2. Has the morning reminder chart helped you?

3. How do you feel when you get a put-up from your friend?

4. When I remind you how an activity should look and should like, does this help you get your work done?

5. Do you like the sharing and games we have been doing?

6. Do you think you are ready for the responsibilities of 3rd grade?

7. If you feel good about yourself, do you think you can do more things on your own?

8. How did we work as a team to earn stars?
Appendix F: This brief is an outline of my inquiry process. It was completed at the start of the process.

Lauren O’Shea
Inquiry Brief
February 10, 2010

Context:

As a Penn State Professional Development intern, I have been working in a second grade classroom at Lemont Elementary School, within the State College Area School District. Lemont Elementary School is a small school located in Lemont, Pennsylvania. The kindergarten through second grade school is made up of three kindergartens, three first grades, three-second grades, and one autistic support classroom. Although small, the teachers, staff, and students have created a close-knit community of learners. After completing grades K-2 at Lemont Elementary, students travel down the road to Houserville Elementary School, sister school to Lemont.

In my particular classroom, adults include a teacher, an intern, a paraprofessional, and two aids that assist autistic students individually. There are 21-second grade students, 9 girls and 12 boys. One female student recently joined our class in January. Of these 21 students, 2 have autism and are in and out of the room all day. Their total time in the regular education and special education classroom is split about evenly. There are also three boys that receive Title I services for about 40 minutes per day. These students, as well as a few others, often express feelings of self-doubt. They seem to believe that they simply cannot do the same things other students do, mostly related to academics. Two students have expressed social and emotional distress due to issues from outside of the classroom environment. Two students have ADD/ADHD. Three students have anxiety when it comes to stressful situations with academics or completing tasks on time. One student struggles to properly express his feelings, especially anger. We have developed a checklist to monitor his behaviors, which has proven to decrease
outbursts and class disruptions thus far. Four students are consistently off-task and need attention in order to refocus and get back on track. Finally, two students have been identified as often putting down other students, usually those whom struggle academically or socially.

In this second grade classroom, we strive to help students improve academically, socially, and emotionally. We try to teach students the importance of responsibility and respect through activities, games, class jobs, and assignments. We have seen progress thus far in the classroom. However, we believe that there is room for even more development and growth.

**Rationale:**

As the year progresses and I begin to take on a more active role as teacher, I realize that my class of 21-second graders, especially a few in particular, are extremely dependent upon the adults in the classroom. This belief has been confirmed, over and over again, by not only my mentor, but by other professionals in the building. This verification made me think that this could be an area to investigate further. Through closer observation, I realized that this was indeed a problem that needed attention.

Throughout each school day, children need constant reminders or assistance in order to complete tasks that have been done everyday since the beginning of the year. Many of these simple tasks requiring adult assistance or reminders slow down routines and the amount of work we can get done. In addition, several students require one-on-one attention in order to complete or even make small progress on academic tasks. I know that children are capable of completing such tasks on their own. I wonder what the causes of these dependency issues are. I am curious if their age, sibling order, family situations, home responsibilities, desire for attention, or other issues cause this classroom problem. Moreover, I am interested in how we can improve
independence and better prepare these students for third grade. From this idea, I wonder if I am going to need to use some type of motivation, and if it needs to be extrinsic or intrinsic. Finally, my gut feeling tells me that if some of these students had more self-confidence, they would be more independent, in and out of the classroom. Therefore, I am curious, if my plan does in fact increase independence, will it also improve self-confidence.

Overall, I am concerned that the lack of independence I see in my students will present problems in the 3rd grade, as expectations grow and the difficulty of material increases. In this second grade classroom we have a teacher, an intern, and a paraprofessional available most, if not all, of the day. However, in third grade, it is very likely that students will be in a classroom with only a teacher, and no additional support. Therefore, I am wondering if some type of management system, complete with student developed rewards, would increase independence in my second grade classroom.

**Wonderings:**

**Big Question:**

How can I increase independence in my second grade classroom?

**Sub-questions:**

- Does increased independence lead to improved self-esteem/confidence?

- What factors affect independence in elementary students? (Teacher actions/words, Parents, Developmental/Chronological Age, etc)

- Does intrinsic or extrinsic motivation work better with second grade students?

- How can the addition of new teaching strategies improve classroom independence?

- How does the level of independence within the classroom affect environments outside of the classroom?

**Data Collection:**
Student Surveys (Before and After)
I will be surveying students before and after the inquiry study. I will ask questions about confidence, their own perspective of their independence, favorite and least favorite school subjects, family life, and responsibilities. If I feel it necessary during the inquiry, I will develop and give out a survey about how they feel the changes have been positive or negative toward helping them prepare for 3rd grade.

Parent Surveys (Before and After)
Guardian and Parent surveys will be given before and after the inquiry process. Questions will include information about their child’s responsibilities outside of the classroom, their attitude toward schoolwork, and their independence levels.

Third Grade Teacher Surveys
I will be surveying the 3rd grade teachers in order to evaluate the level of independence they are expecting from students next year. This will give me a good idea of where my students should be at the end of the school year.

Daily Observations (Before/During/After using Checklists/Anecdotal Notes/Pictures/Video)
Daily observations will include a multitude of things. I will take notes on student work, behavior, and independence levels throughout the process. Pictures and video will be used to assess my own teaching and to show me how I can help students improve and achieve.

Birthday/Age List
The birthday list will help me to see if there is a correlation between age and independence levels within the classroom. I will be looking for patterns that relate age to academic or independence levels.

Teacher/School Staff Interviews
I will interview staff such as guidance counselors, first grade teachers, and paraprofessionals to get a better understanding of their experiences with children and independence levels in primary grades.

Timeline:

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<tr>
<th>Week:</th>
<th>Goals for Week:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/8/10</td>
<td>-Create Student Survey&lt;br&gt;-Complete Birthday List&lt;br&gt;-Continue Observations&lt;br&gt;-Complete and Submit Draft of Bibliography and Inquiry Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/15/10</td>
<td>-Complete Birthday List&lt;br&gt;-Give Out Student Survey&lt;br&gt;-Create Parent Survey and Get Approval From School Staff&lt;br&gt;-Interview/Email Interview with Eileen Pearsall (School Counselor)&lt;br&gt;-Continue Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22/10</td>
<td>-Revise and Submit Bibliography and Inquiry Brief&lt;br&gt;-Send Home Parent Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/1/10</td>
<td>- Develop Third Grade Teacher Survey and Get Approval From School Staff</td>
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<td>- Continue Observations</td>
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<td>- Introduce and Implement Star System</td>
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<td>3/1/10</td>
<td>- Send out Third Grade Teacher Survey</td>
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<td>- Introduce and Implement New Teaching Strategies based on observations and</td>
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<td>3/8/10</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
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<td>- Carry out Star System/Strategies</td>
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<td>- Give Out Student Survey</td>
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<td>- Send home Parent Survey</td>
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<td>4/5/10</td>
<td>- Analysis of Data</td>
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<td>4/12/10</td>
<td>- Inquiry Paper Draft Due (4/16/10)</td>
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<td>4/19/10</td>
<td>- Revise Inquiry Paper</td>
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<td>- Prepare for Conference</td>
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<td>4/26/10</td>
<td>- Submit Final Inquiry Paper Due (5/2/10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Prepare for Conference</td>
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<td>5/3/10</td>
<td>- Inquiry Conference 5/8/10</td>
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Appendix G: This annotated bibliography outlines the resources I collected and used in order to get background information and ideas about elementary independence.

Lauren O’Shea
Inquiry Bibliography


This school district published article is aimed toward parents of elementary school students. It offers advice and guidance on how to foster independence in young children. Suggestions include allowing children to make some of their own decisions, offering guidance, and allowing children to learn from their mistakes. I think that it is important that teachers take into account the many aspects of a student’s life, including the relationship they have with their parents concerning independence. This article offers some insight into this topic. Moreover, this article is helpful in developing the parent survey that I will be sending home, concerning independence at outside of the classroom.


Linda Albert’s approach to cooperative discipline could be a valuable source toward my inquiry implementation. Many of her beliefs about teaching and classroom management are parallel to my own. Consequently, I think I could learn a lot from her and gain valuable information about classroom management. She even discusses how we as teachers, can make children feel capable. I believe that this is a factor in student independence and could help foster independence and confidence in students.


This article hits on the topic of self-esteem and confidence in students. This topic, I believe, has an effect on independence in the classroom. I plan to investigate this further through my inquiry plan. Thus, this article goes along very well with my wonderings. Accompanied with strong sources, the article suggests five different steps that can help adults, both teachers and parents, to assist children in improving their confidence/esteem. I plan to experiment and implement these steps into my classroom to observe their effects on my students.
http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopmenttracker/seven/index.html

This webpage outlines the basic development of a child, around seven years old, the age of many of the students in my second grade classroom. A panel of experts, including professors, writers, and former teachers developed the guidelines for seven year old behaviors and baselines. Although I cannot hold this as a standard for students in my class, it is a general outline that will help me see where most of my students fall. This could be helpful when analyzing the causes of dependence in the classroom and observing if most of my student are above, below, or at the mark for second graders.


The text reviews the effects of teacher language on classroom behaviors and outcomes. This powerful tool gives simple and easy tips for teachers to use when speaking to whole groups, small groups, or individual children in the classroom. I am curious if my teacher language is promoting the lack of independence within our second grade classroom. This resource will be helpful as I implement my plan and take notes on the behaviors I change and the reaction of my students to them. I also think that more specific and clearly defined language in the classroom will help children to stay focused and become more confident in their academic pursuits.


This article was written by Lisa Doherty, a veteran teacher and writer. One belief that she holds, which I also believe, is that students will learn better if the classroom is managed well. Her method of classroom management includes the CHAMP method. Before each lesson, she asks students, C-Conversation, what should the conversation level be during this activity, H-Help, what do we do if we need it during this activity, A-Activity, what is the activity, M-Movement, should we be moving around during this activity, and P-Participation, we will all participate. I thought that this idea would be a great management tool to include in my inquiry plan to improve independence. It helps children know what is expected and what to do if there is a question or a problem. I may modify the questions/letters a bit to better accommodate my students, however, I think that the overall idea is great and will be effective in my classroom.

This basic question and answer formatted webpage is designed, generally for parents, to answer questions they have concerning Montessori education and its specifics. I knew that Montessori education was very different from traditional, public education, especially with its use of freedom and independence for students. I thought that it would be interesting to learn a bit more about how these schools run and how and why they allow children to learn and develop independently. I understand that they want to focus more on the child than on the “lesson plans” and see independence as a way of doing that. I believe that the approaches to independence in my mind and the Montessori way differ. However, this article sparks some ideas that may be useful when trying to foster independence in my classroom.


This article is concerned with assisting children with autism to become more independent. It touches on the topics of why it is important to help these students become more independent, why it may be challenging, and steps to work toward increased independence. There are even some specific examples of activities to do with these students. Since I have two autistic students in my classroom, I thought that it was very important to learn about more about helping them gain independence, for they might require or respond better to different accommodations than the regular education students.


This article focuses on a sub-question that I am wondering, if independence levels increase, will self-esteem/confidence increase in return. The author points out that self-esteem is an important aspect of a child’s development. It is difficult to move children along socially, emotionally, or academically if they do not have the self-esteem to support it. Seven helpful tips are included for improving self-esteem in young children. Children need to learn to accept deficits and adult guidance and support can be a great help. This advice could be monumental for my students and support my inquiry plan very nicely.

Retrieved from

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0NQM/is_4_42/ai_111506830/pg_7/?tag=content;coll1

This article covers the many aspects of classroom management in an inclusive setting. Classroom management can be a challenge in a regular education classroom, however the addition of special education students is an added challenge. I thought that it was important to investigate further the science behind classroom management, and especially classroom management involving special education students. I want to implement this inquiry plan as best I can. Therefore, learning about the process of building a community involving friendships, cooperation, and parental communication is important. A large part of my plan involves managing the classroom to build independence, thus I found this a beneficial article to include.