LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

POSTING & COMMUNICATING DAILY LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND MOTIVATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This research project was conducted at a high school in a suburb of a metropolitan area in the Midwest from August 21, 2007 through October 26, 2007. The purpose of the research was to improve student achievement and motivation through the posting and communicating of daily learning objectives. The research participants included 150 students and five teachers. The students were members of the five researchers' high school classrooms including social science, English, and world language.

Targeted students at the high school site exhibited difficulty with understanding their teachers' expectations. This miscommunication interfered with students' overall academic growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem included a document analysis of anecdotal records, observations, and student and parent interaction.
The interventions chosen for this project included three different types of surveys that were distributed during this research. A student survey was given to students during the first week of Quarter One to determine prior levels of motivation. Additionally, a teacher survey was distributed to 36 different teachers not affiliated with the study or its outcome to determine if teachers are posting and communicating daily learning objectives. Finally, a parent survey was sent home during the first week of Quarter One to determine the amount of parent-student communication and parental involvement. Another tool that was used during this study included a Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist to determine the level of comprehension after daily learning objectives were posted. Lastly, the researchers documented and kept confidential records of class achievement averages of major assessments throughout each unit. These assessments were specifically created to address the learning objectives posted during that unit while implementation occurred.

Posting learning objectives not only benefits teachers, but also parents and students. Teachers will be able to plan an assessment that reflects exactly what they will teach and what they expect students to learn (Arter, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2003). When students realize that they are acquiring intentional daily skills, it allows students to see the importance and relevance of education in their lives. Finally, by understanding and knowing the learning objectives, parents understand what grades mean in terms of what their children have or have not learned (Arter, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2003).

After posting and communicating daily learning objectives, the results displayed an increased student achievement and motivation. In conclusion, the findings of this research indicated the specific interventions did work, and the increase in communication of goals and expectations improved student academic achievement and motivation.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Targeted students at the high school site exhibited difficulty with understanding what was expected of them. This misunderstanding interfered with students' overall academic growth. Evidence for the existence of the problem included a document analysis of anecdotal records, observations, and student and parent interaction.

Immediate Problem Context

Over a two-year period, five teacher researchers conducted this action research project at a high school site, and will be further referred to as the High School site throughout this paper. The researchers conducted their analysis and intervention at the High School, on public school students in grades nine through twelve. Teacher One and Two performed their research at the High School in Social Science classrooms. Teacher Three and Four, at the same high school, worked with their English classrooms. Finally, Teacher Five also at the same high school, conducted research in a World Language classroom.

Consider the following: As the working mother placed dinner on the table, finally having a moment to communicate with her children, she asked the common question, "So, what did you learn in school today?"

Unsurprisingly, both of her children simultaneously responded with, "Nothing." Frustrated and concerned, this mother, like many parents and teachers today, wondered how her

children could spend eight or more hours a day at school and walk away completely apathetic or unable to communicate any interest in school.

If the view of American school children, parents, and educators does not change soon, this generation (and society as a whole) will become stagnant and lack the skills necessary to effectively participate in an increasingly interactive world. Teachers can begin to decrease apathy and change these negative views of American education by posting and communicating learning objectives to increase student achievement and motivation.

Clearly, parents are frustrated. In addition to this frustration, educators feel this dissatisfaction is tenfold. Each teacher strives to have students take away knowledge from their daily lessons. While it may be clear to educators what the desired outcome is, it may not be as clear to students. This by no means indicates a lack of motivation or participation on the students' behalf, but rather a simple lack of communication between the teacher and his or her students. Perhaps if the teacher had clearly posted and vocalized the daily objectives, the student at the dinner table would have been able to answer his or her parent proudly with newly gained knowledge. Realizing that they are acquiring intentional daily skills would allow students to see the importance and relevance of education in their lives, hence furthering academic growth, motivation, and achievement. This is crucial for future generations and society as a whole to continue to progress and succeed in the competitive "real world."

Numerous, accredited researchers have studied this very problem with concern. In the book, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning (2004), Richard J. Stiggins stated that, "If we don't begin with clear statements of the intended learning, we won't end with sound assessments." All of the researchers involved in this study have expressed that the students at the High School display various levels of academic apathy and a lack of daily comprehension.

Each researcher involved in this action research project has collected and reviewed evidence via student-teacher interaction, teacher evaluations, various classroom assessments, document analysis of anecdotal records, observations, and student and parent surveys.

The High School

The information in this section was retrieved from the Illinois School Report Card, (Grades 9, 10, 11, 12, 2005). The High School had 1,676 students in 2005, with little diversity, as the students' population was comprised of 95.5% Caucasian, 2.1% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian, 0.7% African American, and 0.3% Multi-Racial (Table 1, p. 3). Similarly, the socio-economic status of the majority of students fell within the middle to upper class range, as only 1.3% of enrolled students derived from low income households. Fortunately, with a 97.5% parental contact rate, the High School experienced an attendance rate of 94.1% and a truancy rate of 0.7% in 2005. Moreover, Site A's graduation rate was 99.2%, which was well above the state average of 96%. Mobility was a minor factor at the High School, recorded at 4.2% (Table 2, p. 3).

Table 1

Cultural Group Percentages and Number of Students for the High School

	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Multiracial/Ethnic
Site A	95.5%	0.7%	2.1%	1.5%	0.3%

Table 2

School Characteristics and Percentages of Students for the High School

	Low-Income Rate	Limited English Proficiency rate	High School Drop out	Chronic Truancy Rate	Mobility Rate	Attendance Rate

Site A	1.3%	0.2%	0.8%	0.7%	4.2%	94.1%

The High School had a unique faculty since only 47% were non tenured, including those teachers with four years of experience or less. (Table 3, p.4). With 109 teachers and nine departments, the High School had 19 science teachers, 16 English teachers, 15 math teachers, 12 world language teachers, 9 social science teachers, and 10 applied arts teachers, 10 physical education, 6 special education teachers, and 4 fine arts teachers. Additionally, the administration at the High School included one principal, one vice principal, two deans, five guidance counselors, and one social worker.

Table 3

Faculty Characteristics at the High School Site

	Number of Teachers	Number of Males	Number of Females	Non-Ten Yeared Teachers
Site A	102	41	61	47%

In 2005, the High School's facility was only ten years old and provided modernized resources that lead to increased faculty and staff interaction, as well as, greater responsibility and mobility for students. Site A boasted a large faculty office in which every educator was allotted a desk and personal working space. This structural element permitted interdisciplinary interaction and collaboration amongst all content areas. All faculties, despite particular departments, were familiar and socially comfortable with each other. Collaboration, as stressed by the principal, was not viewed as an option, but rather an encouraged practice and responsibility among faculty members. The faculty office promoted increased student-teacher interaction as well, as students were able to locate teachers easily during the school day. In addition, the layout of Site A

afforded students the opportunity for increased individual responsibility through open campus lunches for upper classmen, as well as a comfortable setting for free periods with small limitations.

The High School, again, offered a unique experience in various areas. A young staff afforded students the opportunity to identify with, as well as, create mutually respectful student-teacher relationships. This young staff was encouraged to utilize modern methods and theories on education, while implementing these ideas with an enthusiasm for the profession. The facility's layout simply encouraged the above and constantly reinforced the ideas of responsibility and collaboration, with a focus on building relationships.

The Surrounding Community

The High School is located within McHenry County. According to the district website (District Website, n.d.), the High School consists of three different communities and is approximately 45 miles northwest of a major metropolitan area. The communities are largely residential with some light industry and a large number of commuters. According to the United States Census Bureau 2000, *American Fact Finder* (heretofore referred as Census 2000), the township had a population of 38,000. Of that population, 18,785 male and 19,215 were female. The average age of the community was 34.1 years of age (Census 2000). The ethnicity of the township was somewhat diverse. According to the 2000 Census, 94.1% of the population was Caucasian, 7% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian, 0.6% were African American, 0.2% were American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.1% were Native Hawaii and Other Pacific Islander, and 2.2% were other ethnicities (Table 4, p. 5). According to the Census Bureau 2000, *American Fact Finder*, the median household income was $66,872 in 1999. There were 285 families that lived below poverty level; in addition to that, 1,324 individuals lived below poverty level.

Table 4

Population Racial/Ethnic Background by Percentage in the Community

Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian	African American	Native Hawaii and Other Pacific Islander	American Indian and Alaska Native	other ethnicities
94.1%	7%	2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%	2.2%

According to the 2000 Census Bureau, 23,276 people were over the age of 25 years old and 21,306 earned a high school degree or higher. 8,425 people earned a bachelor degree or higher. The average house value was $170,100 in 2000.

The students ethnicity of the school district was 91.7% Caucasian and 0.7% African American, 5.5% Hispanic, 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American, and 0.2% Multiracial/Ethnic, according to the Illinois District Report Card 2005 [(heretofore referred as IDRC 2005) (Table 5, p. 6)]. Therefore, the High School is slightly diverse.

Table 5

School District Background by Percentage of Students for the High School

Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	African American	Native American	Multiracial/Ethnic
91.7%	5.5%	1.9%	0.7%	0.1%	0.2%

According to IDRC 2005, the low income rate for the school district was 4.3%. The truancy rate 0.9%, the high school drop of rate was 1.0%, the mobility rate was 7.2%, and the attendance rate was 93.7% (Table 6, p. 6). Therefore, the economic background of the High School is mainly upper middle class.

Table 6

School District Characteristics and Percentages of Students for the High School

Low-Income Rate	Limited English-Proficient Rate	High School Dropout Rate	Chronic Truancy Rate	Mobility Rate	Attendance Rate
4.3%	1.5%	1.0%	0.9%	7.2%	93.%

According to the Assistant Superintendent of the District, the district continued to do well financially due to tax revenue growth and because the school board and administration observed a conservative and cost efficient philosophy towards education. The district maintained a balanced budget with no short-term debt and only modest long-term debt. In addition, the district had been able to maintain a quality staff and had not been forced to cut any programs for financial reasons.

According to the district's website, this school was one of the top schools in the nation in 2005 and had also been a recipient of the annual "Bright A+" Award for academic excellence in education, and named as *Newsweek's* top 1000 schools in the nation.

Since 2005, a new curriculum director joined the school district, which inspired the research project on posting and communicating students learning objectives to increase student motivation and achievement. He oversaw all the instructional and curriculum programs at all four high schools in the district. His goals are to continue the curriculum alignment process while reinforcing the posting of learning objectives, hoping this will increase student motivation and responsibility for their own learning.

National Context of the Problem

Improving students' performance through utilizing posted learning objectives will relieve the national concern regarding student apathy. If educators do not begin with clear statements of the intended learning, educators will not end with sound assessments (Arter, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 63). Posting learning objectives would not only benefit teachers, but also parents and students.

If parents don't know how to identify the standards, or learning objectives, represented on various assessments, parents will be unable to help their children see, for example, that two of the seven objectives gave their child trouble, and that he or she did fine on five of them. The child will be unable to see where he or she has had success in learning or to identify where their difficulties lie (Arter, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 54).

If the local curriculum breaks the word "comprehend" down into a set of sub targets, such as *identifies main idea and supporting details, summarizes text, makes inferences and predictions*, and *uses context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words*, teachers would be much better prepared to select appropriate assessments (Arter, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 65). Intentional teaching was also referred to as posting learning objectives. By doing so, the teachers had to make difficult choices regarding what to leave in their curriculum and what to leave out; a well-designed curriculum offered choices. By posting learning targets, teachers would be able to plan an assessment that reflects exactly what they taught and what they expect from their students

The benefits of clear targets to students are indisputable. As soon as students have a clear vision of what is expected of them, they are then led in the correct direction. Usually students do not recall what was learned on a daily basis; however, by verbalizing and visually posting the

learning objectives, students had a clear perspective of the daily goals of the class. Shirley Clarke (2001), a British teacher and author, describes “I can” statements as statements of intended learning. In addition, she recommends that success criteria – statements that describe how students will know how they have learned the objectives – be devised with students, and that they are posted, not just shared verbally.

Knowing the targets at the outset of teaching will also benefit parents. As a teacher explaining to a parent the concept of learning objectives, the easiest strategy would be to use the following verbs: your son/daughter should *know, list, name, identify,* and/or *recall.* An example of a learning objective statement would be, “…knows how to quote Shakespeare using APA style formatting.” In addition, by posting the learning objectives through the individual teacher’s webpage, parents have an active way to be involved in their son/daughter’s learning.

Reflection

By utilizing learning objectives, there were many benefits for not only the teacher, but also the students and parents. Teachers had a clear knowledge of content, students had a clear path of learning, and parents had the opportunity to become actively involved in their son/daughter’s learning. While completing this Action Research project, the researchers’ intended goal was to improve the community or communication in all areas and ages. The action researchers were excited to increase the communication, improve student achievements, and guide fellow teachers through the utilization of posting learning objectives. The researches tried to achieve this goal by posting the learning objectives in their different classrooms and subject areas. The researchers in the fields of U.S. History, Global Studies, English, German, and Speech Communication/Theatre had all posted learning objectives in their specific content area. Each teacher’s style of presenting their learning objectives is based on their subject area and the

classroom dynamic. At that point, students would communicate whether or not they discovered the leaning objectives. If students seemed weary, the teacher would revisit the learning objectives the following day, or individually work with students, depending on the case.

At the completion of the unit, teachers would restate learning objectives on the final assessment. As individuals, the researchers created their own learning objectives specific to their content area; each researcher used unique methods of instruction to exemplify learning objectives, but coincidentally, ended with similar results. The outcome of this study was to enhance student grades as well as lower student failures. Secondly, students had a greater understanding of curriculum and classroom expectations. Finally, parental involvement and feedback increased.

To assess the results of posting daily objectives, students reflected on the objectives at the end of each lesson. The social science teachers involved in this project preferred the use of exit slips, while the world language teacher used discussion questions in target language and native language to follow up students' understanding. The English teachers employed visual indicators within their classrooms, while all of the above teachers utilized quizzes, and/or graphic organizers. An additional way to assess the outcome of this action research project was to supervise student participation and overall academic success. Lastly, this action research project was used for parental feedback.

Students reflected on the learning objectives at the end of every class, and students were required to clarify whether or not they learned the intended objectives. Daily objectives were on the final assessment. Overall, the five researchers try to improve student achievement and motivation by posting and communicating daily learning objectives.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

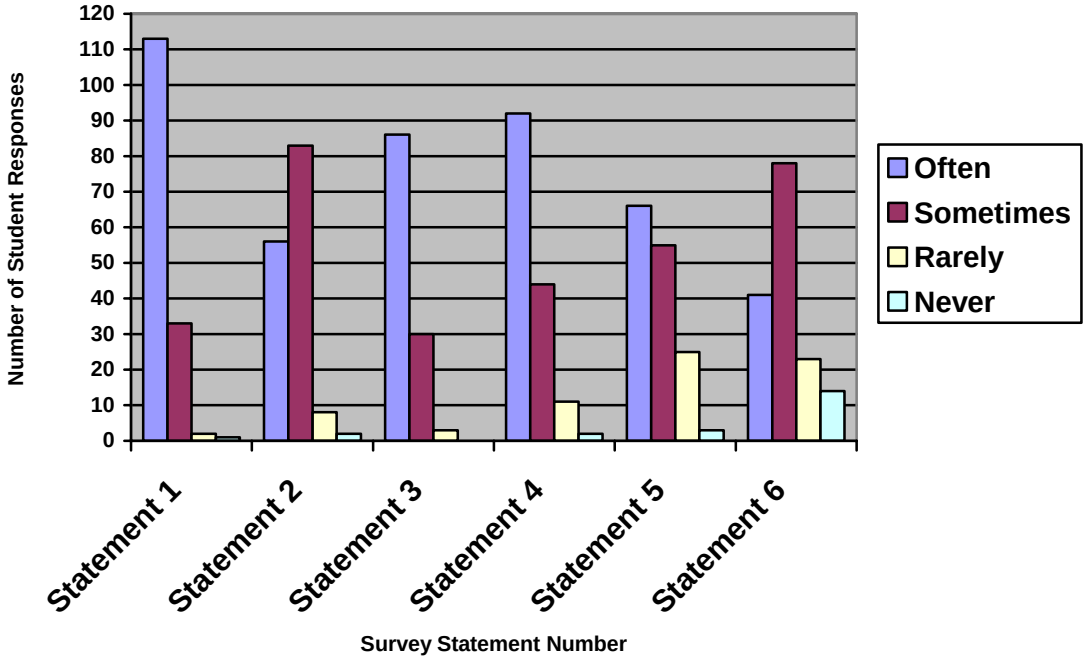
As the world becomes increasingly competitive, higher education is becoming a necessity in order to be successful. However, one cannot expect to change from a weak student in high school to a motivated student in college. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to improve student achievement and motivation through the posting and communicating of daily learning objectives. The research participants included 150 students and five teachers. The students were members of the five researchers' high school classrooms including social science, English, and world language. Three different types of surveys were distributed during this research. A student survey was given to students during the first week of Quarter One to determine prior levels of motivation and achievement. Additionally, a teacher survey was distributed to 36 different teachers not affiliated with the study or its outcome for the same purpose. Finally, a parent survey was sent home with the students during the first week of Quarter One to determine the amount of parent-student communication and parental involvement. Another tool that was used during this study included a Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist to determine the level of understanding in the students after daily learning objectives were posted. Lastly, the researchers documented and kept confidential records of class achievement averages of assessments throughout each unit. These assessed the comprehension of posted learning objectives within the unit, while each teacher posted daily learning objectives. Documentation for this research was conducted during the dates of August 21, 2006 through October 26, 2006.

Student Survey

The purpose of the Student Survey (Appendix A) was to determine prior levels of achievement, motivation, and understanding of academic expectations in the classroom. 149 students received this survey during the first week of Quarter One and were given one week to return the survey. 149 completed the survey at a return rate of 100 percent. This survey was comprised of six questions on a likert scale of “Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never”.

The results of this survey are shown in a bar graph in which each of the six questions are displayed (Figure 1). Question One asked participants if they completed their homework. The goal of this question was to determine if students turned in homework prior to the enactment of this study. Additionally, the survey showed if students possessed intrinsic motivation prior to the posting of daily learning objectives, and also if they found value in past assignments. To gain this information, students responded to the statement, “Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning” (Appendix A). The next two questions asked students if they felt adequately prepared for tests or quizzes, and if they were motivated to do well. This attempted to discover if there is a causal relationship between lack of communication and motivation. Students responded to the appropriate level on the likert scale. Finally, students were asked if they were made aware of daily learning objectives and if it was customary to ask for clarification in their classroom climate. The researchers hoped to gain an idea of how many students were already accustomed to the posting of learning objectives prior to the start of this study, and also if they were less likely to ask questions in a classroom that does not partake in this practice.

Figure 1. Student Implementation Survey from Week One prior to implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Statement 1: I complete assigned homework.
Statement 2: Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning.
Statement 3: My teacher adequately prepares me for test/quiz content.
Statement 4: I am motivated to do well in my classes.
Statement 5: I am aware at the beginning of the period what we will be learning that day.
Statement 6: I openly vocalize when I don't understand something.

The teacher researchers are concerned that many students do not see value that assignments have upon their leaning. The research gathered from the students surveyed supports this assumption considering that over half of students surveyed, 82, believe that their teachers only sometimes give valuable assignments that help with my learning. In addition to analyzing the way students view the validity of assignments, 30 students believe that they are sometimes prepared for tests and quizzes and 55 students believe that they are sometimes aware at the beginning of class what they will be learning. The teacher researchers hope that at the end of

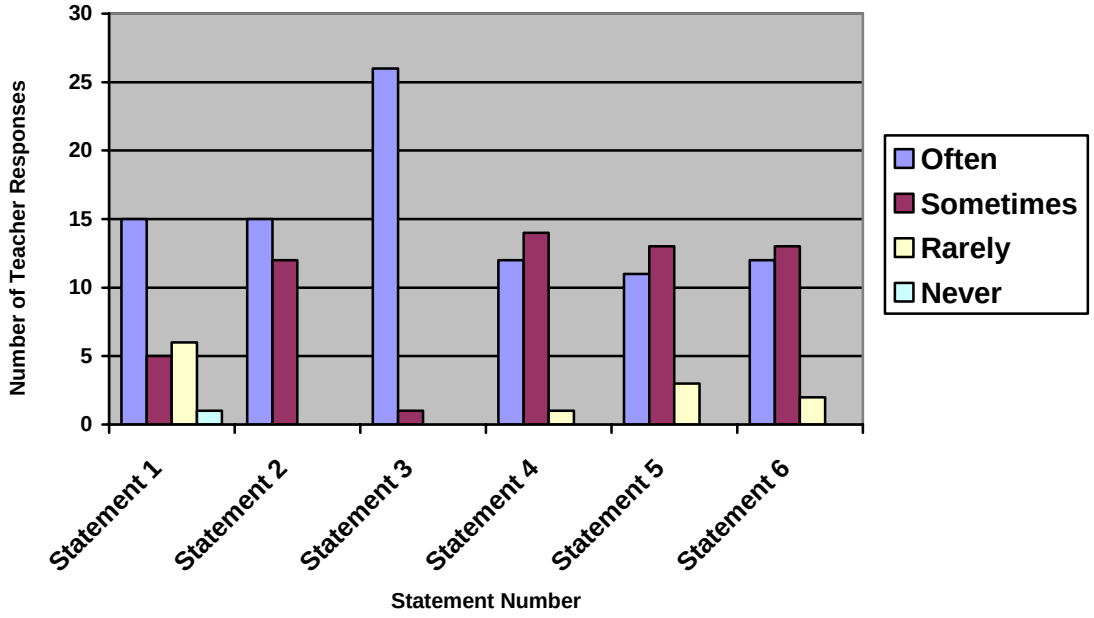
implementation of posting daily learning objectives, students will feel more prepared for tests and quizzes, will find more value in the assignments given by their teachers, and will be aware of what they will be learning at the beginning of each period.

Teacher Survey

The purpose of the Teacher Survey (Appendix B) was to determine the ratio of teachers who already incorporated daily learning objectives in their classrooms, along with its effects on student motivation and achievement. 36 teachers received this survey during the first week of Quarter One and were given one week to return the survey. 36 surveys were collected with a 100 percent return rate. This survey was comprised of six questions on a likert scale of “Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never” with one additional short-answer open-ended question.

The results of this survey are shown in a bar graph in which each of the six questions is represented (Figure 2). The six questions all served the purpose of distinguishing if there was a connection between low motivation and achievement with providing unclear expectations and poor communication. Ultimately, the researchers asked the surveyed teachers if they used learning objectives, clearly communicated the value of assignments, made students aware of expectations, checked for student understanding, and revisited objectives at the end of each lesson. The short-answer open-ended question allowed teachers to include any additional comments or thoughts regarding daily learning objectives, low student achievement, or low student motivation.

Figure 2. Teacher Survey from week one before implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Statement 1: I post and communicate daily learning objectives/targets for my students.
Statement 2: I communicate the value of each assignment to the overall objectives of the unit to my students.
Statement 3: My students are aware of what to expect in terms of content on tests and quizzes.
Statement 4: Overall, my students display the motivation to succeed in my class.
Statement 5: I revisit what we've learned at the end of each lesson.
Statement 6: I check for student understanding at the end of each period.

Out of the 36 teachers surveyed during week one, 15 answered that they post daily learning objectives, while only 5 answered that they sometimes post daily learning objectives. Most of the teachers surveyed said they believe that their students are often aware of what to expect in terms of content on tests and quizzes. 25 teachers make sure to often or sometimes check for student understanding at the end of the period. These 36 teachers lead the researchers to believe that there is a correlation between the use of daily learning objectives and student motivation, as most answered that they state and revisit learning objectives and feel their students are motivated to succeed in class.

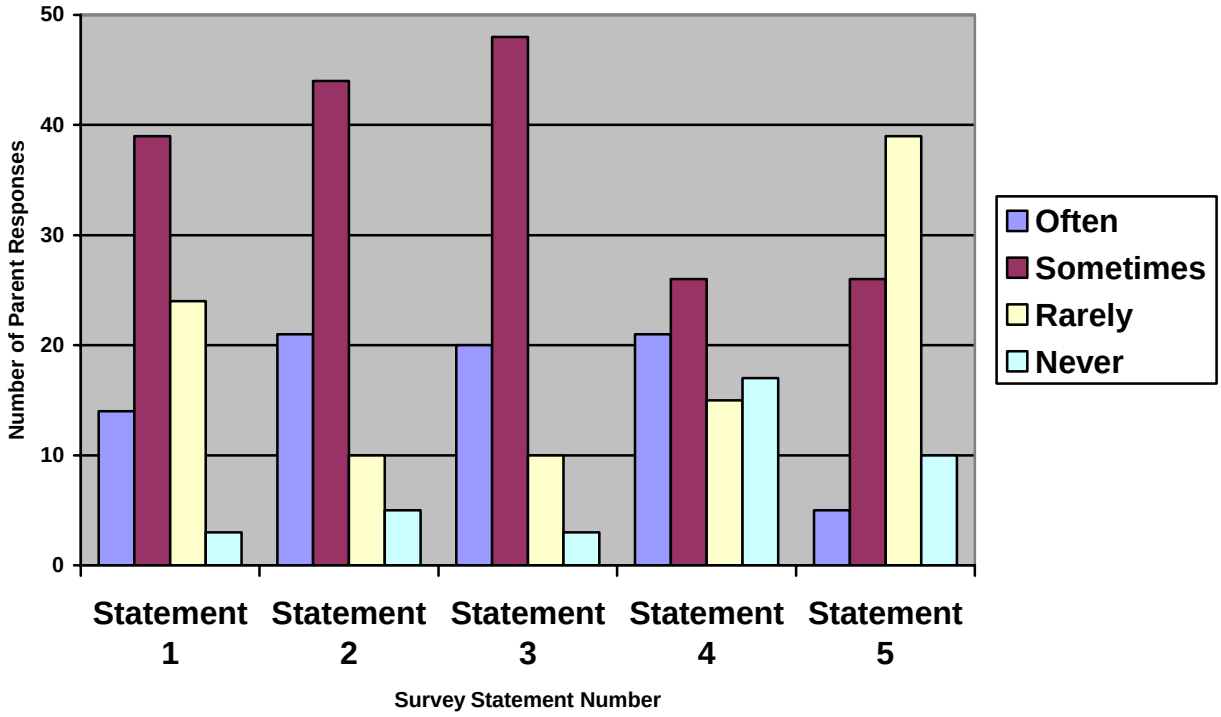
Parent Survey

The purpose of the Parent Survey (Appendix C) was to determine the level of communication between parents and their children regarding school performance and content. 250 parents received the Parent Survey during the first week of Quarter One and were given one week to return the survey that was attached to the Research Consent Form. 80 completed the survey at a percent return rate of 32%. This survey was comprised of five questions on a likert scale of “Always, Sometimes, Rarely, or Never”. Additionally, one short answer, open-ended question concluded the survey.

The results of this survey are shown in a bar graph in which all of the five questions are represented (Figure 3). Two of the five questions focused on the discussions that occurred between parent and student. They asked parents to reflect on the level at which their student shared daily learned knowledge and assessments. The goal of these questions was to determine if the parent was actively involved in their child’s school day. One of the five questions asked the parents if they communicate on a regular basis with their student’s teacher. The researchers hoped to gain insight as to whether or not the knowledge of their student’s academic progress was due to the discussion with the student or with the teacher directly. Two of the five questions asked for the degree to which students find value of assignments and if they look forward to attending school. The researchers hoped to find out if students’ lack of desire grew from minimal communication between parents and students. In order to gain a greater understanding of student apathy in relation to the value of assignments, it was necessary to not only get the viewpoint of the student, but also that of the parent regarding his or her student. The survey concluded with a short answer, open-ended question that asked for further comments “regarding your students

motivation, achievement, and motivation" (Appendix C). This provided the researchers with detailed accounts of parent-child communication and became useful for specific cited evidence.

Figure 3. Parent Survey from week one prior to implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Statement 1: My student communicates daily what he or she learns in their classes.
Statement 2: My student finds value in class assignments.
Statement 3: My student shares their assignments, projects, tests, etc. with me.
Statement 4: My student looks forward to going to school.
Statement 5: I communicate with my student's teachers regularly.

After the researchers collected the Parent Surveys distributed during week one, prior to implementation, they found that more than half of the parents felt that their student sometimes communicated what their student leaned in class. The teacher researchers hope to find at the end of this implementation that students will communicate more frequently with parents concerning daily learning objectives. Furthermore, parents surveyed believed that their students sometimes

share class content and assignments with them. Again, the teacher researchers hope that by posting daily learning objectives, students will be more likely to increase communication with their parents. Similarly, 58 out of the 80 parents stated that they rarely to never communicate with their student's teacher. The hope of the teacher researchers is that the overall communication between the parents, teachers, and students will increase.

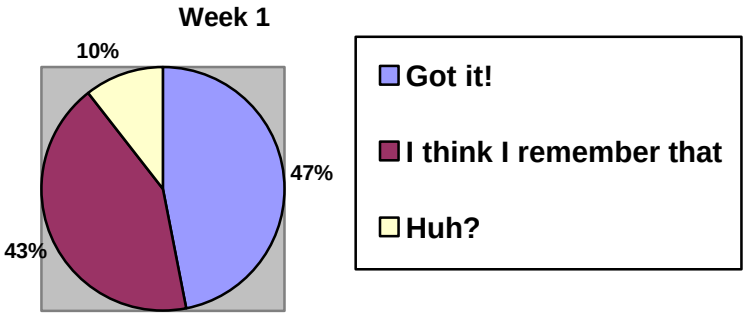
Student Comprehension Checklist

The purpose of the Student Comprehension Checklist (Appendix D) was to determine the level of comprehension students possessed bi-monthly regarding designated learning objectives in the five researchers' classrooms. 150 students received the Student Comprehension Checklist at the end of weeks one, three, five, seven, and nine of this study. Despite absences, the checklists were required to be completed upon return, leading to a 100 percent return rate. This checklist includes six learning objectives, specific to each class, for each week that they are completed. Furthermore, students were required to answer on a likert scale of "Got it!", "I think I remember that", or "Huh?".

The results of the initial checklist are shown in a pie chart in which the researchers' data was compiled, allowing the three above categories from the likert scale to be collectively compared over the study period (Figure 4). The goal for the comparison of Student Comprehension Checklists was for the researchers to see if content comprehension increased as students became more accustomed to the posting of daily learning objectives. The checklist's template is simple in format and provides students with a clear list of what they were expected to learn over the two week period. The hope was that students would gain a greater value in the assessments they completed and gauge their learning in order to seek additional help if necessary. Students were aware that honest answers were encouraged and that they would not be

penalized for low comprehension. As the weeks progressed and the researchers gained a greater rapport with the students, the hope of the researchers was that students' replies would become increasingly accurate to promote a greater communication between student and educator.

Figure 4. Student Comprehension Checklist from week one prior to implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



The Student Comprehension Checklist from week one, during the pre-intervention period, clearly shows that 46% of students comprehended given objectives without them being previously posted and communicated. 40% of students surveyed during the first week were not completely sure that they understood all provided learning objectives. Meanwhile, 14% were not at all familiar with the given learning objectives. The hope of this action research project is that students' understanding and achievement will increase with the posting and communicating of daily learning objectives.

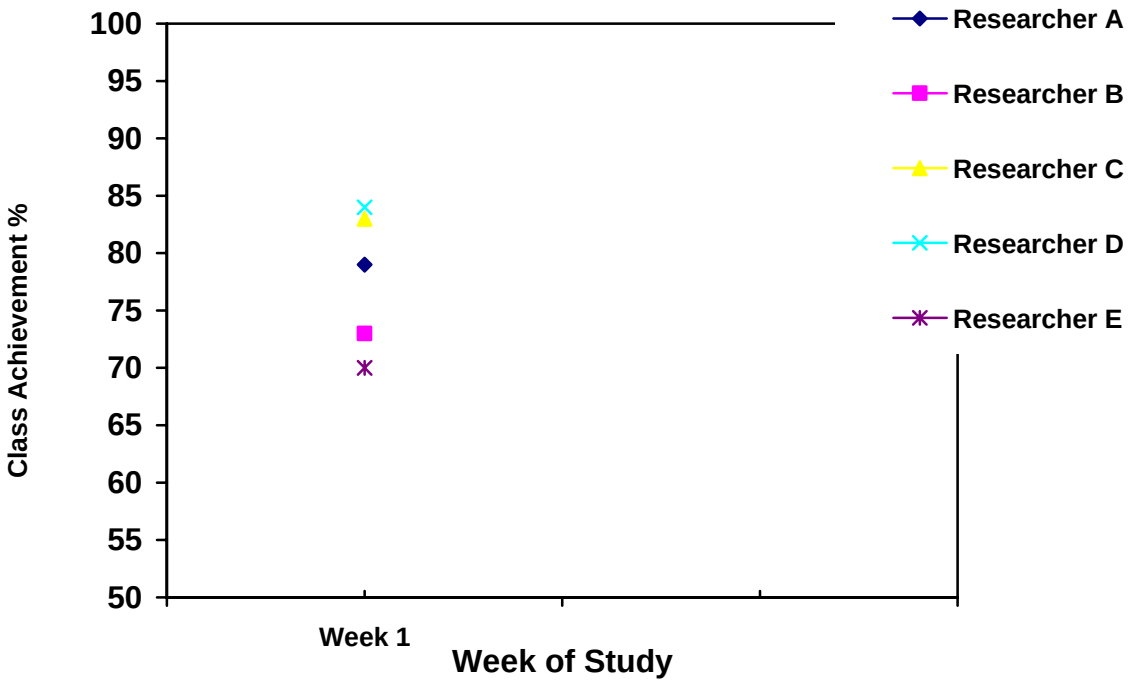
Class Achievement Records

The purpose of this record (Appendix E) was to see if students' academic achievement increased as they became more accustomed to the posting of learning objectives. Five researchers documented Class Achievement Averages prior to intervention at week one, and again at the end of weeks three, five, seven, and nine. Each researcher was responsible for his or

her own class documentation and was required to report the results to Researcher A, who kept a compilation of all five teacher researchers' class averages at the end of the assigned weeks. There was a 100 percent return rate. All five researchers agreed not to accept late work. The researchers would give students a zero for any missed work so as not to have any altered results due to missing assignments. The template for the Class Achievement Record simply asks for the academic percentage of each researcher's designated class to be placed next to the appropriate week.

The compilation of the researchers' first week's class averages are shown in a line graph in which the week of study is shown on the x-axis. Each researcher has his or her own line of results and their corresponding class achievement averages are shown on the y-axis (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Class Achievement Record during week one prior to implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



This preliminary Student Achievement Record will be used as a tool to see if implementation of posting daily learning objectives is having an effect on student achievement. After implementation, a similar line graph will be used to evaluate if the intervention of posting and communicating daily learning objectives had any affect on student achievement and motivation. By keeping records of all class academic averages, these researchers will be able to compare the initial averages to the averages occurring later in the study, which displayed the effects of the action research on the students' achievement.

Probable Causes

There are many factors that contribute to low achievement and motivation among students. Many students may feel as though they are given work that has no true value upon their lives or learning, while other students may simply need reminders of past material covered. It is

the duty of educators to address these problems within their classrooms. Likewise, teachers may feel frustrated that students complain or don't complete assigned tasks. Even parents, much like teachers and students, are disheartened by their student's apathy and low achievement, not knowing where it stems from. This clear lack of communication between the three above groups is a problem that needs to be solved quickly before the educational system becomes stagnate and Americans are no longer able to compete in a growing global community. It is not until teachers adequately convey to the students the validity and importance of academic content that students will be able to communicate the same to their parents. In doing so, parents will become more involved in their students' lives, students will see the "why" in the classroom, and therefore will gain motivation and achievement as a result. Furthermore, teachers will become more aware of their instruction.

Teachers can be placed as the root of the problem in this apathetic classroom situation. It is, or should be, the primary duty of educators to make sure their students clearly understand expectations and the purpose of daily lessons. If students do not understand why they are in the classroom, it is unlikely they will be motivated to achieve. However, motivating students and narrowing content focus can be difficult for even the most determined educator. A lack of set curriculum may cause teachers to become confused or overwhelmed by a large content area, in so much that a policy of breadth, not depth, is enacted. Students become lost in the shuffle as teachers strive to just simply "cover everything." Although teachers have the students' best interests in mind, they are usually overly concerned with the "what", not the "how" of teaching. Teachers often have a clear view of what they would like to teach students, but lack the communication skills to clearly present those objectives. Furthermore, teachers do not always relate the content to students' everyday lives or interest, and therefore, students lose any

relevance to the topics discussed. For example, a history teacher may teach about the Holocaust, knowing how important it is for students to understand its larger principles; however, if the teacher does not clearly convey to students how this event that happened 70 years ago can directly affect their lives today, it is lost in translation as merely “a date.” Also, unbeknownst to the teacher, the assessments they create are not authentic because they do not truly gauge what a student has learned. Students are unsure of what is important to retain and what is merely supplementary information. Teachers must change the manner in which they present information if they want their students to continue to be motivated to learn and achieve.

Although teachers are a large part of the problem in the lack of student motivation and achievement, students are not blameless in the equation. Often times, students hold little self-accountability and are unable to reflectively analyze their participation and growth in a class. Some students may be tempted to give up when they do not see the rationale in a particular assignment or lesson. They may question what is expected of them and give up when they do not receive clear answers. If they are unable to visualize the “big picture” of a lesson, they may be less likely to succeed.

Parents cannot be counted out of this equation, as they too suffer when unclear goals and expectations are given to their children. How is a parent supposed to know what is going on in their student’s education if the student is not even sure? Parents are left in the dark and are ultimately clueless regarding their student’s education. Parents and students alike must be informed of the expectations the teacher has of his or her students as well as the class as a whole.

Literary Problems

Throughout the literature, the teacher researchers found that students lack achievement and motivation due to poor communication between teacher, student, and parent. Students

seemed disconnected from material and did not see the validity of their assessments. The probable causes are split up into three sections which address teachers, students, and parents.

According to Moody and Schafer (2003), mandated tests, such as those administered through a state's accountability system, can best meet the goal of curricular reform by making their domains of learning targets transparent to users. Moody and Schafer (2003) also found that the fault does not only lie within the teacher. Rather, the state does not establish the link between content standards and day-to-day student performance. The state fails to "unpack" their standards and indicators so that they are understandable as guides for classroom instructions (Moody and Schafer, 2003). The research proves that this problem begins at the state level, filters down to the district level, and ends up being a teacher's responsibility.

According to Hopkins (2005), high school principals are often left with a perception that students don't really know what they are supposed to be learning. Hopkins (2005) suggests that a high school principal wants a snapshot of learning, not a snapshot of teaching. In Hopkins' article (2005), he states that one principal commented that a teacher can't prove anything was taught until that teacher has proof of learning. Once the state and the school have decided on a curriculum, Hopkins states that teachers "present learning targets, or statements of intended learning. If we don't begin with clear statements of the intended learning, we won't end with sound assessment" (Arter, Chappuis, Chappuis, & Stiggins, 2004, p. 54).

Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) decide that in general, teachers teach and then test. Chappuis and Stiggins (2004) prove that as the teacher and class progress, often times unsuccessful students who might not learn at the established pace and within the fixed time frame are left behind. Additionally, the author McMillan (2000) proposes that assessment is inherently a process of professional judgment. McMillan (2000) states that the measurement of

student performance may seem “objective” with such practices as machine scoring and multiple test items, but even these approaches are based on professional assumptions and values. According to McMillan (2000), assessment is based on separate but related principles of measurement evidence and evaluation. The author Stiggins (2002) states that Americans are obsessed with frequent and more intense standardized testing. According to Stiggins (2002), the problem is that such tests are supposedly developed to “leave no student behind.” Stiggins (2002) states that student achievement suffers because these once-a-year tests are incapable of providing teachers with moment-to-moment and day-to-day information about student achievement; this is the information that they need in order to make crucial instructional decisions. Strong assessment is one of the most challenging elements for an educator.

Teachers must find a middle ground between both summative assessment, which is of learning , and formative assessment, which is *for* learning (Arter, 2003). The author Arter (2003) states that many teachers are delighted to agree with this statement, but may not know how to go about putting formative assessment (assessment for learning) into action. Teachers may engage in formative assessment without knowing it is what they are already doing, states Arter (2003). Not only are assessments a challenging element for teachers, but working cooperatively as a school is a difficult aspect of education.

According to Chappuis (2006), teachers need documents to be able to work with one another to set and achieve clear goals. Schools need to give teachers the time and support they need to work together to translate standards, benchmarks, frameworks, and grade-level curriculum into clear, teachable, and assessable learning targets, claims Chappuis (2006). Finally, Chappuis (2006) states that if the curriculum is not clear, the assessment will be equally unclear, and therefore not effective. Not only are teachers affected by learning objectives, but

students who lack achievement and motivation due to poor communication will greatly benefit from learning objectives.

Likewise, Cown (2004) describes that a topic list doesn't clarify what students should leave with at the end of the class. Cown (2004) explains that students should be required to know only the terms, and should be able to identify different types of documents. Stiggins (2002) states that student achievement suffers because these once-a-year tests are incapable of providing teachers with the moment-to-moment and day-to-day information about student achievement that they need in order to make crucial, instructional decisions. Students do not often know what is expected of them, and therefore do not take responsibility for their own learning, hence decreasing intrinsic motivation. Since students are unaware of what is projected of them, they are unmotivated to learn.

According to Hopkins (2005), high school principals are often left with a perception that students don't really know what they are supposed to be learning. Hopkins (2005) states that students are regularly disinterested in lessons due to a lack of communication from the teacher. Moriarity, Pavelonis, Pellouchoud, and Wilson (2001) also state that unmotivated students are not active; they have missed the connection between effort and outcome. Moriarity, Pavelonis, Pellouchoud, and Wilson (2001) state that in a student's view, effort is not worth the trouble, and therefore students cannot see the value in hard work. Lack of motivation is often a problem in high school students, and henceforth decreases their learning.

According to Broadwater Hilker (1993), some students enter the classroom ready and willing to work, eager to learn, and constrained only by time. Others, however, appear completely disinterested and must be virtually bright to accomplish minimally acceptable levels of learning, according to Broadwater Hilker (1993). In addition to the lack of student motivation,

students are not working up to their potential in the classroom either. Student achievement can be enhanced by posting learning objectives to guide students to attain the teacher's daily objectives.

According to Talbot (1997), the problem is that students need to be taught to complete self-regulated learning. Self-regulated learning is an ongoing process in which the learner makes sense of the learning task, creates goals and strategies, and implements actions designed to meet goals for the given learning context, states Talbot (1997). Not only do teachers and students need to become a part of the communication process, but parents have to play a major part in this process as well. A strong communication between home life and school life is necessary to increase students' achievement and motivation.

Additionally, "The problem with low motivation is caused by limited educational background of parents, different cultural values, and lack of parental support and involvement" (Bartscher, 1995, pg. 25). Moriarity, Pavelonis, Pellouchoud, and Wilson (2001) state that parents who searched for ways to motivate their children to achieve higher grades often became frustrated due to a lack of teacher-parent communication. When a parent is uninvolved with his or her child's school life, lower achievement and motivation occur within the student.

Peace, Mayo, and Watkins (2000) discovered that what really makes a difference is improving learning. Peace, Mayo, and Watkins (2000) also suggest that parents are not involved in their student's learning process; parental involvement showed an even stronger correlation to student achievement than characteristics such as class size, school size, or student to teacher ratio. These components foster an increase in the motivation and achievement of students based on clear communication of learning objectives between teachers, students, and parents.

In conclusion, school districts and administration need to supervise learning objectives in order to correlate with state standards. Schools should give teachers the appropriate time frame

to translate these standards into clear, teachable, and assessable learning objectives. In addition, teachers need to take the time in their daily classes to post and communicate their daily learning objectives. Once the teacher has fulfilled posting the learning objectives, students will be able to comprehend what is intended. Therefore, students are more motivated to achieve what they are expected to learn, and they will, in turn, have a better chance of getting higher scores on the assessment. Also, the communication between students and parents will improve, since students have a clearer understand of the learned material. By posting and communicating daily learning objectives, teacher researchers plan to increase students' motivation and improve the students' achievement.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

According to the Milwaukee Public Schools website (2006), learning objectives clearly state what a child will be learning in all subject areas; setting learning objectives for each subject area and grade level ensures that all teachers instruct the same skills and concepts at a level appropriate for a student's development. The same website states that while using learning objectives, teachers assess student performance throughout the year, which promotes consistency in teaching and learning. Setting clear learning targets will not only benefit teachers and students, but parents as well.

Every teacher strives to have his or her students take away knowledge from their daily lessons. While it may be clear to educators what the desired outcome is, it may not be as clear to students. Perhaps if teachers post and communicate their daily learning objectives, students would be able to gain new knowledge more easily. This problem does not indicate a lack of motivation or participation on the students' behalf, but rather a simple lack of communication between the teacher and his or her students. Therefore, it appears that teachers should begin to decrease apathy and change the negative views of American education by posting and communicating learning objectives to increase student achievement and motivation.

According to Moody and Schafer (2003), the state has to establish the link between content standards and day-to-day student performance. The state also has to "unpack" their

standards and indicators so that they are understandable as guides for classroom instructions based on research, which was found within Moody and Schafer's findings (2003). Not only is the state responsible to make changes in the curriculum, but school districts should also be accountable for implementing learning objectives.

Chappuis (2006) states that teachers should work together to get the necessary support; they need to do so by getting support from schools and districts in such programs as Curriculum Mapping. According to Chappuis (2006), in order to be effective, teachers need to have ownership of the written curriculum and process. Educators need to be able to work with others to set and achieve clear goals for the school and staff, and most importantly, clear learning objectives for the students, Chappuis states (2006). Districts need to give teachers the necessary time and support to work together to translate standards, benchmarks, frameworks, and grade-level curriculum into clear, teachable, and assessable learning objectives, Chappuis explains (2006). When the state and district have provided the necessary tools for teachers to comprehend the state standards, then it is up to the teachers to implement those standards into their classroom. In order to accomplish this goal, teachers must set up clear and student-friendly language in their daily learning objectives.

According to Stiggins (2002), teachers need to understand and articulate the learning objectives prior to a lesson so their students can comprehend objectives. Chappuis (2006) suggests that teachers should translate a learning objective into student-friendly language, which gives an even clearer picture of the curriculum's expectations. Chappuis (2006) documents that teachers need to have a distinct vision, which can be set and achieved in accurate goals to teach and assess students. According to the article Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning

(2006), teachers should provide a logical and understandable vision of the learning target, and teachers should check to make sure they use language students understand.

According Lehay, Lyon, Thompson, and William (2005), low achievement is often the result of students failing to understand what teachers require of them. Lehay, Lyon, Thompson, and Wiliam (2005) also state that many teachers address this issue by posting the state standards or learning objectives in a prominent place at the start of the lesson, but such an approach is rarely successful because the standards are not written in student-friendly language. Lehay, Lyon, Thompson, and Wiliam (2005) communicate that teachers in their various projects have explored many ways of making their learning objectives and criteria for success transparent to students. According to Stiggins (2002), teachers should understand and articulate the achievement targets in advance to teaching. In addition, teachers should inform their students about their learning goals in terms that students understand, from the very beginning of the teaching and learning process. Once the objectives are written in clear, student-friendly language, teachers will have fewer problems with classroom management, as well as having more success in a subject specific classroom.

According to Kizlik (2006), the purpose of a behavioral objective is to communicate, and well-written behavioral objectives are the heart of any lesson plan. If the objectives the teacher composes are “fuzzy” and difficult, the rest of the lesson plan that is based on the objective is likely to be flawed, states Kizlik (2006). Ur (1996) documents that by teaching a foreign language, often similar formats and structures will be revisited. A teacher needs to consciously introduce every new unit and start with a clearly directed presentation, making students aware of the already learned formats and structures, suggests Ur (1996). If a learning objective is stated

clearly at the beginning of the period, teachers and students should feel confident with the lesson's assessment.

According to Stiggins (2002), for teachers to become "assessment literate," they must be able to transform their expectations into assessment exercise and scoring procedures that accurately reflect student achievement. As stated in the article Assessment for vs. Assessment of Learning (2002), society needs to rethink the role of assessment in effective schools, where "effective" means maximizing learning for the most students. The article defines "assessment of learning" as assessment that place at a point in time for the purpose of summarizing the current status of student achievement. Also, the article Assessment for vs. Assessment of Learning (2002) compares this to "assessment for learning" which is roughly equivalent to formative assessment – assessment intended to promote further improvement of student learning during the learning process. Arter (2003) suggests that a teacher can function as a formative assessor when he or she designs learning targets to make pre-instruction decisions, as well as shares the learning objectives in advance of teaching lessons. McMillan (2006) contends that there is a considerable emphasis on the nature of learning targets, and different assessments are sometimes appropriate for different targets.

McMillan (2006) states that assessment methods are integrated with instructions when teachers evaluate students. According to McMillan (2006), there is a considerable emphasis on the nature of learning objectives and how different assessments are most appropriate for different objectives. For each technique, suggestions for effective practice are presented with examples, case studies, and teacher interviews, states McMillan (2006). According to the article Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning (2006), teachers should ask students what they think constitutes quality in a product or performance learning objective, and then show how the

students' thoughts match with a scoring guide or rubric a teacher uses to define quality. When objectives are clearly set and assessments are successful, students will take responsibility for their own learning.

Stiggins' (2002) research says that teachers using classroom assessments to build student confidence in themselves as learners can help students take responsibility for their own learning, so as to lay a foundation for lifelong learning. Chappuis and Stiggins (2001) claim that involving students in their assessment means that students learn to use assessment information to manage their own learning. When the goal is to increase student motivation and learning, productive feedback tells a student what they are doing correctly, which specifies their strengths and helps learning to develop those strengths even further, says Chappuis and Stiggins (2001). According to Moriarity (2001), students experience academic success by meeting personal goals and increasing their core of knowledge. Moriarity (2001) also states that by incorporating goal setting and personal reflection, students will have higher levels of academic achievement. Arter (2003) suggests ways for students to become formative assessors when they can actually respond to people asking them what they learned in school on any given day. This means that students need clearly articulated, concise learning targets to be able to answer these questions.

McKeachie (1994) states that the first step in preparing for a course is the working out of course objectives; course objectives should only be taken as a rough reminder and can be revised as the teacher develops other aspects of the course plan, and should be further revised in interaction with students. McKeachie (1994) also suggests that teachers should set learning objectives to strive to reach students' own education. McKeachie (1994) states that personal, social, or occupational goals can enhance motivation and cognitive effort. Finally, it is not only important that teachers define clear expectations, but also integrate students' own goals,

recommends McKeachie (1994). When students become individual learners, they can then take responsibility for their own education. Descriptive feedback helps students maintain direction and make improvements, which further enhances their need to become individual learners.

Stiggins (2002) documents that translating classroom assessment results in frequent descriptive feedback (versus judgmental feedback) for students, providing students with specific insights as to how to improve. According to Stiggins (2002), when teachers confer with students regarding their strengths and the area in which they need improvement, students will be able to set their own goals, make learning decisions related to their own improvement, develop an understanding of what quality work looks like, self-assess, and communicate their status and progress towards their established learning goal. When the students and teachers follow the learning objectives, it will not only solve problems for teachers, but also problems for students.

Realizing that they are acquiring intentional daily skills would allow students to see the importance and relevance of education in their lives, hence furthering academic growth, motivation, and achievement. This is crucial for future generations, and society as a whole, to continue to progress and succeed in the competitive "real world." Duffy and Savery (2001) show that when students have a solid understanding of why they are engaging in an activity, they are more likely to succeed in the classroom, as well as in the world. Cown (2004) describes that learning objectives put the focus on the student and learning rather than the teacher and teaching methods. Shank (2005) details that a good design of a learning objective will communicate intent to a student, which will increase motivation and understanding. Therefore, communication between teacher, student, and parent is essential in order to improve student achievement and motivation.

Many parents are frustrated and concerned about their child's success in today's school system. Parents may wonder how their children could spend eight or more hours a day at school and walk away completely apathetic or unable to communicate any interest in school. Peace, Mayo, and Watkins (2000) propose that a home environment, which is child friendly and school friendly, enhances the child's self-esteem as well as their learning; this sense of partnership between the school and the home is crucial for maximizing students' learning potential. Peace, Mayo, and Watkins (2000) also stress that quality assessment requires a clear conception of all intended learning outcomes. Such outcomes or targets must not only be established, but also communicated and assessed to ensure that learning has taken place and the degree to which knowledge, abilities, and dispositions have been mastered, according to Peace, Mayo, and Watkins (2000). Stiggins (2002) documents that teachers should involve students in communicating with other teachers and their families about their achievement, status, and improvement. Increasing student motivation and achievement does not involve just one person; teachers, students, and parents need to work cooperatively together to obtain success. Teachers should post daily learning objectives in a student-friendly language while students need to take responsibility for their own learning and communicate the learning goals to their parents, who then become actively involved in their child's education.

Project Objective and Processing Statements

As a result of posting daily learning objectives at the beginning of each class, revisiting them at the end of each class, and developing assessment that is reflective of the learning objectives, during the period of August 21, 2006 through October 26, 2006, the students of Teacher Researchers A, B, C, D, and E will increase student achievement measured by class achievement records. Additionally, students will gain motivation which will be measured by the

teacher-constructed Student Comprehension Checklists and assessments created based off of posted objectives. The above objectives were completed by Researchers A and B in English classrooms, Researchers C and D in social science classrooms, and Researcher E in a world language classroom.

The following were developed in order to implement this project:

- Parent Consent Form
- Parent Survey
- Teacher researchers wrote the Teacher Explanation/Participation Letter
- Teacher researchers wrote the Teacher Survey for three different departments.
- Teacher researchers designed every lesson beginning with posting and communicating learning objectives.
- Teacher researchers reviewed daily learning objectives at the end of every lesson.
- Teacher researchers collected data front unit assessments with incorporated learning objectives.
- Teacher researchers collected the Bi-monthly Class Achievement Records.
- Teacher researchers handed out the Pre-Implementation Student Survey to participating students.
- Teacher researchers collected the Student Comprehension Checklist before each assessment.
- Teacher researchers handed out the post-implementation student survey to participating students.

Project Action Plan

The action plan for this research project was designed to include strategies to increase student achievement and motivation for students in grades nine through twelve. The following action plan details the anticipated agenda for the teacher researchers for each week of the project.

Pre Week August, 2006

- Each teacher generates 200 Letter Request Forms and Parent Consent Forms before the beginning of the school year.
- Each teacher produces 40 Teacher Surveys before the beginning of the school year.
- Each teacher creates approximately 200 Student Surveys before the beginning of the school year.
- Each teacher brainstorms about the Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist before the beginning of the school year.
- Each teacher adjusts their individual syllabi before the beginning of the school year.

Week 1 August 21 – August 25, 2006

- Each teacher passes out the Letter Request Form to their students on the first day of school.
- Each teacher passes out the Parent Consent Form on the first day of school.
- Each teacher collects and evaluates the Letter Request Form and Parent Consent Form by the end of the first week of school.
- Each teacher distributes their individual syllabi on the first day of school.
- Each teacher issues the Student Survey to their students during the first week of school.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.
- Each teacher researcher distributes a Student Comprehension Checklist at the end of week one.
- Each teacher researcher will report their results of the Class Achievement Records to Teacher Researcher A.

Week 2 August 28 – September 1, 2006

- Each teacher passes out the Teacher Explanation Letter and fellow teachers within their department are made aware of the upcoming survey during the third week of school.
- Each teacher develops the End of Unit Assessment when appropriate.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 3 September 5 – September 8, 2006

- Each teacher distributes the Teacher Survey to their fellow teachers in their department at the beginning of the week.
- Each teacher hands out Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist to their individual classes when appropriate.
- Each teacher evaluates the Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist when appropriate.
- Each teacher fills out the Bi-Monthly Class Achievement Records when appropriate.
- Each teacher informs parents of action research project and surveys during Parent Night at the high school.
- Each teacher revises the End of Unit Assessment (if necessary) at the appropriate time.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 4 September 18 – September 22, 2006

- Each teacher collects the Teacher Survey and evaluates when appropriate.
- Each teacher graphs data from Parent, Teacher, and Student surveys when appropriate.
- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist (if applicable) at the appropriate time.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.
- All teachers collaborate with one another to discuss outcomes of the research after school, at the end of the week.

Week 5 September 25 – September 29, 2006

- Each teacher hands out Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist and evaluates when appropriate.
- Each teacher fills out Bi-Monthly Class Achievement Records during the week.
- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist, if applicable and when appropriate.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose

individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.

- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 6 October 2 – October 6, 2006

- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist, if applicable and when appropriate.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 7 October 9 – October 13, 2006

- Each teacher hands out Bi-Monthly Student Comprehension Checklist and evaluates when appropriate.
- Each teacher fills out Bi-Monthly Class Achievement Records when appropriate.
- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist, if applicable and when appropriate.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 8 October 16 – October 20, 2006

- Each teacher creates their final Student Survey at the beginning of the week.
- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist, if applicable and when appropriate.
- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.

Week 9 October 23 – October 26, 2006 (End of First Quarter)

- Each teacher hands out Bi-Weekly Student Comprehension Checklist and evaluates when appropriate.
- Each teacher fills out Bi-Monthly Class Achievement Records when appropriate.
- Each teacher incorporates the End of the Unit Checklist, if applicable and when appropriate.

- Each teacher raises student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility of their own learning. Teachers choose individual presentation of material, for example, a Power Point presentation, lecture, and/or overhead transparencies.
- Each teacher reminds students to achieve learning objectives when appropriate.
- Each teacher distributes the final Student Survey when appropriate.
- Each teacher evaluates the Student Survey when appropriate.
- Each teacher collects and compares data from fellow teacher researchers when appropriate.
- Each teacher collaborates with fellow researchers to discuss outcomes of the research at the end of the research study.

Methods of Assessment

The assessments for this study included five variations of surveys, checklists, and records that were distributed throughout the first quarter of the first semester from August 21, 2006 through October 26, 2006. The teacher researchers gathered data with three surveys before and after the intervention. The student survey was given to 150 students, both pre and post intervention, and included six questions gauging student motivation and achievement. The Parent Surveys were distributed during the first week of the study period and included five questions and one short-answer, open-ended question regarding their student's level of achievement, motivation, and communication. Likewise, the teacher surveys were also distributed to 36 teachers at the high school during the first week of the study period. This survey included six questions and one short answer open-ended question that asked for the level of participation, motivation, and achievement of their classes. During the nine week study period, Bi-monthly Student Comprehension Checklists were distributed first during week one, and then twice a month to 150 students in order to measure changes in their understanding of course content as a result of the intervention. Similarly, the teacher researchers maintained Class Achievement Records during weeks one, three, five, seven, and nine to, again, gauge student achievement as a result of the intervention. The Student Comprehension Checklists were given before an

assessment; this assessment is reflected in the Class Achievement Records. After the intervention concluded, researchers distributed the Post Student Survey in order to document the effects of the posting of daily learning objectives. The pre, during, and post intervention strategies were compared for evidence of changes in student achievement and motivation.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The teacher researchers developed a plan in which daily learning objectives would be posted and communicated to students in one of each of the teacher researcher's classes. The action plan for this research project is designed to include strategies to increase student achievement and motivation for students in grades nine through twelve.

The following action plan began by the five teacher researchers generating 150 Letter Request Forms and surveys to distribute to parents of students who will be involved in the implementation of this project in order to obtain legal consent. In addition, tools created specifically for this project including Teacher Surveys, Student Surveys, Student Comprehension Checklists, would also be produced and distributed throughout the implementation.

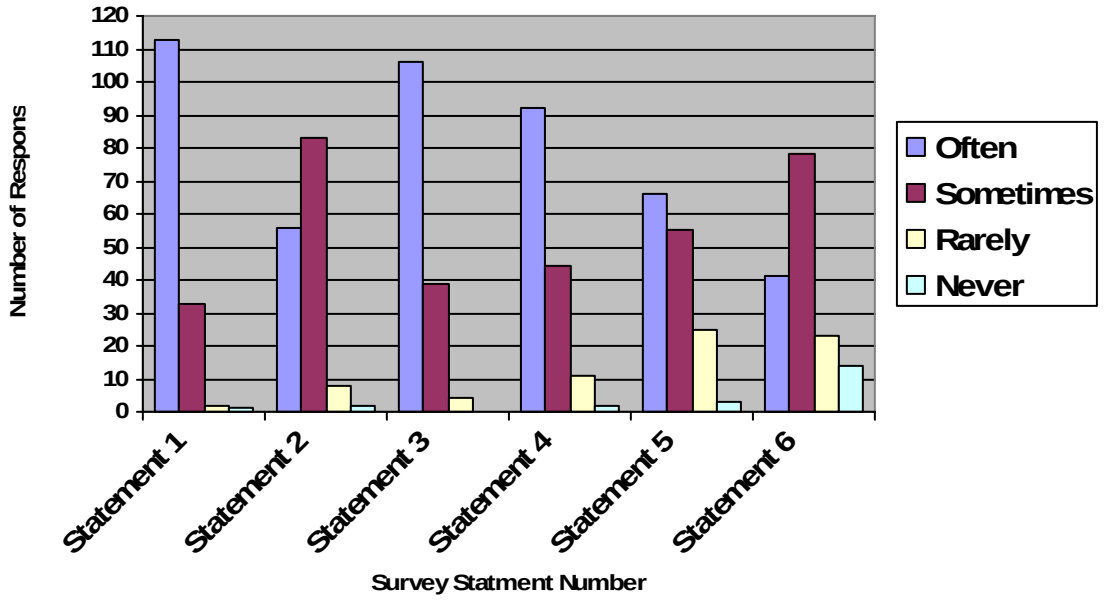
As the teacher researchers began the formal implementation of this action research project at the high school site, each teacher researcher passed out the Letter Request Form, Survey for Parental Consent, Parent Survey, and Student Survey to their students that was to be collected shortly thereafter. This was to serve as a foundation to base further research off of as the project is fully implemented and was to give the teacher researchers an idea of how much the students have previously worked with learning objectives. Furthermore, a Teacher Survey was to be distributed to faculty in the high school to determine how frequent the practice of posting and communicating daily learning objectives already is within the school environment.

In addition, each teacher was to begin, and was continue to raise student awareness of learning objectives by communicating the importance of students' responsibility for their own learning. The teacher researchers was to choose individual and content specific presentation methods of the learning objectives each day, but were to be required to post and communicated stated learning objectives daily.

Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Student Survey

Figure 6. Student Survey after implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives



Statement 1: I complete assigned homework.
Statement 2: Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning.
Statement 3: My teacher adequately prepares me for test/quiz content.
Statement 4: I am motivated to do well in my classes.
Statement 5: I am aware at the beginning of the period what we will be learning that day.
Statement 6: I openly vocalize when I don't understand something.

The Student Survey, given at the beginning of implementing the change of posting and communicating daily learning objectives, clearly showed that a change was needed to motivate students and improve their achievement. Students did not find value in class assignments. Along with this statement, a lack of motivation in the classroom was apparent. Each of the 113 students claimed to complete assigned homework most of the time (often). Also, the 33 students stated that they sometimes completed assigned homework. Noticeably, three students admitted to rarely or never completing assigned homework. All 56 students did not always see value in assignments which were designed to help them learn. Additionally, 83 students sometimes saw that the teacher gave valuable assignments that helped with students' learning. Only 10 students rarely or never saw that a teacher gives valuable assignments that help with their learning.

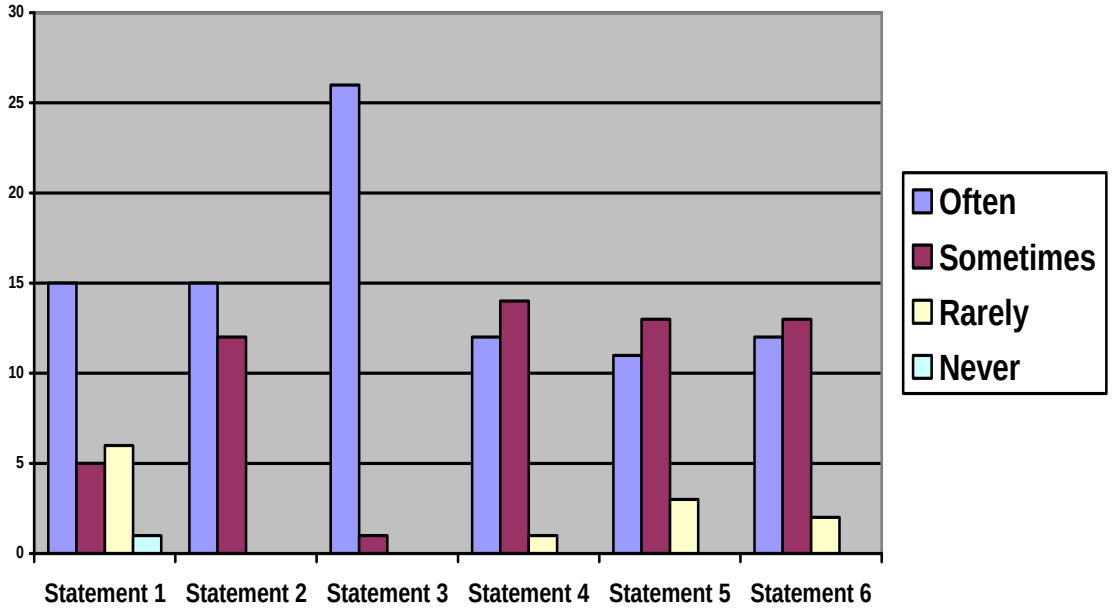
Over 106 students believed their teacher often prepared them adequately for tests and quizzes. Exactly 39 students thought that the teacher only sometimes prepared them adequately for tests and quizzes. Only four students believed that their teacher rarely prepared them for tests and quizzes. Not a single student thought that they were unprepared for tests and quizzes. Next, 92 students said that they were often motivated to do well in class. Interestingly, 44 students claimed that they were sometimes motivated in class; 13 students admitted that they were rarely or never motivated to do well in class.

At the beginning of the period, 66 students were often aware of the daily learning objectives. In addition, 55 students felt that they sometimes were aware of the daily learning objectives. The most shocking of all findings was that the students were not always aware of what was expected of them. Exactly 28 students rarely or never knew the daily learning objectives. Also, the research showed that students weren't openly vocalizing when they did not understand the material that had been taught. Furthermore, 41 students often vocalized that they

did not understand the covered material, 78 students sometimes vocalized their misunderstanding of the material, and 37 students only vocalized when they had a question.

Teacher Survey

Figure 7. Teacher Survey given after implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



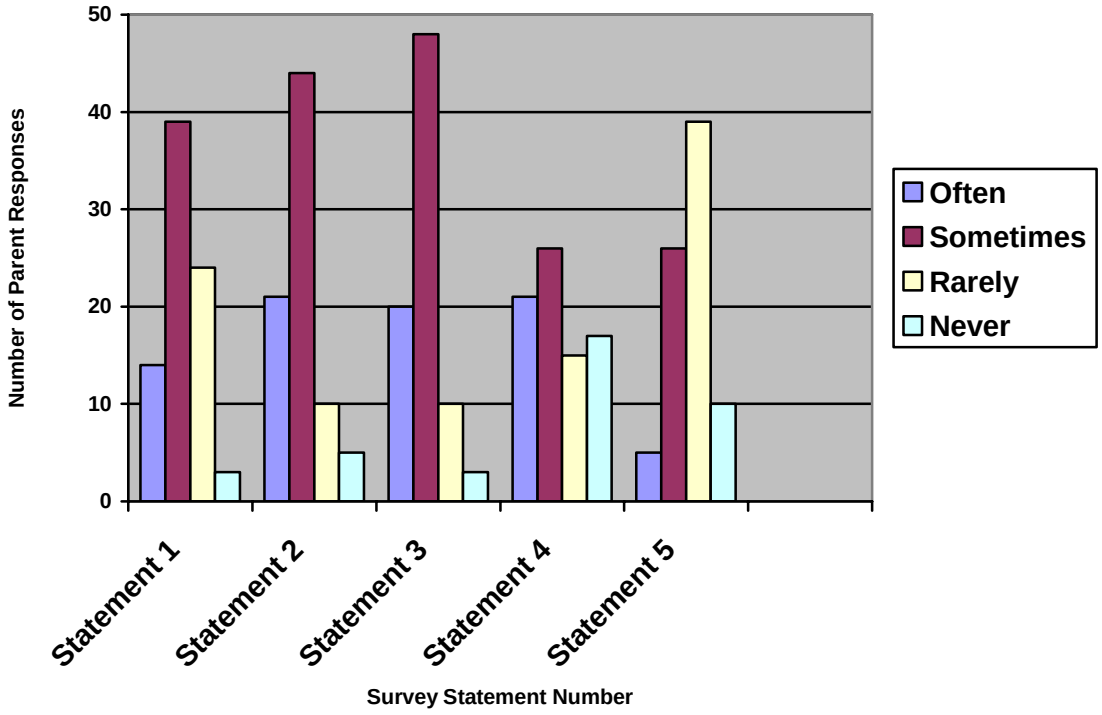
Statement 1: I post and communicate daily learning objectives/targets for my students.
Statement 2: I communicate the value of each assignment to the overall objectives of the unit to my students.
Statement 3: My students are aware of what to expect in terms of content on tests and quizzes.
Statement 4: Overall, my students display the motivation to succeed in my class.
Statement 5: I revisit what we've learned at the end of each lesson.
Statement 6: I check for student understanding at the end of each period.

After questioning 36 teachers in three different departments of world language, English/communication, and social science, research found that 15 teachers posted and communicated daily learning objectives for their students. Five teachers claimed to sometimes post learning objectives in their classrooms, six teachers declared that they rarely post, and one teacher admitted to never post or communicate daily learning objectives. Responding to the

survey, 15 teachers also communicated the value of each assignment to the overall objectives of the unit. Moreover, 23 teachers would often or sometimes communicate the value of their assignments, and 26 teachers claimed that their students were aware of what was expected in terms of content on tests and quizzes. In addition, 26 teachers were often or sometimes able to see students' motivation to succeed in their class and 24 of the 36 teachers surveyed claimed to revisit learning objectives at the end of the class period, whereas three teachers admitted to rarely revisit learning objective at the end of the class period. Only two teachers checked for students understanding at the end of each period, and 25 teachers asserted that they would check for student understanding.

Parent Survey

Figure 8. Parent Survey conducted after implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives



Statement 1: My student communicates daily what he or she learns in their classes.
Statement 2: My student finds value in class assignments.
Statement 3: My student shares their assignments, projects, tests, etc. with me.
Statement 4: My student looks forward to going to school.
Statement 5: I communicate with my student's teachers regularly.

Next, after questioning the 250 parents of the involved students during the first week of Quarter One, only 80 parents (32%) responded. Then, 14 parents stated that their child often communicated what he or she learned in class. Next, 39 parents believed that their child sometimes communicated what he or she learned in class. Finally, 24 parents believed that their child rarely communicated what he or she learned in class. On the other hand, only three parents admitted that their child never communicated what he or she learned in class.

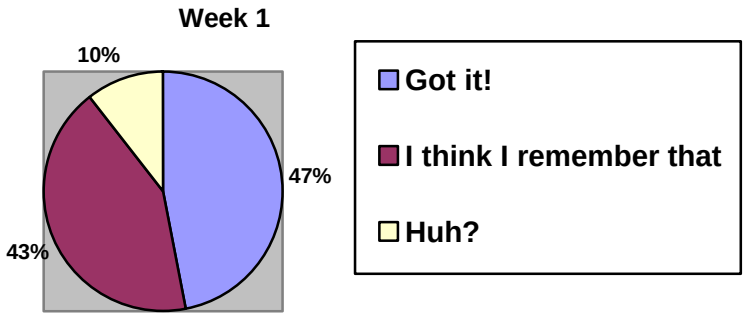
When parents were questioned about their child finding value in class assignments, 21 parents thought that their child often found value in class assignments. In addition, 44 parents responded that their child found some value in class assignments. However, 15 parents replied that their child rarely or never found value in class assignments.

Next, 20 parents believed that their child often shared assignments with them. Over 48 parents replied that their child sometimes communicated assignments, projects, and tests with them. Additionally, 13 parents claimed that their child either rarely or never communicated assignments, projects, and test with them.

Over 47 parents responded that their child often or sometimes looked forward to attending school, while 32 parents questioned said that their child rarely or never looked forward to attending school. Next, 5 parents often communicated with their child's teachers, while 10 parents chose to never communicate with their child's teachers. Finally, 65 parents sometimes or rarely communicated with their child's teacher.

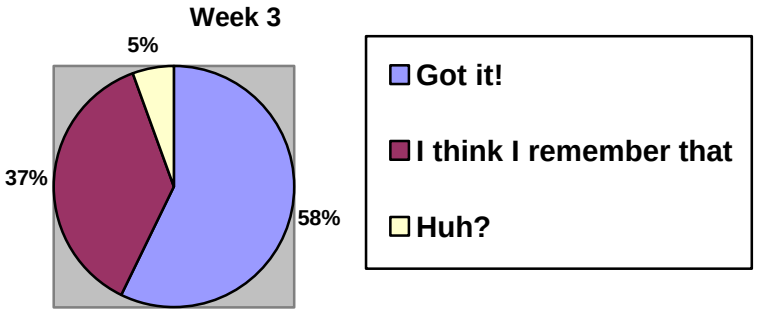
Student Comprehension Checklist

Figure 9. Student Comprehension Checklist for week one compiled prior to the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



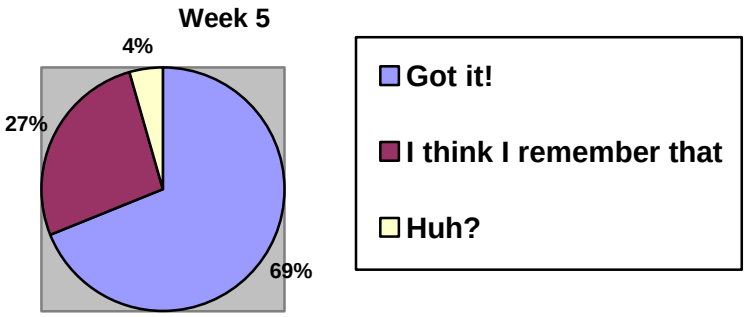
Before giving the unit assessment, teacher researchers handed out a Student Comprehension Checklist. Students were asked to read over the learning targets where they would be assessed; students were then asked to answer in three different categories. Week One's Student Comprehension Checklist stated that 47% of students understood the learned material. 43% of students during Week One's Student Comprehension Checklist answered that they somewhat felt comfortable recalling learning objectives. 10% of students were unaware of the learning objectives during Week One's survey.

Figure 10. Student Comprehension Checklist compiled during the third week of the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



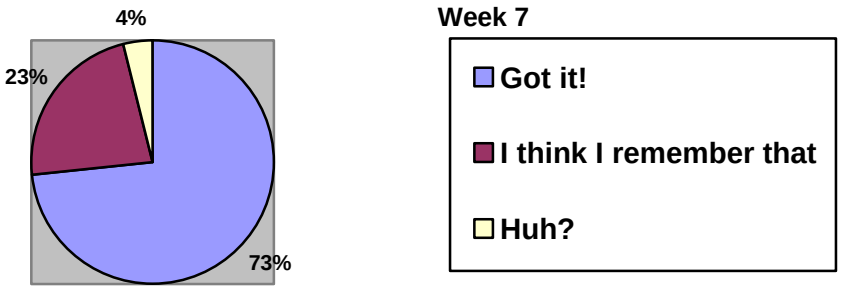
During Week Three's Student Comprehension Checklist, 58% of the students felt comfortable in stating that they mastered the learned material. 37% of students claimed that they felt somewhat confident going into the assessment. Only 5% of the students were not able to comprehend the learning objectives.

Figure 11. Student Comprehension Checklist compiled during the fifth week of the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



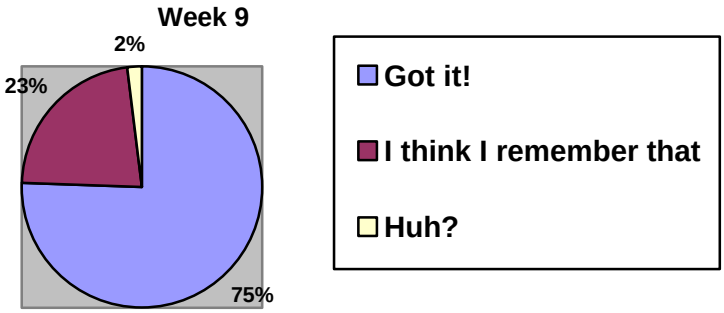
In Week Five, 69% of all questioned students were able to fully comprehend the learned material. Next, 27% of students were able to remember parts of the learned material. Finally, 4% of surveyed students were unclear of the learning objectives.

Figure 12. Student Comprehension Checklist compiled during the seventh week of the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Week Seven's results showed that 73% of students were confident in their success of learning the desired material; 23% felt somewhat capable to master the material. However, 4% of students were not confident that they learned would achieve the learning objectives.

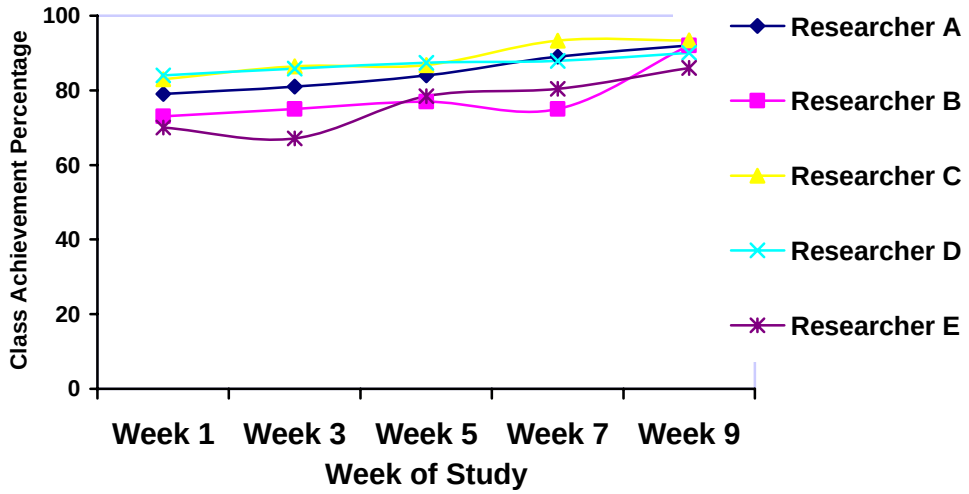
Figure 13. Student Comprehension Checklist compiled during the ninth week of the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Week Nine showed that 75% of students understood and applied the desired learning objectives. 23% of students felt some-what capable to master the material, while only 2% stated that they did not understand the learning objectives.

Class Achievement Records

Figure 14. Class Achievement Records compiled during the implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.

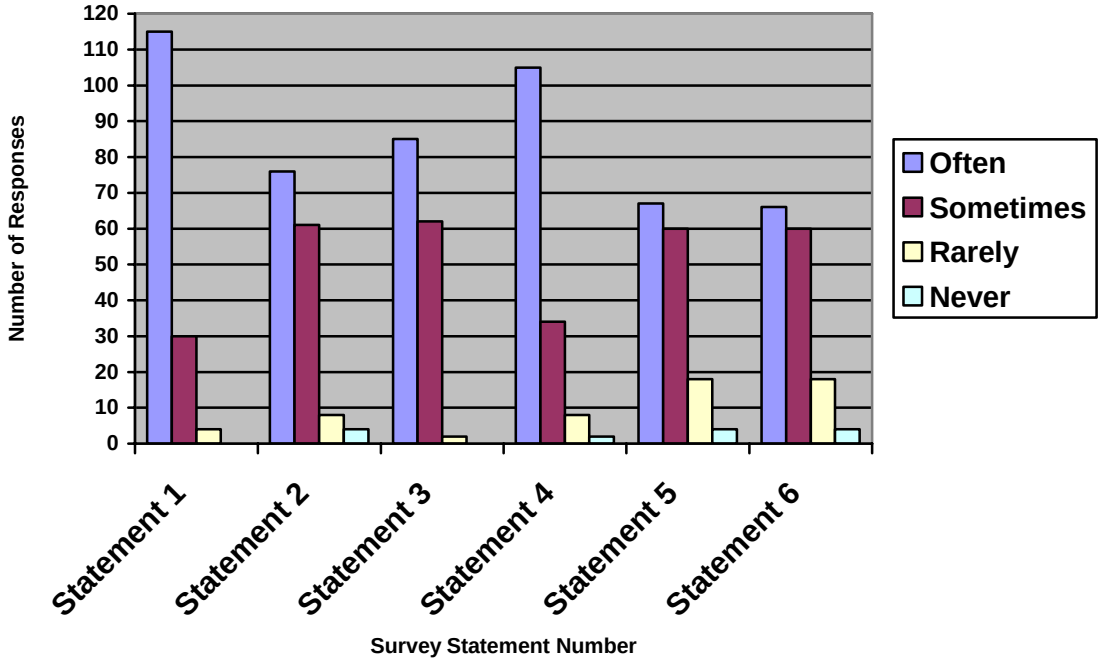


Teacher researchers also kept track of their students' achievements while posting and communicating daily learning objectives. Overall, the achievement slightly increased. Teacher Researcher A had a class average 79% in Week One, and 81% in Week Three; this increased to 84% in Week Five, with a further increase to 89% in Week Seven, and reached a high of 92% at the end of Week Nine of posting and communicating daily learning objectives. Teacher Researcher B started off with a 73% class average in Week One, improving to a 75% class average in Week Three, with a slight increase to 77% class average in Week Five, a 75% class average in Week Seven, and finished with a class average of 92% in Week Nine. Teacher Researcher C had a class average 83% in Week One and an 86% class average in Week Three; there was a slight increase to 87% in Week Five, which further increased in 93% in Week Seven, and finished with a slightly higher average of 94% in Week Nine. Teacher Researcher D began with a class average of 84% in Week One, which improved to 86% in Week Three, 87% in Week Five, 88% in Week Seven, and finished with a class average of 90% after the ninth week of

posting and communicating daily learning objectives. Teacher Researcher E began Week One with a class average of 70%, and in Week Three dropped to a 67% class average. Week Five's class average rose to 78%; the seventh week rose again to 80%, and the ninth week of posting and communicating daily learning objectives finished with a class achievement of 86%.

Post Student Survey

Figure 16. Student Survey given after implementation of posting and communicating daily learning objectives.



Statement 1: I complete assigned homework.
Statement 2: Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning.
Statement 3: My teacher adequately prepares me for test/quiz content.
Statement 4: I am motivated to do well in my classes.
Statement 5: I am aware at the beginning of the period what we will be learning that day.
Statement 6: I openly vocalize when I don't understand something.

To conclude the data evaluation, teacher researchers conducted another survey which contained the same questions as the ones given in Week One's student survey. By the end of the action research project, 115 students often completed their assigned homework. Additionally, 30 students sometimes completed their assigned homework, and only 4 students rarely completed assigned work. The question regarding a teacher giving valuable assignments to help a student's learning showed 76 students responding that their teacher often gave valuable assignments. Moreover, 61 students stated that their teacher sometimes gave valuable assignments, and 12 students said that their teacher rarely or never gave valuable assignments.

In response to the statement about a teacher adequately preparing a student for test/quiz content, 85 students claimed that they were often prepared for their test or quiz. Furthermore, 62 students stated that they sometimes felt prepared for their test/quiz. Two students responded that they rarely feel prepared for their test or quiz.

The statement referring to a student's motivation level in class proved that 93 students said they felt more motivated in class. Of the surveyed students, 42 students believed that they sometimes felt more motivated in class. Finally, 14 students claimed that they were rarely motivated in class.

Exactly 105 students were often aware, at the beginning of the period, what the learning objectives and outcomes of the lesson plan were and 34 students were sometimes aware of what the learning objectives were. Finally, 10 students rarely or never were aware with the objectives and outcomes of the lesson plan.

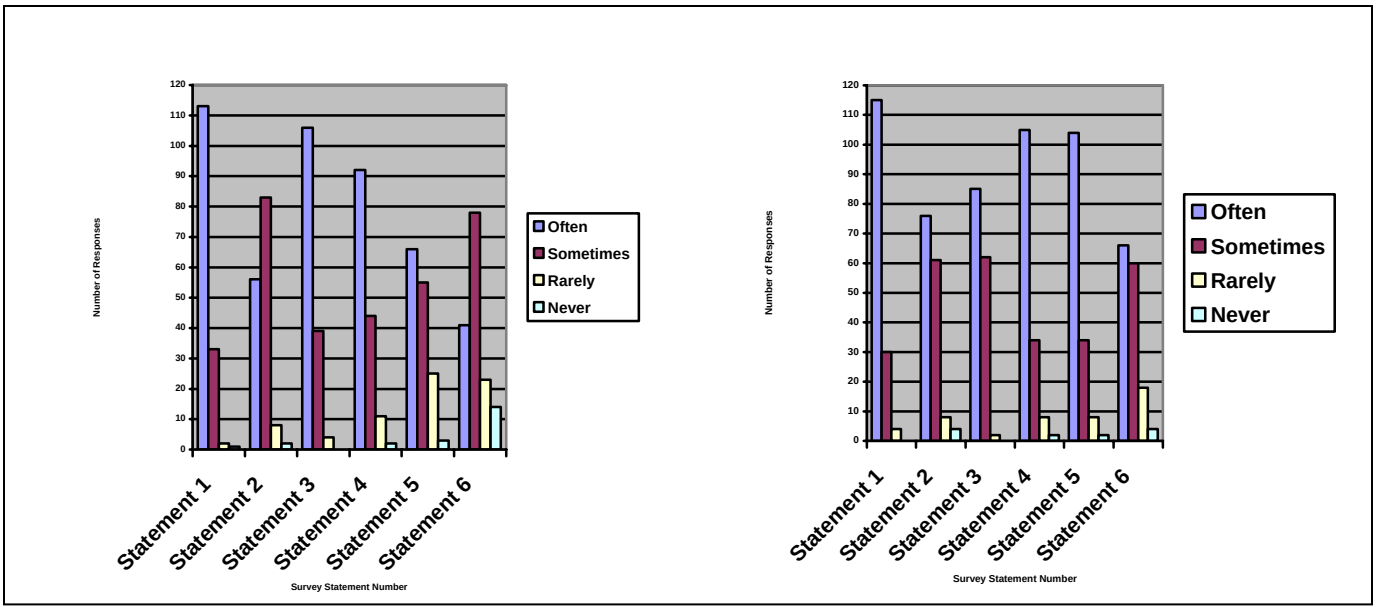
Of the students surveyed, 67 students openly vocalized when they did not understand an objective or learned material. In addition, 60 students sometimes vocalized their misunderstanding of an objective, and 18 students rarely vocalized that they did not comprehend

the objective. Four students claimed to never vocalize their misunderstanding of a learning objective.

Student Survey

In figure 17, there is a side-by-side comparison of the Student Survey conducted during week one and the Student Survey conducted during the last week of the action research project of posting and communicating daily learning objectives. The surveys showed increase in students' motivation.

Figure 17: Comparison of Pre and Post Student Surveys



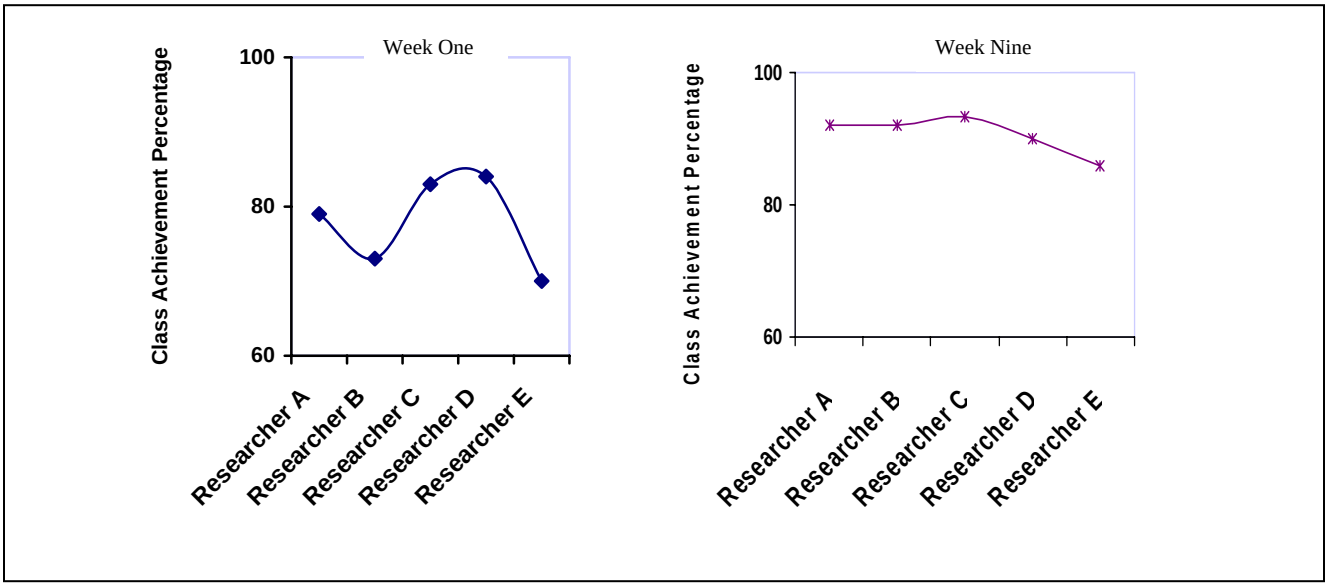
Statement 1: I complete assigned homework.
Statement 2: Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning.
Statement 3: My teacher adequately prepares me for test/quiz content.
Statement 4: I am motivated to do well in my classes.
Statement 5: I am aware at the beginning of the period what we will be learning that day.
Statement 6: I openly vocalize when I don't understand something.

While comparing and contrasting the two Student Surveys, there were many improvements made due to posting daily learning objectives. Although hardly any changes were

apparent in the completion of assigned homework, there was a significant change in the students' view on the value of assignments that help with their learning. For example, in Week Nine's survey, 67 students often found value in their assignments after the teacher researcher posted and communicated daily learning objectives. This is an increase of 20 students because in Week One, only 56 students found that their teacher gave valuable assignments that help with their learning. Next, there was a slight increase from 145 students in Week One who responded that their teacher often or sometimes prepares them for tests and quizzes, versus 147 students in Week Nine who responded that their teacher often or sometimes prepares them for their tests and quizzes. In addition, there was a slight change in student motivation, where two students who were never motivated to do well in class in Week One became motivated by Week Nine to do well in class.

The most drastic change is that students in Week Nine are more aware of the learning objectives at the beginning of the class. In week one's survey, 66 students claimed to be aware at the beginning of the period what will be learned that day. After nine weeks of posting and communicating daily learning objectives, 105 students claimed to be fully aware of the learning objectives at the beginning of the period. There was also an increase after nine weeks of posting and communicating daily learning objectives in comprehension; 67 students often vocalized when they did not understand the material, versus 41 nine weeks prior to that. Also, during the first week of the study, 14 students never vocalized when they had difficulties with the material. After nine weeks, only four students were left to communicate their misunderstandings.

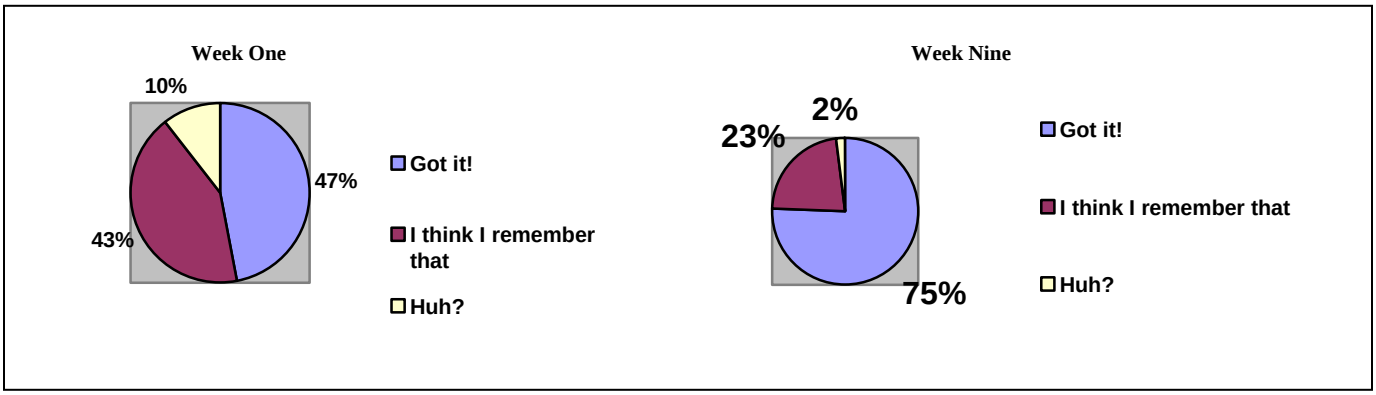
Figure 18. Week One and Week Nine Class Achievement Record side by side comparison.



After posting and communicating daily learning objectives, the research shows that students' achievement has increased. The class achievement records were taken bi-weekly after an assessment for which teachers posted and communicated daily learning objectives. In Week One, the average score was 77% when all students who took the survey are combined. The highest percentage in Week One from Teacher Researcher D was 84%; the lowest percent was 70% from Teacher Researcher E. After nine weeks of posting and communicating daily learning objectives, the average score from all students tested was 90%. The highest score with Teacher Researcher C was 93%, and the lowest score with Teacher Researcher E was 86%.

During the research, Student Comprehension Checklists were given bi-weekly before the unit assessment was given. Figure 20 shows a side by side comparison of the Class Achievement Records from the beginning of the research in Week One to the end of the research in Week Nine.

Figure 20. Week One and Week Nine Student Comprehension Checklist side by side comparison.



After posting and communicating daily learning objectives, there was an increase of students' understanding of the lessons. In Week One, 47% of students understood the learning objectives. In Week Nine, 75% of students understood the learning objectives and were comfortable being assessed on the learned material. This is a 28% increase in number of students understanding the learning objective over a course of nine weeks. In Week One, 10% of the students had no understanding of the learning objectives and were unable to successfully complete an assessment. Over the course of nine weeks, the number of students who lacked understanding decreased to only 2%.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The teacher researchers believed that the problem is that students lack motivation and achievement in today's classrooms. If this problem is not resolved soon, these teacher researchers believe that this generation will become not increase academic achievement and the motivation to learn. Therefore, students will then lack the skills necessary to effectively participate in an increasingly interactive society. Teachers need to post and communicate daily learning objectives to increase student achievement and motivation.

Teacher researchers strive to have students take away knowledge from their daily lessons. While it may be clear to educators what the desired outcome is, it may not be as clear to students. A simple lack of communication between the teacher and his or her students can decrease students' motivation and achievement. Realizing that they are acquiring intentional daily skills would allow students to see the importance and relevance of education in their lives, hence furthering academic growth, motivation, and achievement.

The five teacher researchers posted and communicated daily learning objectives to their students in a high school setting, in various subject areas, over a time period of nine weeks. After completing the research, the teacher researchers found that students were equally motivated during weeks one through nine. This motivation did not increase or decrease significantly in the duration of the nine week study.

Even though students' motivation did not significantly change, students' achievement increased drastically. Students clearly had a better understanding of the learned material and were aware what was expected of them during class. The increase in comprehension is apparent by looking at the Student Comprehension Checklist. There was a 28% increase in awareness of the learning objectives and level of comfort in terms of facing assessments on the material.

The Class Achievement Records were also evidence that the teacher researchers were successful. Class averages increased from 77% to 93%, which is an increase of 13%. This increase is similar comparing a student's grade changing from a C grade to an A grade. Teacher researchers are pleased to see such a dramatic change in class achievement simply by posting and communicating daily learning objectives.

Lastly, teacher researchers succeeded in improving students' awareness of class material and expectations. In the Student Survey, which was given at the beginning and end of the

research project, students were asked if they are aware at the beginning of the period what they are supposed to learn that day. In Week One, 61% of students claimed that they were fully aware of daily expectations. During Week Nine, 70% of students were conscious of the desired learning objectives. This increase of 9% is exciting, and teacher researchers will continue to post and communicate daily learning objectives. They were overjoyed by the fact that their hard work and dedication paid off.

Teacher researchers would like to encourage all teachers to post and communicate daily learning objectives while continuing to maintain open communication with students and parents. Teacher researchers are excited to share their success story with their colleagues and communities. In order to have strong class achievement and motivated students, each and every educator is encouraged to post and communicate daily objectives. Due to the researches excitement, they decided to reflect individually upon their experiences. In doing so, they were ultimately able to discover that their thoughts and feedback were quite similar.

Reflections

Teacher Researcher A

To begin with, Teacher Researcher A implemented her action research plan eager and anxious to see the results. Would the students take to the learning objectives? Would they *actually* benefit from them? Would they view the teacher's ways as juvenile or pointless? Teacher Researcher A was full of mixed emotions, namely the fear that her hypothesis wouldn't be accurate. However, it wasn't long until she realized that she had the support of her fellow researchers, and she was not going through this alone. It soon became clear that her plan would, in fact, be a success, and her anxiety quickly faded.

The researcher was happy to observe early on that the students really seemed interested in the posting of daily learning objectives. Teacher Researcher A was very surprised by how naturally this came to her. It was a clear way to start off class each day, directing students' attention to the posted objectives followed by her discussing them. It was clear to the students, at this point, that class started. Additionally, it was a phenomenal way to close class each day, revisiting the same objectives and discussing comprehension with the students. The original goal of the action plan was not to necessarily make class time more organized and efficient, but surprisingly, this was one of the many positive effects.

Not only was class more organized and time effective, but communication definitely increased with the students as a result. The researcher recognized immediately students' increased willingness to ask questions or state what they need more work on. Students were able to do this both verbally at the end of class, as well as nonverbally through the Student Comprehension Checklist. It seemed that students weren't judged by their peers for additional questing or confusion, but rather, that it was simply part of the daily class routine. Although Teacher Researcher A was hoping this would be a result of the action plan, she didn't expect it to be as overwhelmingly clear as it was.

The researcher was not just happy with the results she saw in her students, but in her fellow researchers and self as well. It was completely clear early on that the researchers were there for one another, sharing a common goal: to do what is best for the students and improve their teaching. They relied heavily upon one another, sharing different techniques to revisit objectives as well as communicate them. They leaned that collaboration is truly invaluable amongst teachers, and it seems that they all, did in fact, grow from the action plan, both as educators and individuals.

Teacher Researcher A is confident that she will continue to implement the posting and communicating of daily learning objectives for the duration of her career. She firmly believes that nothing negative resulted from the plan, and the advantages are unreal. The climate of her classroom has been a mutually respectful zone where communication is essential. Additionally, she has learned to avoid assigning unnecessary assignments; if they don't serve a purpose of meeting an objective, then she doesn't assign it. She plans to continue this mentality, hoping she will continue to thrive as an educator as a result.

Teacher Researcher B

Likewise, Teacher Researcher B was excited to begin the process of posting daily learning objectives too. Teacher Researcher B had never posted daily learning objectives in her classroom until this project, and she soon discovered that daily learning objectives kept the students focused and on track. Teacher Researcher B began to notice that students were incredibly receptive to the learning objectives because they enjoyed the idea of knowing what direction the class would take for the day. Teacher Researcher B was surprised at how well the learning objectives seemed to work, and on the rarity that objectives were not posted, in the presence of a substitute teacher, students later acknowledge the missing objectives. Teacher Researcher B feels students' achievement and motivation increased due to the posting of daily learning objectives, undoubtedly.

Teacher Researcher B discovered that, as a teacher, she became more focused and accurate while communicating with her students. By posting daily learning objectives, she was not only communicating the lesson's goals to her class each day, but she was growing as a teacher and leader too. Teacher Researcher B began to realize the importance of daily learning

objectives, and she incorporated them in each class that she taught. Teacher Research B learned that organization and communication are the essential tools for clear learning objectives.

Students benefited greatly from the posting of daily learning objectives. For example, Teacher Researcher B noticed that students' motivation in and out of class improved due to the posting of learning objectives; students knew what they would be tested on, and the daily goals of the class were never hazy. Teacher Researcher B valued the posting of daily learning objectives, as did her classes.

Finally, Researcher B learned a lot about her colleagues during this project. Teacher Researcher B and her colleagues had to work closely together to accomplish their goals. They analyzed data, discussed methods, and organized materials. Without the teamwork that Teacher Researcher B and her colleagues experienced, the project would have been much more difficult to accomplish. Teacher Researcher B noticed that the climate of the research setting was exciting, interesting, and motivating since the research applied to the daily teaching lives of all the teacher researchers.

Teacher Researcher C

On a similar note, Teacher Researcher C centered the process of posting daily learning objectives with a new sense of openness. The researcher felt that he had reached a crossroads in his early teaching career. He was looking to refine his lesson planning and bring them together with the curricular goals of the school district. Teacher Researcher C decided to implement the posting of daily learning objectives through the use of a question-of-the-day program. This was a daily question that would be posted for the students in the classroom. The teacher researcher designed each daily question in a way that paralleled the main learning objective for the class period. The students were then responsible for writing down the question as well as the answer,

once it was clear that the information was covered in class. At times, the question was purely factually-based, whereas on other occasions, it would allow the students to reflect on a large concept that was covered in the class when more depth was needed for the objective.

As the teacher researcher began with the implementation of the program, the toughest part for the teacher was designing effective questions that met with the class objective. The other challenge for the teacher researcher was getting the students to accept and keep up with the program. The feedback from the students that completed the program, however, was very positive. The one complaint was that some students felt that the program was a lot of work. To alleviate the complaints, Teacher Researcher C was able to maintain motivation by having the written responses to the questions worth a grade; therefore, the students felt that their efforts were rewarded with easy points to raise their grade. As the process progressed, the researcher felt that the process became more effective since it was accepted as part of the daily routine for both the students as well as the teacher.

As an educator, the teacher researcher found the posting of daily learning objectives to be a very effective program. There were two areas, specifically, that its positive effects truly shined; namely, it gave a more clear focus for the goal of each day, both from a planning point of view as well as an implementation point of view. In fact, the feedback that the teacher received from people who came to observe his class was very positive in regards to how it added to the educational environment.

The posting of daily learning objectives, through the use of a question of the day has really caused a shift in the way that the teacher researcher plans and executes his lessons. While working through this project with his team, Teacher Researcher C was able to see that even though they implement their plans differently, all of the teachers were able to see a positive

outcome from their use. As a result, Teacher Researcher C has decided to continue with the posting of the daily learning objectives, as it has become a critical part of the teachers' daily routine.

Teacher Researcher D

In another social science classroom, Teacher Researcher D was a bit concerned at the beginning of the implementation of this action research project as she had not previously posted daily learning objectives for her students. She was worried that the students would reject the idea and not find the merits in its implementation. However, as the project developed throughout the quarter, Teacher Researcher D found that the students were quite receptive to the idea of starting class with clear goals.

As each day passed, the students came to appreciate the goals and checked at the end of each class to see if they fulfilled them. Teacher Researcher D observed that it gave her students a foundation in which to base the day's material upon and helped them grow throughout the quarter. As a result of posting and communicating daily learning objectives, the students' achievement in each class increased steadily as they were more prepared for upcoming assessments and were easily able to judge whether they needed to seek more help from the teacher. Teacher Researcher D also grew with the project's implementation as she became more comfortable with writing the learning objectives each day and came to depend on them as a guide for lesson planning. Her previous feelings of doubt and hesitation soon left as she realized the positive impact it was having not only on her students, but on her teaching as well. Even parents called to comment on its benefits, as they stated numerous times that they noticed their child becoming more confident in the material and their overwhelming new knowledge.

As the teacher researchers implemented this project, they imagined that the action research project would take a gradual progression, and hypothesized that its benefits would not be clearly displayed until the end. They also believed that the setting of the classroom would remain relatively unchanged. However, many of the teacher researchers, Teacher Researcher D in particular, noticed an increase in student achievement and motivation only a couple of weeks into the project's implementation. Moreover, the climate of the classroom began to evolve into one of purpose, while being driven by clear set goals. The students also arrived to class each day with more focus.

Throughout this action research project, Teacher Researcher D realized that her students are driven by clear cut goals and are more motivated to learn when a purpose for the material is established. In addition, she personally acquired more motivation to teach the material by developing, implementing, and communicating daily learning objectives. Teacher Researcher D will continue to post and communicate daily learning objectives far into her teaching career as she has seen the miraculous results of doing so. In addition, she will be more inspired to encourage her peers to do the same.

Teacher Researcher E

The positive feedback does not stop with the first four researchers, as Research E was able to grow from the experience as well. She works as a German teacher in the World Languages Department. Since she wanted to incorporate the action plan permanently if it was effective, she felt it would be best to conduct the implementation tools with her youngest classes—German I. The researcher found the process and the results to be an enlightening experience, and therefore recommends that every teacher post and communicate daily learning objectives. The goal is not only to increase students' motivation, but also their achievement.

Teachers of foreign languages often focus on little details such as subject-verb agreement and adjective endings, and unfortunately, often forget in the process to tell the students the purpose. For example, they might be learning to speak about their hobbies or how to describe their dream house, both of which are quite authentic. By posting these learning objects, the foreign language students focused on the goal of the class and not merely on a grammar point.

Teacher Researcher E's biggest fear was that the student achievement would decrease since the material got more challenging over time; surprisingly, however, the student achievement level did not only stay high, but it even increased. Teacher Researcher E found out that by posting and communicating daily learning objectives, students were better prepared for the assessments and also more attentive of what was expected of them. Teacher Researcher E also became more aware when students needed extra help or even more instructional time in certain cases by using the Student Comprehension Checklist. Teacher Research E never opted to alter the original assessment which was created at the beginning of the unit with the specific learning target in mind, but rather, offered students who need additional help tutoring outside of the classroom.

By posting and communicating the learning objects in student-friendly language, students both enjoyed the class and recognized their progress. By creating a portfolio over the entire school year, students visually saw their learning objects, their achievements, and their progress of becoming more fluent in another language.

Working on this research project as a group was very helpful. All researchers showed improvements in their students' achievement and motivation which proved that the posting and communication of daily learning objectives is effective in multiple subject areas as well as different grade levels in a high school setting. Sharing the success of this study made it even

more beautiful. Teacher Researcher E will continue to post and communicate daily learning objects in the future, not only in the German I level, but in every level of the German program, while also encouraging fellow teachers to do the same.

Summary

Overall, it seems clear that all five teacher researchers are impressed with their findings. They entered the action plan with mere hopes of success, and were showered with positive results. The benefits of the research are indefinable, as it has forever changed five educators. They all agree that the project was successful, and as a result, are devoted to the continuation of this practice for the duration of their careers. They feel fortunate to have taken part in such a profound, authentic practice, and unanimously recommend that all teachers consider implementing the posting and communication of daily learning objectives in their own classrooms. The researchers are confident that this practice can benefit all grade levels, content areas, and schools. There is no doubt that each of the researches proved to be quite dynamic, as they all grew as individuals, and as a team. They provided a support system for one another, where it was common to discuss new ideas and techniques to improve the communication with their students. As a result, students' achievement improved on all levels, and the researchers look forward to positively affecting the countless students to come in their futures.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Directions: Please place a checkmark under the appropriate response. You will not need to write your name on this and your responses will not affect your grade. Please answer honestly.

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. I complete assigned homework				
2. Teachers give valuable assignments that help with my learning (no busy work)				
3. My teacher adequately prepares me for test/quiz content. (no surprises)				
4. I am motivated to do well in my classes				
5. I am aware at the beginning of the period what we will be learning that day.				
6. I openly vocalize when I don't understand something				

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey

Please help us with our graduate project! If you have a minute, place a checkmark under the appropriate response. You will not need to write your name on this so we would appreciate your complete honesty. Please return to your department representative: Ninja Nagel, Sarah Althoff, or Katie O'Reilly. Thank you for your help!

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. I post and communicate daily learning objectives/targets for my students (not simply your agenda)				
2. I communicate the value of each assignment to the overall objectives of the unit to my students.				
3. My students are aware of what to expect in terms of content on tests and quizzes.				
4. Overall, my students display the motivation to succeed in my class.				
5. I revisit what we've learned at the end of each lesson.				
6. I check for student understanding at the end of				

each period.				

Use the space below for any additional comments or thoughts regarding daily learning objectives, low student achievement, or low student motivation.

APPENDIX C

Parent Survey

Dear Parents,

As you may already be aware, five Prairie Ridge teachers are conducting research regarding student achievement and motivation. We would appreciate your input and thoughts on the following questions regarding your child. If you have a moment, would you please place a checkmark under the appropriate response. Your responses will be kept confidential and will aid in improving Prairie Ridge for your student. Please have your child return this survey by Friday, November 10, 2006. Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Sarah Althoff, Katie O'Reilly, Ninja Nagel, Kristen Linde, and John Mason

	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. My student communicates daily what he or she learns in their classes.				
2. My student finds value in class assignments.				

3. My student shares their assignments, projects, tests, etc. with me.				
4. My student looks forward to going to school.				
5. I communicate with my student's teachers regularly.				

Use the space below for any additional comments or thoughts regarding your student's motivation, achievement, and communication.

APPENDIX D

Student Comprehension Checklist

Directions: Review the following learning objectives and check the category that best describes your comprehension level. This will help me see what we should spend some more time on, while also allowing you to see what you should know for upcoming assessments. Be completely honest, because this will NOT hurt your grade! I encourage

Learning Objectives:	Got it!	I think I remember that	Huh?
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.			

_____ _____ _____

3.

_____ _____ _____

4.

_____ _____ _____

5.

_____ _____ _____

APPENDIX E

Appendix ___

Achievement Record

Teacher: _____

Class Average

Week 3: _____

Week 5: _____

Week 7: _____

Week 9: _____