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**Academic Logs in a Pre-Algebra Learning Support Classroom**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative research shows the observed and reported experiences when academic logs were implemented in a seventh grade learning support pre-algebra classroom. This study took place at a middle school building within a small rural town in Pennsylvania. Seven learning support students participated in the study, two males and five females. All students in the class had an individual educational plan (IEP). The academic logs were developed so that students could keep track of their individual daily averages and to create personal academic goals every two weeks. The academic logs were put into place to enhance student responsibility, ownership, motivation, academic success, and goal making skills. During the action research study the students were responsible for keeping track of their daily assignments in the record sheet of their academic logs. Throughout the process the teacher provided the following: instruction on how to create an academic goal, bi-weekly log checks, teacher expectations, teacher feedback, and a model academic log sheet that students had access to. After implementation of the academic log for four months, it was found that academic logs generated student achievement, confidence, independence, responsibility, self-realization skills, and self-correction skills. It was noted that many of the students wanted to continue with the academic logs once the study was completed.

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## **RESEARCHER STANCE**

I am currently a seventh grade learning support teacher in the same middle school I once attended. Although I am no stranger to the district, I was lucky enough to be given an opportunity to teach within my field of study a few months after I graduated college. I continue to be honored to work alongside of those who filled my hopes in dreams of one day becoming a teacher.

I take great pride in having my own class room; I care very much for my students and have the utmost respect for the teachers and co-workers in our building. I love what I do, and I am very privileged to tell people that I am a teacher. I enjoy and feel very passionate about teaching. The success that I have encountered has been overwhelming. I have had a wonderful support system from my family.

Since elementary school, I have known that I wanted to pursue a career in the education field. In high school, I realized that I needed to start setting academic goals for myself in order for any college to look at my records. I was the type of student who had to work and study very hard to earn the grades that I did; I was very envious of those students who did not have to study to get the good grades. I really buckled down my junior and senior year of high school; I worked very hard and attained honor roll eight marking periods consecutively. This made me feel very confident when I started applying for colleges. It felt

extremely rewarding that I set an academic goal for myself during high school and actually achieved it.

This was just the beginning. That academic goal led me to the next; I wanted to attend a college or university that had a dual major of both special education and elementary education. I was lucky enough to have found a program at College Misericordia that offered the dual major within a four-year program. It was at that college that I had the opportunities to become a resident assistant for three years, vice president and president of the education club, and student PSEA secretary for the state. The goal-making process continued as I became addicted to the thrill of setting goals for myself to achieve. Upon graduation from college, my next goal was to find a teaching position, preferably within my field of study. The summer after graduation I had numerous interviews and was offered three different teaching positions within three different districts. I was so excited that I had options to choose from and felt that Catasauqua School District fit my needs and interests. But my goal setting did not stop after I was hired; within my first year of teaching my next goal was to earn my master's degree. I am currently in the midst of attaining this goal and have set other academic goals to follow within my career.

Here I am today, entering my fourth year of teaching, and I am in the final stages of earning my masters degree from Moravian College. In order to fulfill those long term goals I had to set short term goals for myself, similar to

benchmarks. I could not just leap from one goal to the next; there were baby steps and transitions in between. I truly value the gift of goal setting; I believe it was instilled within me by my father. I am lucky to have accomplished all the major things within my educational career that I ever dreamed of doing thanks to him. Goal setting has been successful for me. I have experienced much triumph and have reaped in the rewards of achievement, which may be the reason why I continue to set goals for myself, one after the other. It was not always so easy. I have experienced much disappointment and have gone through my share of meltdowns. But in the end, the accomplishment of attaining my personal goals far exceeds the disappointments at times.

In my own practice of teaching, I want to instill the gift of goal setting to my students. I want them to feel the pride in achievement or to learn about their mistakes. I want them to start thinking about their future, about where they stand, and where they want to go as an individual within their educational career. I do not think it is ever too early to start thinking and wishing about your career. I feel that my students should have some type of ownership within their learning, and I feel by making academic goals for themselves that they can show student ownership and hopefully experience their own triumph and success.

In my experience of teaching learning support students, I found that having low self-esteem is a commonality. As if seventh grade is not challenging and overwhelming enough, the students are struggling with puberty, physical

changes, hormonal changes, sexuality issues, trying to “fit in,” drugs, gangs, smoking, peer pressure, and the list goes on. Aside from the age group, there are typical factors that may affect the students’ learning environment that are out of the teacher’s control, such as students’ home life, broken families, physical/mental abuse, economic issues. For my students, add to the list that they are functioning below grade level, struggling with reading, studying grade level materials for science and social studies, and if that is not enough during class, conquering homework from the daily lessons of their classes.

It is not uncommon for me to hear that my students are embarrassed to come into my class room; they label themselves as dumb because they feel as though they are different. It breaks my heart to hear that any student would hesitate to feel comfortable in my class room. I feel I need to do something. I realize I cannot make the students’ disabilities disappear, but I can help to bring up their self esteem. I want my students to feel the same triumph I did when I accomplished my academic goals. I want them to care about something within their education; I want them to experience setting goals. I want them to learn how it feels when you work really hard to accomplish something you care about and take pride within. I may not be able to hear my students say that they care for school, but deep down I can try to instill within them the gift that my father gave to me. I want to teach my students about goal setting and how important it is to strive for what they personally desire.

As part of goal setting, I want to teach my students the importance of keeping track of their grades in pre-algebra class. I want to guide my students to become involved with their academic success by keeping track of their own grades and by making bi-weekly goals for themselves. I believe if students keep track of their own grades they would take on responsibility for their own academic success and would have more ownership over their school work.

At this point in time, I do not feel that my students can recognize the importance of their grades, the importance of homework completion, and the importance of the work that needs to be put forth prior to a test or quiz. I believe that math class is an appropriate starting point to show students how their teachers figure out their class average. I think that keeping a record of their current grades will allow them to see some deficits that they may have not seen otherwise. If the students' average is not where they would like it to be, they need to analyze their academic log, deduce some type of reasoning for the results that they have earned, and make changes accordingly by setting academic goals for themselves. I would like to find out what the observed and reported experiences will be when academic logs are implemented within a 7<sup>th</sup> grade learning support pre-algebra classroom.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The learning process contains elements that can be intrinsically driven within a student. Students may become more successful if they are taking responsibility for their own learning and creating goals for themselves, with motivation from within. When the student creates the goals for themselves it may be more likely that they will feel the need to be successful. Student ownership can be exhibited within their work habits such as: homework, class work, assignments, activities, projects, and tests. The motivation can be carried through the students goal setting strategies, in order to self regulate, observe, and evaluate their own learning. The final reward within this process is academic achievement for the student, through student success and self-determination.

### **Motivation**

Many educators would agree that motivation is a key factor with academic success and achievement. If a student is not motivated to achieve, then the work is not going to get done. Many teachers are looking at this issue and are trying to discover how to motivate those who seem not to care about their school work. Phillips and Steinkamp (1995) implemented a program designed to improve motivation in their classrooms. They felt that they had students who possessed no ownership in their learning, little confidence in themselves, and had an inability to transfer their learning to something meaningful. Through implementation of their

intervention program, they found that motivation increased in their students. Their four tiered intervention program incorporated cooperative learning strategies, development of a portfolio assessment plan, tool for organizational skills, and goal-setting techniques. They attribute the success of the intervention plan to each and every tier of the program.

Guthrie, Wigfield, and VonSecker (2000) focused on ways that can enhance intrinsic reading motivation through implementation of a reading instructional program. The reading instructional program was concept-oriented reading instruction, also known as CORI. Within the program, direct instruction was provided to teach the following reading skills: paragraph comprehension, information searching techniques, vocabulary, spelling, and expository text composition. The framework of CORI can be broken down into four phases: observe and personalize, search and retrieve, comprehend and integrate, and communicate to others.

The CORI intervention focused in on enhancing students' learning or mastery goals. The data supports the theory that mastery goals are associated with students' intrinsic motivation. Students were intrinsically motivated when they perceived the teacher to provide clear goals for learning. Students with learning goals seek to understand content, master skills, and gain competence. Teachers who focused on learning goals had a positive impact on students' intrinsic

motivation and other aspects of motivation (Guthrie, Wigfield, & VonSecker, 2000).

### ***Student Ownership***

In a middle class community school in Illinois, teachers found that students displayed lack of student ownership, in regard to their learning and lack of homework completion. It was found that students were not being involved in the assessment process. The teachers were in need of forming some type of self-evaluation for their students. Four interventions were established and put into place: the use of portfolio assessments, peer helpers, increased parent/student/teacher communication, and student self-assessments. When these interventions were implemented, the researchers found that these intervention methods were successful for everyone involved, and the awareness of academic and social responsibility was exemplified (Ackerman, Hughs, & Wilder, 1997).

An action research project was implemented within a middle class community in northeastern Illinois, which focused on improving student time use, verbal control, listening skills, finishing school assignments, checking work carefully, completing homework, and other behaviors which were suggested by the students themselves (Anderson, Bassett-Anderson, Gerretsen, & Robilotta, 1997). With the implementation of graphic organizers, daily checklists, working with peers, and completing assignment books it was shown by the data that

ownership of their responsibility skills improved the students' thinking and problem-solving skills.

Keith, Puzerewski, and Raczynski (1999) felt "students of the targeted 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes do not exhibit acceptable responsibility for their own learning and they do not show respect or take ownership for their learning environment" (p. 8). In order to address these concerns, they changed the classroom environment and added cooperative learning, multiple intelligence activities, and journals. They offered choices connected with literature themes, and had whole class discussions. "Researchers analyzed each separate intervention and found that all helped, in some way, increase students' responsibility for their learning and behavior" (p. 72). The students made an investment within their classroom by creating a caring environment. "Overall, the researchers found that the interventions were successful in producing positive changes in student behaviors. The teachers really enjoyed the changes in the students' attitudes, and felt closer to the students as a result of the interventions" (p. 74).

Spadano and Zeidler (1996) support key concepts that are central to education, such as: accountability, ownership of understanding, and responsibility. The article states, "Perhaps instead of the teacher selecting the 'way' students learn, students themselves should direct and advance their particular learning style, thus insuring an appropriate match of learner and learning style" (p. 4). This puts the responsibility and ownership back onto the

student. Students can learn better when there is ownership of understanding. If teachers adapt their curriculum towards the learning styles that are within their classrooms, they should adapt homework assignments around those varying learning styles.

Spadano and Zeidler (1996) also discuss the policy of homework and how a student's desired self-change can occur through methods of homework. Through the content, the learner can reinforce concepts within their homework. Usually with some clarification, students can isolate points of confusion within their homework assignments. They may not realize it, but through all of their confusion they are really constructing and taking ownership of their understanding. Student responsibility will not be developed if the student is used to relying on the teacher for reviewing the homework the following class period. A good motivator for homework is grading. Grading holds the students accountable for doing the work and increases their dependence. Evaluation can be used to improve learning. The homework, tests, quizzes, assignments are the motivating factor for the students to do their work.

### ***Homework Performance***

Spadano, Zeidler, and Chappell (1997) pose the question, "Who owns the understanding? In teacher-centered classrooms, the ownership of understanding belongs to the teacher and is something shared with their students" (p. 2). But on the other hand, "In the learner-centered classroom, the student is an active agent,

central to the learning process and gains ownership of understanding by developing an evidential belief system” (p. 2). In order to make the change from teacher-centered to learner-centered, teachers should simply enforce a homework policy. The evaluation of homework, quizzes, and tests then becomes the motivating factor for the students to do their work. The grading of the homework is often the motivation for the student doing the homework. A homework policy holds the students accountable for attempting the assignment. Homework can take on one of two roles; it can be either teacher centered or student centered. If homework is teacher centered, it evolves into drill and practice, is given credit for attempting not for accuracy, and develops dependence. On the other hand, homework that is student centered evolves into extended learning, research, experimentation, and discovery. From there it is translated into one part of ongoing assessment of student understanding which then leads to independence.

Spadano (1996) completed qualitative research to find out if the effects of a homework model advance student ownership of understanding and responsibility. The homework model placed ownership of understanding onto the student and also helped develop students’ problem solving behaviors. “This research investigated the teachers’ perception of whether their students began to sense that when ‘understanding’ became their responsibility, they became learners, actively taking control of the problem solving process” (p. 2-3). From this research, it was found that students were perceived to become independent

and self-governing as they solved homework problems and developed their problem solving behaviors. Through this methodology, students were able to share their work to solve the problems and advanced their responsibility. Those students who communicated their points of confusion advanced their ownership of understanding.

Callahan, Rademacher, and Hildreth (1998) developed a study to examine the effect of teaching parents of at-risk students how to facilitate a home based self-management program to help the student by improving homework performance and show academic achievement. Lack of homework completion has been reported to be a major factor contribution to poor academic performance, school failure of youth at risk, and youth with disabilities. Within the procedure, the study involved two 1½ hour trainings for the parents. They watched role played scenarios of implementation of the homework program and learned self-management procedures.

Homework performance was defined by having homework completed (a certain percentage of completed math assignments turned in) along with homework quality (the percentage of math problems completed correctly). Throughout the self-management, the students needed to self-monitor and record their homework start and end times, total time spent on homework, and whether or not it was completed at an appropriate time and location. Each student also recorded the number correct and created self-instructing goals based on his/her

previous score. Incentives were also included within the program. The students were able to earn points, which were awarded and given at home to facilitate parent involvement (Callahan, Rademacher, & Hildreth, 1998).

This study showed that homework completion and homework quality were significantly higher during the implementation of the parent facilitated self-management strategies. This also shows that student achievement and success are enhanced when parents are directly involved. Parent facilitated self-management procedures may improve homework completion and accuracy for students at-risk. This study supports the idea that parents play a significant role within the homework process.

### ***Scaffolding***

Scaffolding is very important, teachers need to learn how to teach their students how to monitor their own progress and then analyze their findings. Throughout this process the students will need some type of model to follow. Learning support students especially need to feel comfortable within their environment. Throughout the process of keeping the academic logs and making goals, the students need to have reassurance that they have support if it is needed. Some students may seek the involvement of their parents, and they too can be used as a support system and help to scaffold their child's learning.

Larkin (2001) provides information about the importance of scaffolding for students with learning disabilities. A supportive environment is needed for

students with learning disabilities to function successfully in school. Scaffolding provides students with the help they need and also allows the students to complete a task with assistance before they are able to complete it independently. Gradual decrease of supports and gradual increase of student responsibility with the responsibility for learning shifting from the teacher to the student, teachers should reassure their students that they have the necessary support to complete a task successfully.

Effective scaffolding can be presented by using eight essential elements, such as: pre-engagement, establishing a shared goal, actively diagnosing the understandings and needs of learners, providing tailored assistance, maintaining pursuit of a goal, giving feedback, controlling for frustration and risk, and assisting internalization, independence, and generalization to other contexts. As students perform tasks with less and less assistance from the teacher, the students gain more self-confidence and are more likely to take risks. Those students who have been within the cycle of failure may have trouble maintaining a pursuit of a goal. Teachers can help to encourage through extra praise to increase levels of student motivation (Larkin, 2001).

Students with learning disabilities need a supportive classroom environment that will help them recognize their strengths and feel confident about their abilities. This way the student can then move forward to achieve at least some degree of independent functioning. In order for effective scaffolding to take

place in the classroom, there are guidelines of which a teacher needs to be aware. The teacher needs to identify what exactly the student knows and then begin with what the student is able to do. After that is accomplished the teacher needs to help the students achieve success quickly. Teachers need to assist students in becoming independent and need to realize when to let go (Larkin, 2001).

### **Student Goal Setting**

Researchers have concluded that learning goals are associated with adaptive patterns of behavior, regardless of the perceived level of ability. There are two different types of goals: they are performance goals and learning goals. Performance goals deal with the individual's concern about demonstrating their ability, and their focus is being judged. Learning goals deal more with the individual's concern about developing their ability, and their focus is to gain understanding, insight, and skills (Kaplan & Midgley, 1997).

Kaplan and Midgley (1997) performed a study involving 229 seventh grade students from two middle schools in the Amye school district in Michigan. In both schools, most students attended general math and English classes; some were in the advanced section. Surveys were read aloud to students by trained research assistants during a class period. They used the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Survey (PALS), which asked students about their motivational orientations such as academic beliefs, learning strategies, and perceptions of their teachers', parents', and friends' orientations to school. Five scales were looked at:

learning goal orientation, perceived academic competence, adaptive learning strategies, and maladaptive (helpless) learning strategies. Looking at the results, researchers found that the facilitating role of perceived competence was found among all students, regardless of their level or type of goal orientation.

### ***Self-Regulation***

In order for the students to become successful self-regulators, they need to monitor their own progress and set forth goals to achieve. The students need to be encouraged that if they have the self-determination to correct mistakes or to set a goal and achieve it that they indeed can be successful. They need to seek encouragement from friends, peers, teachers, and family members. The students will gain self-regulating skills that can then be applied to their current and future classes.

Ley and Young (2001) suggest that there are principles for embedding support into the instruction that we teach to help facilitate self-regulation to our less expert learners. Self-regulation includes factors such as: resource management, goal setting, success expectations, and deep cognitive involvement. Self-regulation and performance can be affected by students' self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Research has indicated that organizing and transforming strategies are used by middle school students more than most other strategies because an effort to organize learning materials can influence achievement.

Ley and Young (2001) found that self-regulation can be made from the following components: goal setting, preparing a place to study, organizing materials, monitoring learning, evaluating progress and effectiveness, and reviewing tests. In order to implement self-regulation into the curriculum, there are four principles to follow based on the components listed. The first principle is to guide your students and help to prepare and structure an effective learning environment. The second principle focuses on organizing instruction and activities in order to facilitate cognitive and metacognitive processes. The third principle states that teachers should use instructional goals and feedback to present student monitoring opportunities. The fourth principle states that teachers should provide learners with continuous evaluation information and occasions to self-evaluate.

Monitoring is an important component to self-regulated learning. Monitoring allows for feedback and goal setting and promotes self-regulation. Self-regulators use both external and internal feedback to monitor their progress and to meet their learning goals, look at quality of their learning outcomes, and look at the effectiveness of learning strategies that they are using. Monitoring instructional interventions with and without explicit goal setting have improved performance. Monitoring has been associated with achievement. The issue at hand is that younger students and poor learners use very few monitoring strategies.

Prompting students to keep records affects their learning, motivation, and self efficacy (Ley & Young, 2001).

Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1988) emphasize the fact that self-regulation is an important learning strategy that we should be showing and teaching our students. Through self-regulation, the teacher can put the responsibility on the student and help give the student more ownership of his or her learning. In this study, the researchers are investigating the relationship between students' reports of using self-regulated learning strategies compared to their teachers' observations of students' self-regulated learning performances in the classroom. This is under the assumption that teachers are in a position to observe not only students' use of many self-regulated strategies, but also the outcomes of their strategy use, such as commitment and comprehension.

The study involved 80 tenth grade students selected from a high school in a middle-class suburb. The subject groups represented a broad range of achievement levels and were randomly selected. There were 44 boys and 36 girls, predominantly white, around 15 years of age. Interviews were given to the students to assess the 14 classes of self-regulated learning strategies. The classes are: self evaluation, organizing and transforming, goal setting and planning, seeking information, keeping records and monitoring, environmental structuring, self-consequences, rehearsing and memorizing, seeking peer assistance, seeking

adult assistance, seeking teacher assistance, reviewing tests, reviewing notes, and reviewing texts (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1988).

After the interview, the researchers developed a pool of approximately 25 items that indicated students' use of various self-regulated learning. The items were submitted to a panel of four experienced teachers. Twelve items were judged to indicate students' self-regulated learning strategies and outcomes that were observable to their teacher. In order to rate their students, teachers used the Rating Student Self-Regulated Learning Outcomes: A Teacher Scale (RSSRL). The results showed that the teachers view students' self regulated learning as a single entity. When researchers compared the interviews with the students and the rating scales of their teachers, the results were very similar. The students seemed aware of their self regulating abilities and were accurate in comparison to what their teachers viewed their abilities to be (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1988).

### ***Self-Observation/Self-Evaluation***

Through monitoring one's progress students, can build many skills. The students can take ownership and responsibility for their own learning. They are able to retain and understand what their strengths and weaknesses are within the content area being monitored. The students may become sensitive to the process of trying to achieve the goal because it becomes personal, since they are putting the goal in place for themselves. They also may feel very motivated to mark progress upon a goal that was made by them.

Zimmerman (1989) defines a self-regulated learner as metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning process. “Students learning must involve the use of specified strategies to achieve academically” (p. 329). Self-regulation can be triangulated into person (self), environment, and behavior. These three components affect one another and the self-regulation of an individual. Self-regulated learners can set goals for themselves. It has been researched that children’s achievement motivation has indicated that youngsters with low achievement motivation have tended to set high goals for themselves (Zimmerman, 1989).

“Self-efficacy can be defined as referring to perceptions about one’s capabilities to organize and implement actions necessary to attain designated performance of a skill or for specific tasks” (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 330). Researchers have found that self-efficacy is related to student persistence, task choice, effective study activities, skill acquisition, and academic achievement.

Self-observation refers to student’s responses that involve monitoring their own performance. This information can provide the knowledge of how well one is progressing to their goals. Self-observation can occur in one of two ways: verbal or written reporting or quantitative recording of one’s actions and reactions. Through students keeping records of their own progress it promotes their learning, motivation, and self-efficacy. Self-observation can produce positive self-reactive effects throughout student learning. Self-judgment refers to

the student's response to their performance with a set standard or goal (Zimmerman, 1998).

Bujan (1996) implemented action research to see if she could improve her students' taking responsibility for their own learning. She first saw that lack of higher thinking skills, ability to transfer learning, and lack of self-motivation responsible for the lack of responsibility. In order for students to become responsible for their learning she incorporated a few techniques into her teaching style: graphic organizers, problem solving strategies, higher order thinking skills, and student portfolios. "Students evaluated concepts, thinking processes, and cooperative interaction with one another. They also examined different sides of an issue by reflecting on the positive, negative, and interesting ideas of each experience" (p. 39). From her data and research she concluded that she had increased students' responsibility for learning and saw significant increases within their higher-order and critical thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, and self-evaluation.

### ***Reflective Writing***

Edwins (1995) conducted research to see if reflective writing would provide students with a tool for self-assessment. Edwins felt that both reflective writing and thinking would lead students toward self-assessment. It would also demonstrate an awareness of responsibility for the goals they had set up for themselves, ultimately guiding the students to self-motivation. Edwins' goal was

to have students score their achievement by use of rubric; she wanted to see the students increase by twenty percent on both their goal accomplishment and also their ability to write reflectively. “The implementation of goal setting and reflective writing produced positive results. The students showed enthusiasm and were eager to set goals, write reflectively, and evaluate the results” (p. 29).

### **Academic Achievement**

Magdol (1992) has written an article on the risk factors for adolescent academic achievement. Within the article, she lists the consequences that many adolescents face, such as being below grade level, low achievement test scores, and dropping out of school. There are other negative consequences that can result because of low achievement, like self-concept and sense of control issues, possible behavior problems, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquent behavior, incompatible learning style, and earlier school problems. She goes on to list the contributing factors that play a role within a student's academic performance, such as family, peer, school, work, and community factors. A student's success is not only attributed by the hard work of the student, but also by the surrounding factors. In conjunction with a supportive school, home, and community will all help to produce students who want to be academically successful.

Barr, Dittmar, Roberts, and Sheraden (2002) wrote an article that describes a program that was implemented in a western Illinois middle class community. The program was geared to improve listening skills so that they could

increase student academic performance. The three major categories of intervention were: teaching of effective listening skills, student ownership of self-monitoring, and positive effects of using music in the classroom. It was found that students showed much improvement and transferred their academic growth and progress across all subjects because teachers took the time out to teach listening skills to their students.

### ***Student Achievement***

In Florida, a system was developed for teachers to collect and analyze data to increase student achievement, increase student ownership and responsibility, and increase effectiveness of teacher involvement and inquiry within their own classrooms. This model has improved teachers' involvement in problem-solving educational issues and has led to higher student achievement. The model has been referred to as AMY, which stands for student achievement model. The project was designed to investigate the impact of school wide inquiry on student achievement in one school (Frye, Fugerer, Harvey, McKay, & Robinson, 1999).

Faculty members collectively selected an area or problem. Looking at districts' informal assessments (running records, dictation, survey, and concepts of print), they developed templates that are designed to show teachers specific areas of student weaknesses and focuses. Teachers were then given opportunities to sit down in grade level teams to discuss trends within the data. After two years,

they had established AMY (Student Achievement Model). Student performance data, observational data, and anecdotal notes indicated that the model was effective and that teachers were extremely positive about their involvement in the process (Frye, Fugerer, Harvey, McKay, & Robinson, 1999).

Through student performance data, observational data, anecdotal notes, and survey data collection those whom participated within the project were satisfied or very satisfied in terms of the computer templates. Eighty percent said that they used the data to evaluate their own teaching. This model indicates a process for increasing student achievement by aligning student expectations, instructional strategies, and assessment within an integrated system of process improvement (Frye, Fugerer, Harvey, McKay, & Robinson, 1999).

### ***Self-Determination***

Wehmayer, Agran, and Hughes (2000) saw that teachers of students with disabilities felt that self-determination was important. They also found that teachers did not place emphasis on self-determination when planning activities. A survey was given to 9,762 varied special education teachers nationally who taught students ranging from 14-21 years. The survey asked the teachers about their value of self-determination instruction and issues relating to teaching skills. The survey was based on the functional model of self-determination which states that “self-determination is the acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and

making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference" (p. 58).

There were two sections on the survey: the first gathered demographic information and the second section consisted of ten questions (with multiple parts) dealing with the teaching of self-determination. The survey asked teachers to rank from 1-6 the level of importance of the following; choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment, self-advocacy, self management and self-regulation skills, and self-awareness and self-knowledge. Each of those domains was described. The survey also asked if they implement strategies such as student involvement, education planning meetings, and structured class environments to promote student-directed learning, instruction activities, and mentor programs (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 2000).

A total of 1,219 teachers from all 50 states completed and returned the survey. From the study it was found that a majority of teachers believed that instruction in self-determination was important. All teachers surveyed indicated that they were indeed familiar with the self-determination construct. Decision making, problem solving, and choice making received the highest mean rankings as very important. But the study showed that although teachers are aware of the importance of self-determination is not being implemented or taught within the classrooms. Individuals with severe disabilities can learn to self-regulate and self-manage their own behavior, become less dependent on others, and express

preferences and use those preferences than to make choices for themselves.

Within the survey it was found that teachers felt as if they did not have enough professional development in the area of self-determination teaching strategies (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 2000).

### **Summary**

Students can demonstrate their motivation through several different types of methods. They can show motivation through student ownership, homework performance, and scaffolding. After the student secures a method of motivation, they are on the way to student goal setting. With student goal setting, they need to start by acquiring the skills to do the following: self-regulation, self-observation, self-evaluation, and reflective writing. All are important methods that students should try to master in order to set goals for themselves within the classroom environment. When students have mastered the needed skills for goal setting, they will be on their way to attaining academic achievement. Academic achievement can be conquered through student achievement and self-determination.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY**

### **Setting**

This study took place within a small rural town in Pennsylvania. Within this town there is one elementary school, which houses kindergarten through fourth grade. The middle school building houses fifth grade through eighth grade. The high school houses ninth grade through twelfth grade. This study was conducted at the middle school within a renovated building. At the end of last school year (2006), the middle school transitioned to a new home, which was formerly the high school. After several drastic renovations, this new home featured classrooms for every teacher within our building. The classrooms are currently situated according to grade levels.

### **Participants**

This study was conducted in a seventh grade learning support pre-algebra classroom. All students in this class have an individual educational plan (IEP). I am the case manager for all of their individual educational plans. Throughout the study, I made sure to follow the modifications and adaptations listed within the students' individual educational plans. I also marked their progress on their individual educational plan goals. The class had a total of seven students, two males and five females, all of whom participated in the study. I also taught the participating students within both my English and reading classes.

### **Research Goals**

The focus of my research was to see if my seventh grade learning support pre-algebra students would be able to achieve academic success if they monitored their own progress within pre-algebra class by utilizing an academic log and setting academic goals for themselves. I wanted students to build responsibility and take ownership over their learning and academic success by keeping track of their assignments and grades within my class. Based on the record of grades that they had kept, every two weeks they were to set a new goal for the following two weeks. The goal setting cycle continued as the marking periods progressed. I wanted to see if students motivation was affected to complete assignments on time, improve homework accountability, develop or increase goal setting skills, and to study prior to tests and quizzes.

### **Creating Academic Logs**

An academic log is a folder in which the students keep track of their individual grades and assignments within my math class. I took the inside of a regular file folder and stapled two academic log sheets on the left hand side, which could account for up to forty assignments. The students were able to mark the assignment name, points earned, total points possible on the assignment, cumulative points, and their current average (see Appendix A). On the right hand side, inside the cover, were the academic goal pages (see Appendix B). There were lines designated for the students to mark progress on the previous goals and

also create new goals for the future. The students were allowed to decorate the outside of the academic logs as they wished, as long as it was school appropriate. I did find that since this was the first time I ever implemented the academic logs within any of my classes that I needed to enhance the academic log for the second marking period based on the data and research collected from first marking period.

### **Research Design**

Implementation of the academic logs required students to keep track of their own grades within class. The grades marked within their logs were things such as but not limited to: homework, class work, quizzes, log check, work sheets, work book assignments, and tests. This process allowed students to keep track of their current average within the class.

I collected their log sheets bi-weekly to review for any possible mistakes. I compared their average along with the average that I currently have for that student within Power School (building wide grading system on the computer). If there were any discrepancies between grades, the student and I sat down and compared documentation. If time did not allow for the student and me to sit down together, I made sure to make a comment within their log asking them to see me. The students were held accountable for keeping their academic logs up to date. I had “log checks,” in which points were awarded, 1 point per assignment that should be within their academic log. For example, if there were 10 assignments

the past two weeks that should be in their log, then that is worth 10 points. If they received a perfect log, with all assignments completed along with the correct current average, then the student received full credit for that particular log check.

The students were responsible for keeping the following components within their academic logs: date of assignment, point value per assignment, total points accumulated, earned points, and current average. The students kept the academic logs inside the classroom on a shelf, this way the students did not forget to keep them up to date each pre-algebra class. I kept a model of the academic log posted within the classroom to role model the information and procedure (see Appendix C).

Every two weeks I wanted the students to create a bi-weekly goal based on their current average. In their academic logs I provided spaces and lines for the students to place their goals. I took some time out of the beginning of class in order to allow them to reflect and look back upon their grade record sheet so that they could analyze and look over their assignments and progress. It was the responsibility of each student to write down his or her goal for the next two weeks in pre-algebra.

I encouraged the students to look for trends in their academic log grade sheets. I described to them that setting a goal was something that they would like to improve upon, something they would like to get better at doing. On the top of the goal sheets, in their academic logs, I listed several example goal prompts. If

they were unsure of what goal to create, I encouraged them to refer to the examples at the top of their first goal sheet. I reassured the students that it may take some time until they would reach their goal. The students were directed to break down larger goals into smaller, more manageable goals. For example, if a student wrote a larger goal such as, "I would like to get a 100% in math." I encouraged the students to think about how they were going to attain a 100% average. I tried to exemplify to the students what baby steps they would need in order to achieve the bigger goal. When the students needed direction with the creation of goals I made sure to help them through the goal writing process and provided appropriate and measurable examples for each student when needed.

Since the students were encouraged to direct their academic goals from the progress on their goal sheets, I needed to make sure that their individual grade sheets were accurate. The night before the students were to create their bi-weekly goal for the next two weeks, I made sure to collect the academic logs and look over them. If time allowed in class, instead of collecting the academic logs and looking over them alone, I tried to have a personal conference with each student to check their average accuracy. In order to monitor the students' goal progress, I made sure to review the goals that they were setting forth for themselves and had conversations with the students to see if they were making progress towards achieving their goal. A few times, students reported that they did not achieve their goal for the past two weeks and asked if they could strive for the same exact goal

for the next two weeks. I encouraged the students to achieve for what they felt was needed.

The students took full ownership over what they felt needed to be done in order to improve academically. The students continued to monitor their goals. Every day that we entered a new assignment into the academic log they were able to reference to their goal. After the two weeks had passed, the students would be asked to write down if they have or have not met their goal that they set out for themselves and had to explain their reasoning.

### **Data Collection**

Previous to the start of my study I made sure to research varying methodology that could be used throughout my study. From that information I was able to create and design my own tools for the research I was about to embark upon.

In preparation for the implementation of the academic logs, I needed to first construct the academic log. I needed to create a place where students could keep a record of grades, but I also wanted the academic log to hold the goal-making sheets. I wanted to keep the log sheet for grades with the goal pages because I felt the goals should have been derived from the record keeping.

I also prepared a field log where I kept my daily notes on what was happening in the classroom and what dialogue and activities were being conducted. I was able to type up my field notes every day during my prep period.

When I set up my field log, I sectioned the paper in two. On the one side of my field log I wrote what I saw was happening in my classroom, things I heard students say, reactions that I wanted to keep track of, and so on. On the opposite side I kept my opinions, reflections, and dialogue as to what was happening in my classroom.

In preparation for my action research, I also created pre/post surveys (see Appendixes D & E) to give to the students in the beginning and toward the end of the school year. I also designed interview questions that I thought pertained to the study and implementation of the academic logs (see Appendix F). As my study was progressing, questions came about that I felt I needed a response for.

Throughout my research study I would have “free write days,” which involved the students writing down their thoughts on how they felt about academic logs according to the prompts that I wrote on the whiteboard.

### **TRUSTWORTHINESS STATEMENT**

This academic year I planned to be an ethical action researcher as I conducted my study within my pre-algebra classroom. My research design included multiple data sources such as participant observations, academic logs, student interviews, student surveys, student work samples, student input throughout the study, and goal setting sheets. These items provided different perspectives into my research.

The first step I took was submitting my action research thesis proposal to the Human Subjects Internal Review Board in order to receive approval to conduct my study (See Appendix G). Once HSIRB accepted it, I was clear to pursue my action research. The next step that I took was to receive permission from our building principal (see Appendix H). Once the permission was attained from the principal, I proceeded to explain the study to my students the first day of school (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001).

As I handed out the parent/guardian consent letters (see Appendix I), I made the students aware of what was going to be involved within the study. In order to triangulate data, I informed the students that I would be taking daily notes of class. They would help me by filling out surveys, participating in interviews, and giving samples of their work. I made sure to highlight the right to withdraw from the study, and let them know if they or their parents/guardians felt the need for them to withdraw from the study that they may do so at any given time

without a penalty. I encouraged the students to know that regardless if they participate within the study or not, everyone in my class will be treated fairly and equally. I also let them know that the information pertaining to the study, along with their academic logs, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for security. I also reassured the students that their real names will not be used within the documentation. Instead, I will use pseudonyms in order to provide anonymity from their true identity (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001).

As I received the parent/guardian signatures, I made sure to make photocopies and asked the students to give their parents/guardians the copy to keep for their records and documentation. Throughout the process of conducting action research within my classroom, I was a reflective teacher and continued to be aware of my teaching and myself.

I was very excited to begin my action research journey and had much anticipation to find out what the observed and reported experiences will be when academic logs are implemented in a seventh grade learning support classroom. As I gathered and analyzed data to answer my research question, I remained open to considering multiple points of view. I looked forward to triangulating the data that I collected. I had hoped that through several methods of data collection, I would find multiple themes within my study. I planned to keep a daily field log, pre/post surveys, and pre/post interviews, along with artifacts from the students themselves (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

As a researcher, I planned on being objective; I did not foresee myself predicting outcomes that I hoped would occur. I had an open mind as to what my research may lead me to and was very anxious to find out what my research would behold. I was willing to remain open to any unexpected findings. I also looked forward to attending to all of my students and would treat them all equally. As a researcher, I plan on eliminating any possible biases I may have had for the students, such as the input that the sixth grade learning support teacher already provided me at the end of last school year or the assumption that these students are capable of the organizational skills needed to keep the academic logs. I also examined and coded the data within my field log. I was eager to share my data with a support group of other thesis candidates and my teacher colleagues. I was interested in their viewpoints. I conducted my study for at least three months in order to collect an adequate amount of data to analyze. I have reviewed the appropriate literature for this research study and drew upon previous experiences to help guide my research. (Arhar, Holly, & Kasten, 2001).

## **MY STORY**

### **Introduction**

On the first day of school, the students came into the room quietly, excited to see their friends. I assigned them to their new seats and welcomed them into my classroom. I went through my first-day-of-school routine and spoke of the rules to follow, content to be covered, and materials that would be needed. This year was quite different from any other for several reasons. The first reason it was different was because the curriculum changed and we were given new workbooks to follow. The second reason this year was exceptional was because we started off this academic school year in a new building, the renovated high school. The third reason this year was going to be quite different was because I was implementing my action research study on academic logs.

### **Permission Slips**

On the first day of school, I presented the students with the details and permission slips pertaining to my research. I explained my reasons for implementing the academic logs in the classroom and told them that I was pursuing my masters through Moravian College and this was one of the last stepping stones until graduation in May. The first homework assignment that would be entered into the academic logs was the permission slip. It was worth a total of 5 points; just as every other homework was worth. By the following week,

all permission slips were signed by either parent/guardian of every student. Now I was ready to start implementing and documenting on the academic logs.

### **Academic Log Routine**

The students and I both had to work on an academic log routine for class. Since this is the first time I had the students keep track of their own grades, I needed to become accustomed to a new routine also. We set a time together, in the beginning of each period, to enter our assignments into the academic log. As I verbally led them through the steps of what to enter in each column, I also marked the assignments and filled out the same record sheet as they had in their academic log. It hung in front of the classroom, and was used as a model for students who were absent.

The first few times we entered assignments, I made sure to go around and check with the students to make sure they felt comfortable. Many of the students had never kept track of their grades before and were a bit uneasy about what they were doing. I noticed that the students needed a lot of encouragement and wanted constant reassurance of the task at hand. It did not take long for me to start seeing results.

### **Priceless “Aha” Moment**

The second day we started entering assignments into the log, and Rita yelled out to the class, “Oh my god!” Later on in class she shared, “I get it now!” She stated that she “moved up to a 92%.” She also wanted to know “why aren’t

we doing this in English and reading?” She asked if she could take her academic log home to show her parents, but I told her that I wanted to keep the log in school. I thought Rita felt overwhelmed with the academic logs at first. I had thought that maybe she needed some one-on-one instruction since she was struggling. I told her that we were not doing it in English and reading because I needed to try it out first before I put it into all of my classes, like a trial.

### **Student Accountability**

I told the students that I would be grading the logs every two weeks to make sure that their assignments are written completely within their academic logs. Each assignment is worth one point. They were not graded on the accuracy of computing their average. The students needed to submit their missed work in order to be able to fill out their academic logs completely.

After checking the academic logs for the first time, I saw that almost every student earned a 5/5. This meant that each of the five assignments was entered and calculated into their current average. The only student who did not receive full credit was Joe, because he was missing two assignments from when he was absent, so he only earned a 3/5. He also did not have a current average because he was missing those two assignments. I thought by verbally telling him and visually showing him the blanks in his academic log, it would help demonstrate his ability and responsibility over his grades. The missing assignments would show that he

can earn his grade in the class, and by keeping the academic log he had a visual representation of how he earns his grades.

### **Goal Making for the First Time**

I had the students write an academic goal for themselves based on their grade sheets. Ned was not sure what an academic goal was, so I reassured him that it is similar to an accomplishment that you want to earn in this class. The student's academic goals are listed in the following pastiche. This goal was set on September 15, 2006 for then until September 29, 2006.

The goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is.....

.....get my 100% average again, get 100% every time

.....do get all 100% in Math class and to not be mean but to  
get out of these class

.....**I would like to be able to say more words and I could read  
harder books and say harder words. I would like to get a  
100% average again I will study bring agenda, notebook,  
and pencil and will try to get a perfect grade every time**

.....I want to get a 1 hundred again and stay like that or good grades.

Study and do homework

.....I will study every day an hour in a hafe to do good on quiz so  
I can get my grade up

.....I will write down my assignments all the time

.....doing well and under standing pre-Alg

*Figure 1.* Pastiche- First academic goal.

### **Second Week of Academic Logs**

At about two weeks after the implementation of the academic log, the students started to become accustomed to the routine. The students continued to

ask questions when needed. The students and I had a conversation about the academic log progress so far.

Joe: “If I get a 9 out of 10 do I put a 9 for column A? Do I take 9 and divide it into 63? I went up by 1 point this time, I’m trying to get a 100.”

Ned: “I have a 97 average my goal is to get a 100 too!”

Miss Faust: “So what do you think about the academic logs?”

Jen: “I like knowing my average, I know what I am doing wrong.”

Ned: “If you make a mistake... I can prove you wrong that is a good feeling, are you writing this down?”

Rita: “When mom and dad ask how you’re doing you can tell them.”

### **Free-Write Gives Teacher Reassurance**

I started class by writing a question on the board, “Please, tell me how you feel about the academic log,” for the students to free-write how they felt about the question posed. Students were to respond to this question and hand in their answer. I had become concerned about the time spent on the academic logs and needed reassurance from the students that they saw its value. I was trying hard to show the students the importance of keeping track of their grades and I wanted them to realize how they possessed the power to do well.

The written responses were as follows:

Lisa: Well when we get to put it in it is more fun to be surprised then know. And it takes a lot of time away from learning but that's really it I guess its cool its fine.

Ned: I think making goals is are very cool and its good knowing your grade everyday. I have never kept track of my grades and hated always not knowing my grades and my mom always nudging me "hey you better be doing good in school or else your grounded for life."

Joe: I feel I am doing good in pre-algebra because the academic log shows me my grade and if I'm doing bad I no if I half to bring my grade up. But I never did this before so it's new to me. And I can go home to tell my mom that I have a good or bad grade.

Amy: I like that we set goals for ourself. I like that see average. I have never tracked my grades before. It is little hard when I have get the average. Now when my mom and dad ask I doing in I tell them what average is.

Rita: I really like the academic log because I know my grade and I can tell my mom how I am doing and I am doing good it is up and I never kept track of my grade and it is cool to do it.

Jen: It is a good feeling with the academic log. It makes our lives easier for our parents. This is the first time to do these. It is easy to get it after awhile. You can not put every assignment into the logs. That you can do some projects so we can put those in the logs with homework and test.

### **Student Remembers Academic Log before the Teacher Does**

One day in class, Amy brought to my attention that we forgot to add our homework assignment to our academic logs. Instead of interrupting the class time, I figured we could attend to our academic logs at the end of class. With three minutes left until the end of class, I had the students enter this homework assignment. At this point in time, I still had students asking questions about their averages and wanted me to double check their work.

Before the free-write, I had felt overwhelmed, and questioned the effect that I thought the academic logs would have upon the students. All of a sudden there was a break through. Tina, who was absent all last week, took her academic log and matched it up with my model log hanging in the front of the classroom. She filled in the assignment names, their values, and the total points. She also filled in the assignment in for that day, but could not calculate her average since she was awaiting her other grades. I thought it was very responsible of her to get up on her own and add in the assignments she missed. I was so proud that she took the initiative.

### **Goal Making: Take Two**

The next day, after entering our next assignment into the academic log, I asked the students to reflect on the past two weeks about the goal they had set forth to achieve. Half of the students said, “Yes, I met my goal,” and half of the students said they did not meet their goal. I think it was dependent upon what their goal was to begin with. The goals that they are setting for themselves were very generic/general. I decided to talk to the class in the near future to let them know what my expectations are; I wanted to clarify in detail what a goal is and what it should look like, even though I had told them to refer to the examples on the top of the goal pages.

### **Peer Help**

As students filled out their logs, Joe made the comment, “How many points is this?” I replied, “Every homework is worth 5, unless I tell you differently.” I thought, Where have you been this whole first month of school? I was feeling a bit aggravated that he still was not catching on to our routine from the beginning of the year. Tina made the comment, “I think I did it right!” and Lisa responded, “What would . . . I don’t get it!” As I was about to attend to her for some help, Tina turned around and started to quietly help her through it.

### **Content Connection: What is an Objective?**

I made the general announcement that I was going to be conducting one-on-one interviews about the academic logs at the end of the day. I told the

students that I would call each one over to my room individually. I would continue the interviewing, last period, for the remainder of this week. I asked the students to be honest and told them that this interview was not going to be graded. It was just going to be a conversation between the two of us about the academic logs.

Amy asked if we were going to be writing in our logs and I responded, “I don’t believe so.” She said, “We had homework last night.” I totally forgot about the academic logs. They reminded me, thank goodness. The logs are becoming habit forming for the students.

We started a lesson on decimals, percents, and fractions. As the students filled in their notes, we discussed the lesson objectives. I asked the students if anyone knew what an objective was. Ned responded that “it is like a goal.” I then told the class that all of us should be familiar with that, since we are making goals in our academic logs. I then asked Ned to define what a goal is and he said, “It is something that you achieve for.”

### **Student Interview with Jen**

Miss Faust: We have been working with academic logs now for about a month. In your own words, how would you describe what an academic log is?

Jen: It’s like where you keep your grades in so you know what your grades are in the classes.

Miss Faust: How does it make you feel to keep track of your own grades?

(responsible, okay, feels good, bothersome, easy) Why?

Jen: Responsible and easy for me, don't have parents yelling at you for mid-marking period. I like knowing ahead of time.

Miss Faust: Does the academic log show you anything? If so, what does it show you?

Jen: Shows my grades in math so it can help me, shows what your goal is in that class. Never set a goal before in any other classes except for sports goals like in cheering I made a gymnastic goal.

Miss Faust: Describe what you think your strengths are in Pre-Algebra.

Jen: adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, lessons now

Miss Faust: Describe what you think your weaknesses are in Pre-Algebra.

Jen: Not getting it on the first try and needing to see lots of examples.

Miss Faust: In your own words, define what a "goal" is.

Jen: To help you achieve what you are going for in math.

Miss Faust: Have you ever made a goal for yourself, something that you need to meet or accomplish? If so, what was it (in school or out of school)? If not, why don't you think you need to make goals?

Jen: Goal for cheering- I made that on my own for myself.

Miss Faust: You have been keeping track of your academic log now for about a month now, are you meeting the goals you set for yourself?

Jen: Kind of, my goal was for 100s. I need to keep my quiz grades up, homework, doing all class work, work done on time.

Miss Faust: How does that make you feel? (happy, sad, satisfied)

Jen: I feel comfortable with goal setting; it is getting easier each time.

Miss Faust: What do you think will happen if you continue to keep track of your grades each marking period?

Jen: Help in college to make sure I know how to get percents and to keep grades up. I feel academic logs are a good ideas and would like to see them in English, science and social studies.

### **Amy's Viewpoint**

If I had to describe the academic log, to someone who didn't know what it was, I would tell them that it shows what your grades are in pre-algebra class. It also shows your goals in math class for the next two weeks. I think keeping track of your grades is easy, especially the adding part. The hard part about keeping your own grades is the dividing, but the calculator helps. The academic log shows how good you are doing in math class; it shows you your

average. A goal is what you want to do no matter what it is. Out of school I have made a goal for myself, to read whole book in a week's time. I achieved my goal over the summer and it made me feel good. I read little by little every night. In math class I am able to achieve the math goals I set for myself, I continue to write down my assignments in my agenda. See, I never write my homework down, but these past two weeks I tried really hard. I've noticed that writing my assignments down helped me because my homework brings my grade either up or down. If I continue to keep track of my grades each marking period I will see if I am failing or not for the whole year, it will show me how I'm doing in math class. I never set goals in other classes, although I did keep track of my grades in the back of my agenda last year. I think Miss Faust should do this in the other two subjects I have her for; reading and English.

*Figure 2. Vignette- Amy's Viewpoint*

### **Working with Fractions and the Academic Log**

I was impressed that the students had become more independent with the academic logs. In the beginning of class they knew the routine to get their logs

and start filling them out. It seemed like there were fewer questions being asked on how they are supposed to be filling the academic logs out. Finally we were getting somewhere.

Several times I was able to make a content connection between what we were learning about in math class along with keeping track of the academic logs. The students learned how to change fractions into percents. I used the academic log as an example. I showed the students an example right from our academic logs that demonstrated how we had used a fraction to calculate their averages. They seemed to be amazed. Lisa responded “Ooohhhh!” Rita replied “I didn’t know that!” Joe shared “Wow!” I was also able to make a content connection when we learned about rounding and estimation. I was able to show the students that when they figured out their average, they were rounding to find that number. These content connections were used to show the students that they had been performing these math skills from the first day of school. It gave some reassurance and confidence to the students that they could conquer the new material.

### **Lisa’s Viewpoint**

The academic log is a chart that shows how you keep track of grades and it also has a paper that you keep goals on for that class every two weeks. I said that the academic log is a pain because I get

confused easily. I get confused how to figure when figuring out my average. I am not really sure and I don't always ask for help. The academic log shows me my grades. I also make goals for math class. A goal is something you for yourself; something you achieve. I never made goals before; I never had the need to. So far this year I have not really met my goals. I failed my second goal because I got a lunch detention for not being prepared for class. The goals don't really make me feel any different because I forget the goals so than it doesn't matter. I think if I continued to keep track of my grades I would gain independence and it would help me keep track of what work I was missing. I think if we stopped keeping track of our grades my average would go down because I wouldn't be on top of my grades and assignments.

*Figure 3. Vignette- Lisa's Viewpoint.*

### **Clarification on the Goal Making Process**

I wanted to clarify the goal writing process. I tried to point out on the academic log where they should be writing their goals. The first time we did it I may not have been clear with my expectations. I showed the students where they

should be marking progress on the last goal, and where they should write their new goal for the following two weeks. I asked the students to select a goal from the examples at the top of the goal pages. I reassured the students that it is difficult to measure a goal when you write down that “you want to get higher.” I told the students that they needed to indicate exactly what they were planning to do to reach their goal.

### **Model Log Seems to Help**

We had been working with the academic logs for a month and half, and as we entered another assignment I hear Lisa say boldly, “I’m confused.” As I helped her, we found that she forgot to enter an assignment into her log, and therefore her numbers were off. When she realized her mistake, she went to the front of the classroom to check with the model log. I was glad that she saw that her academic log was not correct and that she used the model log. After the students saw Lisa get up to check the model log, some other students followed. They were showing me that they want to make sure that their assignments are all in place. After checking with the model log, Lisa fixed her mistakes. She realized that her average should not have gone down as much as it was showing on her log. She found the mistake and she made the appropriate changes.

I was glad to see that several of the students were checking their work and had demonstrated a conscientious effort. Joe and Jen looked at the model log three times each. I found that the model log especially came in handy if the students

were absent. I thought a visual was good for the students. The model log helped me when I checked their academic logs every two weeks. It informed the students of the assignments they should have entered and how much each were worth.

### **Free-Write**

I decided it was time for another free-write because I wanted feedback from the students on how the implementations of the academic logs were going. I listed three statements on the whiteboard and had them free-write their responses.

#### *1.) An academic log is.....*

**... a log that we can know what our grades and averages are**

...a paper or folder that keeps track of our grades

...a paper that shows you your average and homework assignments and also your tests

...great cuz we see our grade in math

...something that helps me to know my grades

....a thing that you can have your average of the grades

...something that shows me my grades and helps me and my parents so we can try to bring it up. My parents can make sure I did my homework right. And I can study every night and do good on my test.

2.) *I feel that the academic log shows me.....*

....**my averages and grades because I would not forget them as fast as I use to**

....my grades and how bad I am doing

....my grades for math whenever I want to see them, and tells me if I'm failing or not

....my grade and how I doing in Math

....how I am doing, if I am doing good or bad than if I am doing bad I can bring it up

....what I am having a grade for math and my average in math

....what I need to bring up and what I need to do to pass. And my parents know what I have as a grade.

3.) *When I create goals for myself I feel.....*

....**really good because I know what to say on it**

....like I can accomplish them if I don't forget what I wrote down

....good because it would make me try to accomplish something

....good cuz I have something to get to achieve

....I can bring my grade up a lot

....I feel good so that I can make a goal to see if I am doing good and if

I have my goal

....happy and feel competitive so I can beat the goal and I will be happy

### **Student Success = Teacher Success**

I wanted to know how the students would have done without me there prompting them through the academic log process. One morning, I had a meeting to go to and I was not able to be in class. The students were left to fill in their academic logs on their own. When checking over the academic logs, I was impressed that they all had entered the assignment and most had the correct average. This showed me that there was the possibility that the students would be successful with the implementation of the log within other content areas with little supervision.

### **Students Cannot Get Enough of Academic Logs in Just Math Class**

The students were preparing to set a new goal for the following two weeks. I seemed surprised that students did not ask as many questions as they normally did. In fact some of the students started writing before I even instructed them to. Rita shared with me that she wished I would do the academic logs in all my classes (English and reading). After Rita made that comment, others joined in the conversation. Many of the students have made comments that they would like for me to implement the academic logs in both English and reading classes. They feel that they are more “on top of things” when they know what their average is

and what assignments they are missing. I had thought about the possibility of having the academic logs for the other subjects that I taught, but wanted to complete the second marking period.

### **I Think They Are Getting It!**

Hooray! I think they may have finally gotten it; it took about one marking period to get the students settled with the academic logs. For the first time, after the students had entered their assignments into the academic logs they did not ask any questions, they just filled them in.

I collected the questionnaires that I had students complete for homework over the weekend. Looking over the mid-study questionnaires (see Appendix J), I noticed almost all of the students agreed that I should continue the academic logs in math class next year. The students also felt that the academic log was fine the way it was, that I did not have to make any changes to it. I had to disagree with the students. I felt that there were some changes that I needed to make for the academic log for second marking period.

The revisions that I made for the academic log for second marking period consisted of: adding a new column so that the students could keep track of total points that they have earned in class, and adding labels to name the columns “A” through “E.” I put a brief description at the top of each column to add detail (see Appendix K). I also created a log check sheet for second marking period (see Appendix L). This item was created so that I could document the log check grade

they were receiving every two weeks, write teacher comments about the log check, and record goal making suggestions and/or comments.

### **New Academic Logs for a New Marking Period**

Tina asked, “Are we getting new logs today?” I responded, yes. It was nice to show the students they had a fresh new start for the second marking period. I asked the students to double check their academic logs with the average that I had given them on an index card. As students put up problems to the homework assignment on the board, I called each student over to my desk individually to assemble their new logs. We took the goal pages from the old logs and stapled them into the new log. I then took the first marking period model academic log off the wall and placed a new one for the second marking period.

We entered our new assignment onto the fresh academic log sheet. When computing the average, many students were confused. They did not understand why we were not adding it onto the averages in our old logs. I told them that since everyone had their first assignment for the new marking period completed, that everyone starts the second marking period with a 100% average. Ned made the comment, “So that means you get a 100% in every subject, for the new marking period?” Tina responded, “I didn’t know that, that’s crazy!” I asked with a show of hands how many people did not know that, and four out of the five students raised their hands.

I was dumbfounded; the students did not realize that each marking period

they get a fresh start. The students were amazed by this concept; they asked if this was done only in seventh grade. I reassured them that this happens with each class for each marking period. As soon as they found out that they have 100% averages in all their classes, their faces were aglow. They seemed very lively and excited for the new marking period.

### **Starting All Over Again**

I did not think that when we started a new academic log for the second marking period that the students would struggle with the routine. I thought that filling in their grade sheets would go much easier than it seemed. When the students filled in their second marking period academic logs, Rita made the comment “This is harder, but I think this should be in every subject, this way I can tell my mom my grade when she asks.” Based on the hesitation of most students trying to fill in their academic logs, I verbally walked them through the process of changes and additions that I made to the academic log. I was glad that students recognized the importance of their averages; they recognized if they were not achieving at the level they wanted to be that they needed to take responsibility and initiative to ask what they could do have done to raise their grade to become successful.

### **Stepping Back**

Throughout the implementation of the academic logs, I had been telling the students verbally what it is they should be entering into their academic logs. I

felt that I needed to step back from that primary role and dedicate the responsibility to the students. After all, student responsibility was one of the characteristics that I tried to instill within my students from the first day they walked into my classroom. I had guided them this far and it was truly time for them to fly on their own. So I told the students to go ahead and fill in their academic log assignments on their own. If the students were not sure of how much an assignment was worth, then they would ask and I would let them know the point value. Even though I was not guiding them through the steps verbally, I still kept entering each assignment on the model log in front of the classroom so the students would have a reference point.

It was not easy for me to step back and allow them to be on their own. I knew that if I wanted my students to become responsible for their own learning, then this was the appropriate time to give them more control over their grades. I had guided them for the first three months of school, and at this time I felt they were ready to shine on their own. Some of the students felt uneasy about keeping track on their own; they were not ready. The responsibility was now on them. I knew they were ready at this point. They needed to believe in themselves just as I believed in all of them. This was truly a lesson of self-esteem and confidence. When they had doubts about what they were entering, I reassured them that they could do it. I knew they could because I was the one checking their progress every two weeks. As time went on, the students' academic logs had fewer calculation

mistakes than from when they handed them in the first time.

### **Taking Responsibility over Their Learning**

As the students continued to fill in their academic logs on their own, I saw their confidence and responsibility for their education grow. The students started to come see me for help last period. It felt nice that I did not have to tell particular students to come see me; they had started to come see me on their own. The roles had reversed. They had realized that when they needed help for something, they could seek it on their own.

One afternoon, Jen came to me asking why her average in her academic log did not match up with the mid-marking period averages I had handed out in class that morning. She assured me that she checked my model log hanging on the front of the room to make sure all assignments were entered, but she knew something just was not right. I looked over her calculations on her academic log and I did not see any mistakes. I was really puzzled as to why the two grades just were not matching up with one another. We had found that I made a mistake. When converting the assignments from my grade-book into PowerSchool, computer program that requires all grades to be entered, I missed putting an assignment into the computer. The students had entered this assignment into their academic logs, therefore Jen and my grades did not match each other. We noticed the mistake when our total number of points earned in the class did not match up. I saw that that I had fewer points, because I failed to enter an assignment. I made

sure to clarify the mistake the next day during class and gave all students their updated mid-marking period grades.

### **Wrapping It Up**

Winter break was approaching and the students started to become a bit restless for their holiday break. I have to admit that I was looking forward a restful break, too. I had intentions to interview students at the end of the study. Unfortunately, assemblies, dances, and holiday concerts did not allow time for me to do so. In conclusion to my study, I had each student complete a post-study survey and a questionnaire. Since there was holiday time constraints, the post-study questionnaire replaced the student interview questions (see Appendix N).

### **Voices Are Heard**

To conclude my story, I wanted to incorporate the voices of those affected by the implementation of the academic logs within our seventh grade learning support pre-algebra classroom. From the students' post-study survey and questionnaire, I created vignettes that reflect their responses.

*Jen*

If I had to tell someone what an academic log was I would tell them that it is something you use to show how much the homework, quizzes, and tests are worth. I have learned that the academic log helps to keep track of your grades to show how you are doing within class. Keeping track of my grades makes me feel good, because I know what my average is. The academic log shows me that I am doing good and shows me how to figure out my average. I have met most of my goals and it makes me feel great! I think if I continued to keep track of my grades that it would be good. I think academic logs are a good thing to have in class because it will help me to keep my grade up. I think Miss Faust should have academic logs in her other classes because it has helped me so much.

*Figure 4. Vignette- Jen*

***Rita***

The academic logs have changed me since the beginning of the school year. I now like to keep track of my grades, setting goals for myself, I want to do well in my classes, and I am more responsible for my learning. Academic logs help to keep your grade, it shows that I can do better than what I have. It makes me feel good when I see that my homework is completed. The hardest goal for me to achieve was to keep my grade up to 100%. The personal goals that I have set for myself have not been met, I truly feel that I can do better. If I continue to keep track of my grades I feel that I can bring up my bad grades. I do feel that academic logs are a good thing because they show how you are doing in school. I would like it if academic logs were in other classes because I would know how I am doing. If I was doing bad, I could see what it was that I need more help on to do better.

*Figure 5. Vignette- Rita*

*Amy*

I have noticed that I work hard for the grades I earn and I now know what I need to do if my grades aren't good. I also have learned what to do to improve my grades and have taken more responsibility over my learning. The academic log is a place you can keep your grades and goals for yourself. From the academic log I learned that I need to study more before tests and quizzes. The academic log makes me feel good because I can see how I am doing by finding my grades. I like to set goals for myself, I try really hard to get an A or B in pre-algebra. If I continue to track my grades I think I will try even harder to reach my goals. I think the academic logs are a good thing to have in class because I can see how I am doing and I would like to see the academic logs in the other classes too.

*Figure 6. Vignette- Amy*

*Ned*

Now that I have kept an academic log for almost two marking periods I have learned what an academic goal is and I started to actually set goals for myself in school. I also started to complete homework more so and seek help when I need it. An academic log shows you your average in a class. Keeping track of my grades is really cool because my mom is always bugging me saying “What did you get on this or that.” Keeping track of my grades gives me a good feeling, I love seeing my homework, quiz, and test grades. Before the academic log I knew how to set goals in other classes. The hardest goal for me was getting a 100% average because it is hard when you do all your homework but get a B on your math test. Then your average goes down because of that one grade and you only get a low A or high B. I did meet most of my goals and it made me feel really thankful. If I continued with the academic log each marking period I think my average would get higher and higher each time! I think academic logs are a good thing to have in class because I never tried it before and it is cool. I would like to see the academic log in other classes because I love seeing my grade.

*Figure 7. Vignette- Ned*

*Lisa*

Since the beginning of this school year I started to set more goals for myself in school. I now know what to do when my grades aren't so good. I started to study more before tests and quizzes and realize what I need to do to improve my grade. I want to do well in my classes and started to see what I needed to do to get there. Keeping track of my grades made me feel okay because now I know what my grades are instead of being clueless. When I look at my academic log I can see my average go up or down. I really don't like setting goals for myself but I think it helps me in a way. It's hard for me to keep my grade up because I noticed I get low test grades. The academic log shows me that my strength is homework but my weakness is tests. If I continued to keep track of my grades with the academic log my average may go up. I feel that academic logs are a good thing because teachers don't really tell us what our grades are made of. I would like to see academic logs in other classes; I may do better that way. But I can do it on my own; I can write my grades inside my agenda.

*Figure 8. Vignette- Lisa*

*Tina*

**If someone would ask me what the academic log was I would tell him or her that it is a log that you can keep your average. I have learned that I am not the best at tests and quizzes. Keeping track of my grades made me feel great. I found that I finished all of my homework and that was one of my strengths. Weaknesses that the academic log showed me were tests and quizzes. Setting goals for myself makes me feel good because it makes me think for what I want to do to help myself. My hardest goal was getting a 100% because tests and quizzes are my weakness. I did meet most of my personal goals, and it made me feel great. If I continued the academic log I would improve because I would know where I'm strong and weak. I think academic logs are a good thing because they help us think. I would continue the academic logs in other classes because then we would know what our grades are.**

***Figure 9. Vignette- Tina***

### **Joe**

At the beginning of the school year I wasn't sure how I felt about keeping track of my grades but now I can say I always track them. I have noticed from keeping track of my grades I have started to work harder for my grades. I have realized what to do in order to improve my grades and started to seek help if I needed it. An academic log is a place to keep track of your homework and make goals for yourself. I have learned that it is hard to earn good grades but you have to try hard. It makes me feel good because I know my grade before my parents. When looking at my grade it starts off good, but then goes down, then back up. According to the academic log my weakness is multiplying and dividing fractions. My strengths are dividing, adding, and subtracting on paper. Setting goals for myself makes me feel pretty good because I have something to beat, like a competitor. The hardest goal for me to achieve was getting a 100 because you have to pass tests, be organized, and do your homework. If I continued to keep track of my academic log it will make my grades go up. I think academic logs are good because when you're failing you know how to bring your grade up. I think we should have the academic logs and goal sheets in other classes so we can do a lot better.

*Figure 10. Vignette- Joe*

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Student Work Analysis

#### *Academic Log*

The students kept track of their own academic progress utilizing the academic logs I created. The students were responsible for entering each assignment into their log, filling out the appropriate columns, and calculating their class average daily. Every two weeks, I collected the academic logs to check their progress, look for any mathematical mistakes in finding averages, and so on. I was able to match up their class average that they had in their academic log to the average I had in my grade book. If there was a conflict between the two, I looked over the student's academic log to see if the student made a mistake within their calculations. If they had made a mistake, I made corrections and wrote what the correct number should have been.

My reason for collecting and checking the students' work was so that I could continually hold them accountable for filling in the assignments. When I collected the academic logs every two weeks, I made sure to give them credit for every assignment they had filled in. I did not take points away if the student was out sick the day before I collected the academic logs. I also collected the academic logs the night before we were going to set a goal for the following two weeks. I did not want to have students setting a goal based on an average that might not have been correct. I collected the academic log the night before because

I wanted to make sure that the students had the appropriate averages marked, and could therefore make appropriate goals.

### ***Academic Log Changes***

As I continued on my action research journey, I made several notes in my field log about making some adaptations to the academic log that may help the students. I had a few concerns that I had noted and with those concerns I made sure to adapt the academic log according to those concerns. Some changes I made as soon as I noticed there was a problem. For example, as I verbally walked the students through the explanation of how to enter a new assignment in to their academic logs, I noticed that they were getting each of the columns confused. I then had them label the top of the columns with a number, which in return made it even more confusing. I then later changed it again to labeling the columns on the top to letters consisting of A through D.

For second marking period the academic log took on a new look. I added another column, which I did not have before. I noticed that the students were keeping a total of how many points they have earned thus far in the class, the information was squeezed on the side of another column. Figuring out the total points they had earned in class so far allowed them to figure out their current average. I saw that the students needed a space for this information in their academic log. Instead of having the students receive a new academic log in the middle of the first marking period, I made sure to note the changes I wanted to

make for the second marking period. I figured with second marking period the students start fresh with a clean slate anyway. So for second marking period, I made sure to add a new column for the information the students were squeezing in their first marking period academic logs. The new column stated at the top, “add this assignment to the total of column A.” In the new logs for second marking period I added more description at the top of each column. I felt it gives more direction to the students and I also labeled each column with a name, for example “Column A.”

Through my observations, I also noted that I felt there needed to be more space for me to write down my personal comments about their goals and about their assignment log. For second marking period, I also made an addition of another sheet of paper. This extra sheet allowed for me to record their academic log check assignment score and it allowed me to journal my thoughts to them. My thoughts may have included their goal progress, questions to them, suggestions/comments/feedback to think about, and information pertaining to their assignment log. This extra sheet that housed my feedback was placed in their academic logs behind their assignment log.

### ***Free-Writes***

Several times throughout the marking period I gave the students a question or a phrase to complete that dealt with the implementation of the academic logs. The questions that I posed to the students came from the observations that I was

making throughout the study. Throughout my study, I had my focus in front of me and if I was uncertain, I improvised free write sessions that were not in my methodology in the beginning of the study. The free writes were used to clarify and make sense of my reflections and observations. They provided me with a sense of justification for the future of my research study. The free write topics were as follows:

9/22 Tell me how you feel about the academic log.

9/27 Write a journal entry about the academic logs and how you feel your conferencing went.

10/24 An academic log is....

I feel that the academic log shows me.....

When I create goals for myself I feel.....

Notes/Comments

### ***Questionnaires***

I also gave all of my students a mid-study questionnaire in the beginning of November, which was not originally in my methodology. As my study progressed, I felt that I needed a data collection source based on the observations that I had made up to that point in time, which was about the middle of my study. From my field log notes, I gathered 11 questions that I felt needed clarification and student input. During class, the students were instructed to fill out the mid-

study questionnaire (see Appendix L) as best they could and to try and write as much detail as possible.

### **Interview Analysis**

Initially, I created a list of interview questions, hoping to interview with each of my students in the beginning of the study. Unfortunately, time did not allow me to question all of my students. So based on the observations, field log notes, and my reflections I chose certain students to interview. I was able to interview four out of the seven students during last period of the day. The interviews took place in our seventh grade team meeting room and took about 20 minutes for each. I encouraged each student prior to the interview to be as honest as possible and reassured that the questions were not going to be graded, but that I was using the questions for my research. After each interview, I made sure to enter both the questions and student answers into my field log, and was later able to code the information.

I also had constructed post-interview questions, but unfortunately I was unable to find the time to meet with the students the last week of December before holiday break. My intentions were to interview each individual student at the end of the research, but time and holiday schedule did not allow that to happen. So instead of interviewing the students, I was able to give them the questions in class so that they could answer as a questionnaire. I was able to add these results to my field log so that I could later code and analyze these data.

### ***Student Surveys***

During the first week of school, I gave the students a 16 question student survey, pre-study, rating several of their feelings about the statements that I provided. This was initially done so that I could learn more about the students and to try and get to know them better. After I read over the surveys and saw how they rated the different statements, I filed it away into my field log binder. I was able to reference to it throughout my data collection analysis.

The last day I met with the students prior to winter break, I gave them the same survey but it was entitled student survey post-study. I was now able to compare the student responses from before the study started to their responses to that point in time. I was looking to see if any responses have changed since the implementation of the academic log, and if they did change I wanted to find out why. I also filed the student surveys (post-study) into my field log binder chronologically for future analysis reference.

Throughout my research journey I made sure to collect several kinds of data. I wrote daily field notes based on my observations and reflections. I also conducted interviews, analyzed student work, gave student questionnaires and student surveys. According to Ely, Vinz, Downing, and Anzul (1997), I was triangulating the data. I did not just want to make judgments based upon one piece or method of data collection, so I made sure to have various data collection pieces to analyze.

### **Memo Analysis**

As I read the researchers, I also created analytic memos. I created a mid-study data assessment, which helped me focus on the creation of sub-questions and helped me to look towards the future to see where my research was going. The creation of sub-questions derived from my main focus, brought out specific points of focus for the study I was undergoing. Writing this memo also allowed me to reflect on what was happening and document what I saw emerging within my classroom. I also wrote a figurative language analysis document that showed I needed to be more careful with appropriate word choice. It allowed me to step back from the researcher role to show me the importance of dialogue and how it can impact a classroom environment.

### **Field Log Analysis**

Throughout the implementation of my action research I kept a daily field log, which housed both my observations and my reflections. I made sure to keep my reflections separate from my observations and therefore kept each on their own columns of my field log. I managed to write much information down during class time on my clipboard. Than two periods later, on my prep period, I was able to sit at my computer and type up my observations and reflections with more detail. The reflections encompassed my opinions and my feedback as to what was going on. I was trying to make sense of what it was that I was observing in my classroom. I would compare my field log to a daily diary of pre-algebra class. I

had both what I saw and heard alongside of my thoughts and opinions. I am really happy that my field log was as detailed as it was because when I reference to it, I am able to get a full, vivid picture of what happened that particular day.

When setting up my field log, I made sure to number and date each page. I kept the field log pages, along with other various student work and interviews, all in one three ring binder. It made more sense for me to organize everything chronologically in one notebook. Each page of my field log had numbered lines; this would later help me for the coding process. As I had mentioned earlier, my field log page was separated into two columns. The left column was used for my observations, what I saw and heard. The right column of my field log was used to write down my reflections.

I wanted to analyze the data I had collected from my field log. When I started this process, I first started to code pieces of my log. The codes were handwritten on the margins of my field log; they were meaningful words representing important occurrences within my research study. I continued to keep the codes organized by keeping track of a code index sheet. The code index sheet had all of my codes listed alphabetically. Next to each code I listed the field log page numbers the code could be found on and listed any related codes. The coding of the field log was a continual process, it was a cycle of me going back and re-reading through the codes. I made sure that all of the codes matched up with my index sheet, and I continued to re-code as I added more field log notes.

### **Codes, Themes, and Bin Analysis**

After the coding process was complete and my index list was final, I started to organize the data into bins. I took the codes and sorted them into bins. A bin is comparable to a heading that codes can fall under. The bins that emerged from my question were: student qualities, process, support, feelings (student and teacher), and academic log outcomes. I then created a graphic organizer that visually displays the codes, bins, and my question. Each bin housed codes that related to it, but it took me several tries in order to get to the final product. The creation of the graphic organizer was comparable to a giant puzzle. I had so many pieces (codes) to place into the puzzle that some could be placed several spots. Some codes could have fallen under two bins. So it took some time to organize the information appropriately.

As I completed the graphic organizer, it led me to the next step of analysis. I took both the bins and codes, and created theme statements. My theme statements are topic sentences created from the bins and codes that show what has emerged from the implementation of the academic logs.

## **FINDINGS**

The goal of my study was to observe and report experiences when academic logs were implemented in a seventh grade learning support classroom. My findings from this study were drawn from the new process that I implemented. From the implementation of the academic log process emerged several themes: support, student qualities, student and teacher feelings, and academic log outcomes. The following graphic organizer was produced to show codes grouped together into bins. From the bins, theme statements were developed based on the items of each bin.

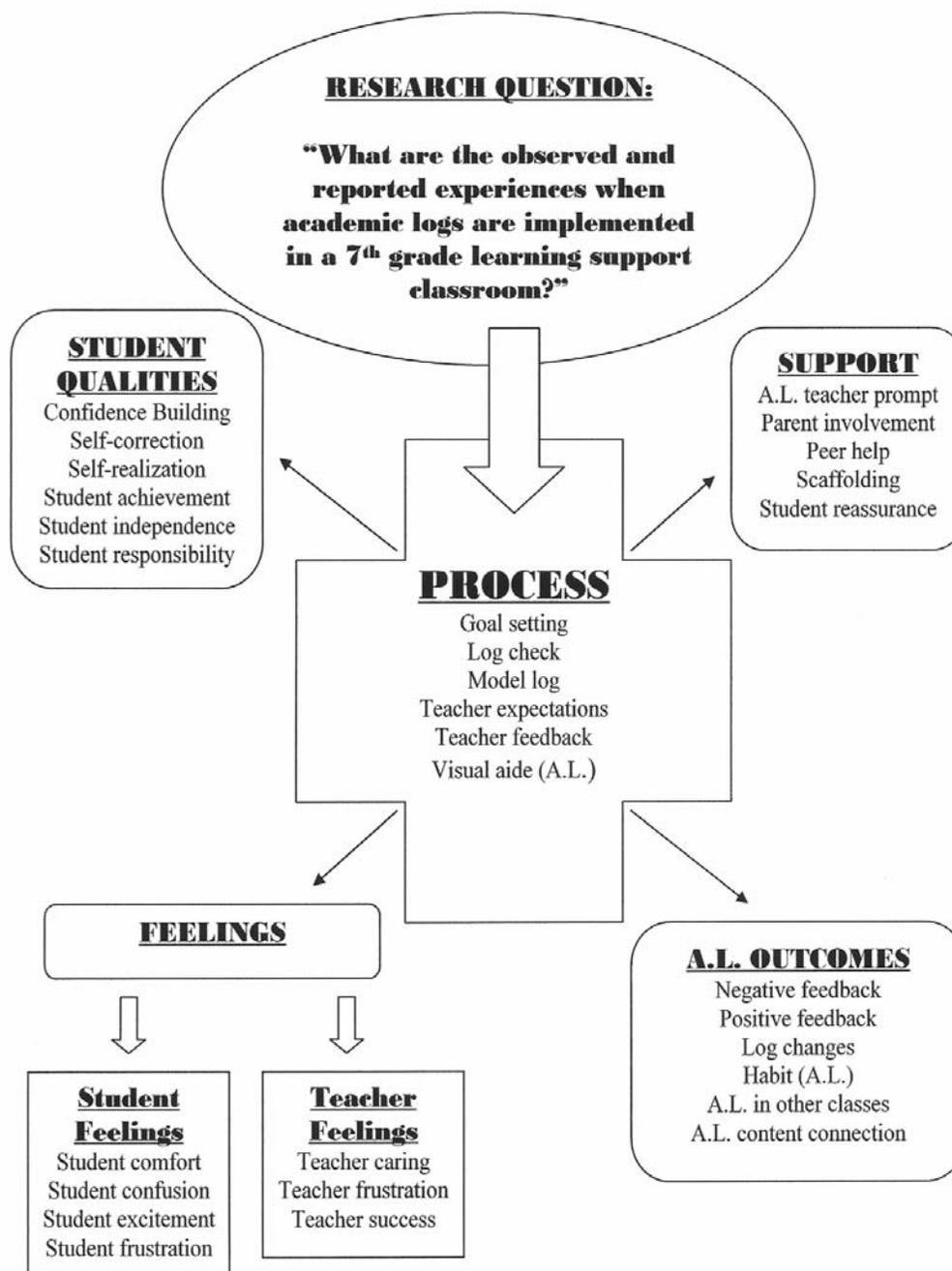


Figure 11. Bins

*The academic log process should provide the following: time for students to set academic goals, bi-weekly log checks, a model academic log, teacher expectations, teacher feedback, and visual aid.* Throughout the process, I made sure to provide the students with my expectations and promoted a caring and encouraging environment. The academic log provided a visual aid for students to follow when monitoring their own progress. The students seemed very receptive and concerned with their personal progress and took great pride in creating academic goals for themselves. I was able to monitor their progress as well; I collected the academic log every two weeks to look over both their grade sheets and goal sheets. Many of the students were encouraged by the empowerment from reaching a personal goal that they put forth to strive for. Although this process needed a few weeks to become habit forming, I supported the students by keeping a model log posted in front of the classroom.

“The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (Freire, 2006, p. 95). Within this statement, Freire shows the importance of putting together a solid program and being able to implement it so that the program itself reflects the goodness intended for the students to benefit from. This program needs to drive the individuals to create challenges and goals for themselves not just intellectually, but also actively.

Within my study, I have implemented and organized a program of keeping track of students' grades. Much thought was put into the creation and implementation of the academic logs. Throughout the process I continued to hold faithful to keeping the students in my best interest. I wanted to create a program that shows self-evaluation and promotes self-esteem. In doing so I am holding the students accountable for their own progress within math class and allowing them to reflect on their progress every two weeks. From this program, the students are marking their aspirations and goals every two weeks.

I had the students write a response to the question "Please tell me how you feel about the academic log?" Joe responded "I feel I am doing good in pre-Algebra because the academic log shows me my grade and if I'm doing bad I know if I have to bring my grade up. But I never did this before so it's new to me. And I can go home to tell my mom that I have a good or bad grade." From the implementation of this program, the academic log, the students are continuously reflecting on their progress within math class. Just as this example shows, many of the students are feeling proud to tell the parents what their average is within math class. My students are demonstrating academic pride.

***Support from parents, peer help, scaffolding, student reassurance, and the teacher all help to promote successful outcomes with the academic log.***

Throughout the duration of the study, many times students would refer to the involvement that their parents had with their education. The academic log

provided a link for communication between parent and child. The students knew their average in math class every single time they entered a new assignment.

When parents asked their children how they were doing in math class, they were able to give their parents an exact average, and knew in detail how they earned the average that they had. I supported the students throughout the process by prompting, reassuring, and encouraging them. I made sure to scaffold the students when appropriate. I saw peers taking charge and helping their classmates out when they got stuck on entering an assignment into their log or trying to help another student trouble-shoot what they did wrong with finding their average.

“Over a decade even the profoundest thinkers never questioned the assumption; they never entertained the notion that what children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone” (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 85). When students work collaboratively with others, such as a small group or possibly in a pair, it may show teachers that students have more skills and knowledge than we thought previously when they students worked individually. When working in a group you see both the mental and the social domains emerge from the student. Some students are better at expressing their opinions, answers, reflections aloud. In a small group these particular students are able to shine far more than they would if they were working alone.

With the academic logs I prefer my students work on their own to discover their own mistakes, but I also encourage students to help one another. I feel that sometimes things can be just as, if not, more meaningful coming from a peer. For example, one day in class Rita was showing other students how to figure out their averages. I was so proud of her, it was only the third day working with the academic logs and already a student was willing to help others. I think in that point in time she “got it” she knew how to figure out her average and was willing to share her excitement with another student whom was having some difficulties with it. She reached her zone of proximal development was a bit earlier than other students. That does not necessarily mean she was ahead of the group or that the other students who were not getting it as quickly were behind the group.

*Academic log outcomes resulted in the following: positive and negative feedback, academic log changes, habit forming routine, academic log in other content areas, and academic log connection to the content taught.* The academic log was a new tool implemented into the classroom to help promote student success and achievement. Keeping the academic log up-to-date required the students to keep track of each and every single assignment. At times, the academic log proved to be somewhat time consuming, especially in the beginning of the school year when it took much longer to have the students enter each assignment. Then I would walk around to see if the student needed my help or encouragement.

From the implementation of the academic log process, students were able to become accustomed to the routine and almost daily habit. The students became so used to the routine that it was noted on several occasions that they reminded me that they needed their academic logs so that they could enter their grades.

The students saw that it was important to keep track of their grades and saw a connection to the content that I was teaching with a lesson on fractions and decimals. They found this lesson to be very easy and connected with the content because of the daily usage of the academic log. Based on the continuous feedback given from the students, changes were made accordingly, in order to enhance the academic log for the future.

From the implementation of the academic log I have noted that the students seem very reassured to know how they are doing in class; they feel comfort with keeping their own averages and being able to see their progression. They have shown within their emotions and tone of in their voice that they were excited with their progress and achievement. Some students were excited to fill in their new assignment so that they could figure out their average.

Throughout student free-writes, questionnaires, daily conversation, and interviews I found that the students wanted to see the academic log incorporated into other subject areas. I think the students realized the value that I was trying to provide them with through the utilization of the academic log. The students

wanted to implement the academic log in the other classes that I taught because they had realized the importance of tracking their grades and goal making.

“Once these processes are internalized, they become part of a child’s independent developmental achievement” (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 90). Vygotsky says that learning creates the zone of proximal development, the child feels comfort in talking with teacher and peers within his environment and therefore, has an easier time internalizing the information that needs to be registered into memory. Through the process of development the information that is gained is then filed and organized by each child.

The skill of goal setting is something that the students can take with them the rest of their lives. I encouraged them to build on their idea of what a goal is, and hope that they will shape and mold their goals to fit what they are acquiring for their future endeavors. The beauty of goal making is that you do not necessarily have to share your goals with anyone else; it is something put into place and is driven by the individual. There are no consequences of your goal if not attained. If the goal is attained than the student is able to enjoy the rewards and benefits from their success. Goal making is indeed an independent entity, goal making should come from within, and it should be something that the individual wants to accomplish for themselves.

One day in class, Amy asked “Can our goal be within all of our classes or just math class?” I told her that “I’m glad to see that you want to make a goal in

other subjects and you can do that on your own, but I just need you to write down your goal in this class (math).” I was very happy to see that one of my students wanted to make goals within other classes. I saw that she had internalized what it meant to make an academic goal and wanted to make goals for other classes. She has taken a skill that has been taught to her in math class and she wanted to infuse it in other subjects.

In the beginning of the implementation process, many students were confused and frustrated, since this was something new for them. Within the interview process, many students shared with me that they never kept track of their grades before. This new process was frustrating and confusing at times, but with the guidance and reassurance from both their peers and me, there was a successful and rewarding outcome.

*Academic logs provide students with an opportunity to gain qualities, such as: confidence, independence, self-correction skills, self-realization skills, responsibility, and achievement.* Having the students keep track of their own grades exemplified particular qualities that all students should strive for, such as accountability, independence, and responsibility. The students have attained particular skills, such as self-correction, self-realization, and are building their confidence. The students started to realize where they had made mistakes and why they were making them. They were checking their mathematical calculations to try and figure out where it was that they went wrong. I saw students raise their

hand to ask a question, and a moment later they would put their hand back down because they had found their mistake on their own. Around the beginning of the second marking period I saw that the students had become more comfortable with the academic log. The students seemed very proud of their accomplishments, especially after setting goals for themselves. Some students continued to work hard and were persistent with attaining the specific goal they originally started with. Some students have repeated the same academic goal twice in a row until they achieved what they sought out to be successful in.

Freire states that there is an important correlation between action and reflection. “On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into *activism*” (Freire, 2006, p. 88). After the action has taken place, reflection should follow. If the reflection does not follow, there will be an empty thought. Every individual has the right to their own thoughts. With their thoughts comes a personal reflection. It is up to the individual to reflect on the action in order to take away or remember the item at hand.

I prompted a free-write by stating “When I create goals for myself I feel...” One of my students responded by writing, “When I create goals for myself I feel happy and I feel competitive so I can beat the goal and I will be happy.” This shows an example of how one of my students feels because of the reflection process. From this experience she has taken away the feeling of

accomplishment and pride because of her hard work and dedication. I think the process of keeping track of student grades is more meaningful to the students because of the reflections component. I agree with Freire and I feel that action and reflection do coincide within one another and will bring about a more meaningful experience for any individual.

*Implementing a new system may provoke teachers to feel caring, success, and frustration.* This whole process was a learning experience. I did not know what was going to come about from implementing the academic logs into my seventh grade learning support classroom. I had an open mind and a drive for the academic log's success. From the research articles that I read, I knew I was creating something unique to promote student success, responsibility, and ownership. Throughout the journey, I made adjustments to the academic log and provided more detailed instruction when appropriate. Once I started attaining results and positive feedback from the students, my frustrations melted away. There were those moments of pure success, which made all the frustration, time, effort, and thought well worth it.

Freire explains that the students are not the only ones learning in an educational environment. The teachers can also learn from their students through class discussion and dialogue. "The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in

which all grow” (Freire, 2006, p. 80). Through conversations between students and teacher a foundation can be formed. From the establishment of the classroom environment students will feel comfortable to talk freely. I had a student make a mistake within their academic log and was not able to figure out what the problem was. Through dialogue with the student they were able to self-correct and make changes to their error. This is a prime example showing the true significance and importance of class dialogue.

*From the implementation of the academic log, students may feel comfort, confusion, excitement, and frustration.* It was hard to tell why the students were frustrated in the beginning of the year. This was the first year that the students were exposed to pre-algebra, and that alone could make someone frustrated and confused. I had implemented the academic logs from the first day of school so that we could build a class routine. Day after day, with the ongoing usage of the academic logs, the students became more comfortable and more at ease. In the beginning of the process, there were so many questions, and all the students needed instant clarification on the accuracy of the grades they were tracking. After a month or two into the school year, things started to turn around, the students started to show excitement for the progress that they were able to see in their academic logs. They were attaining their personal goals and achieving academic success.

We live in a series of situations; we are limitless to the amount of situations that an individual may encounter each day. “The statement that individuals live in a world means, in the concrete, that they live in a series of situations. . . . It means, once more, that interaction is going on between an individual and objects and other persons. The conceptions of *situation* and of *interaction* are inseparable from each other” (Dewey, 1997, p. 43). Dewey explains that we cannot have a situation without having an interaction. Our interactions do not necessarily need to be physical, but could be mental. Our lives can be viewed as a whole situation and the interactions, we encounter and pursue, create the experiences. Each experience can be interpreted differently depending on the person. Every individual experience with the academic logs was linked to their prior knowledge and their past experiences, thus creating varying experiences for each individual.

### **WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?**

The academic log has proven to be a useful tool within my classroom. It has provided my students with opportunities to demonstrate and recognize the following: responsibility, organization, ownership, strengths, weaknesses, confidence, independence, responsibility, and achievement. It felt very rewarding to give a piece of me, my goal setting nature, to my students. Seeing all of the benefits of the academic log encourages me to continue with it. The positive feedback that I received from the students exemplifies the rewards of the academic log. I would like to continue with the use of academic log within my pre-algebra class for the remainder of the school year.

My next step is to introduce the academic log into my fifth period English class. The seven students that are in my pre-algebra class are also in my English class. They will provide peer help to those students who have never been exposed to the academic log. The students from my pre-algebra class will help guide and model those who are unfamiliar with this new tool. In return, I am hoping that it will help to build the self-esteem of those students who are helping others.

My personal goal is to have the academic log successfully implemented into all three of my content areas by the end of the school year. For fourth marking period, I would like to have the academic log implemented into my seventh period reading class. My reading class is made up the same students who are in my English class, who will have been exposed to the academic log in the

third marking period. If all goes well with incorporating the academic log into all three content areas by the end of this school year, I would like to implement the academic log into all three content areas first marking period next year.

I would like to add a space for the “date” into the format of the academic log. This way when students add in a new assignment they can also enter the date. This may help with the bi-weekly log checks and may also help with the students referring to the model log sheet in the front of the classroom. They may find it easier to match up their log with the model log.

In the future, I would prefer doing log checks with the students. I realize that at times our class schedule did not allow me to conference individually with each student to see how their academic log progress. I think it would be easier to explain student mistakes in person rather than reading my critique and instruction on paper. I think it would be more beneficial to have the student and myself sit down together to monitor their progress and record keeping of the academic log. A bi-weekly mini-conference would hold the student accountable and allow for discussion if need be. It would also provide me with immediate feedback on how the academic log process is continuing and affecting the students.

This has been quite an accomplishment and I am very excited to share with others what I have found. I want to tell my colleagues, family, and friends about my findings. I want to share with others the student success that my pre-algebra class has experienced. I want to show others what my students gained

through the implementation of the academic logs and encourage them to try it within their classrooms.

This qualitative study encourages me to research future questions that may arise throughout my teaching career. This year I implemented something new into my classroom curriculum, not knowing what the outcome was going to be. I took a risk. I created something tailored to my specific needs and implemented it. I read the research to see what had worked and what had not worked in varying situations and classrooms around the world.

Over the past year or so, I have grown very close to my research study and it deserves to be heard. I plan on informing others about my research such as: other learning support teachers, special education staff, future teachers, administrators, curriculum and instruction supervisor, and our school psychologist. I am very proud to call myself an action researcher, and am happy to say that I have gone through the experience that I did this past school year. I plan to continue creating goals for myself, my career, and my family. Goal making is just part of me.

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**APPENDIXES**

**Appendix A: Academic Log- 1<sup>st</sup> Marking Period**

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Marking Period   /  

Name of Graded Work	Points Earned	Total Points Possible	Cumulative Points	Your Current Average
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Marking Period   /  

Name of Graded Work	Points Earned	Total Points Possible	Cumulative Points	Your Current Average
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				
30.				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.				
35.				
36.				
37.				
38.				
39.				
40.				

**Appendix B: Personal Academic Goal Sheet****Personal Academic Goal Sheet**

In the space provided please write down an academic goal that you would like to achieve within the next 2 weeks of Pre-Algebra class. After the 2 weeks has past we will write down our comments to see if we have achieved our personal goal.

Please read the following examples of academic goals that you might want to think about setting for yourself; to bring up your average within class, to improve your homework completion, to study better prior to quizzes/tests, to come in after school to receive extra help, to come to class prepared with notebook/book/pencil, to bring up your quiz grades.

**This goal was set on September 15, 2006 for now until  
September 29, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

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**This goal was set on September 29, 2006 for now until  
October 13, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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---

Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

---

---

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---

**This goal was set on October 13, 2006 for now until October  
27, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

---

**This goal was set on October 27, 2006 for now until  
November 10, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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---

---

---

Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

---

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**This goal was set on November 10, 2006 for now until  
November 22, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

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**This goal was set on November 22, 2006 for now until  
December 8, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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---

Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

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**This goal was set on December 8, 2006 for now until  
December 22, 2006.**

The academic goal that I would like to achieve for the next two weeks is

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Do you believe you achieved your goal for the past two weeks? Why or why not?

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Appendix C: Teacher Model Log- 1<sup>st</sup> Marking Period

Model log

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name Miss FaustMarking Period 1 Total A ÷ C

# A

# B

# C

# D

Name of Graded Work	Points Earned	Total Points Possible	Cumulative Points	Your Current Average
1. Permission Slip		5	5	
2. Whole #'s		5	10	
3. Comparing Decimals		5	15	
4. Quiz - Whole #'s <sup>WS 14</sup>		12	27	
5. Ordering Decimals <sup>#1-10</sup>		5	32	
6. academic log assign. #1-5		5	37	
7. Comparing & Ordering Quiz - Decimals		11	48	
8. Problems 3 & 4		5	53	
9. Quiz Mixed #'s WS 18		10	63	
10. Integers WS #6-30		5	68	
11. academic log assign. #6-10		5	73	
12. WS 9 (1-5) #4-12		5	78	
13. WS 10 (#5-24)		5	83	
14. % Percent ad		5	88	
15. WS 103 #2-4		5	93	
16. WS 312 #1-21		5	98	
17. Simplifying WS #132		5	103	
18. academic log assign. #11-17		8	110	
19. Fish story WS		5	115	
20. Quiz WS 102		20	135	

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name Miss FaustMarking Period 1

Name of Graded Work	A B C D			
	Points Earned	Total Points Possible	Cumulative Points	Your Current Average
21. WS 240 # 16-23		5	140	
22. WS 78 # <sup>class</sup> <sub>work</sub>		32	172	
23. WS 25-26 # 1-7		5	177	
24. Quiz WS 22		10	187	
25. Test Unit 1 Lesson 1		65	252	
26. WS 47 # 20-28		5	257	
27. academic log assign # 18-26		9	266	
28. Quiz 1-9		15	281	
29. WS 11 # 36-45		5	286	
30. WS 4 # 17-28		5	291	
31. WS 3 # 1-18		5	296	
32. Quiz # 1-12		12	308	
33. log questions		5	313	
34.				
35.				
36.				
37.				
38.				
39.				
40.				

### Appendix D: Student Survey (pre-study)

#### Student Survey (Pre-Study)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the number that best rates how you feel about the statement provided:

	Uncertain	Never	Sometimes	Almost Always	Always
1. I keep track of my grades in school	5	4	3	2	1
2. I would like to earn A's and B's	5	4	3	2	1
3. I would like to earn C's and D's	5	4	3	2	1
4. I know what an academic goal is	5	4	3	2	1
5. I set goals for myself in school	5	4	3	2	1
6. My parents help set goals for me in school	5	4	3	2	1
7. I know what progress means	5	4	3	2	1
8. I care about what my grades are	5	4	3	2	1
9. I work hard to earn the grades I receive	5	4	3	2	1
10. I know what to do if my grades aren't good	5	4	3	2	1
11. I study before quizzes and tests	5	4	3	2	1
12. I complete my homework	5	4	3	2	1
13. I know what to do to improve my grades	5	4	3	2	1
14. I want to do well in my classes in school	5	4	3	2	1
15. I seek extra help if I need it	5	4	3	2	1
16. I am responsible for my learning	5	4	3	2	1

### Appendix E: Student Survey (post-study)

#### Student Survey (Post-Study)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the number that best rates how you feel about the statement provided:

	<u>Uncertain</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Almost Always</u>	<u>Always</u>
1. I like keeping track of my grades	5	4	3	2	1
2. I care about my grades	5	4	3	2	1
3. I'm okay with earning A's and B's	5	4	3	2	1
4. I'm okay with earning C's and D's	5	4	3	2	1
5. I know what an academic goal is	5	4	3	2	1
6. I set goals for myself in school	5	4	3	2	1
7. My parents help set goals for me in school	5	4	3	2	1
8. I care about the progress I make in school	5	4	3	2	1
9. I work hard to earn the grades I receive	5	4	3	2	1
10. I know what to do if my grades aren't good	5	4	3	2	1
11. I study before quizzes and tests	5	4	3	2	1
12. I complete my homework	5	4	3	2	1
13. I know what to do to improve my grades	5	4	3	2	1
14. I want to do well in my classes in school	5	4	3	2	1
15. I seek extra help if I need it	5	4	3	2	1
16. I am responsible for my learning	5	4	3	2	1

## Appendix F: Student Interview (pre-study)

### Student Interview (Pre-Study)

1. We have been working with academic logs now for about a month. In your own words, how would you describe what an academic log is?
2. How does it make you feel to keep track of your own grades? (responsible, okay, feels good, bothersome, easy) Why?
3. Does the academic log show you anything? If so, what does it show you?
4. Describe what you think your strengths are in Pre-Algebra.
5. Describe what you think your weaknesses are in Pre-Algebra.



**Appendix G: HSRIB Approval Letter**

MORAVIAN COLLEGE

August 18, 2006

Stacy G. Faust  
362 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street  
Northampton, PA 18067

Dear Stacy G. Faust:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has accepted your proposal: "To what extent, can implementation of 'academic logs' affect student achievement?" Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSRIB Chair.

The committee would like to make you aware, however that you have a grammatical error in your Informed Consent letter. The word "than", in the fourth paragraph of the letter, should be changed the "then."

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSRIB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSRIB before implementation.

This letter has been sent to you through U.S. Mail and e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone (610-861-1415) or through e-mail (medwh02@moravian.edu) should you have any questions about the committee's requests.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks  
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board  
Moravian College  
610-861-1415

## Appendix H: Principal Consent Letter

August 23, 2006

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am currently taking courses toward a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses are helping me stay in touch with the most affective ways of teaching in order to provide my students with the best learning experiences.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a study based on my own teaching experiences within the classroom. The focus of my current research study is to be able to see how implementation of academic logs affect the educational success of low achieving students. In doing this study, I hope to learn more about self-regulation, progress monitoring, and student ownership. I am hoping that from my study and implementation of academic logs that the students will take responsibility for their own learning. I am also hoping that they will be successful in meeting their bi-weekly personal academic goals, in which, they will be setting for themselves to achieve.

My main purpose is to find out to what extent do academic logs affect the students' academic achievement. Within my Pre-Algebra class the students will be given an academic log. The academic log is used to keep track of their grades and monitor their progress within the class. The academic log will provide a place for the students to record the following: the name of the graded piece of work, points earned, total points possible, cumulative points, and their average. Every two weeks, I will be collecting the academic logs to look over their averages and check for any mathematical errors that may have occurred. The students will also be responsible for making a personal academic goal for every two week period. At the end of the two weeks they will then mark their success rate of that personal goal. Throughout this study, I will be monitoring the student's academic logs, their bi-weekly goals, modeling the academic log, conducting student interviews, making observations, and conducting both a pre and post survey. I will also be mailing a consent form home to the parents in regards to this study so they are aware and I can obtain their permission.

This study will take place September 5, 2006 to December 22, 2006. Students from my Pre-Algebra class will be asked to partake within the study. Participation within this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect the student's grade in any way. A student may withdraw from the study or the parent or guardian may choose not to have them participate, doing so involves no penalty to the child. If withdrawn, I will not use their information pertaining to the student within my study.

The student's names will be kept confidential. The name of any student, faculty member, cooperating teacher, or cooperating institution will not appear in any written report or publication of the study. Only my name and the names of my sponsoring professors at Moravian will appear in this study. All research materials and information will be secured in a protected location.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Charlotte Zales. She can be contacted at Moravian College by phone (610) 861- 7958 or e-mail at [mecrz01@moravian.edu](mailto:mecrz01@moravian.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project please feel free to contact me at school or e-mail me at [fausts@cattvdsd.org](mailto:fausts@cattvdsd.org). If not please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,  
*Ms. Stacy Faust*  
Ms. Stacy Faust

I attest, that I am the principal of the teacher conducting this research study, that I have read and understand this consent form, and received a copy. Stacy Faust has my permission to conduct this study at Catasauqua Middle School.

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 8/24/06

## Appendix I: Parent Consent Letter

September 5, 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am currently completing my Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. In my graduate courses, I have learned a great deal about the most affective teaching methods and strategies for my classroom.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a study based on my own teaching experiences within the classroom. The focus of my current research study is to be able to see what the observed and reported experiences will be when academic logs are implemented in a 7<sup>th</sup> grade learning support classroom. In doing this study, I hope to learn more about self-regulation, progress monitoring, and student ownership. I am hoping that from my study and implementation of academic logs that the students will take responsibility for their own learning. I am also hoping that they will be successful in meeting their bi-weekly personal academic goals, in which, they will be setting for themselves to achieve.

Within my Pre-Algebra class the students will be given an academic log. The academic log is used to keep track of their grades and monitor their progress within the class. The academic log will be a place for the students to record the following: the name of the graded piece of work, points earned, total points possible, cumulative points and their average. Every two weeks, I will be collecting the academic logs to look over their averages and check for any mathematical errors that may have occurred. The students will also be responsible for making a personal academic goal for every two weeks. At the end of the two weeks they will then mark their success rate of that personal goal. Throughout this study I will be monitoring the student's academic logs, bi-weekly goals, modeling the academic log, conducting student interviews, making observations, and conducting both a pre and post survey.

This study will take place September 5, 2006 to December 22, 2006. All students from my Pre-Algebra class will be involved with keeping track of their academic log and making bi-weekly goals. Participation within this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect the student's grade in any way. A student may withdraw from the study, or the parent/guardian may choose not to have them participate and doing so involves no penalty to the child. Please call or write me if you feel that your child should be withdrawn from the study and I will do so immediately. If the child withdraws or is withdrawn then I will not use the information pertaining to the student within my study.

The student's names will be kept confidential. The name of any student, faculty member, cooperating teacher, or cooperating institution will not appear in any written report or publication of the study. Only my name and the names of my sponsoring professors at Moravian will appear in this study. All research materials and information will be secured in a protected location.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Charlotte Zales. She can be contacted at Moravian College by phone (610) 861- 7958 or e-mail at [mecrz01@moravian.edu](mailto:mecrz01@moravian.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project please feel free to contact me at school or e-mail me at [fausts@cattvdsd.org](mailto:fausts@cattvdsd.org). If not, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

*Ms. Stacy Faust*

Ms. Stacy Faust

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I attest, that I am the student's legally authorized representative and that I read and understand this consent form, and received a copy.

Legal representative signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 9-7-06

**Appendix J: Student Questionnaire (mid-study)****Academic log Questionnaire (mid- study)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you been successful with any of the goals you have made within pre-algebra class? If so, what were they and why do you think you were successful?

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2. How does it make you feel when you when you achieve your goal?

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3. How does it make you feel when you don't achieve your goal?

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4. Is it hard for you to create a goal for yourself? Why or why not?

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5. You have been keeping track of your grades for one marking period do you think any changes will be made for second marking period?

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6. If you could change the way the academic looks, how would you make changes?

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7. Many of the students would like to have an academic log in both reading and English. Do you think this is a good idea, why or why not?

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8. Do you feel that you can keep track of your own grades in other classes besides pre-algebra?

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9. When keeping track of your academic log, what is the hardest thing for you to do?

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10. Should Miss Faust have the academic logs in math class next year?

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11. How can Miss Faust improve the academic log?

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Appendix K: Academic Log- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Marking Period 2

Name of graded work:	<u>Column A</u> Points earned for this assignment	<u>Column B</u> Add this assignment to the total of column A	<u>Column C</u> How much was this assignment worth?	<u>Column D</u> Total points possible in math class	<u>Column E</u> (B÷D) Current Average %
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					
13.					
14.					
15.					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Marking Period 2

Name of graded work:	<u>Column A</u> Points earned for this assignment	<u>Column B</u> Add this assignment to the total of column A	<u>Column C</u> How much was this assignment worth?	<u>Column D</u> Total points possible in math class	<u>Column E</u> (B÷D) Current Average %
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
29.					
30.					
31.					
32.					
33.					
34.					
35.					
36.					
37.					
38.					
39.					
40.					

**Appendix L: Log Check: Grade/Comments/Goal Progress- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period**

**Log Check**  
**Grade/Comments/Goal Progress**

Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

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Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

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Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

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Appendix M: Teacher Model Log- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period

## ACADEMIC LOG

(model  
109)Name Miss FaustMarking Period 2

Name of graded work:	Column A Points earned for this assignment	Column B Add this assignment to the total of column A	Column C How much was this assignment worth?	Column D Total points possible in math class	Column E (B+D) Current Average %
1. HW-WS 246 #1-12	5	5	5	5	100%
2. HW-WS 246 #13-20			5	10	
3. 109 check #1-2	2		2	12	
4. Quiz 5-3 <sup>add</sup> <sup>frac.</sup> <sub>subtract</sub>			20	32	
5. 109 check #3-4	2		2	34	
6. WS 251 #1-25			5	39	
7. WS 81 #1-8			5	44	
3. WS 82 #2-20 <sup>even</sup>			5	49	
9. Quiz $\times \div$ fractions			20	69	
10. pg 41-42 #1-16			5	74	
11. 109 check #6-10			5	79	
12. Test #2			50	129	
13. WS 43 #1-2			5	134	
14. WS 130 #1-32			5	139	
15. WB pg 41 #1-10			5	144	
16. WB pg 42 #1-20			5	149	
17. Quiz- <sup>Rounding</sup> <sub>estimation</sub>			20	169	
18. WB- pg 43 #1-15			5	174	
9. 109 check 12-17			7	181	
20. WB pg 44 #11-22			5	186	

## ACADEMIC LOG

Name Miss FaustMarking Period 2

Name of graded work:	Column A Points earned for this assignment	Column B Add this assignment to the total of column A	Column C How much was this assignment worth?	Column D Total points possible in math class	Column E (B÷D) Current Average %
21. Estimation Quiz			12	198	
22. pg 50 #5-7			5	203	
23. WS 290 #1-12			5	208	
24. Quiz Ratios			30	238	
25. WS 296 #1-20			5	243	
26. WB 95 #1-16			5	248	
27. WS 55 Proportions			5	253	
28. Quiz Proportions			20	273	
29. Test Estimation			30	303	
30.					
31.					
32.					
33.					
34.					
35.					
36.					
37.					
38.					
39.					
40.					

## Appendix N: Student Questionnaire (post-study)

### Student Questionnaire (Post-Study)

1. If someone would ask you what an academic log was, what would you tell him or her?
2. What have you learned from keeping track of your grades?
3. How did keeping track of your grades make you feel?
4. What do you find out when looking at your academic log?
5. According to your academic log, what do you believe your strengths are in Pre-Algebra?
6. According to your academic log, what do you feel your weaknesses are in Pre-Algebra?

