

Increasing Student Ownership in Individual
Progress through Student-Led Conferences

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Audrian Huff

Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of

Masters of Education

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Spring 2008

FACULTY APPROVAL

Increasing Student Ownership in Individual
Progress through Student-Led Conferences

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the project was to identify if student led conferences helped parents and students become more aware of student progress. The study was conducted in a combination first and second grade classroom. Both the students and the parents in the classroom completed a pre and post survey. The students completed the process of preparing and conducting a student led conference. The survey results and comments were analyzed for the differences in opinions from before the conference to after the conference. The survey showed parents felt student led conferences allowed for a better understanding of the individual child's progress. The survey also showed students became more aware of individual progress and how to set goals. The author concluded student led conferences should be implemented school wide.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Parent involvement has always been an important component of student success (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Historically, teachers have involved parents through traditional parent teacher conferences. The format of traditional conferences usually consisted of a meeting between the parents of the student and the teacher. The teacher then explained the student's progress through a report card. Traditional conferences rarely involved the student and parents often questioned teachers as to why a student performed a particular way. The responsibility for reporting the student's progress placed primarily on the teacher.

A new form of parent-teacher conferences has begun to be implemented in classrooms in the recent years; student led conferences. Student led conferences were conducted mainly by the student. The teacher served as a facilitator and sat back while the student and parents had a conversation about the student's progress. Students were given the opportunity to share work completed over the trimester and set goals based on the work.

The change in the format of parent-teacher conferences was led by the hope that students assumed more responsibility in the process and increased parent attendance. As a result, parents have become more involved in what students have learned and how the students have met student goals. "Data has shown most schools that implemented student-led conferences had a 95% increase in

attendance (Bailey & Guskey, 2001, p. xiii).”

Statement of the Problem

Traditional parent teacher conferences have caused stress and anxiety to everyone involved. Students often were anxious about a closed door meeting that took place during which teachers and parents discussed the student’s progress. Parents often felt uneasy about meeting with the teacher for the first time (Clark, 1999.) The stress and anxiety often resulted in a student’s lack of ownership in the student’s progress and low attendance at conferences by parents. In addition, parents were not receiving a clear picture of each child’s progress simply based on the student’s report card.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to measure the effects of student led conferences on a student’s and parents’ awareness of the student’s progress. This was measured by two surveys given to both parents and students prior to conferences and then again preceding the conferences. The surveys were given to a total of 44 students and the students’ parent or guardian. The author predicted the new conference format would increase student’s awareness of individual progress. In addition parents’ awareness of student progress would increase.

Delimitations

This project was conducted on 6 first grade students and 38 second grade students and the students’ parents or guardians. The study took place during the first round of conferences in the fall trimester. The students were in an English combination classroom, taught by two teachers, in an open classroom format.

The students predominately came from low income families as determined by the free and reduced lunch percentage in the school. Many of the parents worked more than one job and were not easily accessible to the teachers.

Eighty six percent of the students in the classroom were Hispanic and many came from homes in which Spanish was the primary language as reported by the parents at the time of enrollment. The teachers in the classroom did not speak Spanish which was a delimitation when teachers communicated to the Spanish speaking parents.

Since the tool used to measure the effects of student led conferences was a teacher made survey, the tool was neither valid nor reliable. The maturation of the students was a delimitation as well. The researcher had to consider the students' age when the researcher examined the results of the student survey.

Assumptions

The researcher met each of the requirements to be a highly qualified teacher and used the Washington Grade Level Expectations when students were assessed and set goals for the upcoming trimester. Parents were treated equally and parents' first languages were considered. Surveys, parent letters, and student report cards were sent home in both English and Spanish. Interpreters were brought in to interpret during the conferences. The parents were notified of the study, were explained the purpose, and were given the opportunity not to participate if uncomfortable with the process. The survey questions given to the parents were the same as the questions given to the students. The scale used for the students was adjusted in order to meet the needs of the students

developmentally.

Research Questions

A research question of the study was: Will first and second grade students become more aware of each student's progress and the steps students need to take to improve as a result of student led conferences? Another research question was: Will student led conferences help parents better understand how students are performing in school and what students need to improve?

Significance of the Project

"Parents' involvement in their children's education is widely considered to have substantial potential for benefiting children's development and academic performance, for improving schools, and for empowering parents (Kreider et al, 1998, p.1)." The implementation of student led conferences was one more way parents were made more aware of students' progress and became involved in school. More responsibility was placed on the students for each student's progress and students learned how to make improvements through goal setting.

One of the goals in the School Improvement Plan of the school in which the study was conducted was increased parent involvement. If the researcher identified the positive effect student led conferences had on student achievement and parent involvement, the process would be shared with the staff. The student led conference format would become a school-wide expectation affecting communication not only in one classroom but with all students and parents in the community.

Procedure

The researcher began by researching the format and effects of student led conferences. The results were shared with the building principal. The building principal approved the use of student led conferences as a trial in the combination classroom described above. The format was used on another second grade class by the researcher twice during the previous year.

The survey used in the study was created by the researcher. The Educational Effectiveness Survey, which was given to schools in state mandated school improvement, was used as a guide for the questions. Two surveys were created for both parents and students. One was given before conferences and one was given after conferences. The student survey was written in student friendly terms and both surveys were anonymous. All of the participants were given an opportunity to provide additional comments if participants wanted to do so.

In order to prepare for student led conferences, students set goals, organized student portfolios, and practiced the format with classmates. Parents were sent two letters. One explained the study and was attached to the survey. The other explained the purpose for student led conferences and what to expect. Parents were then given the opportunity to schedule a time for the conference during the designated conference week.

Definition of Terms

highly qualified teacher. The highly qualified requirements were mandated by the state to ensure teachers were providing quality instruction for student learning.

open format classroom. An open format classroom was an environment in which two teachers combined a classroom in a large room and taught together.

portfolio. A portfolio was a collection of student work from all subject areas from each trimester.

school improvement plan. The school improvement plan was a yearly plan created by schools in order to improve student achievement.

student led conferences. Student led conferences are a form of conferences during which students shared goals and pieces of work with parents and the teacher becomes a facilitator.

survey. A survey was a series of questions given to a group of people in order to get feedback about a group's feelings or opinions.

traditional parent-teacher conference. A traditional parent-teacher conference was a meeting conducted twice a year during which parents and teachers met to discuss a child's progress.

Acronyms

EES. Educational Effectiveness Survey

GLEs. Grade Level Expectations

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

In the review of literature the author decided to discuss the research on the importance of parent participation and the benefits for students, parents, and schools. Student led conferences were defined and the author researched the purpose of student led conferences. The methods included high school, middle school, and elementary formats as well as portfolios, goal setting, and student preparation.

Parent Participation and Student Achievement

Within in the last thirty years parent participation has become an integral part of students' education. The country and the states have implemented higher standards and high stakes testing. The pressure was placed on educators. In response, educators identified parent participation as a key factor (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001).

Parent participation has been defined in many ways by several authors. According to Barrera and Warner (2006) the key component of parent participation was communication (Barrera & Warner, 2006). The authors defined communication as “the foundation of a solid partnership between home and school (Berrara & Warner, 2006, p.73).” Brandes' (2005) definition closely correlated with the above authors when Brandes focused on the importance of active listening between home and school (Brandes, 2005). However, parent participation has been defined more specifically as “attending school functions

and parent-teacher conferences, providing encouragement to students, volunteering at school events, or taking an active role in the governance and decision making in the school (Cotton & Wikelund, pg. 1).”

Under each of the definitions presented by the above authors, parent participation has shown to have had a positive effect on student achievement. For students, parent participation provided opportunities for increased language development, encouraged and guided students with homework, and provided an improved opportunity for success in the future (Benefits of Parent Participation in Schooling, 2007). In fact research has shown the earlier parents were involved in students’ education the higher the achievement (Cotton & Wikelund, 2001). Not only did parent participation have a positive effect on students but on parents and schools as well. Parents became more aware of students’ progress and behavior. Parent participation increased parents’ skills and provided parents with family support. Teachers benefited by having the assurance that parents were there to support them and communicated about the child’s growth and concerns (Benefits of Parent Participation in Schooling, 2007).

Traditional Parent-Teacher Conferences

Traditional parent-teacher conferences normally meant the teacher scheduled a time for the parent to come to the school. Then, the parent and teacher met and discussed the student’s report card, progress in specific areas, and concerns with the child. There was only one problem with that. The most important person, the student, was not present. In reality, the student was probably left home to worry about what the teacher told the parents (Ramsey, 1998).

With the traditional parent-teacher conference format parents left and felt as though there was a misunderstanding about the student's progress. Often parents did not know what to expect when parents went from classroom to classroom for conferences because teachers conducted the conferences so differently. Also, the teacher was the only one who really understood the standards and what a student's work should look like when a student met standards. The focus was placed more on the grade earned than on the skills and strategies the student needed to improve (Holland, 1997).

Another concern about traditional parent teacher conferences was the students meeting grade level standards. The traditional format was not very informative for parents in a situation where students were performing on level. Parents were not informed about what to do to help students to continue making progress. In this situation, Clark suggested parents specifically ask teachers what goals had been set for the child and what the parent could work on with the child at home (Clark, 1999).

Definition and Purpose of Student Led Conferences

Student led conferences have been identified as one type of parent participation which has had a positive effect on student achievement. "Student-led parent conferences may be the biggest breakthrough in communicating about student achievement in the last four decades," said Dr. Richard Stiggins (Paglin, 2001, p. 2). As defined by Bailey and Guskey (2001), "A student led conference is a conference with parents led by the student. The classroom teacher's role becomes that of a facilitator (Bailey & Guskey, 2001, p. xii)." The Arkansas

Education Organization (2007) extended the above definition by adding that student led conferences gave students the opportunity to “show parents their achievements as well as any areas needing improvements to an authentic audience (“Arkansas Education Organization,” 2007, p. 1).” Student led conferences were also a time when students discussed strengths, weaknesses, student performance, and student goals (Borba & Olvera, 2001.)

In this author’s review of the literature each of the researchers agreed on one thing: the traditional parent teacher conferences were missing the most important person; the student. Bailey and Guskey (2001) cited the 3 R’s as the purpose for student led conferences. The 3R’s were relevance, responsibility, and reporting. The process of student led conferences required the teachers to become more intentional in what the teacher taught and increased students’ awareness of the importance of what students learned (Bailey & Guskey, 2001). Through the process of student led conferences the student was forced to become more accountable and responsible for each student’s individual progress. Students were informed on how each of the students were evaluated and how the next level of achievement could be attained (Cleland, 1999).

Parents received a better picture of where the child was performing since the parents saw student work, learning goals, and information about behavior and homework. Student growth was shown over time in the form of a portfolio collection and parents learned how to help the student at home. (Bailey & Guskey, 2001).

Process and Methods Used for Student Led Conferences

There were many different schools that had researched and experimented with student led conferences. Each of the schools conducted the conferences using the same basic components but with a few changes in order to meet the needs of students. However, each school had the same concept: “the student is in charge of the academic conference with the parents. (Hackmann, 1997, p. 1)” In this author’s research, many of the examples of student led conferences were from middle schools or high schools and only a small sample of examples were from elementary experiences. At one middle school the move from traditional conferences to student led conferences began with buy in from the administration. The administration, along with teacher leaders, were sent to trainings which involved the use of portfolios. The administration in this school then implemented portfolio assessment in every classroom in order to keep the process consistent (Juniewicz, 2003).

The next important component of student led conferences was to inform the parents of the process and the reasons for the change. Many researchers found parent notification was done through various newsletters, teacher letters, and student invitations. Hackmann (1997) even suggested parents be asked to come with questions for the student as well (Hackmann, 1997). A well organized schedule was another essential piece to the process. Administrators and teachers realized the importance that conferences be scheduled at a time when many parents could attend and that parents were provided with the purpose for student led conferences. In addition, educators stressed the significance of having all of

the above communication provided in the parents' first language if applicable (Starr, 2002).

The third step in the preparation for student led conferences was to prepare the students. Regardless of whether schools used portfolios, charts, or other tools for reporting, all researchers realized that teachers needed to set clear goals and objectives for the students. The process used to set up student led conferences took preparatory work and advanced planning. Teachers who implemented the process successfully began at the very beginning of the year. One example used in an elementary classroom was the use of "We Can Charts." Before the year even started the teacher decided on a clear set of objectives and goals for the year which would later be used to build the students' "We Can Charts." The teacher also collected samples of student work and goal setting. The "We Can Charts" were lists of skills and strategies students used in all subject areas. The charts were used as a tool for students during the conference (Cleland, 1999).

The next step in the process used to implement student led conferences was student practice. In order for students to be prepared, students needed to know what to expect. First, the teachers modeled what the conference would look like. Students then practiced with classmates several times until the students felt comfortable with the process. The training included how parents should be greeted, how to guide parents where to sit, the process of sharing information, and closing the conference (Borba & Olvera, 2001).

The final steps were the actual conference and the assessment of the conference. During the conference the student shared progress made throughout

the year as was practiced. The teacher played the role of an audience and guide along with the parents. When the conference concluded, the teacher was there to answer any further questions or schedule a parent meeting if requested.

Evaluation and assessment of the process was an essential component of the process. Parents would always be provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the process and suggestions for improving the conferences (Hackmann, 1997).

Summary

The literature reviewed by the author discussed the value of parent participation and the definition, methods, and benefits of student led conferences. Parent participation was identified as an integral part of a child's education and student-led conferences seemed to be a valuable tool which increased the value of the communication.

The traditional parent-teacher conference format was also discussed in the literature. Parent concerns with the format included lack of continuity among teachers in the same school and a lack of understanding of the learning targets for the students and how to achieve the targets.

Finally, the literature reviewed identified student-led conferences as an involved process with the student as the most important component. The literature highlighted the role of the student. Students were active leaders in deciding the learning objectives, goal setting, and sharing individual progress with parents.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The author implemented student led conferences with a group of second grade students. The students went through the process of choosing work samples, setting goals, and practicing for the conference. Prior to the conference both parents and students were given a survey with the same questions in order to identify both the parents' and students' perceptions and opinions of the students' attitudes and teacher communication. Following the conferences parents and students completed an additional survey to identify if parent attitudes and opinions had changed due to the information shared during student led conferences.

Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative research method in this study. A survey was given before and after the implementation of student led conferences in order to answer the research questions.

Participants

A group of 6 first graders, 38 second graders and 44 of the students' parents were the participants for this study. The study was conducted during the fall conference time. Parents were asked to participate voluntarily so feedback from all parents was not received. Some of the parents surveyed spoke Spanish and the rest spoke English.

Instruments

A survey was used to measure the effectiveness of student led conferences. There were two different forms of the survey created; one given prior to the conference and the other after the conference. The only difference in the two surveys was the question specifically asking for parents' opinion about the effectiveness of the conference. The students were given an identical survey only written in child friendly language. At the conclusion of the survey both parents and students were provided with the opportunity to write comments about the process. The survey was neither valid nor reliable since the survey was teacher created.

Design

A teacher created survey was used as the qualitative method of research. The survey was created using the EES as an example. Both the parents and the students were given the survey before and after the fall student led conference.

Procedure

The researcher began by researching the format and effects of student led conferences. The results were shared with the building principal. The building principal approved the use of student led conferences as a trial in the combination classroom described above. The format was used on another second grade class by the researcher twice during the previous year.

The survey used in the study was created by the researcher. The Educational Effectiveness Survey (EES), which was given to schools in state mandated school improvement, was used as a guide for the questions. Two surveys were created

for both parents and students. One was given before conferences and one was given after conferences. The student survey was written in student friendly terms and both surveys were anonymous. All of the participants were given an opportunity to provide additional comments if participants wanted to do so.

In order to prepare for student led conferences, students set goals, organized student portfolios, and practiced the format with classmates. Parents were sent two letters. One explained the study and was attached to the survey. The other explained the purpose for student led conferences and what to expect. Parents were then given the opportunity to schedule a time for the conference during the designated conference week.

Treatment of the Data

The author analyzed the surveys for differences between the surveys given prior to student led conferences and the surveys given after the conference. Comments from both students and parents were discussed from both surveys and areas of improvement were identified for the next round of conferences. The author also looked for common themes among survey answers.

Summary

The research question of whether students and parents became more aware of student progress through the process of student led conferences was answered through a qualitative research method. A group of first and second grade students and the students' parents were given a survey before and after student led conferences. The survey was teacher created and consisted of six questions. The student survey consisted of the same questions but was written in student friendly

terms. The results of the survey were then analyzed for common themes.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

A teacher created survey was used to identify students' and parents' attitudes and opinions about the use of student led conferences. The survey was given to both groups of people prior to the conference and again after the conference. The information was then organized and interpreted in relation to the research questions.

Description of the Environment

This project was conducted on 6 first grade students, 38 second grade students, and the 44 students' parents or guardians. The study took place during the first round of conferences in the fall trimester. The students were in an English combination classroom, taught by two teachers, in an open classroom format.

The students predominately came from low income families as determined by the free and reduced lunch percentage in the school. Many of the parents worked more than one job and were not easily accessible to the teachers.

Eighty-six percent of the students in the classroom were Hispanic and many came from homes in which Spanish was the primary language. The teachers in the classroom did not speak Spanish which was a delimitation when teachers communicated to the Spanish speaking parents.

Since the tool used to measure the effects of student led conferences was a teacher made survey, the tool was neither valid nor reliable. The maturation of the students was a delimitation as well. The researcher had to consider the

students' age when the researcher examined the results of the student survey.

Research Question

A research question of the study was: Will first and second grade students become more aware of each student's progress and the steps students need to take to improve as a result of student led conferences? Another research question was: Will student led conferences help parents better understand how students are performing in school and what students need to improve?

Results of the Study

The surveys given to parents and students prior to and after the conference showed sufficient changes. The changes allowed the researcher to make conclusions and answer the research questions presented. The surveys showed an overwhelming change which represented a positive attitude towards the student led conference format (see appendices p. 30-37).

The first question asked parents if the teachers helped the students set goals. Before the conference, 58% of the parents selected almost always true, 26% selected often true, 8% chose sometimes true, and 8% were unsure. Whereas after the student led conferences, 81% of parents chose almost always true and the other 19% chose often true. None of the parents were unsure or believed almost never true. One of the parents responded in the comments section with, "I am pleased to see the teacher setting higher goals for my child than what is standard and giving her the confidence and assistance to reach them."

Survey question number three asked parents if the teachers talked with the students about how to improve the student's learning. Prior to the student led

conferences, 58% of parents chose almost always true, 34% chose often true, and 8% were unsure. After the conference 81% of parents felt the question was almost always true and the remaining parents, 19%, chose often true.

Another significant question presented to parents was the question about whether parents felt student led conferences gave a good indication of each child's progress. Question number seven was only added to the after conference survey. The results showed that 91% of parents selected almost always true and the other 9% of parents chose often true. Thirty eight of the 44 parents given the survey prior to conferences returned the survey where as thirty two of the 44 parents returned the surveys to the teachers after the conferences.

The results from the student survey also showed a positive change from the pre survey to the post survey. On question number two students were asked if teachers talked to the students about how the students were performing. Prior to conferences 77% of students responded with a yes and 23% said no. After students went through the conference process 91% of the students marked yes and only 9% said no.

Another question asked if the participants felt like students were doing a good job in school. Eighty-four percent of students said yes and 16% of students marked no prior to conferences. Later, 71% of students marked yes and 29% of students said no. This showed a decrease in the number of students who felt successful after the conference process.

The last survey question was only given after the conference process. This question asked if students were excited about sharing growth at the student led

conferences. Eighty-three percent of students said yes and the remaining 17% of students said no. In the comment section of the survey given prior to conferences one student said, "I think my teachers need to help me set goals." Another student commented, "I think I am doing a good job in school." After conferences one student said, "I feel like I'm not doing a good job in school." Another student said, "I like goals and I need help on math." Forty-three students were surveyed prior to student led conferences and 35 students were surveyed after the conferences. The change in numbers was due to student absences and students who were out of the room for other services at the time the survey was given.

Findings

The analysis of the survey results and the comments from both parents and students indicated the process and implementation of student led conferences increased student and parent awareness of how students were performing and where students needed to go next. As shown above, parent opinions about whether students set goals and whether students were made aware of how to increase individual learning improved greatly from prior to the conference to after the conference. Parents saw students setting goals and identifying students' strengths. The following comments from parents after attending a student led conference were an example of the attitudes of the parents. "I think the student led conferences are a good idea. My son will feel comfortable talking in front of people." "My husband and I were both impressed by how our son presented himself during the conference."

The students' opinions of whether the teachers talked to the students about

goals and how to improve learning also improved after student went through the process, prepared, and conducted the student led conferences. After the conferences all of the students responded with an increased interest in subjects and concepts taught. Students had a better understanding of what to do to improve individual learning and knew how to set goals. Student opinions were more negative after the conferences on one of the survey questions. A greater percentage of students felt less successful in school. The researcher believed the negative results could have been because students were made more aware of where each individual student was performing in relation to the grade level standards.

Discussion

Parent communication has been identified as a major component which impacted student learning. Many schools have implemented student led conferences in an effort to improve communication of student growth and expectations. The results of the survey supported the idea that student led conferences improved parent understanding of the student's progress and how to improve the student's learning. The students also became more aware of individual learning and how to improve in each area. Overall, student led conferences had a positive impact on both parents and students.

Summary

A qualitative research method was used to evaluate the effectiveness of student led conferences. A teacher created survey was given to both the students and the parents who participated in the process both before and after the conferences. The

results were then analyzed for changes in parent and student opinions as well as for changes in the comments made by the participants.

The outcomes of the survey concluded that student led conferences did have a positive effect on both parents and students. Parents had a better understanding of where the child was performing and how to improve learning. Students were more aware of the grade level expectations and what needed to be done to reach the expectations. The student led conference format allowed students to be more involved in the process and take ownership in each student's individual learning. The conference was no longer a meeting between the parents and the teacher to see what grades were given to the students. The student became the most important factor.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Parent participation and successful two way communication between parent and teacher have always been an important component of a child's success. One way of improving parent and teacher communication was through student led conferences. Student led conferences were a new format of conferencing in which the student played the most important role. The researcher conducted a study in order to identify if student led conferences were a good communication tool for parents, teachers, and students.

Summary

The author conducted a qualitative study in order to answer two research questions. The first was: Will first and second grade students become more aware of each student's progress and the steps students need to take to improve as a result of student led conferences? The second research question was: Will student led conferences help parents better understand how students are performing in school and what students need to improve?

To find the answers for the above questions a parent and student survey was created using the EES as a guide. The participants were the students and the students' parents in a first and second grade combination classroom. Students in the classroom went through the process of creating a portfolio for the conference. The portfolio included work samples, goal setting, behavior graphs, and homework graphs. The surveys were given to both groups of participants before

and after the student led conferences. The researcher analyzed both the survey responses and the comments from each group participants for changes in opinions from before the conferences to after the conferences.

Conclusions

The analysis of the survey results demonstrated that parents did get a better idea about how the child was performing and how to help the child improve. The student survey results also showed that students had a better understanding of the learning targets, how the targets were reached, and how to move to the next step. Students showed a greater interest in the learning and parents became more aware of the goals students set and the students' attitudes towards school.

Recommendations

Based on the study conducted, the author would recommend a school wide implementation of student led conferences. In order to gain staff support, the author suggests sharing the results of this study with the entire staff as well as the comments from the parents and students. The staff would be encouraged to adopt a standard portfolio format to ensure consistency from classroom to classroom for the parents and students. In order to inform parents of the new school wide conference format, the author recommends the school holds a series of parent meetings or send letters informing parents of the new process and the purpose for having student led conferences.

To increase the effectiveness of the student led conferences, the author recommends that teachers use learning targets in each classroom. The learning targets would then be used to help students set goals for the trimester. The use of

learning targets in each classroom would also encourage continuity throughout the school and make teachers more purposeful.

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APPENDICES

1. Prior to student led conferences parent survey results and comments:

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Almost Never True	Unsure
1. My child's teachers help him/her set goals.	58%	26%	8%	0%	8%
2. My child's teachers talk to my child about how he/she is doing.	50%	34%	8%	0%	8%
3. My child's teachers talk to him/her about how to improve on something.	58%	34%	0%	0%	8%
4. My child is interested in what he/she is learning.	61%	26%	8%	0%	5%
5. My child feels comfortable and knows how to ask for extra help.	47%	21%	24%	5%	3%
6. My child feels that he/she is doing a good job in school.	61%	13%	24%	0%	3%

Parent Comments:

“I am not sure how to answer this since I have not been in his class to observe. I can see that he is having problems with his math work. For some reason he is getting confused with addition and subtraction.”

“My child enjoys schools and is always interested in homework and reading.”

“Overall, I believe my child is doing a good job. I just think maybe a little more communication between teacher and parents. I would like to see more progress reports to know how my child is doing in school.”

“I think my son will do better when he is praised by his responsibility to return his homework. My son is trying hard to be responsible.”

“My child loves school and has so much fun in class.”

“My child is so excited that she is learning a lot. She was happy about her butterfly project. I’m happy that she likes to learn.”

“I don’t have an opinion about the teachers because my daughter has only been at this school for a week.”

“He loves school and is always excited about the new things he’s learning.”

“This survey was very difficult. I really learned a lot from this. Thank you.”

“Encouraging the child to be responsible for returning homework or no recess is great. I feel comfortable coming to the teacher and/or classroom to look at my child’s work.”

2. After student led conferences parent survey results and comments:

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Almost Never True	Unsure
1. My child's teachers help him/her set goals.	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%
2. My child's teachers talk to my child about how he/she is doing.	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%
3. My child's teachers talk to him/her about how to improve on something.	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%
4. My child is interested in what he/she is learning.	81%	3%	3%	0%	0%
5. My child feels comfortable and knows how to ask for extra help.	63%	25%	9%	3%	0%
6. My child feels that he/she is doing a good job in school.	75%	6%	19%	0%	0%
7. I believe that student led conferences give me a good idea about my child's progress.	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%

Parent Comments:

"I think my son is learning a lot."

"I'm happy that my daughter is learning a lot. She likes her teacher and her class."

“I am please to see the teacher setting higher goals for my child than what is standard and giving her the confidence and assistance to reach them.”

“My husband and I were both impressed by how our son presented himself during the conference. We are both pleased by having you as our son’s teacher. You are the best, thanks again for all you do to help in succeeding into our son’s future.”

“You guys are doing a great job.”

“Thank you.”

“I really appreciate the teachers and my son is very happy at school.”

“I better understand the survey. I fell that my child’s teachers are doing a very good job.”

“I think my child is doing good, only I think he needs to work on focusing more on his work then what’s going on around him. Thank you for the work and effort you put in with him while he’s in class.”

3. Prior to student led conferences student survey results and comments:

	Yes	No
1. My teacher helps me set goals.	86%	14%
2. My teachers talk to me about how I'm doing.	77%	23%
3. My teachers tell me how I can improve on things.	84%	16%
4. What I am learning is interesting to me.	91%	9%
5. I know I can ask for extra help if I need it.	84%	16%
6. I feel like I am doing a good job in school.	86%	14%

Student Comments:

"I think my teachers need to help me set goals."

"I feel like I am in trouble all the time."

"I like the butterflies."

"I am worried about getting bullied."

"I didn't know the kids here because I was new in the school."

"I like when we did the milk pan."

"I like recess."

"I like writing."

“I like school a little bit.”

“I want to do more writing.”

“I like to learn about butterflies.”

“I need help with number strings.”

“My school is good because we learn about math and butterflies.”

“I do not know how to count by 5.”

“I do good in writing.”

“I have fun in school.”

“I liked the butterflies because they were painted ladies.”

“I am doing good in my classroom.”

“I like when we let the butterflies go.”

“I want to be called on more. It makes me feel sad.”

“I think I am doing a good job in school.”

“At school I learn a lot of stuff and I like school.”

“At school it is fun. We learned about butterflies.”

“I am afraid to make friends.”

“I like school so much.”

4. After student led conferences student survey results and comments:

	Yes	No
1. My teacher helps me set goals.	91%	9%
2. My teachers talk to me about how I'm doing.	91%	9%
3. My teachers tell me how I can improve on things.	91%	9%
4. What I am learning is interesting to me.	100%	0%
5. I know I can ask for extra help if I need it.	86%	14%
6. I feel like I am doing a good job in school.	71%	29%
7. I was excited about sharing my growth during student-led conferences.	83%	17%

Student Comments:

“I want to learn to do place value.”

“I like making friends.”

“I love reading to my teacher.”

“I like when we let the butterflies go.”

“I want to learn about dinosaurs.”

“I like school and math.”

“I feel like I’m not doing a good job in school.”

“I like goals.”

“I like school. It is fun.”

“I don’t think I’m doing a good job in school.”

“I need help on math.”

“I liked when we learned about the butterflies.”

“I’m worried about losing my friends.”

5. Sample letter writing in English and Spanish to invite parents to participate in the study:

October 8, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are currently working on completing our master's degrees. As part of this process we are conducting a research project on students' awareness of their progress in our classroom. In order to identify this we will be giving them two surveys which will include six questions. We will also be asking the parents and guardians to answer the same six questions. We have attached the survey and would appreciate you taking the time answer these questions. Please feel free to add any additional comments at the bottom and return it with your child at your earliest convenience. We would like these surveys to be confidential so please do not sign your name. Upon completion of our project we would be happy to share our findings with you. Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
(research author)

10 de octubre de 2007

Estimados Padres y Tutores,

Actualmente estamos trabajando para obtener nuestros Títulos de Maestría. Como parte de este proceso estamos llevando a cabo un proyecto de investigación sobre el conocimiento conciente de los estudiantes en cuanto a su progreso en nuestro salón de clase. A los estudiantes se les dará dos encuestas con preguntas referentes a su educación. También les estaremos pidiendo a los padres y tutores que contesten las mismas preguntas sobre el conocimiento de los estudiantes acerca de su progreso. Hemos adjunto la encuesta y les agradeceríamos que tomaran el tiempo de contestar estas preguntas. Por favor siéntase libre de añadir cualquier comentario adicional debajo y devuélvalo con su hijo tan pronto le sea posible. Deseamos mantener estas encuestas en confianza así que por favor no firme su nombre. Al terminar nuestro proyecto estaremos contentos de compartir las conclusiones con usted. Gracias una vez más por su tiempo.

Atentamente,
(research author)

6. Sample letter written in English to invite parents to participate in the student led conferences:

October 31, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This year's parent teacher conferences will be formatted differently than the traditional conferences you may have attended in the past. In our classroom, students will be leading the conferences. We will be using this new format because we believe you and your child will benefit most from it. Your child has earned his/her own grades and will take ownership in them.

Students have worked very hard to prepare themselves to share their progress with you. They have chosen work to highlight their growth and have set goals for the next trimester. Therefore, it is very important that your child attend his/her conference with you. This is a time to celebrate your child's education and achievements. We hope that you enjoy discussing your child's progress with him/her and we look forward to meeting you as your child leads their first trimester conference. If you have any questions please feel free to call us at (researcher's phone number)

Sincerely,
(research author)

7. Sample of student portfolio cover

1st Trimester Portfolio



By: _____

November 2007

8. Sample of student behavior graph

Name: _____

2nd Trimester Behavior Graph

Days in Green	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63									

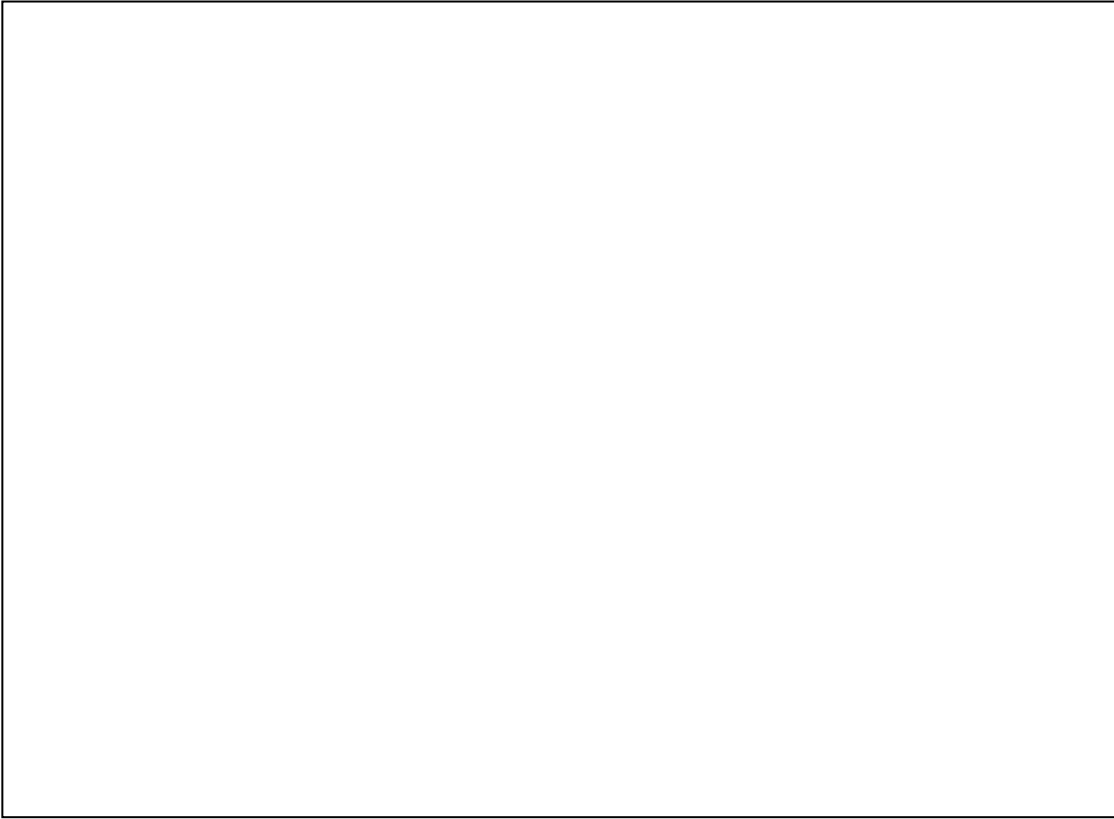
Days in Yellow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63									

Days in Red	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63									

Days in Blue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63									

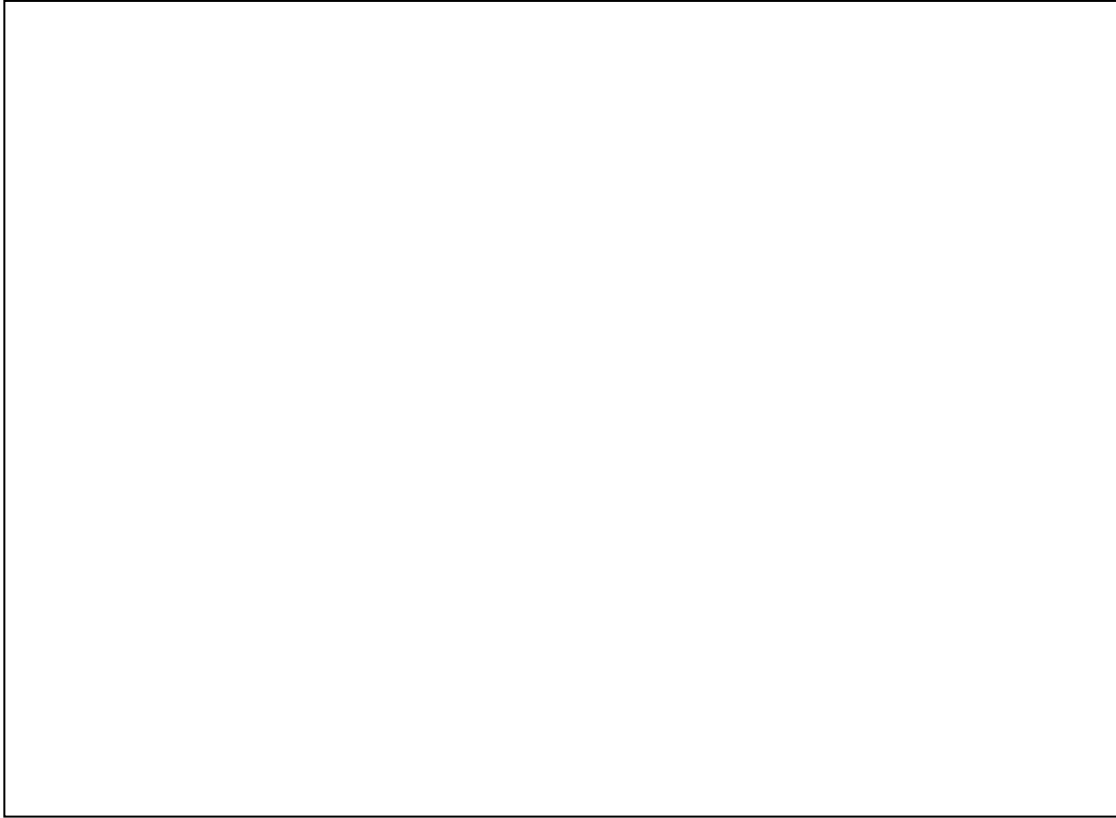
Sample of subject covers

Reading



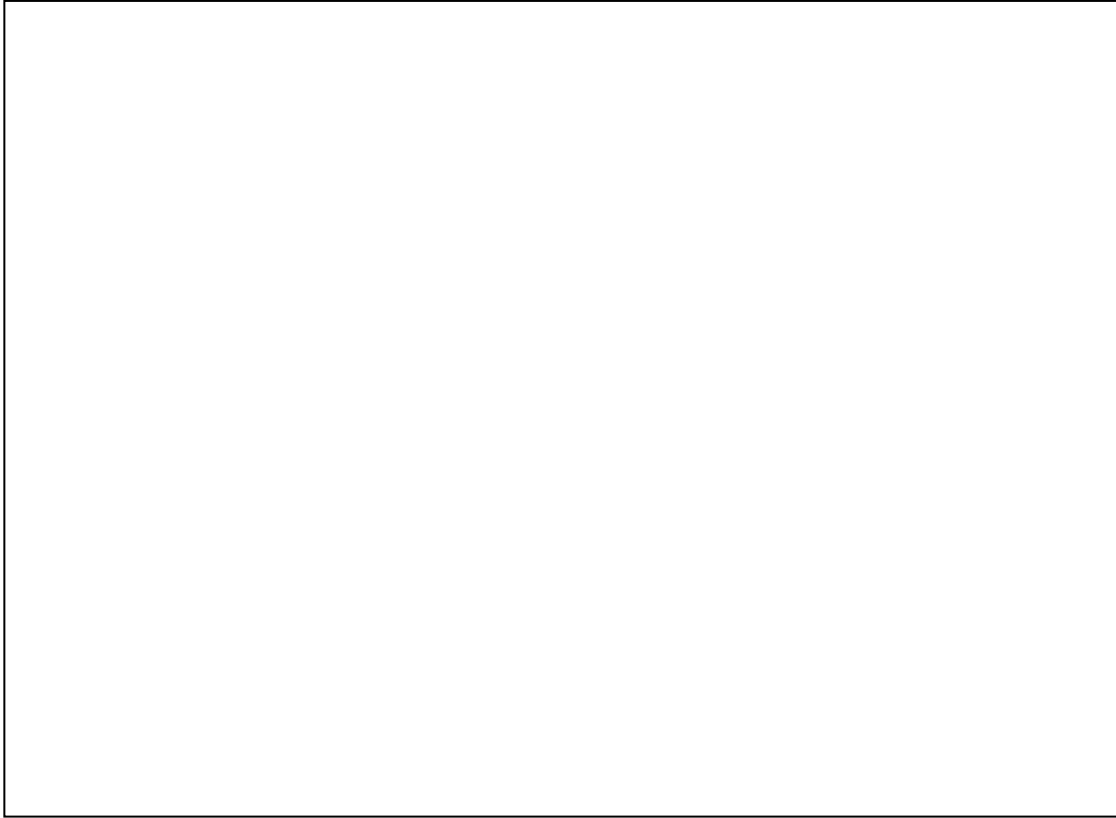
What I enjoy about reading:

Writing



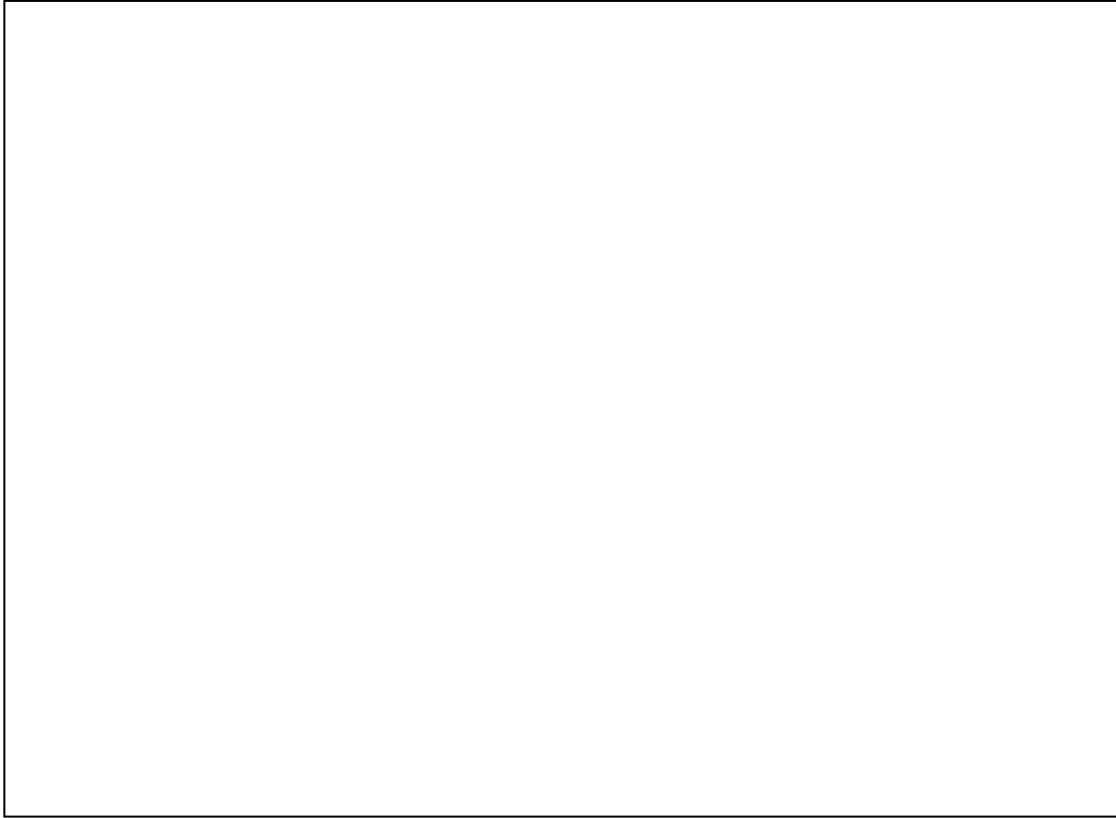
What I enjoy about writing:

Math



What I enjoy about math:

Science



What I enjoy about science:

11. Sample of student goal setting form

Name: _____

Date: _____

P~D~C~A Cycle

Subject: _____

