**Undergraduate Action Research Paper No. 21**

***The Effects of Goal Setting to Increase Motivation***

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**Introduction**

Goal setting and motivation go hand in hand. Without motivation, the person who is completing the goal will have no drive to complete the goal. Goal setting in an academic environment can help students to become self-regulated and confident learners who are motivated to achieve more with each goal that they set (Locke & Latham, 2006; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Studies show that students who set and achieve difficult goals build self-efficacy, which leads to increased academic performance and engagement in the classroom (Zimmerman et al., 1992). This research explored whether using goal-setting and motivational strategies could improve my kindergarten focus student’s overall engagement during the school day as well as his motivation to complete classwork.

This study took place in a rural school in the southeastern United States that serves pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. During the 2018-2019 school year, there were a total of 227 students. Of these students, 113 were female and 113 were male. Eighty-seven percent of students identified as White, seven percent as Hispanic, and four percent as Black with 52 percent of the students qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

This study took place within a kindergarten class of 17 students. Eleven of these students were males and six were females. In this class, one student identified as Hispanic and the other students (n=16) identified as White. One student had been issued an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and one student received services for English Language Learners. There were five students identified as requiring intervention who were pulled for small group intervention with the teacher every morning for fifteen minutes. Three of the students were pulled from the classroom to receive speech therapy two or three times a week.

This classroom was designed with the goal of creating a positive learning environment for the students as evidenced by features such as the small reading area which included a bean bag chair and leveled texts as a space to invite students to sit and read comfortably. There was also a rug at the front of the classroom where the teacher gathered students for lessons and group work. A variety of learning resources were in use in this classroom; including a document camera, a projector, four desktop computers, and a multitude of educational materials that the students used during center time. Students were seated in table groups of four to five students per table. This arrangement allowed the teacher to walk around the classroom during instruction to monitor the students’ behavior and progress. This environment was conducive to safe and meaningful learning experiences.

**Statement of the Problem**

Many students in the classroom appeared motivated and ready to learn, but one student ignored all directions and showed no desire to complete any coursework throughout the day. The student became a distraction to other students at his table. Therefore, I wanted to discover ways to engage this student for his own best interests.

**Question**

This study sought to explore the following research question: How can the use of goal-setting techniques impact my ability to reach a student who is struggling with motivation to participate in class? To answer this question, is important to first define *goals* and *goal-setting.*

**Review of Literature**

**What are Goals?**

Goals are defined as cognitive representations of desired end states that someone is committed to attain (Milyavskaya & Werner, 2018). According to Milyavskaya and Werner, the definition for goal setting can be broken down into three separate parts: (a) cognitive representations, (b) a desired end state, and (c) the commitment to a goal. When referring to a goal as a *cognitive representation*, it is the idea of using future oriented thoughts to make decisions that will ultimately guide the individual’s behavior (Milyavskaya & Werner, 2018). Goals require an individual to imagine a *desired end state* or result of following the steps to reach the goal that they have set for themselves. The desired end state describes what *state* the individual wants to move towards and attain. If an individual is lacking motivation to attain this desired end state, there will be no energy to encourage positive action or sustain motivation to achieve the goal (Milyavskaya & Werner). *Commitment* helps individuals distinguish their goals from wishes and fantasies. Intent is a key component of commitment. Without intent, an individual will not be motivated to move towards their desired end state (Milyavskaya & Werner). Thus, goals are defined as the ideas that an individual is committed to attaining to reach a specific desired end state.

**Goal Setting Strategies**

Locke and Latham (2006) have mapped out a goal-setting theory providing information about different types of goals and how they can be set. The goal-setting theory was developed over a span of 25 years in industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology with research rooted in around 400 lab and field studies. These studies found that when goals described as specific and hard are set, such goals lead to higher levels of performance than easy, vague, or abstract goals (Locke & Latham, 2006). Goals considered hard are motivating to the individual because they require the person to attain more to be satisfied than an easy goal (Locke & Latham). Within the goal-setting theory, Locke and Latham highlight key moderators of goal-setting as (a) feedback, (b) commitment to the goal, (c) task complexity, and (d) situational constraints.

*Feedback* is important to the person who has set or is working to attain the goal because it is necessary for them to track their progress. *Commitment* is also necessary for goal-setting because it means that the individual is viewing their goal as an important task. *Task complexity* refers to how hard it will be for the individual to acquire task related knowledge to complete their goal, and *situational constraints* refer to the various interruptions that may happen that will impede goal attainment (Locke & Latham, 2006). In goal-setting theory, goals can be effective when they come from different sources; meaning they can be assigned by others. Goals can also either be set jointly by the person completing the goal and the person assigning the goal, or they can be self-set by the person who is to complete the goal (Locke & Latham). Locke and Latham noted goals specific to learning as *learning goals*. When using learning goals, an individual does best when the goal is assigned and the task is to gain the requisite task knowledge necessary to attain the goal. According to the social cognitive theory, when people set goals, it increases their cognitive and affective reactions to performance outcomes because the goals that they set for themselves have requirements for personal success (Zimmerman et al., 1992).

**Motivational Theories**

Motivation is another integral piece required for effective goal-setting and attainment of goals. Motivation can be influenced by positive and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is the core of the incentive theory of motivation, which states that actions are motivated by a desire for a reward. (Gavrilova, Donohue, Galante, & Gavrilova, 2018). With this type of motivation, individuals are more likely to engage in a certain behavior if they perceive they will gain a reward. This theory explains why individuals will initiate and sustain goal-directed behaviors even when they are required to participate in challenging activities to achieve those goals. (Gavrilova et al.). The drive theory of motivation, on the other hand, is rooted in negative reinforcement, which means that individuals will engage in goal-directed behavior that will remove a negative experience. Another motivational theory that involves the use of negative reinforcement is the review of negative consequences. This theory was designed to motivate students with their goals by encouraging them to identify and elaborate on negative consequences associated with undesired behaviors (Gavrilova et al.). Research has found that negative consequences and reinforcement are more powerful than positive reinforcement and consequences when it comes to motivation. By thinking of negative consequences, it is more likely to elicit negative affect and distress which in turn produces motivational thoughts to escape those bad feelings (Gavrilova et al.).

**What is the Role of Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation in Goal Setting?**

*Self-efficacy*, or task specific confidence, can mediate or partially mediate effects of other potentially motivating variables when it comes to goal-setting (Locke & Latham, 2006; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Academic self-regulation is focused on how much students are metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally proactive in regard to regulation of their own learning process. A self-regulated learner is distinguished by their proactive orientation and performance as well as their capabilities for motivation (Zimmerman et al.). When a student is a self-regulating learner, they can direct their learning processes by setting challenging goals for themselves, and they are also able to apply the appropriate strategies to complete their goals (Zimmerman et al.). Students who are self-regulated learners show a high sense of efficacy in their capabilities which in turn influences the goals that they set for themselves and their commitment towards completing these challenging goals. A student with a high sense of academic efficacy displays greater persistence and effort, as well as intrinsic interest in their academic learning, performance, and goal-setting (Zimmerman et al.). The perceived self-efficacy of students has a strong influence on the level of challenge of goals that people set for themselves and their persistence when they are faced with difficulties (Zimmerman et al.).

**Plan of Action**

To increase motivation, I worked one on one with an individual student in my placement classroom from October 31st through November 28th. During that time, I implemented a goal-setting strategy with this student. I began the study by taking one day to observe the student and take a record of how many times in one school day he was off task or unmotivated to complete his work and why. After recording these observations, I took time to plan goals for this student to work towards. The following day, I planned on meeting with this student to explain goal-setting and its benefits, but this student was absent from school the following two days. When the student returned to school, I met with him and discussed what goal-setting is, why we were going to set goals, and how the goals would benefit him. We also discussed the rewards that he wanted if he achieved the goals. For each day after that, I continued to meet with this student at the start of each day to remind him of the goals and what he needed to do to meet those goals. The student would meet his goals if the average of all the observed times off task was less than the baseline data collection.

At the end of each goal-setting period, I averaged the amount of times of task for each day to come up with this total. I observed the student each day and kept a tally of how many times he was off task or unmotivated to complete his work. After Days 2 through 4, the first goal-setting period, the student did not achieve his goal. I met with the student to discuss this and we set the same goal for the next goal-setting period. After Day 6, the student met his first goal, *stay focused on my work*, and received the reward of extra time to play with Legos at the end of the day. On Day 7, I met with this student to set one more goal for the week. I decided that although the student met the goal of staying focused on his work the week before, the student still needed to focus on staying on task while working on school work, so he and I decided to use the same goal for Days 7 through 10. After achieving his goal on Day 10, this student was rewarded again with extra time to play with Legos at the end of the day. Also, on Day 10, I met with this student to discuss his thoughts about goals and goal-setting. See Table 1.

Table 1

*Timeline*

**Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Day | Plan of Action |
| Day 1 | I will observe this student and take a tally throughout the day to document how many times this student is off task. I will also document what the student behavior was while off task. After data collection consider the goals that will be set with this student. |
| Day 2 | Meet with student and discuss the goals that are going to be set, why they are being set, what the expectations I have for this student are, what the rewards will be if the goals are met. Observe the student and take a tally collecting the same data as the Day 1 observation. |
| Day 3-4 | Observe the student and see how he is reacting to the goals. Take a tally using the same observation used before and document student being on/off task. At the beginning of the day, meet with this student to remind of the goals. |
| Day 5 | Observe the student. Take a tally using the same observation used before and document student being on/off task. At the beginning of the day, meet with this student to remind of the goals. |
| Day 6 | Observe the student throughout the day using the same observation format. At the end of the day meet with this student to discuss whether or not the goals have been met. If the goals have been met, the student will be rewarded, and new goals will be presented based on the data collected to this point. If the goals have not been met, the teacher will discuss with student why goals have not been met and what can be done to meet those goals in the future, and the goals will not change. |
| Day 7 | Meet with student and make new goal(s). For the rest of the day observe and record data about student being off task and type of behavior while off task. |
| Day 8-9 | Observe the student. Take a tally using the same observation used before and document student being on/off task. At the beginning of the day, meet with this student to remind of the goals. |
| Day 10 | Today is the final day of the study, if the student has met his goals he will be rewarded. During this final interview, teacher will ask the student how he feels about his progress during this process. After interviewing with student, teacher will consider the following questions: did the student achieve the goals that were set?, did the number of times the student was off task go down after implementing the goal-setting strategies?, How did the student feel throughout the process?, Did this study help me grow as a teacher? |

**Data**

I chose to conduct an initial observation of this student before implementing goal-setting strategies. During each day of the study, I also conducted observations of the student. The observations collected data of the amount of times each day the student was off task. The following tables are broken down into two sections; the tally section and the description of off task behavior section. There is a data collection table for each individual day of the research study. The tally section records the amount of off task behavior, and the description of off task behavior section provides the activity that was being done at the time and a brief description of what the focus student was doing while off task. At the end of each table, there is the total amount of times off task for that day. On the days that were reward days for this student, at the end of the table there is the total times off task for that specific day, followed by the average times off task for the goal-setting period, and a note explaining if the student met the goal or not.

Table 2

***Day 1****: General Observation of Student to Gather Baseline Data Information*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning work, talking with others, others are continuing to work and talk at the same time but student is not working. |
| \* | Morning work, looking around the room, not working on his work, a student seated at the same table tells him to “just color” (Student responded well to praise for getting back on task and continued to be on task until the completion of his morning work activity) |
| \* | Messing around while choosing lunch tag, picking up all the tags and asking if this one was his (Student can easily recognize his own name) |
| \*,\*,\*,\* | Read Aloud/Writing Time, not paying attention or completing the work, he had to go sit at the teacher table during this time. |
| \* | Reading Stations (word work center), not completing the activity, standing up on word work easel after being told not to |
| \* | Reading Stations (word work center), pulling the border off the closet door and wandering around the room |
| \* | Reading Stations, pestering other students during his center time, not completing the activity |
| \* | Reading Stations, playing in the water fountain/sink, not completing the activity |
| \* | Reading Stations, off task at another station, not completing the activity, pestering other students |
| \* | Reading Stations, asks to go to the bathroom just to get out of the room/activity, goes out the door and immediately shakes his backside in front of the window once he is in the hall |
| \* | Reading Stations at writing center, is not completing the activity, doodling rather than practicing writing skills |
| \* | Sitting on the table when he is supposed to be standing in line |
|  | Total times off-task: 15 |

Table 3

***Day 2****: Student Goals Introduced and Set at the Beginning of the Day*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning work, asked to change his boots to tennis shoes rather than completing his work |
| \* | Morning tubs, messing around instead of completing the activity. “Stop!” heard from other students |
| \* | Morning tubs, playing with materials near his station, but not with the materials provided for his station |
| \* | Clean-up of morning tubs, goes to the bathroom without asking |
| \* | Playing in the bathroom instead of participating in the morning meeting |
| \* | Morning meeting, talking with another student, not listening to the teacher |
| \* | Morning meeting, poking another student seated near him |
| \* | Math, not counting along with class, filling cheeks with air and using hands to push it out to make a noise |
| \* | Math, not listening to teacher, scooting around on the carpet |
| \* | Math, rolling around on the floor |
| \* | Math workshop, milling around the room |
| \* | Math workshop, told to go put something away, placed item in pocket, and continued to not put item away |
| \* | Read Aloud, snapping in another student’s face during veteran’s day video |
| \* | Phonics, messing with table and items at table, not listening to teacher provide instructions |
| \* | Phonics, interrupted teacher while she was talking |
| \* | Recess, had to sit out at recess |
| \* | Reading Station, bothering another student at a different station than the one he was supposed to be at |
| \* | After PE, not following directions to come to the carpet |
| \* | Science, talking to another student while the teacher is talking, sent to his desk to put his head down |
| \* | Science, after being sent to his desk during the lesson for not listening to the teacher, student flopping around in his chair |
|  | Total times off-task: 20 |

Table 4

***Day 3****: Second Day of Goals Being Set, Held Meeting with Student at the Start of the Day*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \*,\*,\* | Morning work, off task even after discussion of goals and rewards minutes earlier |
| \*,\*,\* | Math, not listening during math lesson |
| \* | Brain Break, not participating in the brain break |
| \* | Lining up for lunch, refusing to get into line |
| \* | Read Aloud, told to come sit on the carpet and took about 3 minutes for the student to choose to come sit down |
| \* | Science, not listening to the teacher during instruction time |
| \* | Science, not listening to the teacher again, rolling around on the carpet |
| \* | Science, playing with another student during instruction time |
| \* | Science, going to get a sip of water after being told not to |
| \* | Science, wandering around the room after being told to get back on task |
| \* | Handwriting, asked to go get another student’s lunchbox from the hall during the lesson |
| \* | Handwriting, messing around at his table not completing the activity |
| \* | Handwriting, got up to ask another student an unrelated question, not completing the activity |
| \* | Given a thank you card to sign, spent a few minutes messing around with the card sitting in front of him, then got angry when another student took the card from him to sign |
|  | Total times off-task: 18 |

Table 5

***Day 4****: Reward Day (If Goals Are Met), Meeting with Student to Remind of Goals in the Morning*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning Work, not completing the activity |
| \* | Morning Meeting, rolling around on the floor not listening to the teacher |
| \* | Math, turned opposite direction from partner during a turn and talk activity |
| \* | Math, got up to tell me his throat hurts |
| \* | Math, laid down in the middle of the circle |
| \* | Read Aloud (Math), turned around and blew in another student’s face |
| \* | Read Aloud (Math), talking during the story, not listening to the teacher |
| \* | Math, got up from the opposite side of the room to open the door after teacher had called a closer student’s name to open the door |
| \* | Math independent work, at the start of the activity has no idea how to complete the activity because he did not listen to the teacher during instruction |
| \* | Math independent work, asked to go to the restroom to get out of his work |
| \* | Math independent work, another student began to complete his work because he was not on-task |
| \* | Read Aloud, not listening to the story, moved seats twice after being told to sit in a specific spot |
| \* | Phonics, playing in sink to get out of instruction |
| \* | Reading Stations, wandering around the room during reading stations |
| \* | Reading Stations, after being given explicit directions to complete an activity at his reading station, he did not complete the activity |
|  | Total times off-task: 15  Average times off task during set goal period: 18  Student did not meet his goal because the average times off task for the set goal period did not fall below the baseline data. |

Table 6

***Day 5****: Continuation of goals from before, Meeting with student in the morning to remind of goals*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \*,\* | Morning Work, not coloring, talking with other students, he is not working while talking with others but other students continue to work |
| \* | Morning Work, talking with other students, has gotten another student off task by talking with her |
| \* | Morning Work, talking with the same student who he has gotten off task already before |
| \* | Announcement from Teacher, not listening to teacher while she is talking |
| \* | I am Talking with a Student, while I am talking with a student he and another student come over to ask what we are talking about instead of continuing to participate in the activity they are supposed to be working on |
| \* | Phonics, not completing the assignment, I had to call the student up to the teacher table to complete the assignment one-on-one because he did not listen the entire lesson |
| \* | Reading, sent to his table to put his head down because he was not listening to the lesson at all |
| \* | Reading, called back to sit on the carpet, messing with his shirt and not listening to the read aloud |
| \* | Reading Small Group, not paying attention during small group reading instruction |
| \* | Reading Stations, not participating in the activity at his station |
| \* | Reading Stations, he left his station and began to cause trouble at a different station |
| \* | Teacher Announcement, interrupting teacher rather than listening |
| \* | Read Aloud, not listening to the read aloud, told to move seats away from another student and did not move |
| \* | Math, not listening to the lesson, bothering other students |
| \* | Math Workshop, not playing the game |
| \* | Math Workshop, chooses a different game and does not participate in that game either |
| \* | Resting Time, talking with other students, kicking under the table rather than taking time to calm down |
| \* | Told to go to nurse for inhaler and come straight back, did not come back immediately, was playing in the bathroom which caused him to be late for PE |
|  | Total times off-task: 18 |

Table 7

***Day 6****: Reward Day (If Goals are Met), Meeting with student at the beginning of the day to remind of goals.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning Work, did not complete the morning work at all |
| \* | Math Workshop, not following directions given nor listening when redirected to task |
| \* | Math Workshop, roaming around the room rather than choosing a station to participate in |
| \* | Math Workshop, messing up other students’ games/activities rather than playing something himself |
| \* | Math Workshop, not cleaning up materials after being directed to do so |
| \* | Transition, sitting in others’ seats on the way to his seat, messing around, not following directions quickly |
| \* | Preparing for Lunch, comes up to get his lunch tag even though his table has not been called, not listening to teacher |
| \* | Read Aloud, talked throughout the entire read aloud after being told not to, not listening to the teacher |
| \* | Reading stations, not working on any activity, arguing with another student instead |
| \* | Not listening to directions while they are being given |
|  | Total times off-task: 10  Average times off task day 5-6: 14  Goals met because the average times off task during days 5 & 6 fell below the baseline data. |

Table 8

***Day 7****: Goal Reset, met with student at beginning of the day to remind of goals.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning Work, not on task or focused on work until we talked about the goals |
| \* | Math Workshop, wandering around the room, not participating in any stations |
| \* | Asked to clean up math workshop and refused |
| \* | Reading Instruction, think time (quiet thinking time), not thinking quietly, talking out about what is going on in the hallway |
| \* | Reading Instruction, playing with his shirt instead of answering the question asked by the teacher |
| \* | Reading Instruction, not listening to the lesson, playing with his shirt and shoes |
| \* | Brain Break, not participating |
| \* | Calm Down Break, not participating |
| \* | Reading Stations, not participating in the activity at his station |
| \* | Reading Stations, away from his station bothering other students |
| \* | Math Instruction, playing rock paper scissors with others during the lesson, back turned to the teacher |
| \* | Math Workshop, threw dice across the room after being told not to |
|  | Total Times Off-Task: 12 |

Table 9

***Day 8****: Met with student at beginning of the day to remind of goals*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Morning Work, not listening to the directions being given by the teacher |
| \* | Morning Work, not completing the activity, goofing around at his table |
| \* | Morning Work, just coloring on the MW activity rather than doing his work, says to me: “I don’t know how to write my numbers!!!” |
| \* | Morning Work, playing around for a second time |
| \* | Math Workshop, bothering another student to get off the computer so he could get on it |
| \* | Brain Break, not participating |
| \* | Reading Instruction, talking and not listening |
| \* | Reading Small Groups, not listening or completing the activity, playing around with another student |
| \* | Reading Stations, chasing another student around at a different station, not working at his station |
| \* | Reading Stations, asks to go to the bathroom to get out of reading stations, found climbing on the stalls in the bathroom |
| \* | Read Aloud, talked out and not listening |
| \* | Read Aloud, not sitting on the rug after being asked to multiple times |
| \* | Counseling (Specials), not working/participating in the activity |
|  | Total Times Off-Task: 13 |

Table 10

***Day 9****: Met with student at the beginning of the day*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior: |
| \* | Reading Instruction, talking with other students during lesson |
| \* | Phonics, goes to the bathroom instead of working on his work |
| \* | Phonics, up out of his seat, walking around talking to others |
| \* | Writing, not working on assignment, up out of seat talking to others |
| \* | Reading Stations, not participating in the activity |
| \* | Math Instruction, talking out |
| \* | Social Studies, talking out |
| \* | Social Studies, did not complete the activity |
|  | Total Times Off-Task: 8 |

Table 11

***Day 10****: Final day of data collection, reward given if goal is met, met with student at the beginning of the day*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tally | Description of Off-Task Behavior |
| \* | Not listening to teacher during an important announcement |
| \* | Not participating in the Junior Achievement Activity |
| \* | Not listening to the JA instructor |
| \* | Talking over others and the JA instructor |
| \* | Playing with his name tag instead of working on activity |
| \* | Wandering around the room instead of working on activity |
|  | Total Times Off Task: 6  Average Times Off-Task from Day 7-10: 10  Goals met because the average total of times off task from Day 7-10 fell below baseline data. |

*Figure 1:* Total times off-task per day

**Data Analysis**

As shown in Figure 1, the student decreased the amount of times he was off task each day. At the start of the data collection period, the student had a spike in the amount of times he was off task during the school day, but by the end of data collection period, the student had significantly decreased the amount of times he was off task each day.

After the initial observation of the student, he was off task 15 times in one school day. I used that number as the baseline for the rest of the data collection. On Days 2 and 3, the student was off task significantly more than during the original data collection. On Day 2, the student was off task 20 times and on Day 3 the student was off task 18 times throughout the school day. I believe that this was because after the first day I observed the student, he was absent from school for the remaining two days I was in the classroom that week. I believe that if the student had been present for those two days, and if I could have quickly implemented the goal-setting strategies, that the amount of times the student was off task would have decreased. By Day 4, the first reward day, the student did not meet his goal for the week. He did not meet his goal because the average amount of times off-task from Days 2 through 4 was 18, which did not fall below the baseline of 15 times off task.

On Days 5 and 6 the same goal from Days 2 through 4 was used. On Day 5, the student was off task 18 times throughout the day, which was three more times off task than on Day 4. I believe that the amount of times that the student was off-task on Day 5 increased because of the time that I was present in the classroom. Days 2 through 4 were Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of one week. Those three days are the designated times that I went to the field placement. I believe that the student may have had difficulty falling back into the routine of remembering and working towards meeting the goals that had been set. I believe that this is the reason for the increase in the amount of times off-task on Day 5 because on Day 6 the student was off task only 10 times during the school day. On Day 6 the student met his first goal because the average amount of times he was off-task during Day 5 and Day 6, 14 times, fell below the baseline data I had collected.

Day 7 through 10 were days where I was consistently in the classroom, and I saw a large difference in the amount of times the student was off task throughout the day during this data collection period. Day 7 was the students’ first day back from a long holiday break, and it was also the first day where I was present in the classroom for the full week. On Day 7, the student and I discussed the goal for this goal-setting period and what reward he would receive on Day 10. Each morning, I met with this student to remind him of the goal we had set for that week. Throughout the week, I watched the amount of times he was off task during the day decrease. I believe the decrease is due to the consistency of meeting with this student for uninterrupted data collection periods.

For the first goal-setting period, Days 2 through 4, the average amount of times the student was off task was 18 and the student did not meet his goal because this number did not fall below the baseline data. For the second goal-setting period, Days 5 through 6, the average amount of times the student was off task was 14 and the student did meet his goal because the number fell just below the baseline data. For the final goal-setting period, Day 7 through 10, the average amount of times the student was off task was 10 and the student met his goal because the number fell below the baseline data.

Figure 2 records the decrease in the average amount of times the student was off-task during each goal setting period. The averaged total for each goal-setting period is listed as data.

*Figure 2:*Average amount of time off-task during goal setting period

During the study, there was a steady decrease in the average amount of times the student was off task per each goal-setting period. I believe that while I was consistently in the classroom for longer periods of time, the student benefitted most from the implementation of goal-setting strategies. Overall, I believe that goal-setting strategies were advantageous for this student and assisted him to learn how to become a more engaged participant in the classroom.

**Conclusion**

After compiling and reflecting on the results of my action research study, it can be concluded that implementation of goal-setting strategies does impact my ability to impact my ability to reach a student who is struggling with motivation to participate in class. After goal-setting strategies were introduced, the amount of times the focus student was off task or unmotivated throughout the school day decreased. Although my approach was effective, I was surprised by the results. I believe my surprise was due to the daily observations of this student because through those observations it was difficult to determine if the student was improving until the last goal-setting period.

I am choosing to pause before I am satisfied with the results of this study because I believe it is important to point out that some of my data is most likely skewed due to several factors. First, I believe that the data was skewed because I was unable to implement goal-setting strategies immediately following the Day 1 observation. This was out of my control because the student was absent from school the following two days. Second, I believe that the data was skewed because of my intermittent presence in the classroom. I realized this to be true during the final goal-setting period where I could work with the student consistently. I believe that if I could have consistently reminded the student about the goals he was working towards, that the results would have been far more concrete. I believe that if I was to have a longer period of consistent time to work with this student, I would be able to make very clear and meaningful changes in the way that this student remains on-task and motivated to complete his school work.

In conclusion, despite the data skews that were experienced, I would use this approach again because of the improvements that I did see during the limited amount of time that I worked with this student. This approach is also beneficial for students of all learning levels and can be used with not only motivation to complete course work, but also with students who are working towards an achievement.

**Plan for Future Action**

I would like to use this approach in my future classroom; however, I would implement these strategies at the beginning of the year. I plan to use these strategies with each student in my future classroom and will strive to help each student decide on goals that will be beneficial to their success in the classroom. Since I would be implementing these strategies in my own classroom, I would be able to work with the students for longer amounts of time, and because I would be consistently working with the students, the data I collect would be more reliable and valid. Also, instead of always deciding the goals for each student, I would teach students how to create meaningful goals for themselves over the course of the school year. This will be incredibly beneficial for the students as they move through life and are faced with situations where they must set goals for themselves. Finally, I do recommend this approach because the results that I gathered were positive, and based on my research, goal-setting strategies are successful in creating motivation.

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