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**PROMOTING SELF-DETERMINATION SKILLS THROUGH  
GOAL SETTING IN THE LEARNING SUPPORT CLASSROOM**

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"We are more than what we do, much more than what we accomplish, far more than what we possess."  
*-William Arthur Ward*

## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative action research study investigated the observed behaviors and reported experiences when self-determination skills were promoted through individualized and group goal setting in the learning support classroom.

The study was conducted with seven learning support students during the support portion of the day. All students participated in goal setting and group discussion on a weekly basis with the guidance of the learning support teacher. The students self-monitored their self-selected goals each week. This study discusses the improvement of self-determination levels through a pre- and post questionnaire. The text further discusses increased student achievement and the development of a positive learning environment. An increase in the students' communication skills was also noted.

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### **Researcher Stance**

When I think about my own educational experiences, I remember the teachers who encouraged me to strive for success. Those teachers stand out in my mind because of their dedication to, and compassion for, students. They took the time to bring out the best in me. I often think about where I would be without the power these positive influences exerted on my life.

Even as a child, teachers were my role models. I can think back to when I was a little girl, and I would play school with my stuffed animals and dolls. Most little girls love to play school, but I would take it to another level. I loved playing school more than any other toy or game in my room, and I played almost every single day. I loved children and as I grew, I began to become a kid magnet-bringing their attention to me wherever I went. My mom tells me that kids were drawn to me. I would teach my younger cousins and read aloud to them at family gatherings. I knew at a very young age that I wanted to work with kids.

Along the way, I have had my share of overcoming obstacles. I grew up around multiple divorces and ended up relocating many times for the first seven years of school. With all of this change and uncertainty, I had choices to make about my life, and I knew I wanted to do something positive. I started to care about how people perceived me and began to set goals for myself including graduating from high school and applying for college. Everything I have accomplished was through my own perseverance. Every negative experience

became the fuel for my desire to succeed. My goals were met one by one, and I became increasingly confident as I continued to become more successful. I overcame obstacles along the way and continued to push through. I did not allow my frustrations to get the best of me.

As a result of my experiences, I have always had a tremendous amount of empathy for kids and adults who struggle with something in their lives. When I started to think about college, I had difficulty deciding if I wanted to be a counselor, a child psychologist, or a teacher. Regardless, I knew I wanted to work with kids or help people in some capacity. I finally declared my major after joining an organization called Best Buddies in college, and I worked with a young man with developmental disabilities. We spent time together going out to places like the movies and the mall. His appreciation for our time together was evident every time I picked him up, as he would smile from ear to ear when I came to the door. This experience completely confirmed my choice to work in the field of special education.

Each year I have been a teacher, I have become increasingly concerned with my students and their levels of self-esteem. They often share negative experiences of embarrassment and stereotyping from peers because of their learning differences. I have always been their biggest advocate by assuring them that I would never embarrass them or make them feel different. I feel it is my job to empower them and build on their strengths. It is difficult enough to be a

seventh grader, but it becomes even more challenging when learning does not come easily. I have shared part of my history with students with the hope of encouraging them to try harder with their schoolwork.

Unfortunately, my opportunity to talk with my students intimately is decreasing year after year. In addition to their family lives, learning difficulties, and peer acceptance, they are inundated with the pressures of standardized testing. I have noticed that most of my students seemed turned off by school. I started to think about these problems such as lack of motivation, declining student achievement, and lowered self-esteem. I wanted to get the chance to talk with my students, as I was able to do in the past before we were consumed by the PSSA's. So, I began to question the use and purpose of the last period in our school day's schedule called "Academic Flex." The old academic flex looked like a circus act as we ran around the room helping the students with their assignments. My teacher assistant and I would divide and conquer to support students with homework, organization, reteaching concepts, and test reviews. The frustration quickly set in because there was too much to do in a short amount of time. It was difficult to actually determine what was being accomplished during this "flex" time. This realization of futility of our use of time during "flex" is when I decided to meet with the students in small group, so I could have more of that personal connection with each of them. I began to ask them to set academic goals, and I asked them to monitor their own progress.

I wanted my students to succeed, but more importantly, I wanted them to keep trying in the face of adversity. I wondered: How I could get my students to want to learn? How would this affect the students later in life? Would they learn to help themselves in the future? How could I empower them to be motivated intrinsically? All of these questions brought me to my research question for my study: **What are the observed behaviors and reported experiences when self-determination skills are promoted through individualized and group goal setting in the learning support classroom?**

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Students in today's society want choice and independence in their educational environments. Most students want their learning to be interesting and relevant to their futures. All of these factors may increase students' levels of motivation and their willingness to learn. Motivating all learners, regardless of ability, may be crucial to their feelings of self-worth and their levels of competence. Stipek (2002) recognized that activities and situations that promote feelings of self-determination, as well as feelings of competence, are the most intrinsically motivating. She also noted, "Students are intrinsically motivated to work when they feel self-determining rather than controlled..." (p. 193). Eggen and Kauchak (2007) note that goal setting has been shown to increase motivation and self-determination in the business world, and there is increasing evidence that it has the same effect in education (p. 315).

Teachers' attitudes and other students' opinions of students with disabilities often affect their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers should try to promote acceptance towards all types of learners in their classrooms (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). It is not uncommon for many students to have a lower self-esteem when they struggle academically; therefore, educators should try to encourage strategies such as goal setting to increase self-esteem and academic achievement, as well as self-determination.

## **Goal Setting and Students with Learning Disabilities**

Studies of goal setting interventions have found that goal setting has a positive impact on the academic performance of students with disabilities across a variety of academic domains, including writing, reading, and math (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009). Since students in special education are becoming more mainstreamed or included, there is a need for more support for students in the general education classroom. Student-directed learning strategies such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and problem solving are evidence-based strategies that can be used as curriculum augmentations to teach students skills to achieve greater access to the general education curriculum (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009). Goal setting and self-monitoring are strategies that may promote this progression towards achieving success, which could eventually evolve into self-determination. The greater the success the students feel, the more they will want to try harder.

Tollefson (1986) conducted a study with eight learning disabled students. They were taught goal setting skills in a resource room setting. The students set realistic goals, developed plans to achieve their goals, monitored their goals, and accepted responsibility for the outcomes of the goals. Tollefson discovered that this goal-implementation strategy was effective for some students in increasing their assignment completion in the resource room and in the general education

curriculum. “The present study found that many LD students can learn to set realistic achievement goals, that they can develop plans to reach these goals, and that they can monitor their progress toward the goals” (p. 202).

Campbell-Whatley (2008) conducted a study with 13 students with disabilities using pre tests and post tests measuring self-esteem and found that teaching students how to cope with their disabilities resulted in significant changes in the students’ attitudes. The students began to understand how they learned best by understanding themselves. Encouraging students to set goals and reinforce progress enhances intrinsic motivation because the students are in control of their own learning. A study conducted by Shih (2008), found that when students learn out of personal interest and personal relevance, they are more fully engaged in schoolwork, both behaviorally and emotionally. As these skills are internalized, students begin to develop self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is when a student has the ability to recognize when he or she is actually improving.

*Self-Regulation.* Goal setting has been shown to help students become more motivated and more competent; however, goal setting does not happen naturally. It takes time, encouragement, and opportunities for reflection. “Teachers can help students to hone this invaluable self-regulatory skill by giving them frequent opportunities to evaluate what they have learned or where they erred after completing a task” (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2008, p. 19).

We often ask a student to set goals at the start of the school year, but we

may not always encourage him to keep track of how he is trying to achieve the goals. Through the process of self-regulation, a student takes responsibility for his own learning by choosing his own goals, monitoring, and self-assessing his progress. The learner is able to plan, control and evaluate his own thinking (Montalvo & Torres, 2004). The student and teacher work together to achieve goals selected by the student using this process of self-regulation. The teacher serves as a support to the student and encourages the student to reflect on his goal on a regular basis. It is helpful to have a visual aid such as a sheet or a graph, so the student can visually keep track of his own progress. Many of these strategies may also help promote academic achievement over time.

*Self-Monitoring.* As students choose a goal, they should set a timeline to revisit their goal. During this time, students are encouraged to self-monitor or indicate the progress they have made on their specific goal. Eggen and Kauchak (2007) stressed, “Once people have committed to a set of goals, monitoring them leads to a sense of accomplishment, promotes self-efficacy, and can be a pleasant emotional experience” (p. 316). This may also promote learner responsibility because the goal is self-selected and the progress is self-monitored. Students are encouraged to take a look at what worked or what was not working at the time, which emphasizes the learning process rather than the end result. Self-monitoring strategies have been widely used among students with disabilities across multiple content-related tasks, such as reading comprehension, writing, and on-task

behavior in the classroom (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009). When students write down their progress, they begin to understand how they learn best.

Quite often teachers will ask their students, “What did you do to learn that? How did you figure it out?” and other thought provoking questions to promote a deeper level of thinking. Through these questioning strategies, students are encouraged to choose a goal, create a plan, and self-monitor their progress to decide if they need to change the goal or the plan. In general, the process of goal setting and self-monitoring makes students more aware of what they need to be working on and thus makes them more likely to achieve their stated goal (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009).

### **Self-Determination**

Self-determination theory is a theory of motivation, which is researched today (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). According to Malian & Nevin (2002), self-determination is instinctive in nature. It is defined as the act or power of making up one's own mind about what to think or do, without outside influence. It primarily involves motivation, competence and relationships between teacher and students. Self-determination skills should become an integral part of the school curriculum, beginning in early elementary school and continuing across all curricular areas.

Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, and Little (2008) conducted a study with 20 high school students with disabilities. The students were taught the self-determined learning model of instruction (SDLMI) by the special education teacher. This model followed a three-step process, which included: (a) set a goal, (b) create an action plan, and (c) monitor progress towards reaching the goal. The results were successful for all of the students in the instructional support classroom. According to the students in the study, many other benefits emerged from the study such as: becoming more organized, having less stress over an assignment, being more confident, participating more, keeping track of work easier, understanding assignments better, and using better study habits at home.

Agran and Hughes (2008) conducted a research study with 17 high school students and 56 middle school students with varied abilities. They wanted to collect student input on their levels of involvement in their IEP's, as well as to investigate whether or not they had opportunities to learn self-determination strategies. During the study, they surveyed the students multiple times, since previous research did not include much student input at all. The feedback was mostly obtained from parents and teachers in the past. They discovered that both groups of students did not even know what an IEP was, nor did they participate in their yearly meetings. About 67% of the high school participants reported learning goal setting skills and 50% learned self-monitoring skills according to the survey data. Researchers reported that 82% of junior high participants were taught to set

goals and more than half were not taught to self-monitor. “The findings provide evidence that these students are being taught to employ several strategies positively associated with enhanced self-determination” (p. 74). Some self-determination skills that can also be taught in the classroom in addition to goal setting are: learning how to speak up for yourself, making choices, keeping track of certain behavior, telling yourself you did well or how to do something, comparing how you did in the past with the present, and problem solving (Agran & Hughes, 2008).

“Allowing some student choice fosters intrinsic interest in school tasks and has the added advantage of teaching self-management skills required for success in higher grades and in the workplace” (Stipek, 2002, p. 191).

Shih (2008) studied a group of Taiwanese eighth-graders and looked at the relationship between self-determination and achievement goals and the students’ schoolwork. He explored students’ perceptions of autonomy support from their teachers. Autonomy support from teachers included student choice and self-directed learning opportunities. He found that when students were provided with learning experiences that involve their personal interest, they were more engaged in their schoolwork. He concluded by encouraging teachers to adopt an autonomy-supportive environment, rather than a controlling style, to enhance students’ intrinsic motivation.

Eggen and Kauchak remind us that, “a productive learning environment is

where students feel physically and emotionally safe, and the daily routines, as well as the values, expectations, learning experiences, and standards for appropriate behavior are all designed to promote learning” (2007, p. 368). The last, and possibly one of the most crucial, elements when fostering self-determination is developing a positive relationship between the teacher and the student. Teachers should try to relate to their students by offering help and listening to their students. Students who feel a sense of belongingness become more focused on their academic performance. It is believed to be more beneficial to have a classroom climate that is more student-centered rather than teacher-centered. A person-centered approach in the classroom allows everyone to have a voice and mutual levels of respect are present for all types of learners (Freiberg and Lamb, 2009).

“A supportive classroom environment, where each student is valued regardless of academic ability or performance, contributes to relatedness and is important for both learning and motivation” (Stipek, 2002, pg. 159). As teachers reinforce students’ beliefs about their competence, students may begin to feel connected to others including the teacher. When students believe their teachers like, understand, and empathize with them, it influences learning and motivation (Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

Teachers should show they care and should show they are committed to their students’ learning outcomes by offering both praise and criticism. Students

may benefit from feedback including criticism. When criticism is present, the students become more competent but it must be presented in a positive manner. Criticism increases competency and also encourages students to problem solve when they make mistakes. “The use of praise and criticism also influences students’ perceptions of their competence” (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

I believe students in today’s classrooms should be encouraged to take a look at who they are and who they aspire to become. The research supports the importance of helping students to develop a sense of self-determination through setting goals and continuously monitoring those goals. Students who learn from their mistakes and who have been empowered to build on their strengths and weaknesses will achieve success throughout their lifetimes. Anctil, Ishikawa, & Scott (2008) studied how persistence influences competence, which in turn influences career decision making and ultimately enhances self-esteem and supports one’s academic identity. Students with disabilities, though, often find themselves giving up when presented with challenging tasks. Students who receive special education services often get discouraged before a goal is accomplished, and may perceive their success on tests as due to luck instead of ability. The debate over whether a child’s self concept or self-esteem is lowered as a result of labeling has been, and continues to be, one of importance in the educational field (Muse 1992). The home

environment and parental structure play a significant role in learning disabled students' feelings of self-esteem. During an interview in a study conducted by Campbell-Whatley (2008), one student reported, "My mother would never believe that I really have a real problem. She just thinks I am lazy and that is that, but I am glad to know that my problem is real and I can start to help and believe in myself" (p. 141).

If students are supported and encouraged to identify their difficulties, set goals to make progress, reflect on their progress and decide what to improve next, they will most likely instinctively develop the motivation to succeed. "Teaching goal-setting skills has positive effects on student achievement" (Garavalia & Gredler, 2002, p. 222).

Lastly, in order to have successful achievement results when goal setting, teachers should promote positive learning environments. "Effective learning occurs in a social context where the interrelationship between student and teacher is critical (Lerner, 2000, pg. 216).

## **Research Design and Methodology**

"One part at a time, one day at a time, we can accomplish any goal we set for ourselves."

*-Karen Casey*

### **Research Goals**

The focus of my research was to see if my seventh grade learning support students would be able to achieve self-determination in the regular education classroom through the use of goal setting. I wanted my students to be responsible for their own learning by allowing their successes to push them further. I also hoped to encourage communication using small group sessions on a weekly basis. In addition, I hoped my students would begin to develop a more positive sense of themselves and their true abilities by using self-reflection.

In the end, I wanted to provide a safe, open environment where my students could learn what it means to be self-determined in hopes to better their future educational experiences.

### **Introduction**

Year after year, students in my learning support classroom lack the study skills and motivation to perform well on tests and complete homework on a regular basis, but that is just the surface. Most have difficulty with identifying their greatest area of need, overcoming any struggles they encounter, and so often a learned helplessness is developed over time because they have a lower self-

esteem. I decided to investigate my students' perceptions of themselves, intrinsic motivation (what students need and want in the classroom), through the use of goal setting with self-monitoring: all of which encompasses a self-determined student.

### **Setting**

I taught in a small suburban middle school in Pennsylvania. Our community takes pride in its agricultural roots. The majority of our district is still mainly made up of farmland, which is enticing to people in the surrounding neighborhoods. We are continuing to grow as more people are moving to our area for its peaceful scenery. Our middle school has recently adopted a teaming approach, and I was the co-teacher for the seventh grade team. My students received itinerant level support, which means they are mainstreamed into the regular education classroom for all subjects. At the end of the day, I supported my students in the learning support classroom during a period called "academic flex." During this time, the students received help with homework, test preparation, organization, etc. There was also a teacher assistant in the room during this time.

## **Participants**

There were seven learning support students receiving support on a daily basis. There were four males and three females, all of whom were Caucasian except for one female who was African American. One of the students was identified with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which falls under the Other Health Impairment category of disabilities according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The other students had a specific learning disability in at least one of the following areas: fluency, reading comprehension, and written expression. Many of my students had a wide variety of needs and levels of motivation, as well as some very unique background experiences.

## **Procedure**

I began to collect my data in September of 2009 after I obtained permission from Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB) for approval of my topic idea and methods for data collection. After making minimal changes to my proposal, the HSIRB approved my thesis topic (see Appendix A). Then, I obtained approval from my principal by providing a brief description of my study along with a consent form (see Appendix B), which she enthusiastically approved the very same day it was submitted.

As school started, I introduced my study to my students after we had one week of classes completed. I told them they would be part of a research study for

my master's degree in which I would be meeting with them in small groups at the back table to work on goal setting. I explained the consent forms to them and asked for their parents' permission (see Appendix C). Once I had all of the forms I needed, I began my data collection.

Each week, I met with the student participants in groups at a small horseshoe-shaped table in the front of the classroom. I shared the teacher input regarding classroom performance with the students each week on a sheet of paper, which was referred as the "blue sheet" (see Appendix D). This sheet was used to start conversations with my students by sharing positive comments from the teachers themselves. We focused on the following skills during the small group sessions:

- The students reflected on their past experiences in learning support as well as their success in the general education classroom (what worked/what did not)
- The students set goals based on their areas of need.
- The students created a plan to work towards their goals.
- The students monitored their own progress on a weekly basis by reflecting on their progress using a goal-tracking sheet (see Appendix E).
- The students chose to keep the goal for a week or chose a new goal to work on.

- The students began to set life goals, not just academic goals (transitioning, high school, and post secondary).

### **Data Sources**

Following each goal setting group, I recorded my observations in my field log. I used my field log to record observations and reflections along the way. I also surveyed my students pre and post study in order to obtain insight on their self-perceived strengths and weaknesses and to encourage them to be more self-reflective (see Appendix F and Appendix G). I looked at district assessments including PSSA data, benchmark testing, Teenbiz reading comprehension tests, and marking period grade reports. I used this information to get a baseline reading on each of my students and also to monitor their progress throughout the study.

I also administered the AIR Self-Determination Questionnaire (see Appendix H) to look for any changes in the levels of self-determination before and after the study was completed.

### **Trustworthiness Statement**

As a teacher researcher, I continued to try to make my research as trustworthy as I can. Throughout my study, I questioned whether or not I was being fair to my students. My focus was to take a look at what I was doing and how I could do it better using student feedback such as student interviews and surveys. Trustworthiness is a key component of an action research study.

I learned, as a teacher action researcher, that I needed to be trustworthy throughout my study from start to finish. The students were aware of what was going to happen during the study and they were allowed to withdrawal at any time. I did not include any non-participant information in my field log and in my final written thesis. All participants of my study participated in the same activities. The parents and students understood my purpose of the study, which was to teach self-determination skills through goal setting during small group discussions. Also, the students knew that any work or documentation I collected would not affect their grade in any way. I explained to the students that everything we did together was confidential and was not shared with anyone.

To ensure anonymity, I assigned each student a pseudonym. My field log included the students' initials, which were kept private and secure when I was not collecting any data or reflecting on the day. After the study was completed, I purged all of my data by destroying it to ensure confidentiality.

My field log served as a constant tool used to collect what I was observing and also to reflect what I was thinking. It is important to distinguish between the two during action research so there is a defined observation and also a reflection (Bogdan & Biklen, 2002). After I finished gathering information in my field log and commented on what I observed, I coded my entries and found more information and insight as I looked for deeper meaning embedded in my study (Hubbard & Power, 2003).

I made every attempt to ensure trust on the part of the participants throughout my study by letting my students know their feedback was valuable to me. I told them right up front to be as honest as possible and not just tell me what they think I want to hear. The participants were encouraged to reflect on themselves as learners throughout the study and the rest of the year during the small group discussions.

### **Biases**

I encountered some biases during the research process. No matter what I found, whether it helped or hindered my study, I included it in my experience. My goal was to keep my findings as realistic as possible by painting the entire picture of my study. I found it difficult to not expect results right away from some of my participants. In the beginning of the study, I noticed most of the students were willing to try anything I put in front of them, but then I started noticing some resistance. At times, part of me became frustrated because I wanted to just blurt

out how important it was for them to set a goal for my study. However, I realized I could not force some of my students to identify an area of need so time is what I gave them. For those who were most resistant, I decided to start with other students in the group who I knew were more willing to work with me. My intent was to use some positive modeling.

During the study, I gathered many different types of data including observations, pre and post surveys, teacher feedback “blue sheets,” goal-setting record keeping, interviews, and a pre and post self-determination questionnaire, which provided me various viewpoints for my study. It is important to collect several forms of data to ensure credibility. By having varied forms of data, I could determine results more effectively than if I only used one or two types of data.

## **This Year's Story**

I often think about what school is like for my students as they try to fit in socially and academically. How do they view themselves? What have their past experiences been like? Have they been accepted for their learning differences? These barriers seem to be more challenging each year. The following story is told from a learning support student's perspective:

### *Matt's Typical School Day*

*I let the farmhouse screen door slam behind me and I begin to run down my driveway. My backpack is half unzipped, my shoes are untied, and my coat is twisted halfway around my body. As I approach the road, I see the cornfields all around me and feel the soft wind blowing on my face. I hear in the far distance the sound of my bus climbing the hill as the morning sun begins to peek out. My stomach feels queasy as it churns and grumbles waiting for the bus to arrive. It's the third week of school and seventh grade is okay so far.*

*I hustle into school with the flow of students moving fast all around me. I get to my locker and there are two kids at either side of me joking around and shoving each other while I am stuck in the middle like icing inside a cookie. All I want to do is try to find my binder and get to homeroom. My friend Ben comes over and the boys stop. Ben and I walk*

*to homeroom together talking about the cool video game we got over the weekend.*

*The bell rings and my first period class begins. "Get out your..." begins the teacher...I zone out looking out the window thinking about how I would much rather be home. My body jumps as the teacher asks me a question so loudly it's as if she has a megaphone at her lips. I wish I could stop myself before I zone out like that. Class is over, so now I need to figure out where I'm going next. God. What day of the cycle is it? Is it Day 1 or Day 2? I can never remember, and I am not about to ask someone as we shuffle out the door. I pull over in the hallway away from the busy traffic flow and pull out my schedule. Great. I am going to be late. Ok, so Monday Day 1 or Day 2, I think I go to Art class. I don't have my schedule memorized. All the other students automatically enter the classrooms as I flounder through my backpack for my schedule.*

*Art class was great. I love making things in that class, and the teacher lets us get up and walk around whenever we want! I wish all of my classes were like this one.*

*Language Arts. Yuck. This is the absolute worst class of the day, and I am one of the "fortunate" ones to have it twice. I hate reading and writing. In fact, I despise it. I have never been good at it, and I never will be. We have a spelling test today. Well, I already know how I am going to*

*do on this one. I get up and leave the room to go to Mrs. Chandler's room. She's my "helper" teacher. She reads tests to me and stuff. Helps me out at the end of the day so we know how to do our homework. I sharpen my pencil and look around the room. I see a small number of desks set up in groups. I don't mind my seat in here. I see a lot of quotes and posters hanging all around. Her room is relaxing. It makes me feel calm in here not stressed like out there. Out there in the real world where people are mean. I sit down and get ready for the dreaded spelling test. I write "nisissary". The word is necessary. I write "eferiwon". The word is everyone. The final score after it is all over. 42%. Yup. That's right. That pretty much explains it all.*

*I wish people would understand me instead of making fun of me. I hear about it on the bus, in class, at lunch and sometimes my friends say things. I hear about how I'm in the "special" class. It hurts. A lot.*

### **Where Should I Begin?**

The pressures of standardized testing were beginning to consume everyone in our middle school and especially in our department. Our students in special education were always the main part of discussion at faculty meetings because of consistently low test scores. Our shift in learning support began to focus on making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in order to comply with the

federally mandated No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislature. We had fewer opportunities to get to know our students because more time was spent trying to prepare them for the tests. I felt less connected with the last few groups of students I worked with because of this narrowed focus. Instead of communicating with my students, I only relied on teacher input, and I lost sight of what I enjoyed most about my job – connecting with my kids. I began to see less effort and motivation from my students in the areas of preparing for tests and homework completion. The drive to want to do well and be successful seemed to be missing in many of my students each year. I think these struggles were mostly due to the focus on the standardized testing.

In addition, I was interested in knowing how they perceived themselves. They would sometimes share negative experiences of embarrassment and stereotyping from other peers because of their learning differences. I became increasingly concerned with my students and their levels of self-esteem because they were singled out as being different.

So, I decided to change the way I supported my students at the end of the day, because it just didn't feel right. It felt as though I did the same thing year after year, but I never felt as though I helped them make enough progress. I began to feel helpless, because my students seemed to want less and less help from me as the years progressed. They became distant and disconnected from any type of discussion or help. Each year seemed to be the same old scene.

ME: Do you need help with anything? THEM: No. We're fine.

Then, the end result would be: a) failing grades, b) missed homework, c) doing the bare minimum just to get by or d) all of the above. I didn't want to hover over them asking them to see each homework assignment or lecturing them about effort and responsibility.

I wanted to help my students develop the want or desire to learn on their own—to have control over their own lives instead of someone telling them what to do, to help them help themselves, to overcome an obstacle and learn how to get through the next one with ease. I wanted to provide an opportunity for my students to talk with me on a regular basis. I wanted my classroom to be a positive learning environment so all students felt comfortable enough to talk about how it was really going for them. So, I took a look at the structure of my last period of the day and modified it to fit the needs of my students.

### **The Nice and Easy Beginning**

“Thank you for bringing back your permission slips. I really appreciate it and I am excited to start my study with you! So, I just wanted to remind you of what we are going to be doing back here. I will be showing you this ‘Blue Sheet’ each week, which includes feedback from all of your teachers on how you are doing in each class. We are going to be working on setting goals together that will hopefully help you do a better job in the classroom. When I am all done with my

study, I have to write a big paper describing how it went and how you did this year. Can anyone guess how long my paper will end up being? About 100 pages!”

“Whoa!” replied a few students in unison.

“Yes, but the cool thing is it will be all about each of you and what we do here together. So, you’ll be famous when I’m all done. Don’t worry though, you will all have top secret names so when someone reads my paper, they won’t know who I’m talking about.”

“Cool!” said one of the female students, “Can *we* read it too?”

“Of course you can!” I exclaimed.

*Well, if I had one of those “That was EASY” buttons, I would have smacked that right then and there and called it a day with my study. It went over so well with my students, I couldn’t believe it. I expected to have more resistance in the beginning.*

### **Getting To Know You**

The first two weeks of school were spent getting to know my students with some fun games and allowing them to settle into their schedules with the new beginnings of seventh grade. I remember that time in my life, and it wasn’t always easy. My main focus was friends and boys; the rest was just a blur.

“Alright guys, we need to have a seat so I can chat with you a bit about what this year entails,” as I eagerly wait for quiet to flood the room.

“We have had about two weeks of school under our belt, and I am here to talk with you about my expectations of you as seventh graders.” *The silence was a little eerie. I could imagine them thinking, “Oh, here we go...the don’t be a punk or else speech.”*

“You are here for support. Each and every one of you has your strengths as well as weaknesses. The one thing I ask of you this year is to be kind to one another, be tolerant because what one may struggle with in here, someone else may be able to step in and help out. You will go through big changes this year in seventh grade as you begin to figure out who you are and how to take what you’re good at and do something about it. When you see me in the classrooms, I will never EVER embarrass you. Most students in the room end up viewing me as just another classroom teacher in the room. You will notice me teaching more lessons in some classrooms than others; it just depends on the week. My job is to help you and others who aren’t my support students. I ask for your respect this year as I will always respect you. We will focus on setting goals that you will pick yourselves. Together we will talk about what is working for you in your classes and where you feel you can improve. My hope is to get in the habit of setting goals to feel good about making progress.” *Whew. I wonder how much of that they heard? I guess we will see as we begin this new adventure.*

Each year, our middle school students take the Pennsylvania State System of Assessments (PSSA’s). I use this information as one of my baseline data

points. However, it is important to note that multiple forms of assessment are needed to gain a clearer picture of their academic abilities.

Table 1:

*6<sup>th</sup> Grade PSSA Scores*

	<b>MATH</b>	<b>READING</b>
<i>Matt</i>	Advanced	Proficient
<i>Lisa</i>	Basic	Basic
<i>Richard</i>	Basic	Basic
<i>Heather</i>	Below Basic	Below Basic
<i>Maci</i>	Basic	Basic
<i>Justin</i>	Proficient	Basic
<i>Tom</i>	Proficient	Proficient

In the beginning of the year, I took a look at this PSSA data and made some observations. Matt was my highest achieving student, but the one with the most discipline problems according to last year's teacher. Heather stood out to me, because she scored Below Basic in both reading and math, which indicates she is significantly lower functioning in comparison to the other students. The other students scored in the Basic range in at least one of the two categories. A

few of my students this year also exhibit some signs of test anxiety, which is important to note when viewing standardized test scores.

I remembered the first time I called each group back to the table. I folded an index card in half and put the names of four students on one side and the other three on the other side. I would flip the card to let them know which group was going to meet with me. I distinctly remember some students eagerly waiting to be called back. Others, however, weren't too thrilled to be working with me. They all had a story to tell.

### **Who am I?**

*Matt:* energetic, fun, sense of humor, sneaky, absent a lot previously, has trouble during unstructured times, struggles with spelling and writing, the office knows him as the troublemaker from last year, has ADHD and a learning disability in the area of writing.

*Lisa:* loud, boisterous, fun, talkative, stylish, easily embarrassed, struggles with reading, test anxiety, nervous at times, has trouble sleeping at night, has a learning disability in reading comprehension and fluency.

*Richard:* quiet, always smiling, organized, diligent, struggles with writing and test preparation, isn't always truthful between home and school, has a learning disability in the area of fluency.

*Heather:* unpredictable, sweet natured, just wants to fit in, wants to be friends with everyone, stubborn, social but quiet at times, struggles with reading comprehension and writing, and moody, has very inconsistent data including her true diagnosis because she is difficult to test. She has multiple learning disabilities in the areas of reading comprehension, fluency, writing, math and possibly some emotional disabilities according to a most recent evaluation.

*Tom:* kind-hearted, funny, struggles with reading and writing, stubborn, does not work hard most of the time, gives up easily, hates reading, frustrated with school on most days, and has a disability in the area of reading fluency.

*Maci:* sweet, always trying her best, thoughtful, very caring, always willing to help anyone, struggles with reading comprehension and writing, strong family support, seems to love school and works hard every single day. Has a disability in the area of reading fluency.

*Justin*: quiet, hard-worker in math, loves athletics, struggles with reading comprehension and writing, stubborn, nervous at times, seems to become easily annoyed by peers and teachers, would rather work alone, first year mainstreamed into language arts without much support, learning disability in the area of reading comprehension.

Table 2  
*Goal Setting Groups*

<u>Group 1</u>	<u>Group 2</u>
Matt	Heather
Lisa	Tom
Richard	Maci
	Justin

When I set out to plan the goal setting groups I wasn't quite sure if I should randomly put kids in a group, so I sat down and looked at their IEP goals and their PSSA scores. I tried to keep a mix of students in the group rather than grouping them homogeneously. I knew I wanted to try and keep the social friendships separate, so I could keep them focused on the goal setting. Also, I tried to keep at least one really hard worker and easily motivated student in each group, so I could always have a positive role model within that group. Since it

was the beginning of the year, I could only rely on some of my notes from last year's teacher on work ethic/responsibility.

I asked the students to tell me what goals they set in the past. Some shared goals about soccer, getting good grades, and achieving goals in extracurricular activities. I complimented them on their participation and moved forward with explaining that we would be focusing on academic goals. I explained they would be revising the goal and reflecting on their progress. Then, as the students worked independently at the table on homework, I would sit face to face with each of them individually and share information from the "blue sheet" which included teacher feedback from all of the different subject areas. This would help spark conversation with the students to help lead them to set goals based on their self-perceived areas of need. I gave them each a goal-setting sheet and asked them to create their first goal for the year. After about a week or two, we would meet again to discuss their goals, and they would indicate their progress at that time. We eventually ended up adding more components to the goal setting process including a plan of action and an area for reflection. This area asked the students to indicate what steps they would need to take in order to work towards their goal and to identify what was working so far and what wasn't working for them. We continued this process for weeks, and it became part of our weekly routine.

Heather just sat and stared at the paper.

“Tell me what was difficult for you in the past.” I said. She stared at the paper. “I will come back to you because it’s tough to think about so I will give you some time to think.”

“Ok, thank you.” she said. I could tell she needed more time to think, so I let her go and moved on to the other students.

Many thoughts ran through my mind as I began to talk with the students. I was anxious to see what goals they would choose. I was excited and nervous at the same time to begin my study. I wondered about their past experiences with school and how those experiences might impact their perceptions of themselves. I forced myself to just jump right in and give it a try. Here’s how a typical conversation went with one of my students during our small group goal setting meetings:

*Chandler: Alright Maci we are going to start setting goals together each week. You are actually going to choose your own goal with my help if you need it and we are going to look at how you are doing or how much progress you have made. Ok?*

*Maci: Ok.*

*Chandler: Not only will we be working together on this goal setting but this will also allow us to talk back here about how things are going for you in your classes. Does that sound good?*

*Maci: Yes it does.*

*Chandler: Well, let's first start by talking about what it means to you to set a goal? How would you define a goal?*

*Maci: I don't know. I guess it's like something you work for.*

*Chandler: That's good. When you choose a goal it is usually something you want to get or receive. Can you think of anything personal that you want to get or receive?*

*Maci: I want to make the traveling soccer team.*

*Chandler: Awesome! And we will learn this year how to set goals together and come up with a plan so we can work towards the goal.*

*This is the blue sheet. It includes all of your teachers' feedback for the past week in each subject. I am going to share this with you, and it might help you pick an area you would like to focus on. Just remember that you don't have to pick a goal in a class that you have the lowest grade in. I want you to pick goals that you want to work on. So, in all classes your teachers say you are doing a great job especially in math and social studies. They say you participate often and you are doing a great job completing homework. What area or areas would like to focus on for your first goal?*

*Maci: Um. I guess Language Arts because I haven't been able to study much for my spelling tests because of soccer.*

*Chandler: Ok, great. So how often would you like to study?*

*Maci: I guess every day so that I can pass. I need to work on studying for spelling and I need to practice them at home.*

*Chandler: Will you have time everyday?*

*Maci: I think so.*

*Chandler: Ok, well let's write you goal down on the sheet and next week we will take a look at how it's going.*

*Maci: Ok. Thank you.*

### **One week later**

*Chandler: Ok Maci. Do you remember last week's goal?*

*Maci: Yes. It was to work on my spelling words every night at home.*

*Chandler: That's right! And how did it go?*

*Maci: Well, not good because I didn't practice them every single night.*

*Chandler: So, first circle "No Progress" on the your goal setting sheet.*

*Why would you say it didn't work for you?*

*Maci: Because I can't study every night because some nights I get home really late from soccer.*

*Chandler: Ok, I'm glad you remember what your focus was and also realize it wasn't working for you. That's a great first self-reflection.*

*Do you think you could change your goal to make it more realistic with your schedule?*

*Maci: Yes. I think I will change it to study on Wednesdays and Sundays, because we don't have soccer then.*

*Chandler: Write the new goal down, and we will take a look at it again next week.*

## **My First Goal For This Year Is To...**

*Study in Social Studies and handwriting I had to practice in*

**To get my homework all the time**

Work on looking over/practicing my spelling words at home!

**Practice spelling words correctly**

**Try to lison (listen) more in LA and get all my homework done**

Participate in math class more

Raise my hand and talk in front of each other more often. And complete all my homework on time.

Improving on reading on Tuesdays and Fridays

*Figure 1. Pastiche of Students' First Goals*

## **Mischievous**

“I can’t think of any strengths. Am I done?” as Matt fills out his first questionnaire. I encouraged him by asking him to think about what he’s good at in school. He writes: *I am most proud of math and most frustrated with reading and spelling. Will 7<sup>th</sup> grade be hard and will the tests be hard?”*

Most teachers believe that each student has a clean slate each year regardless of what the previous teachers have said. I tried really hard not to let the previous feedback taint my perception of Matt as he began seventh grade. I approached him in a very matter-of-fact way instead of becoming frustrated. The second week of school, I needed to leave the room for ten minutes, and I asked my teacher assistant to help out. I came back to find Matt zooming across the room in my rolling chair. I came in and told him to get off of my chair and have a seat. Nothing more was needed. No yelling. No lecturing. Just a simple move and a “don’t do it again” look.

I thought about his need for encouragement to write something good about himself. I thought about his family history from what I knew so far and how difficult it has been for him over the last few years. His parents are split and primarily his mom, who works hard to support the family, raises him. He often runs around my neighborhood all day and, at times, later in the evening. He is diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which makes it difficult for him to concentrate and stay on task. His previous teachers

commented about his behavior last year and his frequent absences. I already knew he had a lot to face individually and personally at home. From the first week of school, I wrote about how I wanted to reach out to this kid and help him somehow, but I just didn't know where to begin.

**Absent Already.** 9/23/09 Matt has been absent for three days in the last two weeks. His teachers have already commented about his absence on the blue sheet, which gives a weekly update on how the students are doing in the general education classroom. I met with him one-on-one and said, "Matt, all I care about right now is that you come to school. I understand if you are sick but if you miss school for every little stomach flutter, you will miss out on much more. I like you and I like when you're here." He stared at me with a blank look on his face and did not comment.

I asked him for his consent form from his mom. He still did not have it. His hands were folded across his body, and he continued to stare at me with this apathetic look.

**Art Class.** I met with Matt to share the teacher feedback from the last two weeks, which was all positive. Then, I brought up art class. Matt's teacher contacted me through an email to let me know about some disrespectful behavior she had observed.

"I'm not good at art. My whole family is good at it but I am not!" Matt huffed, seemingly annoyed.

“Well, I am discussing this with you because your art teacher went out of her way to let me know you were being disrespectful to her in class, and I want to meet with you back here without having to talk to you about your behavior. I hope you can keep your comments to yourself, so I don’t have to hear from her anymore.”

I wondered how that went over with him, because last year, he was known for office referrals for bad behavior on a regular basis. I was hoping my direct to the point approach would help in the future. I really didn’t want to overstep my boundaries with him.

After our discussion, he started to go back to his seat and he stopped abruptly and said, “Oh, wait. I have that thing you need.” I looked at him with a puzzled look on my face. He opened up his binder and pulled out his consent form and handed it to me. I was excited to see he remembered without needing a reminder, and it almost was a silent way of saying he accepted me as his teacher.

## **Matt's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/23/09 To continue to do all of my homework and pay attention in language arts.**

**10/6/09 Met homework goal! Pass math project**

Achieved 1<sup>st</sup> goal of the year and passed spelling test after three attempts

Plan: plan due dates and do not wait until the last minute

**10/20/09 Hand in project on time**

Plan: Finish it tonight or tomorrow

**10/26/09 Met goal! New Goal: Earn a good notebook grade**

Reflection: It worked because I worked at home. I don't usually work at home because I try to get it all done in school.

Plan: Ask teacher for rubric and file loose papers.

Reason: So, I can pass.

-Art teacher comments after we discussed behavior: "Shows improvement and listens and follows directions"

**11/21/09 Passed math notebook Met goal!**

Reflection: What's been working for me is I work on my binder in flex so it's in the right order. It took me a few days to do it.

**12/1/09: To get a good grade on letter to the author**

Plan: To come in for support with Mrs. Chandler, work on writing in notebook at home, read what I write on my own to find mistakes

**12/11/09: Score at least a C on next paper**

Met goal!

Reflection: I did ok because I came in here for help. I didn't turn it in on the first one we did together.

**12/21/09: Last goal ~ encouraged by Mrs. Chandler**

Stay in classroom instead of receiving support for math in the learning support.

Table 3

*Matt: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study Responses</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Math</li> <li>2. Volunteering</li> <li>3. Gym</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work good in groups</li> <li>2. Like hands on activities</li> <li>3. Love teaching myself stuff</li> </ol>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading</li> <li>2. Spelling</li> <li>3. Listening</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trying to listen</li> <li>2. studying</li> <li>3. Not always getting good grades</li> </ol>

In the beginning of the year, Matt already had a better idea of his strengths and weaknesses in comparison to some of the other students. He identified gym as

an area of strength; I noticed his need to get up and move around since the first week of school. Math was certainly his strongest academic area, and it always had been; whereas, reading and spelling had been a struggle for him since elementary school. Matt's post study responses were more specific, and they included more detail than the pre study responses. The math was an obvious strength and reading/writing had been a continuous struggle, but Matt saw even more in himself and looked past his disability, which was commendable. He recognized how he learned best which was by hands-on activities. Matt also noted that he had difficulty listening and studying which were two areas we discussed in small group a few times this year.

### **Annoyed**

Not everyone was so excited to meet with me in small groups nor excited to be in school for that matter. When I first met Justin, he seemed to be either really nervous when I spoke to him or really annoyed. When I gave him my beginning of the year survey, he let out this big sigh as if to tell me "Yeah, this is great. I have no idea how to fill this out." The last question on the survey asked the students to list any questions they had about learning support, he wrote: "Do we have to come here 9<sup>th</sup> period every day even if we don't have homework or don't need help?"

Oh great, here we go again with these stupid groups. I wish I wouldn't have go back to the table. I don't know why I have to come here for support anyway. I think I am going to ask to use the bathroom and maybe I can sneak out for a while. (Some time passes...) Darn it, my group is back there. I am going to go sneak over to my desk and hopefully Mrs. Chandler won't realize I am back. I just want to go home. It's stupid for me to be here and it's a waste of my time. She's calling me back now. This sucks.

Ok I'm here so now what? The blue sheet...blah, blah, blah, your teachers say, blah, blah, blah, goal you would like to work towards...blah, blah, blah. My goal is to go home. Fine. I am going to work on my spelling two days a week in school and at home. How does that sound? Can I go now?

I continued to struggle with Justin for a quite a few weeks. The sighing continued each time I called his group back the table and every single time I asked him which goal he would like to focus on, he would respond with "I don't know." I became increasingly frustrated until one day I tried a different approach. I started with him first, shared the teacher feedback, talked with him about his grades, and then I told him I would come back to him and let him think about his

goal first. After giving him some time to process, he began to write down his goals without me having to prompt him as much. Nonetheless, his goals pretty much centered on passing his spelling tests and didn't change much until about mid-November. I didn't want to push it, because at least I got him comfortable enough to meet with me and try to set some type of goal.

### **Justin's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/15/09 Goal: Participate more**

**9/23/09 No Progress. Keep Goal.**

**10/5/09 Change Goal: Try to participate 1 or 2 times in math class**

10/15/09 Made Progress.

**10/21/09 Goal: Participate 1 time in every class and try in science class too**

11/8/09 No Progress.

Goal: Raise hand in social studies

Plan: Write in assignment book to participate

Reason: I don't do it at all.

11/21/09 No Progress (forgot goal)

Goal: Keeping participation goal in social studies and math

11/30/09 Made Progress

New Goal: Keep my binder organized

Plan: Put papers away when I get them, go through binder at home and at school

Reason: To keep organized

12/8/09 Made Progress

**The need for revision.** Justin didn't know this at the time, but he taught me something very important that changed the way we worked on goal setting for the rest of the semester. Since I struggled so much with trying to get him to pick a goal to work on, I realized I needed to focus more on the process and the reason behind the goal of choice. I edited the way the students set goals and made sure I included an area for a plan, reason why they choose the goal, and then a reflection piece. The reflection section asked them what worked well so far and what did not. I closely modeled the process of self-regulation. This allowed me to see more of their thought process and also provided a routine each time we met. They couldn't just plop down any goal, because now they had to justify their reason for choosing it.

Table 4  
*Justin: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading</li> <li>2. Grammar</li> <li>3. Math</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Math</li> <li>2. Social Studies</li> <li>3. Homework</li> </ol>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Writing</li> <li>2. Spelling</li> <li>3. Social Studies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tests for language arts</li> <li>2. Quizzes for language arts</li> <li>3. Science homework</li> </ol>

Justin was very difficult to work with for almost the entire length of the study. He was resistant to meeting with me, and even now, I have to really encourage him to say goodbye when he leaves for the day or just to engage in some type of conversation with me. Justin's responses changed from the beginning of the study. He changed math from a weakness to strength. We discussed his progress in math quite often this year. I always complimented him on his participation and his overall average in math class. He even decided to stay in the regular education classroom for math as one of his last goals during the study. He still continues to keep to himself and never asks for help. The sighing

and the attitude continue as if he doesn't want any help, but I don't believe that is his true intention. I think Justin appreciates the help but would never admit it. He acknowledged his weaknesses in the assessments for language arts, which has been very difficult for him. Most of the low scores were due to his lack of effort. He came right out and told me he didn't study. The biggest difference I saw post study was Justin began to realize that he must prepare himself for assessments at home ahead of time. When he studied, he came in all proud of his grade, because it reflected his effort. He seemed to understand himself a little more clearly.

### **Enthusiastic**

Some students were resistant to meeting with me, while others couldn't wait for their number to come up. Lisa came running through the door.

"Hi!!!" she yelled with a voice louder than everyone else in the room combined.

"Hello Lisa," I calmly greeted her at the back of the room.

"What up?" she loudly asked her friend in the room.

A few minutes later, I called the second group back to the table. Lisa got up before I could even finish my sentence. She was the first one to sit at the table and began to talk to the people in the group instead of waiting for my direction.

*Little Miss Chatterbox entered the building. Wow! She had a lot of energy! I hoped she could channel it in a positive way this year.*

“Ok guys and gals, let’s get started,” I said this time with a louder tone than I typically have with my students. “Lisa, let’s take a look at your goal from last week. It had three parts to it. Do you think you made progress towards that goal somewhat, not at all, or completely?” I asked.

“I think I made progress, because I catch myself when I feel like I am not raising my hand in class enough, and I feel pretty focused in class,” she commented.

“Excellent! Then, circle ‘made progress’ on your goal sheet.” When I looked at her work, I noticed she was struggling with her homework from that day’s lesson especially in math. I never saw her refer back to her notes or ask to borrow a math book. I wonder if she realized she would do much better if she got into the habit of using her materials more often?

She decided to keep the same goal for next week. I wished I could just tell her what goals to pick but I knew I couldn’t. At least she was trying to be reflective about her goal. That was more important right now. I hoped the more reflective she became the more targeted her goals would be.

## **Lisa's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/14/09-10/5/09 1<sup>st</sup> goal : I will raise my hand and talk in front of each other more often and complete all my homework on time.**

Lisa wanted to keep this goal for three goal sessions in a row and to try and continue to make progress.

Met goal!

Reflection: I am raising my hand more in math than in the past and I am also very focused in class.

**10/6/09 New Goal: Complete homework in all subjects**

Plan: Use my assignment book every night

Met goal!

Reflection: I have not missed an assignment at all in any class. I make sure I check it off in my assignment book when I am finished with it.

**10/15/09 New Goal: I need to improve my reading for my pocket mod.** (independent reading assignment)

Plan: Use boxes in my assignment book. Check it when I read my 15 pages.

Did Not Meet Goal.

Reflection: The boxes do not help. I need to just write Read. I keep forgetting things. That's my problem and that's going to be my next goal.

**10/21/09 New Goal: Work on organization**

Plan: Bring home binder every night and use a homework folder.

Reason: “So, I can don’t forget to bring things home and back to school.”

Met goal!

Reflection: When I got papers I put them in the section right away.

**10/22/09 Continue organizing binder**

**11/1/09 Made Progress – continue goal**

**11/12/09 New Goal: Complete all homework and go over it by using books and notes**

Plan: Put all my homework in my homework folder and use my planner and keep it neat

Reason I picked this goal? Because I think I should work more harder on what I do.

**11/20/09 Made Progress on Goal.**

**11/23/09 Keep previous goal**

**12/1/09 New Goal: Read more for my pocket mod**

Plan: Try to read more pages at night instead of just 15 to get ahead

Table 5  
*Lisa: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	1. Gym/Running 2. Soccer 3. Reading	1. Setting Goals 2. Working Hard 3. Helping Others
<b>Weaknesses</b>	1. Comprehension 2. Talking in front of people 3. Reading out loud to people	1. Being Quiet 2. Language Arts Tests 3. Pronouns
sometimes		

Lisa has really opened up this year in regards to learning how to become a responsible young adult. She was extremely nervous when it came to tests and is now seeing her family doctor to help with some of the anxiety she faces on a regular school day. She actually changed her weakness of talking in front of people to having a weakness for being quiet which is exactly the side I see almost every day. I became very close to her mom this year because of the issues she has had sleeping at night and how tired she looks during the school day. I feel like I wouldn't have known Lisa to this extent if I didn't change my support period to a more student centered

approach.

### **Dismayed**

Heather has been unpredictable since the first day of school because she tries to fit in with all of the other students. The first day I met her she didn't want to introduce me to her mom at open house. She was easily embarrassed for asking for help around her friends. Her PSSA scores were the lowest out of all of my students and at times she tremendously struggled with her assignments. However, there was this spark in her that I began to see early on in the year. It seemed as though Heather has more to offer but often was distracted by outside stress in the home from her peers etc. Each day was different with her because one day she would be answering every question in the classroom and the next day she would say she was confused and that she couldn't remember.

### **Heather's Goal Setting Experience**

Heather needed to be seen in our guidance department so she missed my flex period quite frequently in the first two months of school.

#### **9/30/09 Study my social studies and my handwriting**

#### **10/14/09 No Progress (forgot goal)**

Goal: Focus more in language arts (copied goal from another student in the group)

Plan: ignore other people in the room

Reason: Because I have a C.

**10/19/09 Made Progress! Goal: Do a 1 and 2 spin in twirling**

**\*changed goal back to focus in language arts**

**11/13/09 Made Progress. New Goal: Work on organization**

Plan: Use reinforcements when my papers rip

Reason: I'm very unorganized.

**11/21/09 No Progress (forgot goal)**

**New Goal: Pull up social studies grade**

Plan: Complete homework on time, study and get better grades

Reflection: I am going to ask Mrs. Chandler for study groups.

Reason: I have an F.

**12/1/09: Made Progress.**

**New Goal: Work with mom at home on pronouns**

Plan: Use website and do worksheets with mom

Reason: To bring my grade up

Table 6  
*Heather: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study Responses</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spelling</li> <li>2. Art</li> <li>3. Science</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Writing down good notes</li> <li>2. Math</li> <li>3. Problem Solving</li> </ol>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social Studies</li> <li>2. Language Arts</li> <li>3. Handwriting</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language Arts</li> <li>2. Comprehension</li> <li>3. Writing Stories</li> </ol>

Interestingly, Heather made some good observations about herself at the end of my study. Even though it's minimal progress in regards to her self-concept or the way she views herself, it's still progress. For example, her pre study responses were basic and some were not really accurate like handwriting. Heather's handwriting is very neat and easy to read. I think she just wasn't sure about herself or maybe nobody ever asked her how she perceived herself. I noticed her post-study responses were more accurate to her true ability especially the strength in writing down good notes. She is very good at listening to the teacher and writing tricks or tips on her paper to help her understand the concept

better. I have complimented her and used her strategy as an example in the regular education classroom a few times. She also notes a post-study weakness in writing stories which is also an area I worked with her one-on-one this year. I helped her to edit a few writing pieces where we had to take out a lot of unnecessary information. We would joke around about her stories going on and on like a soap opera. I didn't think these conversations were helping and I didn't realize it stuck with her to the end of the study. Towards the end of my study, Heather started to tell the guidance department she wanted to come back down to my classroom instead of meeting with the counselors.

### **Obedient**

Richard was always smiling in the beginning of the year and seemed quiet but happy. His materials were always neat and tidy in his binder. He didn't say much at all unless you asked him questions. Everyday he came in and did what he needed to do. When I started the goal setting groups, he seemed to be missing my meetings a lot. He went on vacation and when he returned he had to meet with his teachers to catch up on what he missed. I had to finally seek him out and get him to be part of the process. He would never complain and he would just do what was asked of him. I started to notice he was too quiet and he began to struggle academically. Most of the time he would not ask for help or say a word during class. I contacted his parents in November and voiced some of these concerns.

They immediately responded with concerns of their own. He wouldn't answer them at home even when asked a question about what he would like for dinner. His parents were so concerned they brought up the possibility of home schooling him because nobody had ever brought this to their attention. Could it be that all of these years he was just known to everyone else as the quiet, hard worker?

As the weeks progressed, I got him to set goals with me and he began to choose goals that were very fitting for his needs. He became more reflective as the months progressed. In the meantime, his parents and myself requested an evaluation from the school psychologist to get a clearer picture of what his true abilities looked like because his last testing was done in second grade. What we found was that he was actually scoring in the normal range for a seventh grader and the results were completely different from when he was first identified. From the testing, we were able to identify a fluency weakness, but we/they also found concerning data in the area of feeling withdrawn and lonely. Instead of him being known as the quiet kid, we now have a better understand of Richard. He is academically very capable of succeeding. In the future, everyone will need to keep an eye on him in school and at home more closely.

## **Richard's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/30/09 Work on independent reading assignment on Tuesdays and Fridays**

10/6/09 Made Progress

**10/15/09 New Goal: Bring book to class for silent reading**

Plan: Keep book in binder

Reason: Read it if I have spare time in class

10/21/09 Met Goal!

\*Vacation missed school

**11/12/09 Goal: Finish writing warm-up faster**

Plan: To work faster at writing it

Reason: I'm slower than everyone else.

**11/21/09 Made Progress**

**New Goal: Practice for pronoun test**

Plan: Look at night and use website to practice, come for help

Table 7  
*Richard: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	1. I am good at math 2. I like school 3. I am organized	1. Math 2. Computer 3. Health
<b>Weaknesses</b>	1. I struggle in Language Arts. 2. I need to improve in reading. 3. I forget homework sometimes.	1. Language Arts 2. Science 3. Reading

I was really interested in Richard’s pre and post study responses after all that was uncovered. His robotic-like responses pre-study seemed like he wrote them before. His self-perceived weaknesses weren’t really true to what I observed in the classroom. He never missed a homework assignment and his language arts grades have been very good that last few years. His responses changed at the end of the study to shorter but more specific by subject area. He also rushed through the survey and quickly handed it in to me, which most likely affected his

responses because I believe he would have been more reflective and true to what I was seeing so far this year.

### **Discouraged**

Since the first few days of school, Tom has walked in at a snail's pace, not too motivated to do much of anything. In fact, I had to remind him to bring his binder and his assignments to my class numerous times during these routine-making days. The typical, "Oh, I forgot" response was common coming from him. His written survey in the beginning of the year was pretty scarce. He did recognize, however, that his biggest weaknesses were language arts, reading, and writing and his strengths were science, social studies, and math. That information became very telling as the year progressed. When asked what questions he had about the learning support program he wrote, quite largely in the small space provided, NONE.

### **Tom's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/30/09 Goal: To get my homework done all the time**

**10/14/09 Made Progress. New Goal: Best effort in reading**

10/26/09 Made Progress. New Goal: Read 8 pages a night and use assignment book to keep track of it

**11/12/09 No Progress. Goal: Keep and use my assignment book**

Plan: Use it in every class and in flex

Reason: Because I can't stand making up late work

**11/21/09 Made Progress. Goal: Pass my pronoun test**

Plan: Study with flashcards by typing the words and study before boy scouts

Reflection: I have been checking the website to practice with my mom for extra practice and that helps.

**12/1/09 Met Goal!**

Table 8

*Tom: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	1. Math	1. Math
	2. Science	2. Social Studies
	3. Social Studies	3. Science
<b>Weaknesses</b>	1. Language Arts	1. Language Arts
	2. Reading	2. Pronouns
	3. Writing	3. Verbs

Tom's responses didn't change much from the beginning of the year pre and post study. Tom has always been pretty straightforward. If he's in a bad mood

he will tell you. He was very frustrated with having to read and write. We came to a couple points in the year where he was ready to give up and he was telling his mom he didn't care about school and didn't want to come. We had a parent meeting with his mom and I also had numerous phone conversations to try and motivate him and to also hold him accountable at the same time. As we continued to meet in small groups, he started become more confident and proud of his grade improving in language arts. I had a phone conversation with Tom's mom towards the end of the study and she said, "I don't know what you did to him, but whatever it is, it's working!" Unfortunately, Tom has been discouraged again lately and has mentioned dropping out of school when he gets older. I have been encouraging him to go to our technical school in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to find a hands-on trade because I think he would excel in that type of field.

### **Innocent**

There has never been a mean bone in Maci's body. She was always kind to everyone. During my study, Maci would always be honest when she didn't meet a goal or didn't do well on an assignment. Any helpful hint or trick I mentioned, Maci not only wrote it down but she tried it almost immediately. She would always try and help herself and then ask when she wasn't sure.

## **Maci's Goal Setting Experience**

**9/30/09 Goal – Look over spelling and practicing at home**

**10/6 Made Progress! New goal – Study spelling everyday after hockey**

10/15/09 No Progress.

**New Goal: Use assignment book to keep track of when I study for spelling.**

10/26/09 Made Progress!

Reflection: It worked sometimes when I remembered to write it in.

**New Goal: Study every Sunday and Wednesday before Friday's test**

**11/8/09 Met Goal!**

Reflection: I like picking the days ahead of time.

**11/8/09 Study for all tests/quizzes**

Plan: Bring my morning and afternoon binder home to study

Reason for goal: I want to get straight A's.

**11/21/09 Made Progress!**

Reflection: I forgot to study sometimes. I need to write down what I need to study for.

New Goal: Pass my language arts test

Plan: Make flashcards and use them

### **12/1/09 Met Goal!**

Reflection: My flashcards worked and I have been bringing both binders home so I have everything.

New Goal: Find a spot at home to do my homework and studying where I can concentrate

Plan: Try different spots in the house

Reason: It's hard for me to focus at home

### **12/9/09 Met Goal!**

New Goal: Pull up grade in science

Plan: Really study for next test or quiz using my notes from class

Table 9

*Maci: Self-perceived strengths and weaknesses*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Pre Study Responses</b>	<b>Post Study</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	1. Doing homework on time 2. Writing stories 3. Reading	1. Gym 2. Studying 3. Reading
<b>Weaknesses</b>	1. Spelling 2. Staying concentrated 3. Health	1. Talking in front of people 2. Keeping up with art projects 3. Focus on homework at home

Maci has continued to be one of my hardest working students this year. Her strengths were definitely comparable to what I see in the classrooms as well as her weaknesses especially focusing and keeping up with projects. I noticed that she is having more difficulty staying focused and organized. She also complained of not being able to sleep at night. I noticed her lack of focus as a big change from the beginning of the year. This was an area of focus when we conducted her yearly IEP meeting.

### **Exit Card Responses**

Towards the end of my study, I had each student complete a post survey, exit card and a questionnaire. The exit card asked them to describe to me what it means to set a goal and what they thought about meeting at the back table? Their responses are below:

Maci ~ “A goal is when we try and encourage ourselves to do something. Like take more notes so I can do better at that subject. It also means to do better at something. I like the groups because it helps me to set a goal and have a better piece of how I’m doing in school. It helps me understand my homework so I can do it on my own.”

Tom ~ “To set goals is to remind yourself to do your best. I like to see how I’m doing for that week so yeah the groups are ok. I don’t like bringing everything back and stop what I’m doing.”

Justin ~ “To set a goal means to do your best at trying to reach it or come close to it. What I like about it is if we need help with our homework you can help us with it in a group.”

Heather ~ “It means to find something that’s one of your weaknesses and you try to reach it by finding things that help you reach it. I like that it’s about your own goal. It helps me.”

Lisa ~ “Meeting back here at your table has been going well and I like coming back here to talk about things. When meeting, there’s nothing that I don’t like. I like coming back here and talk about my goals because it helps me out. So, thanks so much. 😊”

Matt ~ “I get stuff that I don’t get on homework. Also, I know when stuff is due. I kind of don’t like when you give me candy because I can get fat but I still like it.”

Richard ~ “A goal is something you write about and talk about a few days later. I guess I like coming here. I like being in a group for help.”

Also, my students filled out the *AIR* (American Institutes for Research) Self-Determination Scale questionnaire.

Table 10

*\*AIR Self-Determination Scale Results*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Pre Study Results</b>	<b>Post Study Results</b>
<i>Matt</i>	<b>72</b>	<b>86 (+14)</b>
<i>Lisa</i>	<b>93</b>	<b>113 (+20)</b>
<i>Richard</i>	<b>82</b>	<b>83 (+1)</b>
<i>Heather</i>	<b>92</b>	<b>52 (-40)</b>
<i>Maci</i>	<b>97</b>	<b>110 (+13)</b>
<i>Justin</i>	<b>68</b>	<b>76 (+8)</b>
<i>Tom</i>	<b>81</b>	<b>61 (-20)</b>

The post study results were varied and many questions began to arise. Why did Heather and Tom’s scores drop significantly? Why didn’t Richard’s score really change? It is important to note that Heather had significant learning differences as compared to the rest of my students. She was inconsistent on a

daily basis and her learning difficulties impact her ability to retain what is learned from the previous lesson. Some days with Heather were like starting over with a new student as if she wasn't in school the previous day. I believe this is why it was difficult for her to cognitively understand what was going on during the goal setting groups and generalize from our small group sessions to the regular education classroom. Heather did pick up on a weakness of her own after working with me one-on-one multiple times. She needed a lot of individualized attention.

In Tom's case, I wondered if it was a bad day for him because he had moments this year where he seemed genuinely excited about his successes. Tom also needed a lot of encouragement because he tends to give up quicker than the other students.

I was pleased to see the other four students' scores increased. I would be interested in seeing how all students score at the end of the year as we continue the goal setting in small groups. Almost all of the students responded positively towards meeting in groups during academic flex. I would like to continue this process not just this year but for future years to come.

This continuous support may empower students to gain the desire for success throughout high school and beyond. The last question on the post survey asked the students to list future career goals; their responses are displayed in the following pastiche:

### **Future Goals ~ When I Grow Up**

going to college, getting a police job, and having a family

*get into a great college and hopefully get on a pro football team*

**going to college, work hard, and get a good job**

get a job at a daycare

become a cop, get to work/school on time, go to college for criminal justice

get my license and play baseball or hockey

Penn State Lehigh Valley to be a gym teacher

*Figure 2.* Pastiche of students' future goals

### **What Matters Most**

In the end, the students' points of view are what mattered most. They provided invaluable information, which could never be measured. I interviewed students at the end of the study and asked them their opinions of meeting with me in small groups and their responses are displayed in the following table:

Table 11  
*Students' Opinions*

---

#### **What did you think about meeting in small groups?**

---

- I like getting help with homework during period 9.
  - I like meeting at the table still...it makes things easier. I like meeting individually with you and together.
  - It seems easier than last year.
  - I do better than last year because I'm working towards a goal.
  - I don't know.
  - I get help right there right away.
  - If we need help you can help us with it in a group.
-

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I am very pleased to see that most of my students seem to have benefited from my study as expressed in Table 11. I also enjoyed interviewing my students and I believe their voices were one of the most important pieces of data in my study.

## **Data Analysis**

Analyzing data has been part of my educational career for a very long time. Working within the field of special education, it becomes second nature to take a look at data and continuously determine what interventions are needed in order for the child to continue to succeed.

### **Field Log**

Throughout my study, I analyzed many different forms of data by categorizing, tallying, and labeling (Ely, Vinz, Anzul, & Downing, 1997). I made a lot of observations in my field log during the small group goal setting as well as in the regular classroom setting. I used index cards taped to a file folder to record what I saw and heard in the classroom and then transferred my observations into my field log. After reflecting on what I experienced, I went back to reread and code along the margins. This process continued throughout my study. Following each goal setting group, I recorded my observations in my field log. I used my field log to record observations and reflections along the way.

### **Student Surveys and Interviews**

In addition to analyzing and coding my field log, I was particularly interested in understanding what my student's thought of themselves, which is known as their self-concept. I gave them a pre and a post survey, which looked almost identical. Both of the surveys asked the students to list at least three

strengths and weaknesses about themselves. I also interviewed the students at the beginning, middle, and end of my study. All of this information was recorded, analyzed, and coded similar to the field log.

### **Self-Determination Questionnaire**

I administered the AIR Self-Determination questionnaire at the beginning of the study and also at the end to try and obtain a numeric level of self-determination. I analyzed the scores pre and post study and reported the data in my findings.

### **District Data Collection Forms**

I used the state assessments (PSSA'S) as a beginning baseline for each student. I also used curriculum benchmarks in the areas of reading and math, computerized reading comprehension testing (TeenBiz), district progress reports, as well as first and second marking period grades.

### **Teacher Feedback**

Each week, I collected feedback from each content area teacher in order to gain insight on how my students were performing in the general education classroom. This sheet, known to the students as the "blue sheet," was used during our weekly goal setting groups.

Finally, I gathered all of my thoughts and observations from all of the data sources; I looked for common threads or themes that kept recurring. I created bins, which helped me sort these themes into a graphic organizer. After I constructed my bins, theme statements were put together to elucidate each bin. These theme statements provided the preliminary findings of my study.

## **Findings**

During my study, I observed and reported the experiences when self-determination skills were incorporated into my learning support classroom using goal-setting strategies. These are the major themes that emerged:

- *Goal setting promoted increased levels of self-determination in several of my students with disabilities.*
  
- *Students in the learning support classroom improved their goal setting skills.*
  
- *Through the use of goal setting, students improved their academic performance.*
  
- *Meeting in small groups has produced a positive learning environment and has improved students' communication skills between themselves and with the classroom teacher.*

***Goal setting promoted increased levels of self-determination in several of my students with disabilities.***

Throughout my study, I was focused on trying to teach self-determination skills in my learning support classroom using small group instruction and goal setting. I wanted my students to develop the desire to learn and the motivation to be successful even when faced with challenges.

According to Malian & Nevin (2002), self-determination skills should become an integral part of the school curriculum beginning in early elementary school and continuing across all curricular areas.

Each week, the students met with me in small groups, and I assisted them while they engaged in goal setting. I gave the students choices when selecting their goals and also acknowledged their accomplishments in the general education classroom by creating a bulletin board to display their academic achievements (See Appendix H). They seemed to enjoy helping me with the bulletin board each week and at one point one of the students reminded me that we had almost forgotten to update it. Stipek (2002) recognized that activities and situations that promote feelings of self-determination, as well as feelings of competence, are the most intrinsically motivating. She also noted, “Students are intrinsically motivated to work when they feel self-determining rather than controlled...” (p. 193).

I measured the students' levels of self-determination using the AIR Self Determination Scale (Martin, 2006) before and after the study. I found that five out of seven students increased their self-determination scores on the post test (Table 10, p. 69). Heather's and Tom's scores significantly dropped according to the results from the questionnaire. I believe their scores dropped for a few different reasons. Tom had difficulty with language arts class and he shared his frustrations with me one day during our small group discussion. He physically threw his hands in the air when he did not do well and told me he was giving up. I did my best to encourage him, but I had to remind him that he would run into challenges like these in the future. I reassured him if he worked at it, he could be successful.

Heather struggled with her home life and missed parts of my study, because she needed to access our guidance department quite often. However, I believe she had more ability in some areas, which may have been stifled at times by her emotional state. For example, during the pre study survey she listed her strengths as "spelling, art, and science" (Table 6, p. 57). Her post study strengths were "writing down good notes, math, and problem solving." She was pretty accurate the second time around on her post study responses. I was really proud of her and her ability to remember some of her school experiences.

I noticed some other students were more detailed and specific on the post study survey compared to the pre study survey. For example, when Lisa was

asked to list her strengths the first time around she focused on physical activities like gym, running and soccer (Table 5, p. 54). However, her post study responses were academic in nature. I did not prompt her to answer this portion of the survey differently, she automatically listed her strengths as “setting goals, working hard, and helping others” and her weaknesses as “being quiet, language arts tests, pronouns.” Lisa had a lot of difficulty understanding the grammar portion of the language arts curriculum, especially pronouns. I remember working with her group one day, and as soon as I mentioned pronouns, she covered her ears. We all laughed, but I knew most of the students shared similar negative opinions about the topic. It was rewarding to observe Lisa use humor instead of becoming really frustrated and angry. She realized that she needed to continue to try and study for the pronoun test even though it was a hard topic for her.

***Students in the learning support classroom improved their goal setting skills.***

A goal is “an outcome an individual hopes to achieve” (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). Throughout my study, all of my students continuously chose a goal to achieve during our small group sessions. From the start, I asked the students to identify an area of need by utilizing the teachers’ feedback or by self-selecting a goal on their own, create a plan on how to achieve their goal, and then reflect on their progress. In the study conducted by Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, and Little (2008), students were taught the self-determined learning model of instruction (SDLMI) by the special education teacher. The students were taught how to follow a three step process which included: 1 - set a goal, 2 – create an action plan, and 3 – monitor progress towards reaching the goal. The students reported many benefits from learning goal setting skills including becoming more organized, having less stress over an assignment, being more confident, etc.

Many of my students would choose an academic goal related to an upcoming assignment or project, while other students would choose goals more behavioral in nature such as participating in class more often or trying to stay on task in a specific subject area. This eventually became part of our weekly routine. Many students learned how to follow this process of goal setting and self-monitoring. For example, Matt focused on the following goal one week: I would like to earn a good notebook grade. His plan: I will ask the teacher for the rubric ahead of time and file my loose papers in class or in your room (learning

support). Matt reflected and self-monitored his progress by stating, “I picked this goal because so I can pass. What’s been working for me is I work on my binder in flex so it’s in the right order. It took me a few days to do it but I met my goal!”

Lisa also learned to set goals and seemed to reflect more on the process rather than the final outcome. For example, one of her goals was to improve the amount of time she reads independently for the language arts requirement. Her plan was to use boxes in her assignment book to check off when she read her assigned 15 pages. During one of the small group discussions, she self-monitored her progress and determined she did not meet the goal at all. Her reflection stated, “The boxes do not help. I need to just write ‘Read’ in my assignment book. I keep forgetting things. That’s my problem.”

Richard seemed to set goals to help him keep up with the other students in the classroom. For example, one of his goals was to bring a book to class for silent reading. His reason for this goal was because he would like to read in his spare time like other students so he has less to do at home. His plan to achieve the goal was always to put his book in his binder. He met his goal and continues to keep his book in his binder. He set another goal to try and finish the writing warm-up faster. His reason for choosing it was because he felt he was slower than everyone else in the room. His plan was to think about working faster when he was writing it. Richard indicated he had made progress in this area.

I interviewed the students and asked them to explain in their own words

what it means to set and keep track of a goal. Only then did I realize that most of my students knew what a goal was and understood how to set a goal.

Maci responded to my question by saying, “You set a goal and try to encourage ourselves to do something. Like take more notes. I want to take more notes so I can do better at that subject. Goals help us do better at something if we stick to it or to understand my homework on my own.” She identified what it means to set a goal and knew that she needed to do to “stick to it”.

Heather commented as well, “Goals help me out. It means to find something that’s one of your weaknesses and you try to reach it by finding things that can help you reach it. I like that it’s your own goal. The questions are kind of boring to me.” She did not like the “questions” on the sheet that asked her to write about what was working for her during the self-monitoring stage. Heather’s comments were very rewarding to hear because she really understood the purpose of goal setting even though in class she would often say she was confused and couldn’t remember her goal. Justin is a man of very few words, however, his comment was also encouraging, “To set a goal means to do your best at trying to reach it or come close to it.” I especially like that he commented on coming close to it because Justin is beginning to focus on learning goals and has become more motivated to study and try harder since the beginning of the study.

Eggen and Kauchak (2007) stressed, “Once people have committed to a set of goals, monitoring them leads to a sense of accomplishment, promotes self-

efficacy, and can be a pleasant emotional experience” (p. 316). One of my students described goal setting this way: “To set goals is to remind yourself to do your best. I like to see how I am doing when you go over the week with us and we set goals.”

*Through the use of goal setting, students improved their academic performance.*

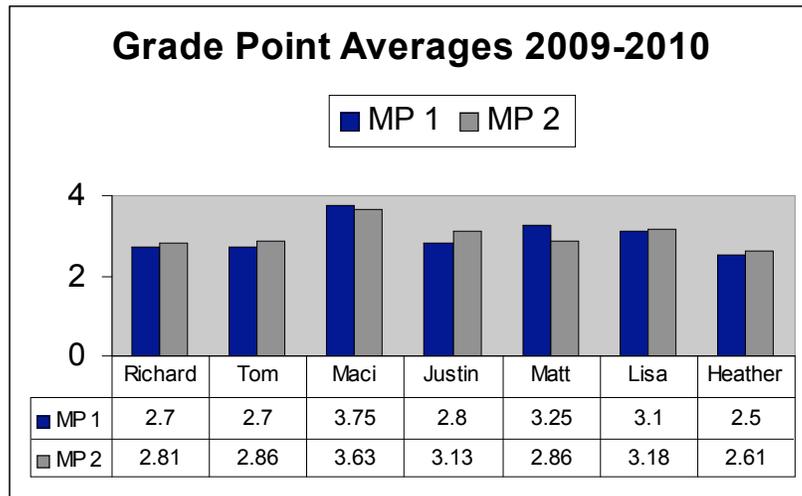
Studies of goal setting interventions have found that goal setting has a positive impact on the academic performance of students with disabilities across a variety of academic domains, including writing, reading, and math (Lee, Palmer, & Wehmeyer, 2009). Adapted from the Pintrich model of self-regulation, (Montalvo & Torres, 2004) the goal setting process included creating a goal, planning out how to work towards the goal, stating the reason or justification for the goal, and reflecting on if the goal has been met or progress has been made. However, the original goal setting sheet only included a reflection section but as the study continued more of Pintrich's model was incorporated.

All of my students were mainstreamed into the general education classroom in their least restrictive environments. Almost all of my students met with success throughout my study. Throughout the study, I printed out weekly progress reports from our district's online grading software. I shared the feedback with my students from the blue sheet and also from these printouts. When I shared the teachers' feedback, the students seemed to be interested in what their teachers had to say about their performance. The students would often ask to see a recent grade report in a certain subject area. Each week, I studied and analyzed the students' grades to help guide the students with their goal setting.

About mid-study, I noticed the teachers were commenting positively on

most of my students' progress in the general education curriculum. They noted many of my students were participating in class, completing all of their homework, staying on task, etc. I remember thinking and reflecting in my field log about the overall academic progress of this group of students as compared to previous years. I wondered if the goal setting in small groups was making a difference in my students' performance in the general education classroom. However, there were some ups and downs throughout the study during the goal setting. Some students were making progress while others could not remember what goal they chose a week ago. Fortunately, most of my students naturally began to flow into the routine of self-selecting a goal, reflecting progress on a sheet, and explaining what was working or was not working for them.

In the graph shown below, most of my students' grade point averages increased from marking period one to marking period two, only two students dropped.



Matt's GPA decreased which surprised me because he is very intelligent and capable but I remembered how inconsistent he could be throughout the study. At times it was difficult for him to focus, which was most likely due to his struggles with his ADHD. Maci's GPA also dropped although her average to start was very high so I would consider her to have maintained her grade point average through the first and second marking periods since she had the highest GPA out of all of the students.

Other studies have demonstrated that teaching goal-setting skills has positive effects on student achievement (Garavalia & Gredler, 2002). Many of the students' goals seemed to help them develop the responsibility of knowing how they are performing in their classes. Some examples of my students' goals from the study are: pass my math project, raise my hand in social studies, keep my binder organized, practice for my pronoun test, etc. For each goal, the students

came up with a plan and listed ways they were going to try and reach the goal. Each student came to me with a different goal and a different outcome. Some made very slow progress while others seemed to self-reflect and choose another goal to monitor without difficulty. “Teachers can help students to hone this invaluable self-regulatory skill by giving them frequent opportunities to evaluate what they have learned or where they erred after completing a task” (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2008, p. 19).

Eventually, I would hear comments similar to this one, “Mrs. Chandler! Can I check my grades? I want to know how I did on my science test. I think I did really well this time. I studied!” I began to notice most students became genuinely excited to check their grades online. Most students felt a sense of pride when they did well on an assignment or if the teachers had something positive to say about them. They would remind me if I forgot to share the blue sheet with them in the small groups because they seemed to look forward to it.

*Meeting in small groups has encouraged a positive learning environment and has improved students' communication skills between themselves and with the classroom teacher.*

Each year, I try to make sure my classroom climate is one that accepts all students and in turn I always ask my students to also accept one another. I feel it is so important to have a classroom community where students and teachers work together. I did not like it when I had to be in a teacher-centered classroom because I wanted the students to share their thoughts and contribute to their learning. I also tried to be open with my students and have discussions with them on a regular basis. I began this study because I was becoming increasingly frustrated as these opportunities to talk with my students were slowly diminishing. I wanted a more person-centered approach to my classroom (Freiberg & Lamb, 2009). Eggen and Kauchak remind us that, “a productive learning environment is where students feel physically and emotionally safe, and the daily routines, as well as the values, expectations, learning experiences, and standards for appropriate behavior are all designed to promote learning” (2007, p. 368).

Since I implemented this new structure to my day with small group instruction, I have seen many positive differences in my classroom. The most important positive change I observed was my students opening up and discussing academics and personal stories with each other. They also seemed to be more self-reflective with me when I was asking them why they did not reach their goals or

what was challenging them in the general education classroom. I seemed to notice less “I don’t know’s” and shoulder shrugging when I would ask them to reflect on their progress.

I asked my students to share their opinions on meeting in small groups to set goals and their responses were very positive (Table 11, p.72). Stipek writes, “A supportive classroom environment, where each student is valued regardless of academic ability or performance, contributes to relatedness and is important for both learning and motivation” (2002, p. 159). During one of the student interviews, Matt decided to be humorous by saying, “I like when you meet with us back here because sometimes you give us candy. I like the candy but I might get fat if we have too much. Can I say that during the interview?” I appreciated Matt’s humor; it created another moment where I felt the climate of the classroom change. Another student commented, “It’s good for me because I get stuff that I don’t get on homework. I know when stuff is due for homework because I am setting a goal to get things in on time.”

Lastly, I noticed I had less disciplinary problems this year. I believe my study could have impacted my students’ behavior. Most importantly, the students and I began to build a classroom environment where we supported and respected each other.

### **What's Next?**

As a teacher researcher, I have had the incredible opportunity to conduct a qualitative research study from start to finish. I was hopeful that my results would have some positive impact on my students. Indeed, I found positive results from my study and I plan on continuing the way I support my students during academic flex for the remainder of the year and in the future. Most importantly, I was elated that I found a way to help my students learn how to help themselves in order to succeed in the general education classroom.

I would also like to incorporate similar data collection practices each year with my students to understand their interests and their perceptions of themselves in order to increase their motivation and academic achievement. I believe this will give me a clearer insight into who my students really are and who they aspire to become. Also, I would like to continue using the self-determination scale but I need to look into the three categories in the survey in more detail. I think further analysis of the data would be beneficial.

I would like to make a few changes to some of my forms especially the teacher feedback form. Now that we have access to the students' grades online, I think the form needs to change to have a behavioral and reflective focus. Also, I would like to edit the goal-setting sheet to include a self-monitoring graph so the students can physically keep track of their own progress.

I believe students' opinions on their education programs are crucial; I

would like to involve the students in their IEP goal progress monitoring by sharing the results with them. I also believe my students should be involved in the IEP planning before, during, and after the meeting.

As any true researcher knows, it does not end here. There are many questions developed throughout the study, which I plan on investigating in the future:

- What would it look like if we used the self-determination scale with students in the general education classroom? How could we use this information to meet all students' needs?
- How can I still implement the small group setting when my class size doubles in size next year? Could students begin to set goals independently at their seats?
- How can I promote other self-determination skills in addition to goal setting with my students?

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## Appendix A: HSIRB Approval Letter



August 25, 2009

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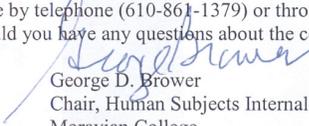
Dear Jodi Chandler:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has accepted your proposal: "Promoting Self-Determination Skills in Students with Learning Disabilities Through Small Group Instruction in the Learning Support Classroom." Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB 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 HSIRB 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 (610-861-1379) or through e-mail ([browerg@moravian.edu](mailto:browerg@moravian.edu)) should you have any questions about the committee's requests.

  
George D. Brower  
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board  
Moravian College  
610-861-1379



## Appendix C: Parent Consent Letter

### CONSENT FORM

September 11, 2009

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on developing self-determination skills with seventh grade students by meeting with them on a weekly basis during their academic flex period. The title of my research is **Promoting Self-Determination Skills in Students with Learning Disabilities Through Small Group Instruction in the Learning Support Classroom**. My students will benefit from participating in this study by taking a look at their strengths and needs as learners and then developing goals to help them succeed in the regular education classroom. My intent is to foster their strengths and empower them to set goals not only in seventh grade but throughout life. By providing this support, I hope to encourage and motivate them to be successful.

As part of this study, my students will be asked to participate in surveys, interviews, track their academic progress, and monitor their goals. They will be receiving one-on-one conferencing on a regular basis as well as study strategies in a small group setting. The study will take place from September 13, 2009 to December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms – no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked filing system that will be stored in my home every evening. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities. Students will be asked to continue to meet with me in a small group setting and continue with interactions during classroom discussions. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study affect your child's assessment on the quarterly report cards. Please feel free to contact our principal, Mrs. Laurie Hoppes, at 610-298-8661 ext. 3917 or the guidance counselor, Ms. Merric Hrinkovich, at 610-298-8661 ext. 3920.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me or my advisor, Dr. Richard Grove, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-625-7958, [rgrove@moravian.edu](mailto:rgrove@moravian.edu). Our principal, Laurie Hoppes, supports my coursework and may be contacted at 610-298-8661 ext. 3917, [hoppesl@nwlehighsd.org](mailto:hoppesl@nwlehighsd.org).

Sincerely,

I agree to allow my son/daughter to take part in this project. I understand that my son/daughter can choose not to participate at any time.

---



## Appendix E: Goal Tracking Sheet

Goal Tracking Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

### PLANNING:

1. What goal are you working on this week?

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2. What is your plan to try and reach the goal?

---

---

3. Why did you pick this goal?

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### SELF-MONITORING:

1. Circle one:

MET GOAL                      MADE PROGRESS                      NO PROGRESS AT THIS TIME

### REFLECTION:

1. What has been working for you: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What isn't working for you: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you keeping the same goal?                      YES                      NO

(\*If you answered NO, please change/edit your goal or use a new planning sheet.)

\*\*Adapted from Pintrich's Phases for Self-Regulated Learning (2000).

## Appendix F: Student Self-Awareness Pre-Study Survey

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### STUDENT AWARENESS PRE-SURVEY

\*All information is strictly confidential AND spelling/grammar does not count 😊

**Question 1. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?  
(LIST 3 on each side)**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**Question 2: What area(s) do you receive help for in the learning support classroom?**

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**Question #3: How do you score on tests in school on average?  
How often do you complete your homework?**

---

**Question #4: What does it look like when you study, how do you study?**

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**Question #5: What skill(s) are you most proud of as a student and what skill(s) are you most frustrated with as a student?**

**Proud of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Frustrated about:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #6: List some questions you might have about learning support and 7<sup>th</sup> grade as we begin the year?**

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Student Self-Awareness Post Study Survey

### STUDENT AWARENESS POST-SURVEY

\*All information is strictly confidential AND spelling/grammar does not count 😊

**Question 1. What are your strengths and weaknesses as a student?  
(LIST 3 on each side)**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**Question 2: What area(s) have you most improved on?**

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**Question #3: How do you score on tests in school on average at this point in the school year? How often do you complete your homework?**

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**Question #4: List your favorite study methods that you learned this year.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Question #5: What goal(s) have you met or made progress on so far this year?**

List goal(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Question #6: List at least 3 possible goal(s) for the future.  
(high school, after high school, adulthood)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix H: AIR Self-Determination Questionnaire

### AIR Self-Determination Scale®

#### STUDENT FORM

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Your Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Your Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

#### HOW TO FILL OUT THIS FORM

Please answer these questions about how you go about getting what you want or need. This may occur at school, or after school, or it could be related to your friends, your family, or a job or hobby you have.

**This is not a Test.** There are no right or wrong answers. The questions will help you learn about what you do well and where you may need help.

**Goal** You may not be sure what some of the words in the questions mean. For example, the word **goal** is used a lot. A **goal is something you want to get or achieve**, either now or next week or in the distant future, like when you are an adult. You can have many different kinds of goals. You could have a goal that has to do with school (like getting a good grade on a test or graduating from high school). You could have a goal of saving money to buy something (a new iPod® or new sneakers), or doing better in sports (getting on the basketball team). Each person's goals are different because each person has different things that they want or need or that they are good at.

**Plan** Another word that is used in some of the questions is **plan**. A **plan is the way you decide to meet your goal, or the steps you need to take in order to get what you want or need**. Like goals, you can have many different kinds of plans. An example of a plan to meet the goal of getting on the basketball team would be: to get better by shooting more baskets at home after school, to play basketball with friends on the weekend, to listen to the coach when the team practices, and to watch the pros play basketball on TV.

The AIR Self-Determination Scale was developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), in collaboration with Teachers College, Columbia University, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), under Cooperative Agreement HO23J200005

**HOW TO MARK YOUR ANSWERS**

**EXAMPLE QUESTION:**

I check for errors after completing a project.

**EXAMPLE ANSWER:**

Circle the number of the answer which tells what you are most like:  
(Circle **ONLY ONE** number).

- 1 Never.....student **never** checks for errors.
- 2 Almost Never.....student **almost never** checks for errors.
- 3 Sometimes.....student **sometimes** checks for errors.
- 4 Almost Always.....student **almost always** checks for errors.
- 5 Always.....student **always** checks for errors.

**REMEMBER**

**There are NO right or wrong answers.**

This will not affect your child's grade. So please think about each question carefully before you circle your answer.

**THINGS I DO**

1. I know what I need, what I like, and what I'm good at.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. I set goals to get what I want or need. I think about what I am good at when I do this.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Things I Do – Total Items 1 + 2					
3. I figure out how to meet my goals. I make plans and decide what I should do.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. I begin working on my plans to meet my goals as soon as possible.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Things I Do – Total Items 3 + 4					
5. I check how I'm doing when I'm working on my plan. If I need to, I ask others what they think of how I'm doing.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. If my plan doesn't work, I try another one to meet my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Things I Do – Total Items 5 + 6					

Please go on to the next page ⇒

### HOW I FEEL

1. I feel good about what I like, what I want, and what I need to do.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. I believe that I can set goals to get what I want.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
How I Feel – Total Items 1 + 2					
3. I like to make plans to meet my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. I like to begin working on my plans right away.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
How I Feel – Total Items 3 + 4					
5. I like to check on how well I'm doing in meeting my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. I am willing to try another way if it helps me to meet my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
How I Feel – Total Items 5 + 6					

Please go on to the next page ⇒

**WHAT HAPPENS AT HOME**

1. People at home listen to me when I talk about what I want, what I need, or what I'm good at.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. People at home let me know that I can set my own goals to get what I want or need.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at Home – Total Items 1 + 2					
3. At home, I have learned how to make plans to meet my goals and to feel good about them.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. People at home encourage me to start working on my plans right away.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at Home – Total Items 3 + 4					
5. I have someone at home who can tell me if I am meeting my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. People at home understand when I have to change my plan to meet my goals. They offer advice and encourage me when I'm doing this.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at Home – Total Items 5 + 6					

Please go on to the next page =>

**WHAT HAPPENS AT SCHOOL**

1. People at school listen to me when I talk about what I want, what I need, or what I'm good at.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. People at school let me know that I can set my own goals to get what I want or need.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at School – Total Items 1 + 2					
3. At school, I have learned how to make plans to meet my goals and to feel good about them.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. People at school encourage me to start working on my plans right away.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at School – Total Items 3 + 4					
5. I have someone at school who can tell me if I am meeting my goals.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. People at school understand when I have to change my plan to meet my goals. They offer advice and encourage me when I'm doing this.	Never <input type="checkbox"/> 1	Almost Never <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 3	Almost Always <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Always <input type="checkbox"/> 5
What Happens at School – Total Items 5 + 6					

Please go on to the next page ⇒

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**PLEASE WRITE YOUR ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS...**

Give an example of a goal you are working on.

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What are you doing to reach this goal?

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How well are you doing in reaching this goal?

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**THANK YOU!**

The AIR Self-Determination Profile  
Student Form

Items	Think Do Adjust			Total	Things I Do	How I Feel	Capacity
	1-2	3-4	5-6				
10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
0							

Items	Think Do Adjust			Total	What Happens at School	What Happens at Home	Opportunity
	1-2	3-4	5-6				
10							
9							
8							
7							
6							
5							
4							
3							
2							
1							
0							

Items	Think Do Adjust			Total	Level of Self-Determination
	1-2	3-4	5-6		
10					
9					
8					
7					
6					
5					
4					
3					
2					
1					
0					

Capacity	+	Opportunity	=	Level of Self-Determination
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(Write sum in box and mark in column)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

8 AIR Self-Determination Scale, Student Form

## Appendix I: Goal Setting Sheet Student Sample #1

Goal Tracking Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: 10/19

### PLANNING:

1. What goal are you working on this week?

Practice spelling words correctly for one week

2. What is your plan to try and reach the goal?

Study in school

3. Why did you pick this goal?

Because of my grade in LA

### SELF-MONITORING:

1. Circle one:

MET GOAL

MADE PROGRESS

NO PROGRESS AT THIS TIME

### REFLECTION:

1. What has been working for you: chunk the words

2. What isn't working for you: Similar words

3. Are you keeping the same goal? YES  NO

(\*If you answered NO, please change/edit your goal or use a new planning sheet.)

\*\*Adapted from Pintrich's Phases for Self-Regulated Learning (2000).

## Appendix J: Goal Setting Sheet Student Sample #2

Goal Tracking Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Week of: 10/26/05

### PLANNING:

1. What goal are you working on this week?

Hand my project in on time

2. What is your plan to try and reach the goal?

Finish it tonight and if not finish tomorrow

3. Why did you pick this goal?

Because a project is a big part of my grade

\* STOP HERE

### SELF-MONITORING:

1. Circle one:

MET GOAL

MADE PROGRESS

NO PROGRESS AT THIS TIME

### REFLECTION:

1. What has been working for you: worked at home

2. What isn't working for you: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you keeping the same goal?

YES

NO

(\*If you answered NO, please change/edit your goal or use a new planning sheet.)

\*\*Adapted from Pintrich's Phases for Self-Regulated Learning (2000).

## Appendix K: Amazing Achievers Bulletin Board

