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Self-Management Program to Handle Social/Emotional Baggage in the Classroom

Abstract

This action research study investigated the effects of teaching students to use a self-management tool in a fourth/fifth grade general education and science classroom at Master's Academy in Chicago, Illinois. Seven students who come from a range of broken homes exhibited effects of their home lives in their academic and social learning. These students were taught to assess their abilities both academically (spelling) and socially (teamwork) and then to set weekly goals for improvement in these areas. Weekly goal setting took place over a four week period during the third quarter of academic year 2014-2015. Students' accomplishments were celebrated weekly. Results of this study were observed in students' weekly and quarterly spelling grades which improved by 7.2% , their weekly goal charts as compared to their improved character report cards, and on their quarterly grades in science which improved by 2.1% . This shows that a goal system is very much needed to further improve students' scores.

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Comments

Action Research Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

A Self-Management Program to Handle
Social/Emotional Baggage in the Classroom

By

Lisa N. Hines

B.A. National Louis University, 2007

Action Research Report
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

Department of Education
Dordt College
Sioux Center, Iowa
(April 2015)

A Self-Management Program to Handle
Social/Emotional Baggage in the Classroom.

By

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Abstract

This action research study investigated the effects of teaching students to use a self-management tool in a fourth/fifth grade general education and science classroom at Master's Academy in Chicago, Illinois. Seven students who come from a range of broken homes exhibited effects of their home lives in their academic and social learning. These students were taught to assess their abilities both academically (spelling) and socially (teamwork) and then to set weekly goals for improvement in these areas. Weekly goal setting took place over a four week period during the third quarter of academic year 2014-2015. Students' accomplishments were celebrated weekly. Results of this study were observed in students' weekly and quarterly spelling grades which improved by 7.2% , their weekly goal charts as compared to their improved character report cards, and on their quarterly grades in science which improved by 2.1% . This shows that a goal system is very much needed to further improve students' scores.

Keywords:

Self-management (as defined by Oxford dictionary): Management of or by oneself; the taking of responsibility for one's own behavior and well-being.

Broken home: A broken home, in this context, is one that is not structurally intact, as a result of divorce, separation, death of one parent, and illegitimacy.

Are students' areas consistently disheveled, leaving them unable to find materials and work? Are students scrambling for extra-credit work, too late? Are students baffled about their grades? Are classroom grades and test scores slipping? Why does this happen? Is there a solution?

Even in the best managed classrooms students have a tendency to fall prey to the aforementioned scenarios. The problem is not what is going on within the classroom, but what is going on within the student. Students come to school with so much social/emotional baggage that it hinders their learning and the way they function as members of the classroom body. “As educators, this can be a daunting task—teaching students who come with a book bag in one hand and emotional baggage in the other. It’s more than some of us bargained for” (“Emotional Baggage”, 2012).

A key example of social “baggage” that students in an urban setting could have to bear is poverty. One article reports that, “living in poverty can have a direct effect on students not exceling in their education. In many cases, students living in poverty have parents that work multiple jobs and don’t always support them academically” (B., K., 2013). The article goes on to say that as educators it is our responsibility to act as surrogate parents who show students that education is important in hopes that they’ll agree and go on to excel in their learning. Examples of emotional “baggage,” not just limited to urban students, “range from achievement-related stress, often coming from parental pressures, to overcoming language and social class barriers, family problems, and peer group and personal social concerns” (Phillips, 2014). Although Phillips is reporting here on high school students, these issues affect students at all academic levels, and at all levels students’ learning is adversely affected. These students need teachers to teach them how to learn despite these challenges.

One final example that covers both “social” and “emotional” baggage would be a student who comes from a broken home. According to Alika and Edosa (2012), “A broken home in this context, is one that is not structurally intact, as a result of divorce, separation, death of one parent, and illegitimacy.” Students living in these conditions exhibit many different types of

behaviors that interfere in their learning environment, often times hindering them and others from learning. An article from Livestrong.com states that school-aged children who come from broken homes may exhibit rebellious behaviors which include acting up during class (Seifert, 2013).

Students in urban settings are often viewed as “disadvantaged” students, especially those who live in economically challenged areas of their cities or who also come from “broken” homes. Numerous programs have been developed to offset the effects of their “disadvantaged” situation in hopes that they won’t be left behind academically. These students’ academic performance is substandard when compared to those of their peers from predominantly suburban areas. Becker and Luthar (2002) show that there is still a considerable gap between the performance of “disadvantaged” students and that of their peers even though programs are being developed to address this gap. The authors wrote the article with the intent to capture the attention of the “powers-that-be” in the world of education. They want them to be aware of the social-emotional needs that both hinder and promote disadvantaged students’ achievement, motivation, and opportunities for academic success.

The lessons that teachers teach must not only come from textbooks, but from life’s experiences as well. In *Totally Positive Teaching*, Ciaccio (2004) cites a colleague, William Glasser, who says every child comes to class doing his/her best and if we as educators viewed our students this way (vs. burdened with social/emotional baggage), we would be more likely to “devise strategies that may not only help the child but also significantly increase their own control over the situation” (Ciaccio, 2004). We must extend a branch that will enable them to rise above and see beyond their current issues so that they can succeed today and lead happy, healthy, and productive lives in the future as citizens and decision makers in our society.

In a *Social Policy Report*, researchers Jones and Bouffard (2012) make a push for schools to implement social and emotional learning (SEL) programs throughout their curricula. One school system not only incorporates SEL into their curriculum, but also focuses their whole program on SEL. The KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) schools are an example of experts understanding the importance of SEL in the lives of their students. According to their website, the mission of KIPP is to create a respected, influential, and national network of public schools that are successful in helping students from educationally underserved communities develop the knowledge, skills, character and habits needed to succeed in college and the competitive world beyond (<http://www.kipp.org>).

An example of a school implementing SEL in their curricula can be seen in A. B. Combs Elementary School in Raleigh, NC. Their principal, Muriel Summers, was featured in Stephen R. Covey's (2008) book, *The Leader in Me*, after she approached him about using his *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* with students as young as five years of age. At the time it hadn't been done, but Covey didn't see why it couldn't. Muriel and her staff developed a leadership program that saw their school go "from the brink of nearly being terminated as a magnet school to being named the number one magnet school in America" (Covey, 2008). This program's success has spawned a worldwide movement that has not only rescued schools from the brink of extinction, but has launched a generation of future leaders who have been trained to take responsibility for themselves socially, emotionally, and academically.

For the purposes of this study, the scope of the problem will be narrowed to focus on the role of goal-setting, one component of the Leader in Me program, which is being used as a tool in both an academic and social setting. The researcher presents two questions for research, and they are:

1. If students set and work towards reaching weekly academic goals in an ever advancing subject then their grades will improve or they will maintain their advanced grades.
 - What benefits do students gain as they set, work at, and possibly re-work a goal?
 - What effects does this have on their character?
 - What are the drawbacks, if any?
2. If students set and work towards weekly social goals then students will grow in their character.
 - How is the student's character affected?
 - How is a student's self-esteem affected as they set, work towards, and possibly re-work a goal?
 - How is a student's overall attitude towards school affected as they work towards reaching a set goal?
 - How is the class, as a whole, celebrated as they set, work, and re-work if necessary, their way towards a collaborative goal?

Literature Review

Students carry social/emotional issues with them daily. Whether they are in an urban setting or in a transitional phase in life these issues make learning difficult. Students need to be equipped with the necessary tools to enable them to manage these issues and move past them to get to the business of learning. Experts have written about the importance of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools. The following research stresses the importance of using an SEL program to offset the negative effects that social/emotional issues have on students. The literature also tells about the positive results that can be experienced as a result of using a program and, finally, the uncertain future of these programs due to some school experts who are still in a reform mindset.

The effect of social/emotional issues on the classroom:

Becker & Luther (2002) draw attention to the need for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools. The article incorporates various experts' findings on the matter of social-emotional factors that adversely affect disadvantaged students' learning. The article points out that even though there have been school reformation attempts there still exists a big gap in test scores of the disadvantaged students when compared to others. To stress the importance of this matter, they have taken a different approach by focusing on the effects on middle school students and how these issues affect their relationships and mental health (pp.1-2).

“The need to address the social-emotional challenges that interfere with students' connecting to and performance in school is critical. Issues such as discipline, disaffection, lack of commitment, alienation, and dropping out frequently limit success in school or even lead to failure” (Zins et al., 2007, p.3). At the beginning of their article the authors cite another source

that states how successful a school can become when they combine academic with social/emotional learning. Many experts see the need and are beginning to envision the results of this solution in action.

The effects of Social/Emotional Learning on the classroom:

In a story from NPR a school in Baltimore, MD, is featured because of their integration of a PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) program. The story tells about the kindergarten classroom where “every week, students get two 15- to 20-minute lessons on themes like self-control and treating others with respect” (Singh, 2014). The teacher says that the lessons they learn are very helpful in teaching students how to develop problem solving strategies that they may or may not learn at home.

Ciaccio (2014) states there are two types of students: achievers and underachievers. The students being addressed in this study are considered to be underachievers--they are the ones that make up over half of the student body. Ciaccio presents ways to reduce that large number by “using strategies aimed at the whole class” (para. 2).

In an e-zine article, Kruger (2012) provides a snapshot of a high school teacher’s class. The issues that the individual students bring with them into the classroom are discussed and how the teacher chooses to begin each day’s class in an attempt to offer his students the opportunity to, “Check emotional baggage at the door!” The teacher shares that he chooses to begin each class period in a two to five minute teacher-led activity that is of high interest to his students and unrelated to the curriculum. He keeps a schedule on the type of activities he’s going to do for familiarity’s sake, and though some of the students think it’s corny, in the end they love it. When asked what he accomplishes with these activities, the teacher said that for those five

minutes, “I’ve cleared the ‘inner-head trash’ of 34 teenagers. I’ve helped reset their brains to a neutral state that’s better-equipped to learn ...” (Getting in the green zone section, para. 3).

The future:

Yet, after more than two decades of improvement efforts, the results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP, are largely flat, our performance on international tests is mediocre and slipping, social mobility is rapidly diminishing, and we still have millions of children, often students of color and the disadvantaged, caught in the achievement gap and largely unprepared to assume productive citizenship” (Reville, 2014, p. 24).

Experts are clearly aware of our students’ challenges; however, they believe the answer is found in going back to the drawing board and creating a bigger, better, system to ready our students for their future responsibilities. They believe the reason behind the slow turnaround of our education system is because we have been using the same old tools to reach the new goals in our 21st century economy. Reville goes on to ask and answer, “(w)hat's the solution to the problem of our failing schooling engine? Design a new engine with enough power and versatility to meet the challenge of educating all students to a high level” (Reville, 2014, p. 28).

In an article from *In Motion Magazine* Noguera 2005 states that although there are a large number of failing schools throughout the nation, merely pressuring them to improve is not the answer. “They need a total change in culture and they need real help.” (para. 18) In an article using the first chapter of his book, *City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education*, Noguera goes on to say that the answer to our failing system is “teachers who consistently create educational magic in their classrooms, who incite and motivate

their students to want to learn, who set high standards for themselves and their students and make it clear that not learning simply is not an option” (“Gaining a Perspective” section, para. 2).

In Buenos Aires teachers use “emotional education” to help their students gain more confidence and learn more efficiently. This program has “recently become so popular among educators in Argentina that a debate has been opened up about whether to officially incorporate it into the national school curriculum.” It is believed that the earlier a student is introduced to this type of learning the earlier they can develop positive emotions that will shape the type of adult they will become (Aghazarian, 2013).

More programs are being developed that teach social and emotional literacy to students around the country; however, not enough of these programs are being implemented in our schools, because many of them are considered expensive. “It’s pricey, but it does cost less per child than juvenile detention or rehab programs later on” (Singh, 2014).

Caring Classrooms/Intelligent Schools: The Social Emotional Education of Young Children is a collection of the current thinking about effective social and emotional education of young elementary school children and focuses on strategies and programs that can be integrated into school life (Cohen, 2001).

Whether a pre-packaged SEL program is used or a do-it-yourself system based on the needs of your students is developed, this researcher believes that some version is necessary. Below, a customized SEL program based on the needs of the fourth/fifth grade students at Master’s Academy in Chicago, IL, is explored as a way to address students’ social and emotional challenges.

Methods

This study used an observation design to assess the effectiveness of a goal-setting program (a small portion of an SEL program) on students' productivity in an academic subject, (namely, spelling) and the effectiveness of a positive reinforcement encouragement program on students' characters and on their productivity in an academic subject (science).

Participants:

The participants of this study were fourth and fifth grade students (seven in all) in a private school on the south-east side of Chicago. Three students (42.9%) live with their mothers and have no father involvement; two (28.6%) live in a "split-living" arrangement, and two (28.6%) live in a two-parent household (both sets of parents are entrepreneurs and run their own businesses). One student has recently been given an IEP. All students are between the ages of eight and eleven years of age and come from low-middle class families.

Materials:

For the academic aspect of the program the materials necessary to determine student achievement and growth included their first, second, and third quarter spelling grades, their weekly spelling goal worksheets data, and students' weekly assignment scores.

For the social aspect of the program the materials necessary to determine students' achievement and growth in social behavior include a Class Dojo (a practice area where students can engage, practice, and master new concepts in learning) points chart and a Goal Tracking Chart (<https://www.classdojo.com>).

Procedures

For the academic aspect of the program the design of the research was a correlational study, examining the relationship between a goal-setting program and student growth in spelling achievement. The independent variable was the goal-setting program itself being used in a fourth and fifth grade spelling class. The dependent variable was the students' achievement as reflected in their grades. The control group was the students' achievement in math as reflected in their math grades.

To conduct this study, the researcher at the beginning of each week gave students Spelling Goal sheets. Students were then directed to select from a "shopping list" of goals and to write their selected goal for the week on the GOAL line. Choices included: improve performance on weekly list, improve performance on weekly definitions, improve performance on weekly sentences, and improve performance on weekly activity. At the end of the week a goal ceremony was held. During the ceremony students' accomplishments for each of the week's assignments was examined; if they maintained their previous week's grade or improved upon it they were allowed to put a symbol on the goal chart on the wall. Spelling goal sheets were read aloud during the ceremony and if students reached their weekly goal they placed their symbol on the goal chart.

The procedures for the social aspect of the program were: On the first day of the program students were given a Class Dojo Points chart, a brief overview of the character traits, and a point goal for the week. Throughout the week students were awarded or deducted points based on their completion of the character traits. At the end of the week students tallied their own scores and placed one sticker on the class goal tracking chart. Each sticker had various incentives

attached to it. The point total goal changed weekly depending on the achievement from the previous week.

Assessment was based on meeting and/or exceeding the goal and on the improvement on students' science grades. There was no penalty for not meeting the goal.

Results

Research Question One

The first research question asks the following: What is the effectiveness of students setting weekly academic goals? In order to answer this question, the researcher first had to determine an academic area that could serve as a control variable and one that could serve as a dependent variable. The goal setting was the independent variable. Both the spelling and mathematic programs had students working in ever-advancing grade-level work, so these academic areas were selected. In both subjects, students' performance from quarter one to quarter two was consistent; however, in spelling two students' grades went down a grade level, shown in the tables below. Spelling was chosen as the dependent variable and mathematics acted as the control variable.

Table 1

Spelling Grades: Quarters 1 and 2

	Student#1	Student #2	Student#3	Student#4	Student#5	Student#6	Student#7
Q1	F	A	A	C	A	A	A
Q2	B	A	A	C	B	A	B

Table 2

Math Grades: Quarters 1 and 2

	Student#1	Student#2	Student#3	Student#4	Student#5	Student#6	Student#7
Q1	F	A	B	B	B	C	A
Q2	F	A	B	B	B	C	B

Students were directed to review their performance overall (quarter grades), their week-to-week performance (weekly test scores), and their day-to-day achievements. Next students were asked how they might plan for improvement and then shown how to plan for improvement upon the grades on their weekly assignments. Then they were given a goal sheet to complete (see Appendix A) where they could record: their needed area of improvement/maintenance based on evidence from prior week's grades, a three-step plan for improvement/maintenance, a helper to keep them accountable to the plan, and what evidence they were going to look for to see if they had reached their weekly goals.

At the beginning of each week during this observation period students were given back their weekly tests from the prior week, directed to review their performance on the prior week's assignments, and then given a goal sheet to complete for the upcoming week. At the end of each week students' achievements were celebrated during a goal ceremony in which students placed character stickers on a wall goal chart to show how they had done on each day's assignments and on their intended goal for the week. The following figures show the class and individual performances:

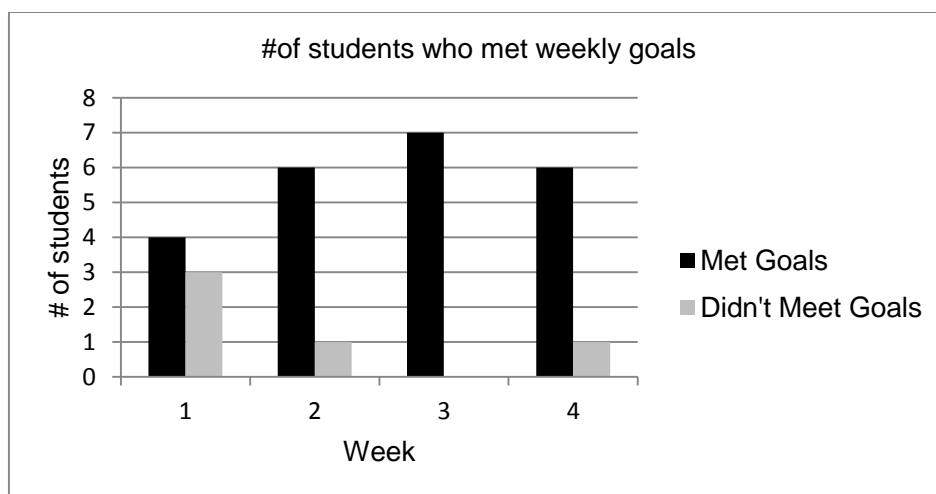


Figure 1. Number of students who met their weekly academic goals in spelling and those who did not.

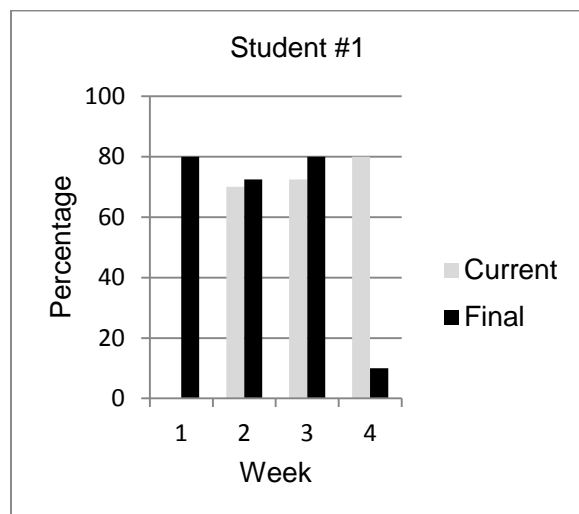


Figure 2. Student #1's performance.

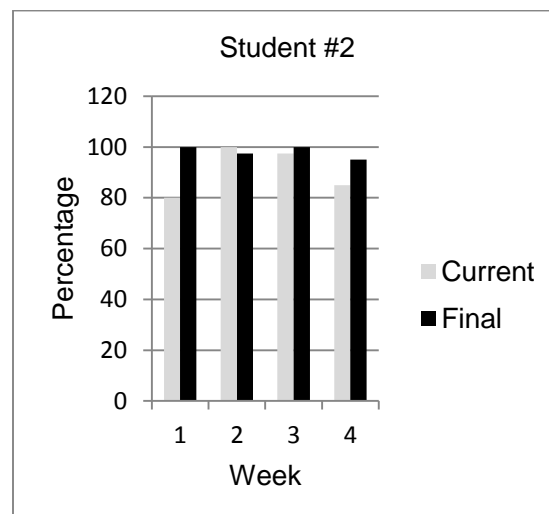


Figure 3. Student #2's performance

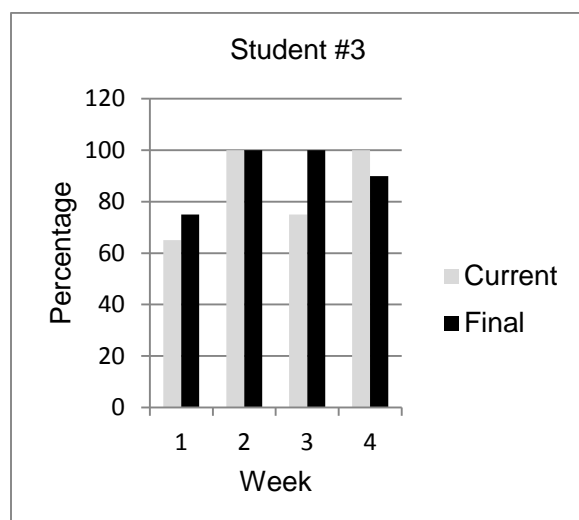


Figure 4. Student #3's performance.

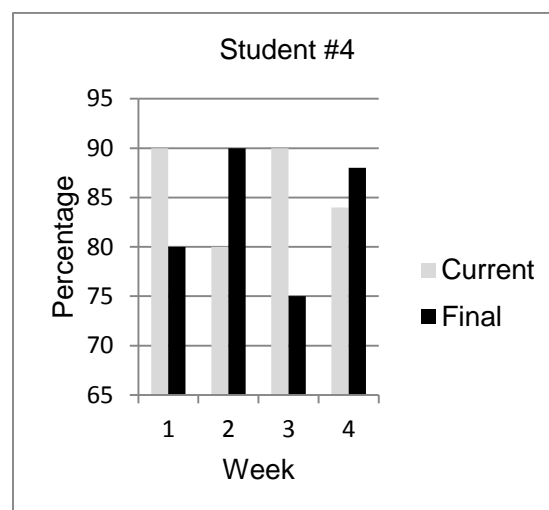


Figure 5. Student #4's performance.

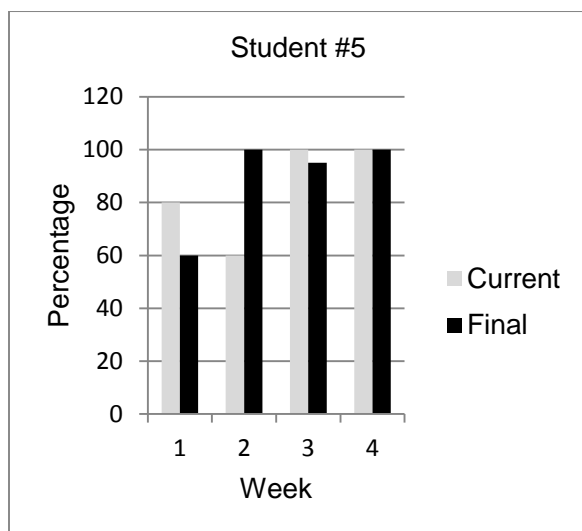


Figure 6. Student #5's performance.

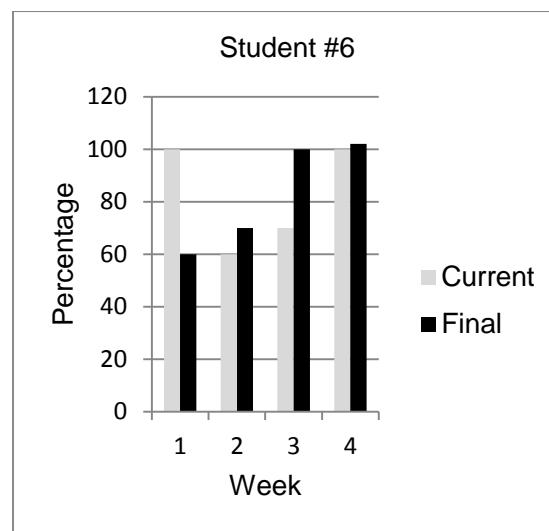


Figure 7. Student #6's performance.

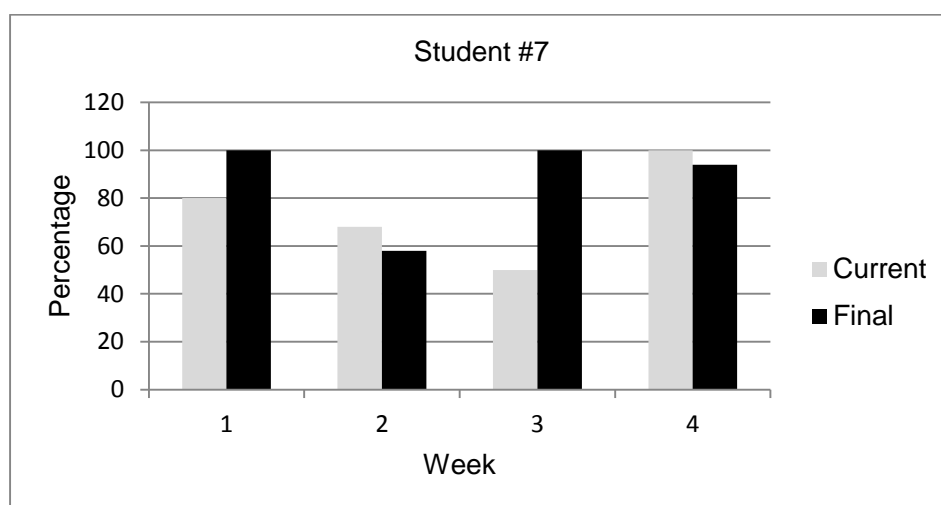


Figure 8. Student #7's performance

When looking at the data, the researcher determined that weekly goal setting by the students had an effect on the students' learning and on their grades. The researcher noted the inconsistencies in Students 1 and 3 because of the adverse effect on their grades. Students 4 and 7 demonstrated similar patterns of inconsistency; however, the overall effect on their grades was reverse that of their peers.

The researcher has determined that the program has accomplished its intended purpose and answered research question one: having students set weekly assignment goals has an effect on students' learning and can act as a tool to handle social/emotional issues. The majority of the students have maintained or surpassed their previous quarter's grades as shown in the following table.

Table 3

Spelling Grades

	Student#1	Student #2	Student#3	Student#4	Student#5	Student#6	Student#7
Q3	C	A	B	B	A	A	B

In comparison, quarter three's math grades, the control group, show a need for the implementation of a goal setting-program.

Table 4

Math Grades

	Student#1	Student#2	Student#3	Student#4	Student#5	Student#6	Student#7
Q3	F	A	C	D	C	C	B

Research question two asks the following: What is the effect of students' setting and achieving social goals in the classroom/school? In order to answer this question, the researcher gathered data from a similar goal-setting program that was implemented in the students' science classroom. The program that was used in the science classroom is based upon a point earning program called Class Dojo. Students set goals to gain Dojo points from the teacher based on

their efforts in class participation, working hard, staying on task, having a positive attitude, following directions, and ability to work with others on a team.

The following figures show the students' progress, first as a class, and then individually. As a class, students met their goals three out of the four weeks that the research was being conducted. Data shows that students worked towards social goals independently, collaboratively, and, with the exception of one week, reached the set goals. This ability to work alongside their peers towards their goals was rewarded in the end with a mini-party and movie.

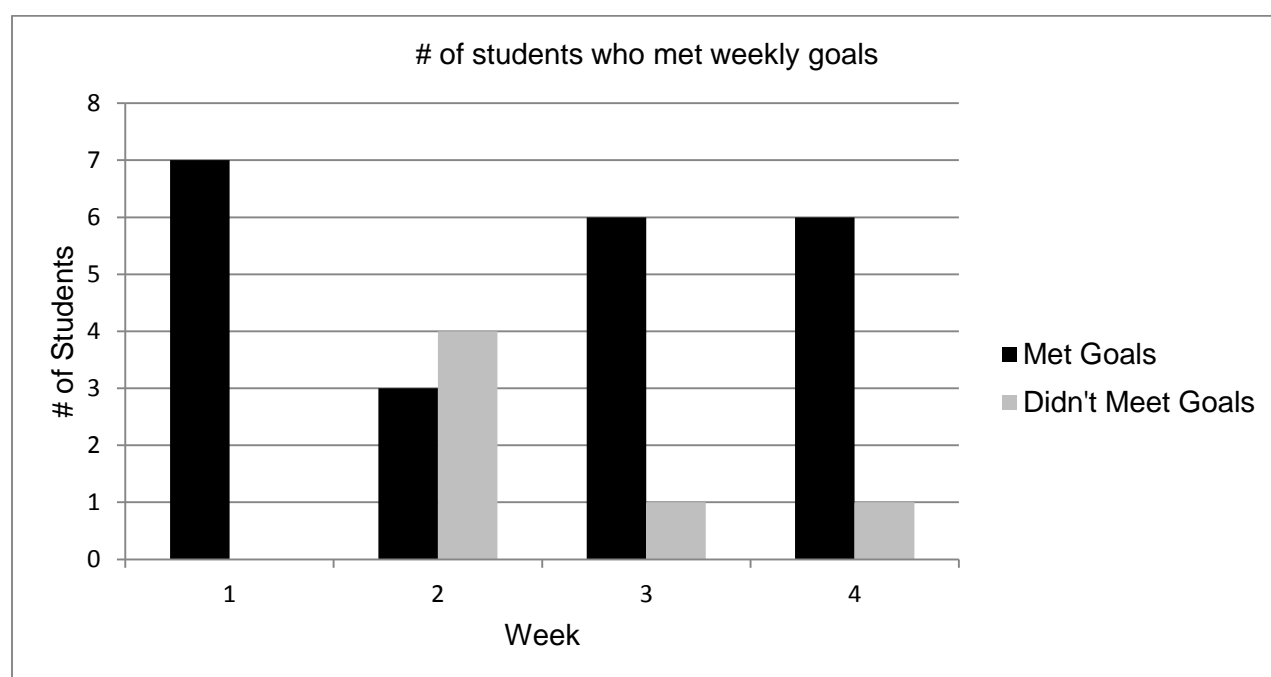


Figure 9. Number of students who met their weekly Dojo points goals and those who did not.

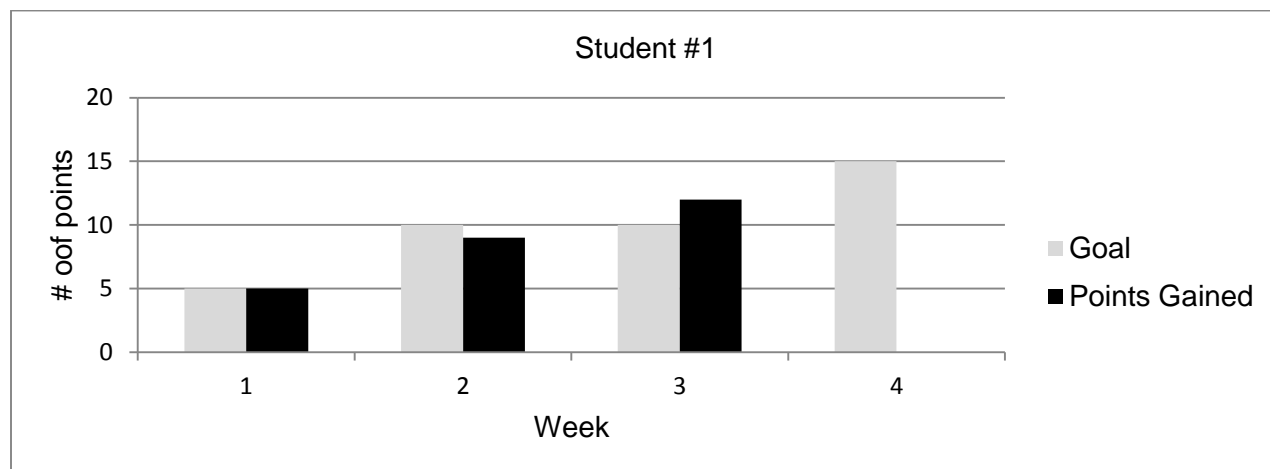


Figure 10. Student #1's weekly Dojo goal performance.

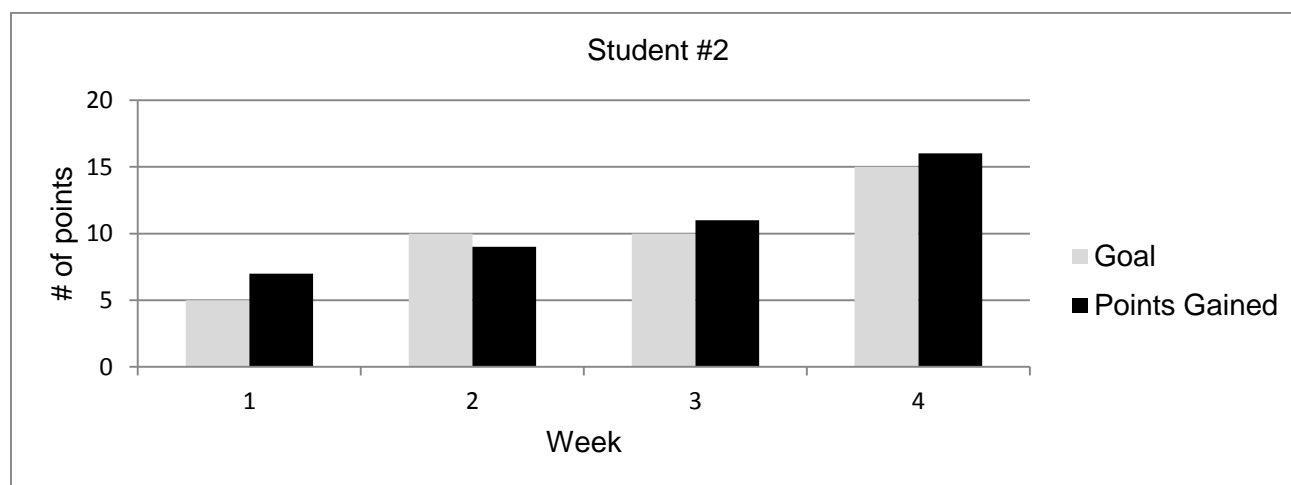


Figure 11. Student #2's weekly Dojo goal performance.

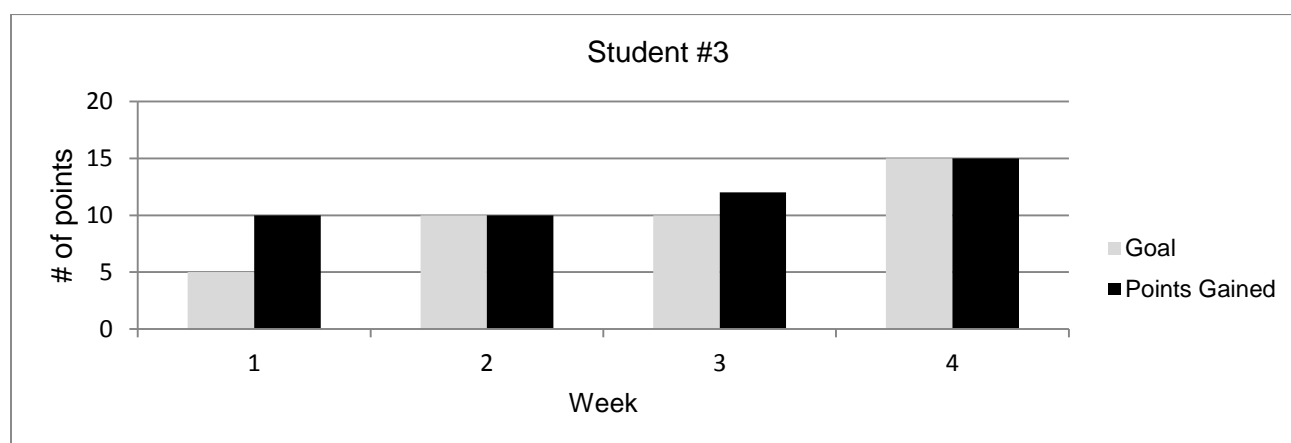


Figure 12. Student #3's weekly Dojo goal performance.

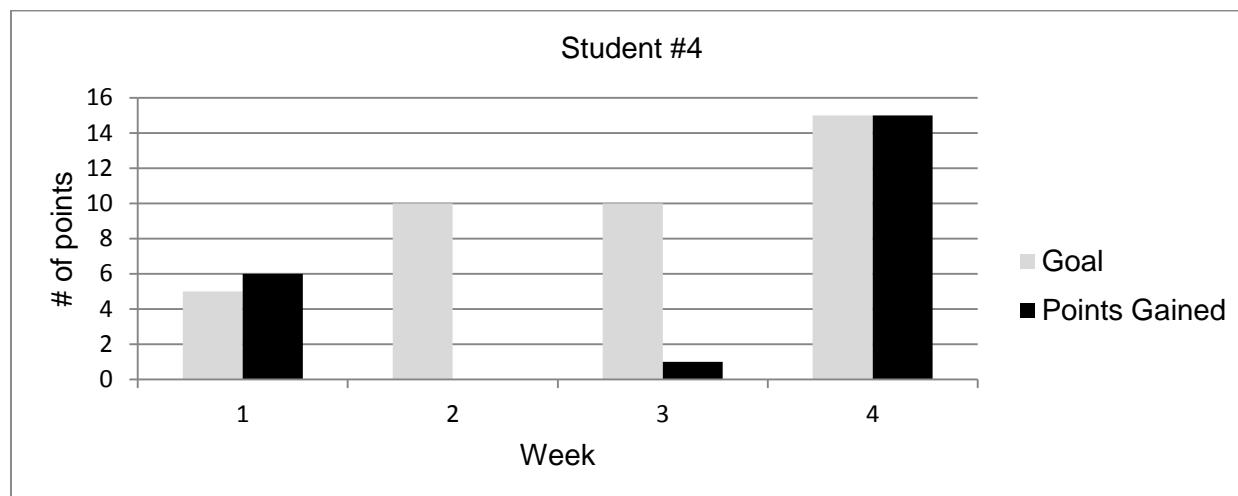


Figure 13. Student #4's weekly Dojo goal performance.

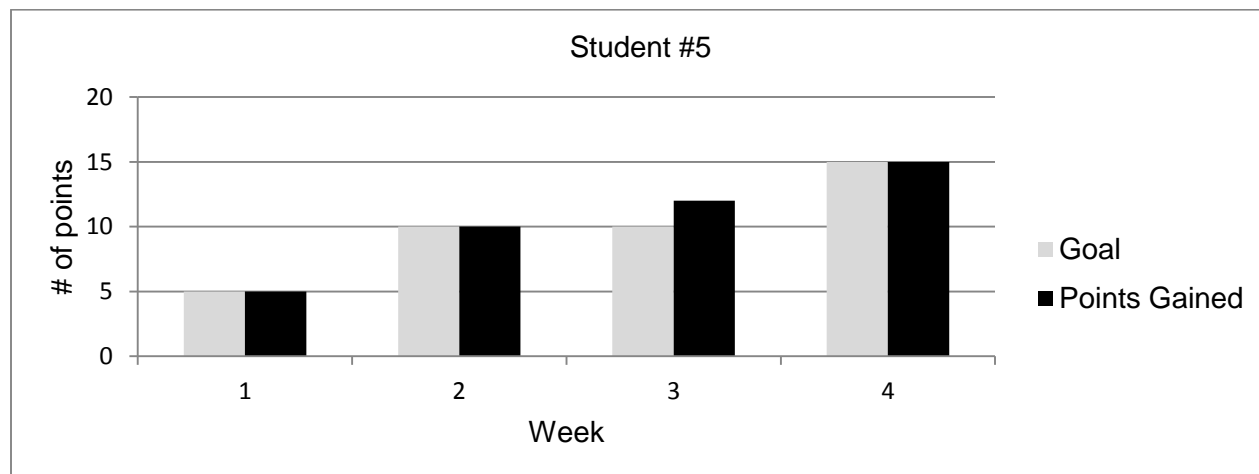


Figure 14. Student #5's weekly Dojo goal performance.

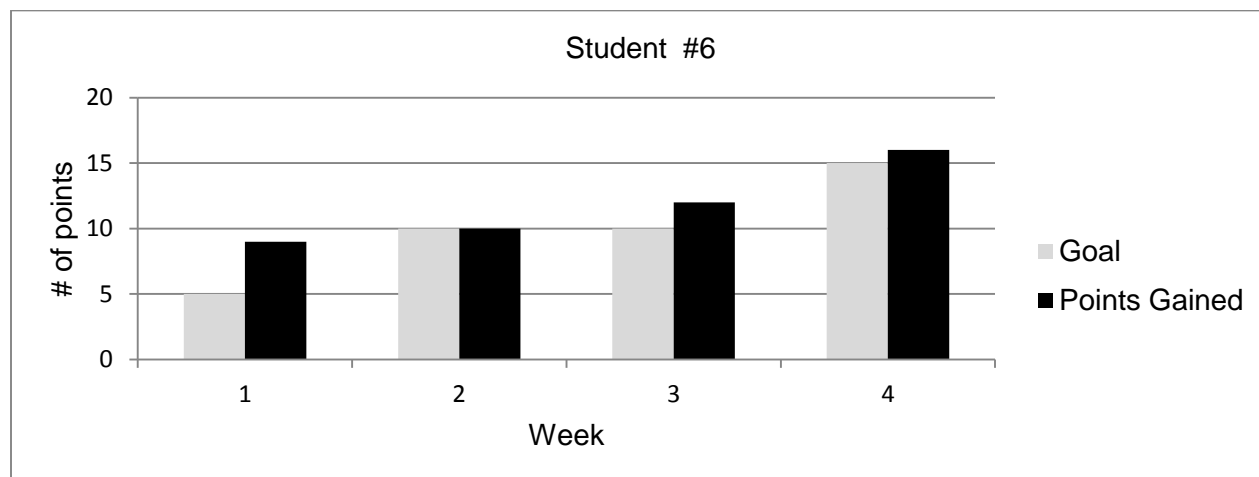


Figure 15. Student #6's weekly Dojo goal performance.

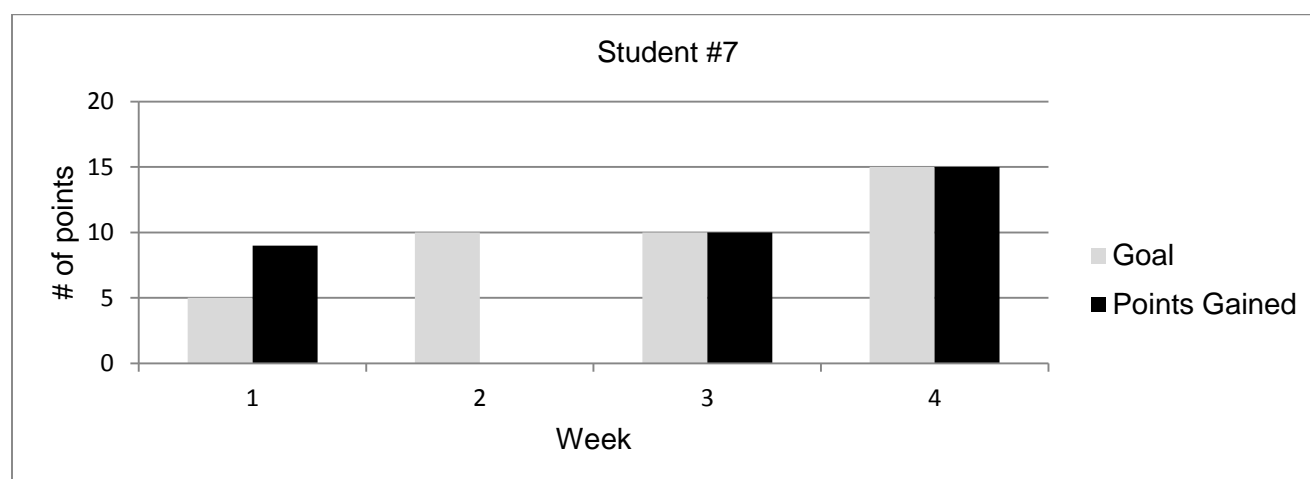


Figure 16. Student #7's weekly Dojo goal performance.

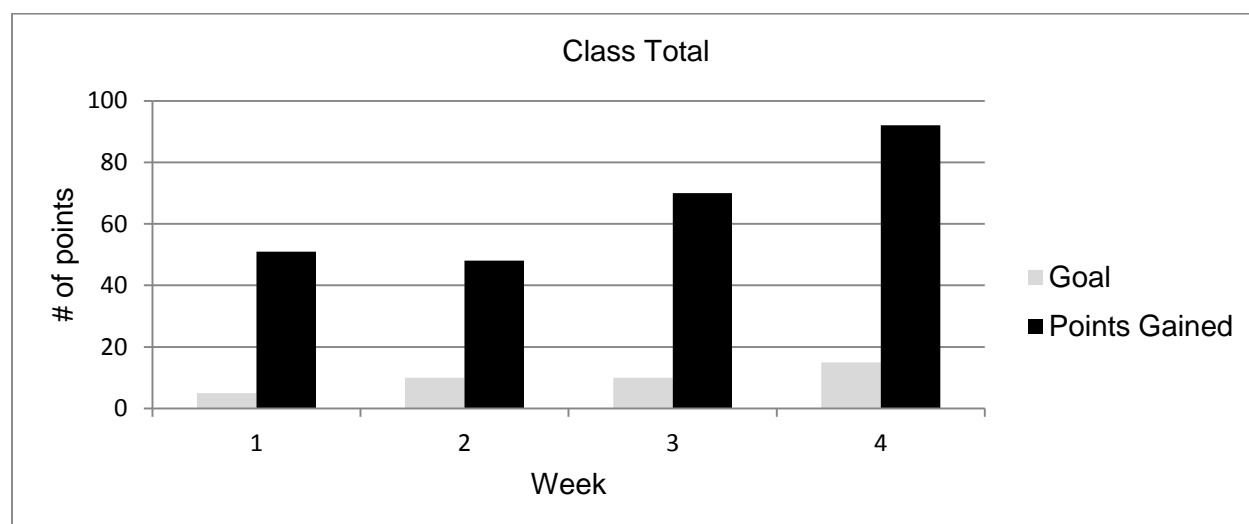


Figure 17. Class' weekly Dojo points gained.

The areas in which the students set goals for science correlate with the areas on their quarterly character development cards. The following table shows students' progress on their character development cards since quarter one. A correlation can be made between this data and the class Dojo points they gained; providing another answer for research question two: What is the effect of students' setting and achieving social goals in the classroom/school?

Table 5

Character Development Cards

		Zest	Grit	Optimism	Self-control:S	Self-control:I	Gratitude	Social intel.	Curiosity
Student#1									
	Q1	S	N	S	U	S	S	N	N
	Q2	S	N	S	U	S	S	N	N
	Q3	S	S	S	U	S	S	N	N
Student#2									
	Q1	V	V	V	V	N	N	N	V
	Q2	S	V	V	S	N	N	N	V
	Q3	S	V	S	S	N	N	N	V
Student#3									
	Q1	S	S	S	S	S	V	S	S
	Q2	V	S	S	V	V	V	V	V
	Q3	V	V	S	V	V	V	V	V
Student#4									
	Q1	N	S	U	S	U	N	U	N
	Q2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Q3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Student#5									
	Q1	S	N	N	N	S	S	S	N
	Q2	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Q3	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
Student#6									
	Q1	S	N	S	N	S	E	V	N
	Q2	V	S	V	S	V	E	V	S
	Q3	E	S	S	V	V	E	V	S
Student#7									
	Q1	E	V	N	V	V	V	S	V
	Q2	E	S	N	S	S	S	N	V
	Q3	V	S	N	S	S	S	S	V

Note: E= excellent; V= very good; S= satisfactory; N= needs improvement; U= unsatisfactory

For the month of March, students were tasked with the goal of achieving 40 points overall in the area of eight character traits. The table below shows the total amount for the month that students scored in the listed area. Student character improvement is partly based upon their scores.

Table 6

Character Dojo Points

		Zest	Grit	Optimism	Self-control - S	Self-control - I	Gratitude	Social intel.	Curiosity
Student #1		5	6	22	3	10		2	
Student #2		6	4	26	5	13		2	
Student #3		6	8	22	4	13		2	
Student #4		5	6	14	4	11		1	
Student #5		6	7	24	4	13		2	
Student #6		6	7	24	4	12		2	
Student #7		5	7	16	55	14			

Table 7

Science Grades

	Student#1	Student #2	Student#3	Student#4	Student#5	Student#6	Student#7
Q3	C	A	A	C	B	B	B

Discussion

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to answer this question: Can goal-setting be used as a tool to manage the social and emotional issues which students bring with them into the classroom? In order to answer this question, the researcher introduced an academic goal-setting program in a fourth/fifth grade general-education classroom during the third quarter of the 2014-2015 academic school year. The program was in response to a declining pattern in the spelling grades from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2. In addition, a social goal-setting program was enacted in the fourth/fifth grade's science classroom during the same period. This implementation was in response to a developing pattern in the student's negative behavior towards one another.

Summary of Findings

After the four week implementation period of the goal-setting program in both classrooms, this researcher observed that the majority (four out of seven) of the students met their goals three out of the four weeks. Two out of the three that did not meet their goals had results that were very close to their intended targets. Finally, the one student whose data was very irregular had an overall grade increase, making that student the exception.

During the observation period Student 1 missed his/her goal during the final week by a drastic amount, affecting the overall grade in a negative way. It was around this period that Student 1 experienced a life-altering situation when the student was removed from school for a day to be assessed for an IEP at a different school. Student 3's progress faltered as the student became challenged by the advancing grade-level words; this had a negative impact on the overall grade. Student 4's irregular data may have to do with the life-altering circumstances s/he

experienced during the observation period when the student's mother got married after being the sole provider for the student's family for the majority of the student's life.

Recommendations

Based on the given data, the researcher would recommend the use of a goal-setting program in a fourth/fifth grade classroom. The program enabled the students to approach their work in a different manner, taking ownership of their learning and then striving to maintain and/or surpass their previous week's goals. This attitude of taking ownership seemed to mitigate the social/emotional issues that might otherwise have taken away from the students' learning (both academically and socially). In the cases where students found themselves dealing with new circumstances, new opportunities presented themselves to help the students manage these circumstances as well.

Goal-setting was a small component of a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program that this researcher discovered while preparing for school one summer. The larger program seemed very challenging to incorporate; however, with the success of this small component, the plan is now to branch out to incorporate another subject (math) during the last quarter of this academic school year. By drawing attention to the success of this small component the researcher hopes to encourage others to research the potential of SEL programs in the classroom. Whether your students are in an urban, suburban, or rural setting, they all have needs that if left unmet can have a detrimental effect on their learning and their social interactions with peers both now, and as research has shown, in the future.

Limitations of the Study

In planning this action research the researcher tried to keep the steps and materials as simple as possible so that this process could be implemented in other subject areas as well as replicated for use in other classrooms. However, there are always unforeseen drawbacks that could prevent the user from obtaining the same kinds of results. The program is a tool to aid students in managing life's challenges that threaten their learning academically and socially. It is especially hard to motivate a student to create and keep goals if the student has not seen the benefit of goal tracking previously. To overcome this issue, goals were set for students in the social aspect of the science section of the program. This was to encourage students to take part in the program in order to see results. Moving forward, the students will be asked to set their own goals, in order to also implement self-assessment.

Another drawback is when a student is absent at the beginning of a week or there is a shortened week in which the students are out of school during the initial goal setting day. When scenarios like this occur, there must be a plan to ensure that the students' goals are achievable for the shortened week.

In order to overcome the problem of students being absent at the beginning of the week, goals should be set the week before. If this also becomes a problem, the previous week's goal should be used to ensure that students do not miss out on a week.

Lastly, due to the fast pace of the classroom environment, accurately setting the amount of time necessary for students to think, plan, and record their goals was not always plausible. This problem will lessen as the students become more comfortable with the program because

expectations become clear and known, allowing students to become more efficient and effective in planning their goals.

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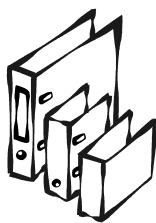
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Appendix

_____ 's Spelling

Goal Sheet

Quarter: _____

Performance on assessments and accurate completion of daily assignments are measures used to determine skills in this area. Use the "shopping list" below to decide the most important goal for you.

Goal Shopping List:

- Improve performance on weekly spelling list.
- Improve performance on definitions.
- Improve performance on using words in context for sentences.
- Improve performance in completing weekly activities.

Goal # 1: _____

Goal was established on what evidence? (Why did you choose this goal?)

Action Plan: What will you actually do to reach your goal? What help do you need? What check points will you use to see if you are making progress?

Step 1- I will _____

Step 2- I will _____

Step 3- I will _____

Helper(s) Job: _____

How will you tell if you are improving (data measure)?