THE IMPACT OF STUDY SKILLS AND ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS

ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of

Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in

Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University

Chicago, Illinois

May 2008

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ABSTRACT

Teachers at three separate public schools analyzed possible reasons behind low grades. All problems—late work, unprepared students, lax attitudes—related to students who were not organized for learning. Even though these teachers taught a variety of ages ranging from third thru twelve grades, they typically found evidence of a lack of organization inside students' desks, lockers, binders, book bags, and pencil pouches.

A review of the professional literature showed that a lack of organization was a problem. Most articles showed a distinction: Many teachers did not directly teach organization skills, and many employers assumed that their employees already possessed organization skills. Students who never shape or settle schoolwork may not have skills to organize tasks and activities later in life. In addition to basic skills, students' education may be inefficient. As disorganization leads to lower grades and achievement, students are not prepared for the school side of life. Teachers also found that while some students knew the subject material, their grades did not reflect their knowledge. Lacking education, skills to display their abilities, and fundamental skills, students are not prepared for life.

Few educators have implemented a program for teaching organizational habits. It is often assumed that organization skills will be taught at home with other life skills. Unfortunately, this is seldom the situation. Teachers must provide a structured classroom environment. We did that by holding students accountable for bringing writing utensils, their assignment notebooks, and their binders to class daily. Data collected from journals, surveys, and students' grades indicated that any increase in student organization benefits students. Students lost fewer assignments and were better prepared for class when they had a sense of order. Of all tools, the binder was the most effective, probably because it accomplished such basic necessities for order: students had a definite place for homework, they could find returned assignments to review for tests, and they had paper with them for note taking.

Organization is a prerequisite for success. Organization crosses all studies for higher education and all life situations. Directly teaching organizational skills aids students for their current task (school) while preparing them for their latter tasks (workforce). Simple tools such as binders increase learning time and grades earned by students while decreasing their frustration. Teachers who teach organization skills to their students are teaching important lessons for school, as well as for life.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

Targeted students demonstrated a lack of organizational skills. Such a lack of coordination often led to forgotten homework, lost notes, overlooked reading assignments, and a generally unprepared attitude for class. Students were required to have their agenda books with them for identification and for planning; few students carried and used these appropriately. Evidence for the problem included failing grades, anecdotal records that documented missing or lost homework and notes, student surveys that described their perception of the issue, and teacher observation.

Local Context of the Problem

School A

School A was a two story building built in 1960 that served grades three through five. The building contained 11 classrooms, a computer lab, a library, a gym with a stage, a lunchroom, and a basement with a classroom and an all purpose room. School A had a total enrollment of 240 students with a racial/ethnic background consisting of the following: 94% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, and less than 2% other. Of these students, 37% were considered low-income. Mobility rate for the students was 23% and the attendance rate was 96%. The average class size was 19.

Each class in school A was self-contained with one teacher teaching a traditional curriculum consisting of all subject areas with the exception of music and computers. Special programs included After School Challenge, intramurals, Run for Fun, chorus, band, and orchestra. Issues targeted by the school for improvement included language arts, math performance, and raising interest and awareness of individual and instructional needs to improve performance in instructional methods and the school environment. School A was recognized by the Red Cross for fund-raising, it had received an award from the state for academic improvement, and was one of four schools in the state that was featured at a Raising Student Achievement Conference.

The classroom used at school A consisted of 14 special needs students in grades three through five. Disabilities present in the classroom during research included mental retardation, learning disabled, and other students with health impairments. One teacher and one aide served the class. Three computers were provided in the room with two for student use and one for the teacher. There were two doors to the classroom with one providing access outside and the other providing access in and out of the classroom to the main hallway of the school.

School B

Site B was a two-story brick building built in the year 1892. The building housed 35 classrooms, 3 computer labs, a library, a reference room, a teacher's lounge, a gymnasium, a central office, and a combined band and orchestra room for approximately 620 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Total student enrollment was 620. The student population consisted of 93% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 3% Multi-racial, and less than 1% other. Low-income rate was 33%. Chronic truancy rate was less than 1%. The mobility rate was 14%. Attendance rate was 94%, and the chronic truancy rate was less than 1%.

Each grade level was divided into teams of approximately 100 students. Each team consisted of one teacher for each of the core subject areas: math, reading, English, science, and social studies. One team had two special education teachers that provided services for all of the special needs students at that grade level. The other team provided Title I services in reading and math for those students that qualified.

The classroom consisted of six large tables, individual stools, and four student computers. One entrance was placed near the front of the classroom, and windows lined the side wall.

School C

The high school was part of a unit district. The unit district had four separate school buildings. The high school was in a rural area and was located on 80 acres of land. It was a one-story brick building that was finished in 1976 and received a large remodeling in 2003. Many updated rooms existed such as 51 carpeted and air-conditioned classrooms, a theater-auditorium, two gymnasiums, a commons area, two teacher lounges and a library-media center. The high school served grades nine through twelve, or freshman through seniors.

The classroom was the fourth largest classroom in the building. The teacher had a desk with a computer; the classroom also had 29 student desks about a year old. A long bookcase lined one wall. Grammar books, dictionaries, thesauruses, and art materials were kept in the bookcase.

About 700 students attended this high school. The students were 93% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, and 3% other. The attendance rate was 94%, the chronic truancy rate was 3%, and the dropout rate was 4%. Students with a low-income were 16%. No students were limited in English-proficiency. The mobility rate was 12%.

The high school's curriculum consisted of English, fine arts, foreign language, mathematics, health/PE, science, social studies, and applied technology. The teacher taught English and Speech.

The school was recognized for its programs and awards. Programs were available for certified staff members to refer students. The school offered a freshman-mentoring program, a junior job shadowing day, two senior retreats, and a senior co-op program. AP courses, world travel programs, and the Wilson Reading Program were available for students as well. The school was recognized with the Bright Star Award. Numerous students earned statewide honors, academically and athletically.

The high school deliberated several issues and concerns. The special education program lacked certified teachers. Truancy, plagiarism, and tardiness were other concerns. Implementation of the program Writing Across the Curriculum was a concern as well.

<div align="center">Community/District Context of the Problem</div>

School A and B-District

School A and School B were both in the same unit school district and community. The school district was made up of 7 buildings with a total enrollment of about 1,850 students. Each of the 7 buildings had its own principal, with the junior high school having a principal and an assistant principal. Special education services for the district were headed by another administrator, the director of special services. All of the principals and administrators reported to the superintendent and associate superintendent located in the central office of the district. The student make-up of the district was 93% Caucasian and less than 2% other. The low-income rate of the district was 34%, mobility rate was 19%, and the attendance rate was 95%. The total number of teachers in the district was 124 with 11% male and 89% female. The average years of

teaching experience was 13. The percentage of teachers with bachelor's degrees was 55% and the percentage with master's and above was 45%. All of the classes in the district were taught by highly qualified teachers with the average class size being 23. The district was making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in both reading and math.

School C-District

The unit school district contained three schools serving grades kindergarten through eighth grade and one high school. One elementary school had 500 students and 30 teachers. It served third through eighth grade. It had 30 classrooms, a gym, two computer labs, a library, a band room, and several chorus facilities. Another elementary school had 700 students and 50 teachers. It served kindergarten through eighth grade. It had 30 classrooms. An additional elementary school had 250 students and 20 teachers. It served kindergarten through second grade. It contained 11 classrooms and a library.

Three private schools also added to the community. The first school was a Catholic school serving grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The administration was comprised of a pastor, a principal, and a preschool director. The school had eight classrooms, a music room, a resource room, a computer lab, and a gym. The school also employed eight classroom teachers; additionally, it had a computer, PE, after school care, music, and resource teacher.

The second private school in the community was at a combined level of elementary and secondary serving students at the kindergarten through eleventh grades. This was a smaller school with only 20 students; 95% were Caucasian and 5% were American Indian.

The third private school was a Baptist school serving a combined elementary and secondary school population. The school served pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade with

eight classroom teachers. The student to teacher ratio was seven to one with 65 total students, all Caucasian.

The unit school district's administration was comprised of four positions: superintendent, curriculum director, special education director, and technology comptroller. The high school's administration was comprised of three positions: principal, vice-principal, and athletic director. Two elementary schools each had a principal and vice-principal. The third elementary school simply had a principal.

About 130 full-time teachers worked for the unit school district. Females were 75% of the faculty and males were 25% of the faculty. The faculty was 99% Caucasian and 1% other.

School A and B-Community

The community school A and B was located in consisted of over 22,500 residents. The residents were predominantly Caucasian at 97%, with the largest minority group being Hispanic at 1%. The resident's median age was 39. Median household income was $42,000 and the median house value was $90,000. The percentage of residents with a high school education or higher was 82%, bachelor's degree or higher was 15%, and graduate or professional degree was 4%. Four percent of the residents were unemployed. For those residents that were employed 21% were in the manufacturing field, 17% were in educational, health and social services, and 14% were trade.

School C-Community

The rural community's population was approximately 6,000 with about 2,000 families. The average family size was 3 persons. Males comprised 47% of the population while females comprised 53%. The median resident age was 38; the median household income was roughly $41,000; and the median house value was $79,000. The population was made of 95% Caucasian,

3% Hispanic, and other 2%. Manufacturing comprised 30% of the workforce, while 30% was in the service field, 25% was in the trade area, 2% was in the administration field, and 15% was categorized as other.

The community's utility services consisted of five municipally owned deep wells, a secondary sewage treatment plant, a telecommunications company, one natural gas and an electric corporation, and a waste management facility. The community ran on an aldermanic form of government where municipal and county zoning regulations applied. Multiple subdivision ordinances existed. Community service jobs engaged many: 10 full time police officers, 30 volunteer fire fighters, and 30 volunteer rescue ambulance service workers. The community's residents had multiple private practice doctors' and dentists' offices to choose from while also having access to three major hospitals located in an urban area approximately 15 miles away.

Residents were provided with a variety of activities and facilities. The community's cultural and retail elements consisted of a downtown area with multiple shops, a large chain grocery store, and access to other large retail shops in a neighboring community. Additionally, the community had a new public library facility and a community center where inhabitants of the area could participate in athletic events as well as community events. The residents of the area received spiritual guidance and counseling from religious leaders of 16 churches: 15 Protestant churches and 1 Catholic.

<div align="center">National Context of the Problem</div>

Teachers recognize locally that students become increasingly unorganized with passing years. Not only are students locally struggling due to little order, but also a negative impact nationally is occurring. As students experience failure and frustration, they become accustomed

to such. Once failing in school, students are at a greater risk not to graduate. Entering the workforce, these ill-prepared adults know little about succeeding at a career, or even positively contributing to a business. Businesses in turn spend funds attempting to teach practical skills, such as organization, to employees. Lacking the practicality to organize negatively impacts students, which in turn hurts businesses and later, society.

A general lack of organization causes students not to be prepared for class, which in turn causes failing grades. Another reason that disorganization leads to low grades is because the students are missing valuable instructional time. Instead of taking notes, participating in activities, or contributing to class discussions, students often search for lost assignments or missing materials.

The manner in which these students organize the many demands of their busy lives is critical to their success at school as well as to their personal sense of control and accomplishment (Gallagher, 2003). Students who are disorganized not only suffer from failing grades, but also experience added stress and poor self-esteem issues (Williamson, 1997). They are often overwhelmed with the sense of being "two steps behind" their fellow classmates. Today's learning approaches are primarily based upon discovery and cumulative projects as opposed to the traditional lecture and repetitive practice worksheets, which further compiles the workload. The lack of organizational skills among students play a large role in determining which students are getting the most out of their educational experience (Gallagher, 2003).

Failing to organize in school continues with students after they graduate from the public school system. The college and business worlds attribute a loss of money to cluttered students. Colleges report that freshmen with few study and organizational skills often fail post secondary education. When arriving on a college campus, students are not only responsible for planning

study and leisure time, but also have to deal with work schedules while maintaining living quarters. Feeling overwhelmed, many students fall behind with this combination of skills (Simmons, 2006). Furthermore, businesses too often spend money training and providing materials for disorganized employees. Straying from that practice, employers now seek employees with practical skills. Due to the multitasking and goal setting required of so many businesses, the ability to design, plan, organize, and implement projects within an allotted time frame is no longer desired, but required of employees. Students may not be hired if the potential employer fears that basic skills must be taught (Hanson, 1995). Students that are not required to cultivate organizational skills will struggle in college and a business setting later.

Deficits in organizational skills can also lead to a cycle of low socioeconomic status within a family. A family's socioeconomic status is based on four different things: family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (Demarest, Reisner, Anderson, Humphrey, Farquhar, & Stein, 1993). This cycle begins with one member of a family performing poorly in school because of a lack of organizational skills. The lack of these skills leads to a higher chance of the student either dropping out of school, or being difficult to employ after graduation. If this student does become employed, because of a lack of skills, knowledge, or education, the student is most likely hired for minimum wage pay. As these students start families, their children are already destined for failure. Students from a low socioeconomic background constitute the largest population of individuals considered to be at-risk of not graduating from high school (Caldwell & Ginther, 1996). Because these students have increased economic problems, they are also more likely to create troubles for society. In order to break this cycle and decrease the number of students at-risk for academic failure, programs that teach organizational skills need to be started early on with students.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Evidence of the Problem

Analyzing student performance within a classroom setting requires looking at a multitude

of criteria. Beginning with individual sleeping patterns and extending to the limited number of

hours in a given day, student performance has notably begun to decline in today's public school

system. After taking a closer look at popular trends with today's students, researchers saw a

connection to organizational methods and study skills.

Deciding to further investigate organizational methods and study skills used by local

students, teachers developed a system to obtain, document, and chart specific patterns and

occurrences during a twelve to fifteen week period. With the combination of student checklists,

parent surveys, and a thorough review of school records, researchers gathered and evaluated vital
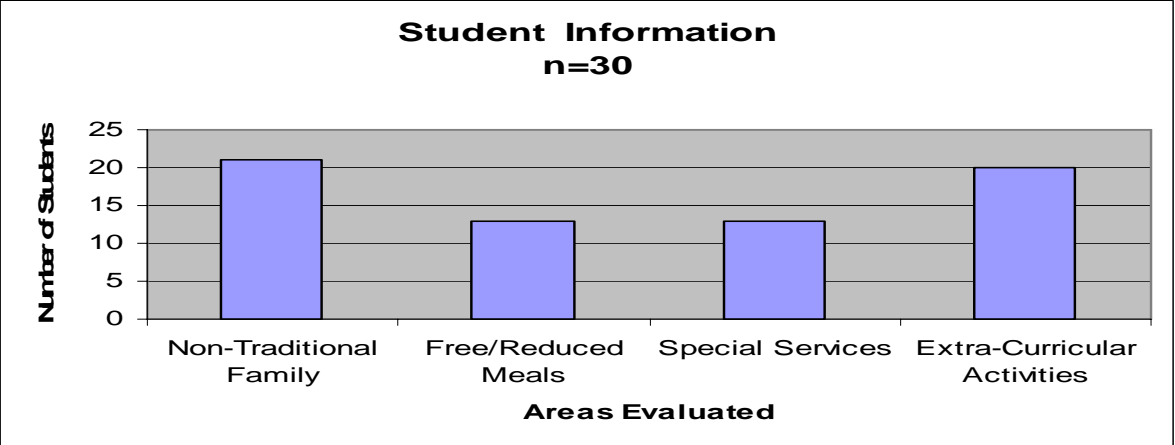
information.

Figure 1. Information regarding student backgrounds.

Evaluation of school records provided specific information regarding socioeconomic status; family background/make-up (traditional, implying both biological parents under same roof, vs. non-traditional, implying divorce and/or being raised by someone other than biological parents); disabilities, both physical and/or mental, and additional services rendered (students with 504 plans, receiving assistance from Title 1 and/or Chapter funds/grants). According to data obtained from these records, nearly two-thirds of the targeted students came from non-traditional families (See Figure 1). Grandparents, single parents, and stepparents raise majority of these students. The high incident rate indicated an extreme likelihood for time shared between multiple homes, forcing the students to have numerous areas requiring organization. More than one-third of the targeted students received some type of special education services indicating a trying school experience, thus leaving little time for organization.

Lastly, the addition of a high number of extra-curricular activities also contributed to the lack of time for student organization. Students who attend school for seven hours and participate in numerous activities for more hours may need organization the most; however, organization may fall to the bottom of priorities.

Researchers implemented student checklists to monitor the frequency of specific uses of the student planners such as: possession, appropriate documentation of homework assignments and upcoming projects, assignment completion, parent/guardian communications, and signatures. Next, researchers used student checklists at various times to monitor and chart specific study skills patterns and behaviors used during the process. Researchers then asked students to carry specific writing utensils, one pen and one pencil with them at all times, along with plain white notebook paper for further preparedness. Researchers then gave parent and student surveys to identify specific organizational and study skills patterns inside and outside of the school.

Table 1

Student Responses to Survey Regarding use of Assignment Notebook and Organizational Skills

	Frequency of Answers		
Question	Yes	No	Sometimes
Use assignment notebook	15	3	13
Find assignment notebook useful	18	3	10
Keeps track of my homework	16	6	9
Helps me learn to plan my time	7	18	6
Helps me get my work completed on time	12	12	7
Used to record social events	7	17	7
Helps me plan for big projects	18	11	2
Keeping track of my grades would help me	16	10	5
Used to keep track of my goals	1	26	4
Daily assignments are prioritized	6	17	8
Helps me feel in control of my homework	17	9	5
Teachers encourage the use of my assignment notebook	21	3	7
Teachers clarify assignments to write in assignment notebook	19	1	11
My parents go over my assignment Notebook	13	17	1

n=31

Teachers noted targeted students appeared to look for guidance from the teachers while answering the student surveys, as if looking for adult approval. While nearly all of the students responded that they use their student planners on a daily basis, teacher observations do not support their claims. Closer examination by the teachers indicated students had not recorded

assignments during the first month of school. Targeted students admitted that teachers

frequently encourage the use of the student planner on a daily basis with verbal and visual cues.

Students probably ignored such cues. (See Table 1).

Table 2

Parent Responses to Survey Regarding use of Assignment Notebook and Organizational Skills

	Frequency of Answers		
Question	Yes	No	Sometimes
Child frequently loses	2	17	1
Assignment notebook helps me feel informed	16	1	3
Child breaks big projects into sections	8	8	4
Child keeps track of social events	6	10	4
I encourage use of assignment notebook	17	3	0
I go over my child's assignment notebook	14	4	2
Helps my child plan his/her time	16	1	3
Helps my child's organization	16	2	2
Instruction on would benefit my child	17	2	1
Hinders my child's work	1	18	1
I use to communicate with my child's teachers	6	11	3
I view the back portion	6	11	3
I encourage my child to write their goals	5	11	4
I model the use of a planner	14	2	4
Child is more in control of school life with the use of assignment notebook	15	2	3

n=20

Comparisons between the parent and student surveys yielded discrepancies in several areas. As noted in Table 2, parents expressed a high interest in their child's use of the student planner. While parents indicated they monitored use on a weekly basis, students stated otherwise. Nearly one half of the parents indicated previously using the student planner to communicate between home and school. Closer examination by the teachers indicated they had not. Teachers felt the parents had answered the surveys in order to meet the needs of the teachers, not in an honest manner.

Table 3

Number of Students with Missing Assignments and Failing Grades before Implementation of Intervention

Missing Assignments	21
Failing Grades	11

n = 30

Weekly communications between teachers and researchers indicated a large number of missing assignments in targeted subject areas. As noted in Table 3, out of 30 targeted students, there were twenty-one missing assignments among them. Of these 21 incomplete assignments, parents recorded none in the student planners. This large portion of forgotten assignments is in direct correlation to the number of failing grades.

<div align="center">Probable Causes of the Problem</div>

While documenting these specific behaviors, notable patterns began to immerge as potential causes of the problem. While reviewing school documents, a correlation became evident between the socioeconomic statuses of many of the organizationally deficient students.

"A family's socioeconomic status is based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community" (Demarest et al., 1993, para.1).
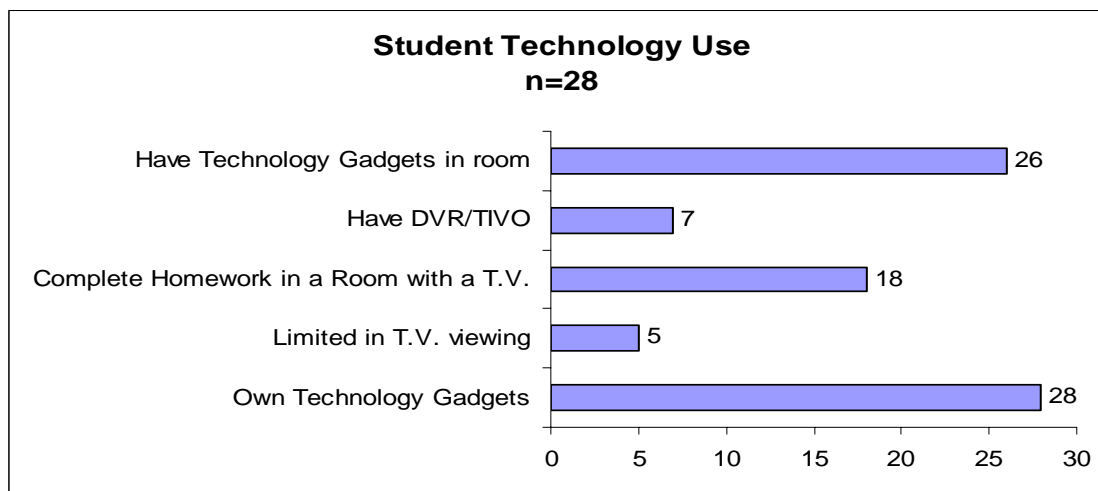
Nearly one-half of the targeted students came from poverty level families. These students received free and/or reduced cost breakfast and lunch provided by the school districts, which often served as the primary source of nourishment for them each day. School districts also gave these students waivers for all required textbook and general education fees; however, schools still made students responsible for providing their own essential school supplies. Those essential school supplies included items such as writing utensils, folders, and notebook paper. Demarest and others (1993) wrote:

> For families in poverty, these challenges can be formidable. Sometimes, when basic necessities are lacking, parents must place top priority on housing, food, clothing, and health care. Educational toys, games, and books may appear to be luxuries, and parents may not have the time, energy, or knowledge to find innovative and less-expensive ways to foster young children's development. (para. 3)

Development includes organizing materials best suited for an individual. Even when schools later give students books and supplies, such students have no prior knowledge in keeping materials together. Papers haphazardly sticking from desks, books, folders, and jeans' pockets may not bother students because they may have never possessed such articles. This is normal orderliness for them. Additionally, with monetary restrictions, many of these students have little means of purchasing the limited number of supplies required, a problem which further contributed to poor student organizational methods and study skills. Finally, as brain based theorists contend, students will focus on survival first, and other tasks second. Organization falls

into the latter category; while many low-income students must focus on dire needs, their brains prevent them from diverting to other concerns.

Student Technology Use
n=28

Category	Value
Have Technology Gadgets in room	26
Have DVR/TIVO	7
Complete Homework in a Room with a T.V.	18
Limited in T.V. viewing	5
Own Technology Gadgets	28

Figure 2. Individual student use of technology.

In contrast, children coming from a higher socioeconomic status often have a greater opportunity for resources extending well beyond the classroom. Demarest et al., (1993) explained:

> Families with high socioeconomic status often have more success in preparing their young children for school because they typically have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support young children's development. They are able to provide their young children with high-quality child care, books, and toys to encourage children in various learning activities at home. (para.1)

Families falling within the higher socioeconomic statuses tend to provide their children with many more supplies than required by the school system. Generally, these children tend to have access to note cards, binders, plastic tabs, laptop computers, scientific calculators and other tools that increase their performances in the classroom.

As noted in Figure 2, data collected from student technology surveys contradicts what traditional research suggests, which is that families lack technology if they struggle financially. A study by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (1999) explained that families in the highest-income brackets were nearly five times as likely to have computers at home than those in the lowest-income categories. The same study reported that beyond computer access at home, a more critical issue for many students is Internet access. Unfortunately, the data suggest a familiar pattern. While all economic sectors are experiencing increases, low-income homes are far less likely to have Internet access, and, again, the gap is widening. In 1998, families in the highest-income bracket were seven and a half times as likely to have home access to the Internet as those in the lowest-income category (60.3% versus 8.1%). Growth in access rates among the poor were slow as well. Between 1997 and 1998, for example, the percentage of homes with Internet access in the $75,000 or more annual income bracket rose 11.1% (from 49.2% to 60.3%). Yet those earning $5,000 or less increased their access level by only 1.1% (from 7.2% to 8.1%).

Students' surveys at the targeted site did not reflect a lack of computers or Internet access. While nearly one-third of targeted students qualified for financial assistance with food, tuition and books, over 90 percent of them claimed to own technology gadgets of some kind. Eighty- six percent of the targeted students claimed to possess technological gadgets in their bedrooms. Over fifty percent admitted to completing homework in a room with a television. Teachers noted a high frequency of these targeted students without the necessary classroom supplies. Many of these students claimed they either could not afford basic school supplies or their parents were not able to provide them.

A second possible consideration linking a correlation of socioeconomic status to a lack of student organization is based upon the parent's personal level of education. As children begin to consider future plans, they will look to a parent for educational guidance.

Typically, it is common for children to uphold similar educational values to that of their parents. If the parents have received a college education, the message being sent to the child is that a strong education is important for a successful future. Characteristically, those parents with a higher education level tend to embrace their child's academic performance. They tend to take a more active role in the daily interactions of their child's life, such as choice of friends, homework, extra-curricular activities, and daily assignments. These parents also are more likely to constrain children's activities, such as limiting television viewing, providing adult supervision when the children return from school, and monitoring homework (Israel and Beaulieu et al., 2001). Generally, these parents model good study and organizational skills for their children by keeping a family calendar and providing a designated time and area for schoolwork each evening.

Conversely, children of less educated parents assign less value to their own educations. Growing up in a home with little educational influence can hinder the future success of a child. Zill, Collins, West, and Hausken (1995) wrote:

> Low maternal education and minority-language status are most consistently associated with fewer signs of emerging literacy and a greater number of difficulties in preschoolers. Having inadequate resources and limited access to available resources can negatively affect families' decisions regarding their young children's development and learning. (para. 5)

Such "difficulties" may mean organization. A lack of basic skills at the preschool level already

hinders a child's future.

A final consideration of low socioeconomic status affecting students' structuring is the

shift of parental roles to children. Often parents with little education are forced to work manual

labor positions with poor working hours. As a result, many children are being asked to serve as

the primary caregivers to younger siblings; taking upon majority of the parental responsibilities.

Not only are the older siblings being unsupervised, but they are being asked to prepare meals,

complete household chores while serving as the sole responsible party for others. These

additional responsibilities leave very little time for homework completion, necessary guidance,

or the development of adequate organizational abilities. The nurturing factor between the parent

and child is essentially eliminated. The amount of quality time spent on nurturing activities,

such as helping children with their homework, discussing important school activities with them,

and holding high educational aspirations is declining at a rapid rate (Israel and Bealieu et al.,

2001). Parents' long work hours largely eliminate the nurturing factor between the parent and

child.

Overall, the cycle of poverty constitutes a bleak future for many of these children.

"Students from a low socioeconomic background constitute the largest population of individuals

considered to be at-risk of not graduating from high school" (Caldwell & Ginther, 1989, para. 2).

Students cite many reasons for dropping out of school. While many are complex and difficult to

pinpoint specific influences, each of the reasons has been lumped into general categories.

"Research has grouped these factors into four general categories: familial factors, personal

characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and educational achievement/school behaviors" (Dunn &

Griggs, as found in Differences in learning styles of low, para. 3). Such vast categories create

insurmountable obstacles for students or anyone trying to help students.

Whatever the reason may be, a continual lack of parental involvement within a child's

education can lead to failure on many levels. With the busy lifestyles of families today, many of

the students are not receiving adequate role modeling of good study and organizational habits.

Parents may assume those skills are being taught by the schools; the school system assumes

these skills are being taught and modeled at home. Students advance from elementary to middle

to high school without formally being taught how to manage their time effectively.   Essentially,

parents do not have the time to teach these skills at home with their already overly scheduled

days. Schools do not have the time to dedicate to teaching these skills due to the already overly

scheduled demands of meeting specific State Standards and Benchmarks.

Simply put, "children are not alike in their ability to be organized. Some children have

better organizational skills than others" (Gallagher, 2003, para. 3). If these children do not

observe these disciplined behaviors at home or at school, how can society expect them to

develop such skills? Even if students do go home to an organized home, they have a multitude of

choices. Many students choose technology, which bombards students. Television seems to be a

prime example.

As technology contributing to television increases, the amount of options to aid in

television viewing rises. When television became present in homes, families had minimal

choices. Stations scheduled shows in advance, families knew of the plan, and families scheduled

accordingly. People avoided being late and missing part of the program. Thus, organization was

vital. Later, with more programs and the introduction of the VCR, people recorded programs if

they couldn't watch and the scheduled time. This requires less organization and prioritizing;

however, viewers must still use organization skills: people programmed the VCR for the correct time and found a tape with enough space. Most recently, Michael Ramsay and James Barton formed the company TIVO that makes the digital video recorder (DVR) in 1999 (Gale, 2006). With this, organization and advanced planning became obsolete.

DVR machines allow freedom to viewers in two primary ways. First, recording a program only has to be done once. People now can record the same program every week. Second, while watching a show, viewers can pause or rewind. Such interventions do not lend themselves to organization. No time deadline exists now; previously, people had to concentrate on the task in front of them—the television. If they wanted a conversation, they had to remember the topic. Now, pausing or rewinding does not require such mental planning, but lets you watch anything you want to watch when you want to watch it (Gale, 2006). Television, the most used technology by students, no longer requires organization; it discourages it.

Lastly, as students mimic their surroundings, television stands as a poor example. When young people 12-17 years of age increase their television viewing by 3% in one year, television is obviously a prominent example for impressionable students (Turnoff TV Week, 2007).

Nielson states that a television set is turned on for eight hours, 14 minutes and that the average person watches four hours, 35 minutes of television each day. Another alarming statistic shows that the average child spends half an hour every week in meaningful conversation with a parent, 1.8 hours a week reading for pleasure, 5.6 hours doing homework, and 28 hours watching television (Meadows, 1996). Ito (1996) has four suggestions to help students; one is to organize time. For a week (168 hours), students should devote 30 for school, 56 for sleeping, 10 for eating, with 72 left over. Comparing Ito's suggestions what Nielson's statistics of reality, students spend 39% of their free time watching television. Because students spend so much time

watching television rather than concentrating on family, friends, or school, there are several

consequences. One, students are learning poor organization habits from interacting with the

television. Secondly, students are not partaking in events that foster organization—reading,

writing, cleaning, or conversing. Thirdly, students are not interacting with parents.

One of the major contributions to teaching organizational skills is parental involvement.

Students' massive television addictions hinder what should be natural and practical opportunities

for teaching organizational habits. Parents must be informed of television as a detrimental habit.

Aside from the students' home lives influencing the development of organization skills, schools

do as well.

Inconsistency of teaching methods among instructors further contributes to student

disorganization (Capretz, Ricker, & Sasak, 2003). Often teachers assume when they announce

important dates/facts aloud during class a student is able to mentally and physically decipher

through the material, record the material in some organized fashion and recalls the material in the

future. The likelihood of a student performing those specific tasks without prior knowledge is

very low. Teachers also assume when homework is assigned it should be completed in a timely

manner. Students with few organizational skills may not remember to bring the necessary

materials home with them in order to complete the assignment and/or return the completed work

back the following day. Mentally and physically, the students may have the capability to

complete the assigned work; however, poor organizational skills have prevented them from

completing such a task (Bryan & Burstein, 2004).

After a thorough investigation into the trends of student organization and study skills,

some definite patterns began to emerge. Probable causes ranging from those uncontrollable

forces such as being born into poverty to more correctable forces such as poor role modeling,

distractions, or teacher instruction all lead to the same disturbing trend: low student achievement.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

A Review of the Literature

A lack of organization is seen across grade levels. Because chaos in students' lives exists in many forms, schoolwork is affected. Unorganized or nonexistent schedules and planning immediately lowers grades, later hurts the overall educational quality of a student, and finally negatively impacts the student's life.

Modeling study skills and organization catalyzes patterns and guidelines for students' lives. Modeling guides students to start their organization. Teachers can provide a set-up for how the inside of a school desk should look, monitor work areas, and provide a clean-up time at the end of each class, day, or week (Ito, 1996). Teachers should set up a personal space for students that is free of clutter. By allowing them to be in a controlled area, they will experience work in a clean area. It seems that all research suggests that teachers provide students with time to make sure that their personal space at school is organized (Bakunas & Holley, 2001). Aside from typifying organization quietly, teachers should provide open and thorough explanations of organizational expectations.

Organization, because it leads to better leaning, needs to be a priority. Strategies which increase student's attention, provide instruction at the appropriate pace and level, decrease the number of errors students make, and actively involve students in the learning process increase the impact of learning activities. Organization is such a strategy. As students witness

organization from the teacher and have a structured environment in the classroom, organization hopefully forms during school hours. To aid completely with material arrangement, parents should be involved.

Parental involvement, like all aspects of education, benefits student organization. At all grade levels, teachers should communicate positive progress and strategies with parents. If parents want to provide extra guidance in organization, parents should develop a physical routine that will lead to organization in many aspects of life. (Helping the LD Child, 2006). Parents will have times and locations established for students. Another example is to have a consistent time and place for students to study (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Another tool at home would be a homework center (Parents' Guide to Organization Skills, 2006). In doing so, parents can reinforce ideas at home.

Along with physically aiding in organizational skills, parents can provide behavioral guides as well. Parents should assist only when needed (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Students who organize in their own manner yet who are kept focused and structured by their parents will, in later years, organize independently and in a manner that best suits them.

Modeling by teachers and parents contributes to student success with organization; however, better student organization skills necessitate direct instruction.

Research demonstrates that intervention will raise test and homework scores. In a 2004 study by Bryan and Sullivan-Burstein, elementary school teachers took two years to study the effectiveness of teacher-selected homework strategies, both with students with and without learning disabilities, and with and without homework problems. Four techniques were developed to assess students' homework completion rates and weekly performance on math and spelling quizzes. One technique was for students to graph their homework completion so they could

reflect upon their achievement. The second technique was for teachers to introduce reinforcements for homework completion. The third technique had students completing homework deemed "real-life" assignments. The fourth and final technique had students making their own homework planners that included student made art and homework tips. According to Bryan and Sullivan-Burstein (2004), "The results showed that the teacher-selected intervention strategies significantly increased homework completion and performance on weekly math and spelling tests" (para. 14). Because of the success, the teachers obtained funds to implement the program school-wide. Two years later, homework planners and graphing were still being used.

Many teachers do not openly discuss organization, but they should. It is helpful to be kind but firm with instruction to let the students know that the teachers are serious about the importance of study skills. If a teacher has students that are continually disorganized, conference with them to come up with ways to solve the problem (Bakunas & Holley, 2001). Continual feedback on how their study skills are progressing reassures students (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Some schools provide a course on organizational skills, which normally proves beneficial (Wigley, 2004).

Organizational skills are learned at a young age. Many students either learn few organizational patterns or unorganized patterns. Some, of course, observe and learn constructive organization skills. Far too many students need an intervention. As educators, we desire students to develop skills for success in schools and for life. Organization helps in all aspects of life.

Experts have realized that organization is vital for success. The school setting can lend itself to teaching organization. Some tools are already in place in schools, such as students using assignment notebooks, encouraging personal organization with desks and lockers, and using

student binders. Teachers should emphasize the use of these tools, as spending time with organization will later bring benefits.

Students receive agenda books or assignment notebooks. A daily agenda or planner should be carried at all times of the day and used regularly (Helping LD Child, 2006). Such a planner helps students keep track of items that they find important. Students need to determine the priority of the items (Few of the Many Study Skills, 2006). Multiple intelligences are utilized by the use of assignment notebook because it appeals to visual, verbal/linguistic, naturalist, and logical/mathematical intelligence (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Students should use the log and chart method. This method includes making a list and marking points off as students complete assignments (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Students will benefit if they start each week with a teacher made, classroom specific assignment log. Students will record assignments and update a list of upcoming events. Dependent upon the student, teachers and parents may need to monitor such a log (Few of the Many Study Skills, 2006). Providing a schedule of work for the course will allow students to see their logs in a larger scope. Explain what will happen the entire year (Wigley, 2004). Teachers' proactive role in their students' organization is vital. Teachers should check assignment notebooks to make sure that they are filled in correctly as well as instruct students on how to set up a plan for completing long-term projects (Bakunas & Holley, 2001). Teachers should model good time management for the students by using a set classroom schedule (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Additionally, teachers should have students enter all assignments the day they are assigned, as well as they day they are due. Reminding students to refer to the assignments frequently helps as well (Messina & Messina, 1999). Importantly, teachers should consider the factor of student personality. By providing a positive interaction

with the student, the teacher will be boosting the student's self-esteem, which will lead to higher morale, and in turn, higher achievement (Wigley, 2004).

Students must see that organization has to extend beyond school paper work and into their personal space. While organizing a child's bedroom is out of a teacher's scope, teachers can help with personal space organization at school.

Another area of disorder is student's lockers. Teachers can provide a specific arrangement with items in it to help with organization. Again, provide an opportunity for cleaning lockers (Ito, 1996). Book bags also become cluttered. Teachers could provide a chance for clean up (Ito, 1996).

To keep class work organized, students should have a folder or binder with tabs. Binders need several portions. They should contain dividers arranged in order of classes; 'to do' and 'done' pouches; and a pencil pouch. Binders should be collected and checked periodically with grades given for neatness and certain components present (Ito, 1996). As many students come to class ill prepared, they should keep a plastic pouch inside the binder for materials such as pencils, pens, and markers (Bakunas & Holley, 2001). Teachers should suggest a notebook that holds all material. To avoid losing items, students could divide this notebook into different sections: a calendar, assignment sheets, and paper. These divisions should have dividers, labeled with names (Messina & Messina, 1999). Overall, a three ring binder seems to be the best tool, with it divided into separate sections (Bausch & Becker, 2001).

Smaller ideas can help with individual organization. Color-coding helps students identify certain sections quickly (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Dependent upon the class setting, subject folders may work better than a large three ring binder (Few of the Many Study Skills, 2006).

Students should purchase a three-hole punch that can be attached to the binder. This will make for quick insertion of papers into the correct division (Bakunas & Holley, 2001).

Directly teaching students aspects of organization must occur for students to begin organization. Organization flows into all aspects of schooling.

In an additional study, researchers and clinicians from the NYU Child Study Center used reports of over 180 teachers. These reports detailed the organizational approaches of over 900 children. The research showed that children are not alike in their ability to organize, meet deadlines, or manage their time effectively. Because "these organizational differences among students play a large role in determining which children get the most out of their educational experience" (Gallagher, 2003, para. 4), researchers provided numerous suggestions for helping students organize.

Students should be directly taught study skills, from planning to actual location of studying. Students should make a list of steps or procedures at the end of every day. At home, student should continue through this list, checking points off as they finish a task. (Helping the LD Child, 2006). Students should have organized study times. They need time for preview and review. Looking at what they have learned and what they are going to learn aids in their planning (Messina & Messina, 1999). Overall, the teacher should teach students how to be organized from the first day of school and continue throughout the year. The teacher's room should serve as a model of organization, including desks, lockers, and notebooks. In the classroom, a large class assignment calendar should be made visible to all. At the start of each day, students should go through subjects and events for the day. At the end of each day, students need time to plan homework. As the year continues, teachers should provide weekly checks for organization along with feedback and reinforcement (Messina & Messina, 1999).

Students should also be taught note-taking skills. Teachers should directly teach students how to take notes. Using handouts, providing partially filled in notes, avoiding information overload, and supplying an outline of the notes will help reluctant note-takers (Bausch & Becker, 2001).

Teachers should not assume that students know basic ideas that will support organization. Teachers should teach active listening skills, as many students simply hear and do not listen. Teachers should also provide direct instruction on how to use textbooks (Bausch & Becker, 2001). Another idea is to provide students with a list-making lesson (Bakunas & Holley, 2001). Finally, teaching key skills like time management helps improve performance in school (Wigley, 2004).

All students must be reached, as different organizational patterns will work for different students. Teachers should provide many different strategies. Such a ways are to introduce graphic organizers and to use mnemonic devices (Bausch & Becker, 2001).

For the purpose of this research project, the researchers began by inventorying the students' strong and weak aspects of organization. Teachers observed behavior through journaling, looked at failing and incomplete grades, and surveyed students and parents to discover current organizational skills, note taking habits, and study skills. The researchers then examined prior implementations by other educators.

Teachers made a conscious endeavor toward modeling organizational skills. Teachers, perhaps as survival, have organized classrooms. To increase student skills, teachers specifically showed students their techniques.

The teachers corresponded with parents about organization. Using the Internet and letters, teachers provided ways to help students study at home.

The teachers taught note-taking skills. Students were too often simply told, "take notes" with no real idea how to do so properly. Teachers instructed students not to write everything spoken; to write the date with the corresponding notes; and to review and add to the notes daily.

The teachers implemented a study tip weekly. This tip was simple and short. An example was "do not study with an entertainment device on." Students wrote about the tip and discussed ways to implement the tip, realistically, into their study times.

All classes began a binder system. Students and teachers made dividers that best suited individual classes. As teachers returned papers, students placed graded assignments in the corresponding section. As test time approached, students had all study materials in one location. Also, if students or parents had questions concerning an assignment, the students located the assignment easily. The researchers noted an increase in questions about assignments occurred due to an increase in parent-teacher communication.

Assignment notebooks were utilized. All schools gave students an assignment notebook at the beginning of the year. Some students utilized the book daily and even fewer applied all major portions of it. As teachers discussed the notebook, students began taking advantage of its many benefits.

<div align="center">Project Objective and Processes</div>

As a result of implementing organizational strategies during August 2007 thru December 2007, the targeted students will improve academic performance, make more efficient use of classroom time, and increase participation in classroom activities as measured by journals, checklists, and student surveys.

In order to accomplish the objective, the following processes occurred:

1. Modeling of study skills for students such as where to study and not taking.

2. Provide direct instruction on study skills.

3. Organize students.

Project Action Plan

A. Discuss portions of the handbook and how to use these portions. Portions of the handbook will be explained specific to the students' grade levels.

    a. Provide guidelines, expectations, rules, and procedures in the classroom.

    b. Binder/folder/organizational tool expectations will be established.

        i. Students will be given a deadline for obtaining the organizational tool.

        ii. Students will be told the setup of this tool.

        iii. Students will be told the components that the tool must contain.

B. Responsibilities were divided.

    a. The teacher will model organization with presentation of material, note taking, and order within the classroom.

    b. The students will keep their handbooks current and updated while keeping class work organized.

C. The time frame is 16 weeks.

    a. The teacher will continually complete her responsibilities. Observations will take place daily for assignment notebooks and weekly for binders.

    b. The students will write in their agenda books daily. They will add to the correct section of their binders daily as well.

D. Organization will take place in many areas

    a. The teacher will check the organizational tools at each student's desk.

    b. Parents will help students organize at home.

      c.   Students will organize at home and in the classroom.

E.   To foster organization, the teacher will walk to each desk as students complete an independent task of the day; this interaction serves a purpose: the teacher will see individual problems with organization.

      a.   The teacher will do this so that she has personal interaction with each student.

      b.   In doing so, the teacher will be developing a relationship so that the students will be modeling her organizational skills.

      c.   The teacher will also be providing a means of communication so that students can explain frustrations and the teacher can suggest ways of mending problems the student identifies.

      d.   The teacher will also be able to identify problems specific to certain students and correct them. Some of these issues will require less of a 'blanket' approach as poor organizational skills are, unfortunately, learned.

F.   Provide direct instruction on study skills.

      a.   Teachers will teach weekly study skills.

      b.   Students will reflect on these skills.

      c.   In class, students will apply targeted study skills to assignments.

<div align="center">Methods of Assessment</div>

To evaluate the outcomes, five documented observation checklists covering students' binders, assignment notebooks, writing utensils, classroom books, and paper were made. The surveys given at the beginning of the project were repeated at the end. Student and teacher reflections covering the study skill of the week were recorded in journals.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Overview

Students' exhibition of weak organizational and study skills within the school setting has caused an increased concern both locally and nationally. If these issues are not addressed, students' academic careers and the prospect of ill-equipped adults entering the work force may be real probabilities. The researchers chose to focus on this problem after experiencing interactions with students year after year who were unorganized and deficient in their awareness of study skills. It became evident to the researchers that the lack of these skills negatively impacted student academic achievement in the school setting. The researchers became gradually more aware of an increasing number of students receiving failing grades, and a declining number of students completing homework. Many students were observed to be unprepared for class, and some lacked basic school supplies needed to be successful in their classes. Due to a lack of organizational and study skills exhibited by students at the targeted schools, the researchers' objective was to improve academic performance and organizational skills with the implementation of a binder system and direct instruction of study skills.

At the beginning of the research, students' parents were asked to sign a parent consent form. A few of the parents declined involving their students in the project without reason. Those students seemed genuinely upset that they were not going to be involved. The students

and parents were then asked to fill out surveys (Appendixes A and B) listing questions related to study skills and organization. It was noted by all three researchers that it seemed that answers given lacked honesty and were rather answered in the way in which both parent and student thought they should be. Interestingly, confliction could be found between parent and student answers. Most parents commented that they checked their child's assignment notebook daily, while the students answered otherwise. A technology survey (Appendix C) was also given to the students. The students at the grade school level were still unfamiliar with some of the devices on the survey. It was still quite obvious by the surveys that the students were spending a large majority of their time involved with technological devices of some sort. This time significantly outweighed the amount of time they were spending on homework completion.

A binder/folder system was introduced, explained, and implemented at the beginning of the research project. Students were provided with binders and tabs or folders to use as dividers. The student binders were divided into sections for each academic subject with the use of either tabs or separate folders. The junior high and high school students preferred using tabs, while the elementary students preferred the folders. Those students using tabs prepared a tab that corresponded to each subject area. The students collected important materials for each academic area and placed those materials in the corresponding subject area section. Elementary students were each given three folders. Each folder was labeled with designations for homework, to bring back, or to keep at home. Teacher-led instruction and discussion took place on how to utilize the binders and dividers, and also how to organize materials in functional ways. Modeling by the teacher indicated important materials to be kept in the binders. (See Appendix D for a materials checklist.)

Students received assignment notebooks that contained a monthly calendar and school handbook. These notebooks were placed in the front of the binders. Each assignment notebook contained a weekly calendar that provided space for students to write in assignments for each subject area. Rules and information in the handbook were explained during the first week of school. Also, direct instruction and modeling on how to properly fill in the assignment notebook occurred prior to student use. All students were encouraged to get their parents involved with their organization; however, the elementary students were specifically instructed to have their parents check their assignment notebooks nightly and to sign them. Teachers made a conscious effort to inform students on what assignments and events needed to be recorded in the assignment notebooks, and which ones did not. Teachers also wrote assignments on the board to provide visual reminders.

 Weekly binder checks occurred to monitor appropriate student use and to provide time for organization. Binders were checked weekly for organization, and checked daily for proper completion of assignment notebooks. The researchers employed a checklist to monitor student use of the system. The goal of using the binder system was to arrange student materials into one location, eliminating the chances of something becoming lost or misplaced. Use of the assignment notebook was implemented to organize and prioritize student assignments and improve the prospects of homework completion.

To aid in student organization, the researchers made a point of personally interacting with the students. During this interaction, the researchers looked through student binders and discussed with each student how the organizational tool was working. This time of communication allowed for student discussions on what was beneficial and what was not. Teachers made suggestions to students to help them improve upon weak areas. The researchers

also utilized this time to model organizational skills for the students in an attempt to improve deficits.

Teachers provided direct instruction on study and note-taking skills. After teachers gave students weekly study tips, students reflected upon the taught skills, discussing how to utilize them to improve academic performance. Teachers expected the students to apply the study skills taught to daily assignments. Teaching materials concerning organization were original as well as from published sources. Research constantly showed that people organize in different ways. To accommodate this, the teachers decided to show different methods to encourage students to find their own styles. After the initial research, teachers made writing prompts and guidelines specific to their class' needs. To help reduce the amount of extra class time needed to teach these skills, they were included in regular classroom instruction as much as possible. While the teacher reviewed for an upcoming test, study skills such as, "establish a quiet study area free from distractions" and "review small sections of information in frequent intervals rather than all at one time" would be included in the instructional procedures. Researchers gave students a list of suggestions pertinent to studying at home (see Appendix E). The teacher also used the closing phase of lesson plans to reiterate what homework needed to be completed. This time was used to stress the importance of using the assignment notebook, or some other kind of calendar, to manage homework and daily activities. Reminders were also given during this time to write the daily assignments in the assignment notebook. Extra time outside of regular academic instruction was used to instruct students on other study and organizational tips. Researchers incorporated into this instruction development of habits and routines for school and home. This included setting aside specific times and places for homework at home, packing backpacks for school the night before, and using assignment notebooks as a guide for completing necessary assignments

on time. At school, students worked on making it a routine to fill out assignment notebooks at the end of each class period, making use of a checklist to ensure preparation for class, and utilizing assignment notebooks at the end of the day to help determine what materials needed to be taken home to complete given assignments. Researchers also taught students to organize materials in one place. With the elementary students, a pencil box that could be kept in desks was an option to help with organization. The junior high and high school students could use a pencil pouch that easily clipped into a binder. Even with efforts to provide all the instruction on study skills and organization during regular instructional time, time outside of class was still needed to give students an opportunity to actually organize their materials in desks, lockers, backpacks, and binders. Additionally, combing through textbooks and supplemental teacher material, teachers found guidelines for students. Using these whenever time permitted, teachers discussed these different overheads, worksheets, and talking prompts. Taking time to present this new focus—organization—allowed students to illustrate likes and dislikes, helpful and unbeneficial requirements.

Unfortunately, the focus the teachers must exhibit for successful organization may bring other areas of learning down. When teachers returned papers to students, it was necessary to correct the answers. Doing this and then placing the different kinds of papers in the correct sections often created a small havoc. Students would correct answers while trying to organize the binders. This led to time management; the teacher had to remind students to correct papers and then put them away. While students followed these directions, they couldn't help but be unorganized on their desks. Students would often try to juggle textbooks, open binders, returned papers, and personal objects on a desk, which often resulted in spilled binders or lost writing utensils.

During this process, researchers noted difficulties with keeping all of the students organized. Those students who were very much drawn in and interested in the program were much easier to keep focused and on task, while those students who seemed indifferent posed more of a challenge. It took much effort on the researchers' part to provide daily reminders and visuals on what assignments needed to be written in the assignment notebook. Even after putting forth this effort, some students still chose not to write the assignments down. Students needed extra class time to write assignments in the assignment notebook and clean and organize binders. Some students had a difficult time understanding that it was acceptable to throw items away if they were not of use. These students had a tendency to want to keep everything, which led to an overabundance of papers spilling out of their binders. Weekly binder "clean-outs" became frustrating for the researchers at times because of the amount of clutter that some students kept in their binders. In some situations, the researchers felt that more of the responsibility for the organization was placed on them than on the students. Researchers made an effort for student led opportunities concerning organization, but the "ripple effect" of negativity combined with students not wanting to stand out made students ignore organization unless the teacher initiated the process.

Overall, the three researchers at different grade levels observed many similar behaviors. Nonetheless, the teachers did have a span of experiences due to subject matter and students' ages. It is important to look at each teacher's story for clues into specific level of students. The elementary teacher, the junior high teacher, and the high school teacher all noted interesting learning experiences for themselves.

Students involved in the action research project at the 3-5 level all possessed individualized education plans. Students were included in the regular classroom for all academic

subjects except reading. During reading, the students met with the researcher for instruction. It was during this time that the researcher checked and monitored binders and assignment notebooks. The regular classroom teachers were also involved in the process. At the end of each day, the regular classroom teachers would provide additional instruction to the students on how and what to fill in on the assignment notebooks.

Implementation of the binder and assignment notebook system greatly excited the students. The 3-5 students involved were very enthusiastic about receiving their own binders with folders inside. Researchers decided to use folders for the 3-5 students because access to a three-hole punch was limited for them. It was also felt that at such a young age this would be a better method to start with to teach them how to be organized. At the onset of the system, the teacher gave instructions concerning how to use the binder and what kinds of things should go into each folder. The teacher led instructions on how to utilize and fill in the assignment notebook. The grade school students were also required to have a parent sign their notebook each night in an attempt to facilitate parent involvement in a student's homework and education. The assignment notebook could also become a quick and easy form of communication between parent and teacher. The guidelines and operation of the program was reinforced by further instruction given by the teacher in the regular classroom.

As the program began, the researcher would do a binder check each day to monitor who was employing them and who was not. Assignment notebooks were also checked for parent signatures. The students were eager to talk each day about how they were using their binders. The researcher found that she didn't even have to ask the students about their binders because the first thing each of them would do each day upon entering the classroom would be to open up their assignment notebooks to the correct date and show the researcher where their parent had

signed. The students would even remind the researcher to do binder checks each day. Much to the satisfaction of the researcher, the students demonstrated more excitement and involvement in the program than was expected. Teachers from the students' regular classrooms even commented on how thrilled the students were about using the binders.

The excitement about using the binders continued as the research went on. When asked about how they felt about using the binders, it was unanimous that they really liked them and felt that they helped them stay organized. The researcher expected to have students lose the binder, but was pleasantly surprised when it didn't happen. One issue that occurred shortly after the implementation of the program that interfered with its effectiveness was the tendency of some students to stuff papers randomly in their binders instead of using the folders appropriately. After this was noted, the researcher provided more instruction and modeling concerning how to use the binder and folders resourcefully. Binder clean-outs were also started to help minimize the number of unimportant papers that remained in the folders. The researcher noted that in some student assignment notebooks parents had signed daily, however; the "stay at home" folder remained full. This led to suspicions that the parent was just signing the notebook and not paying attention to everything that was in the binder, which would not aide the students in their organization nor instill in them the importance of education.

Even with the student's excitement about using the binders, it became very evident that more than just organization plays into how well a student performs at school. Those students that continued to struggle with homework completion and grades had excessive absences. When teachers contacted parents about these absences, parents gave excuses. It was apparent to the researcher that without parental support at home, a child's success at school was going to be jeopardized. The researcher felt limited in options and became frustrated with the amount of

work and effort she was putting in compared to what was coming from the students and parents. Again, if the importance of education is not reinforced at home, only the hope remains that an educator will reach the student in some way. In regards to the research, if students and teachers lack support from home, a teacher can put in vast amounts of time to try to keep students organized and the effort will still fail.

Upon the implementation of the program, it was thought by the researcher that as the program continued, the amount of time needed to keep the students organized would wane. Contrary to this belief, it did not. The students remained eager to use the binders, but even after continuous instruction on how to use them an ample amount of time was still needed to keep them in action. Curiosity arose about the relationship between how much time was needed to help the students with their organization and their age. It was felt that because this was the student's primary introduction to the use of a binder and an assignment notebook for organization, it might take them longer to become independent with its use. With the continuity of the use of the binder and assignment notebook system throughout a student's educational career, it is the hope that it would become habit.

Students involved in the action research project at the 6-8 level reported to last period study hall. It was during this time that the researcher checked and monitored the binders and assignment notebooks. In this junior high, teachers post important announcements on the board at the completion of each period. Students are directly responsible for making note of all assignments, deadlines, and upcoming projects in their assignment notebooks. Each teacher encourages the use of the organizational tool; consequently, teachers established rules and procedures conducive for organization.

Students often see study hall as a break from their day—a chance to do very little work. Oppositely, students should see study hall as a time to organize their books, binders, homework, and ideas before going home. The researcher purposely chose study hall for assessment and work concerning organization, as the class held the most potential for overall, meaningful change.

Due to a small number of targeted students enrolled in the sixth grade study hall, obtaining consent forms was easy. Students eagerly returned the consent forms the following day. The students asked when the report was due, if their names would be in it, and who would read it. At the start, implementation looked promising because of students' eager attitudes.

While students willingly began the project, parents showed apprehension. Some parents made slight jokes in subsequent communications about their parenting styles and hectic lives. These references to the study skills, class activities, and surveys forced the researcher to question the validity of parental surveys. Parents nervously raised the topic in communications. Additionally, the researcher noted that two parents made offended remarks. These parents expressed slighted remarks after the researcher sent home study skills and tips. As parents expressed concern to the researcher, it is questionable what the parents said to their students. Waning student excitement may be the result of hurt or frustrated parental comments.

Student surveys showed the researcher the areas that students spend their time. In general, surveys showed that students spent massive amounts of time playing video games, playfully searching the Internet, arranging songs for their IPOD, and texting on their cell phones. Also, surveys showed that students spent minimal time reading library books, reviewing school materials, studying class notes, or completing homework. Furthermore, overall responses indicated that parents failed to monitor or limit students' usage of technological gadgets.

Junior high students readily began the binder system. The teacher provided each student with a large 3-ring binder, a cover sheet, tab dividers, white notebook paper, various pens and pencils, a pencil pouch, and an assignment notebook. The researcher spent several class periods demonstrating how to organize each subject, how to monitor the worthiness of filed papers, and how to keep them organized.

The researcher encouraged parents to monitor weekly the use of the planner and binder system. The researcher did not require parental signatures. Parents seldom responded to these requests. The extent of parental involvement is unknown.

After the first few weeks of use, the researcher clearly saw which students employed the binder system and which did not. The same target student who was missing the highest number of assignments at the beginning of the study was still missing the highest number of assignments after a few short weeks. This particular student was often unorganized, lost his essential materials, spent the majority of this study hall time digging through his pencil pouch, and never knew of his missing assignments. Even though this student had direct instruction and constant reminders, he showed little improvement.

Overall, the majority of the targeted students responded very well to the interventions. They continually brought their binders to class with pride and with eagerness to place a mark on the checklist for having it completed. Students decorated their binder covers and enthusiastically and proudly shared their binders. They often reminded the researcher to check their work.

Findings from the junior high researcher showed implementation at this age level provided some improvement. Preadolescent students want to please their teachers and parents; however, junior high students face other struggles—the elaboration of bullying, cliques, sports, and clubs. For organizational methods like a binder to be truly effective, it can't be seen as

desirable or undesirable, but a normal and usual activity. Complaints or comments from peers heavily influenced the targeted students. Furthermore, students who entered the 6-8 grade level with sound organization and study skills continued to maintain those skills with little encouragement. Those students who had not mastered those skills did not respond well.

The high school level requires that class be designed for organization. Everyday, students enter the classroom and begin working on a grammar exercise. After grammar exercises, the class transitions to writing; this effectively bridges from grammar and conventions in writing to literary ideas in writing. Lastly, the class works on the current reading project. Naturally, some days may need a different pattern, but the teacher always informs students in advance, as they are used to this class' design. The teacher always structures her classroom and life, so this project befitted her normal teaching style. As the teacher wants to be informed and educated, a teaching goal is for students to be as well. For most people to succeed in life they must have a plan—or be organized. The high school teacher organizes her workplace, home, and all sections in between, and students are aware of this modeling. Sadly, the teacher often observed students frustrated as they searched for lost materials, and she thought many of them should have better grades than what they do; lost assignments and forgotten notes impede them. The teacher began this project with hope of organizing students to better their educational experiences.

On the day the teacher approached students with the project, she waited until students finished the day's grammar. The teacher explained to them the idea and asked if they had any comments. Most of them did; most commented about a lack of organization. Many more laughed curiously at a teacher being "assigned" such a topic for a large paper. As expected, they chided the teacher for choosing this willingly. The students also asked questions about graduate school

and college. This shows that from the beginning, the students were willing to participate in this project; they may have been excited, hopeful about it.

The process of organization began with binders. After receiving signed permission slips and surveys, the class began by taking a class period to organize binders. Helping students set up their binders provided a nice chance to work with them individually—an instance that is normally eliminated in the high school setting. While other students worked in groups, each student and the teacher sat down together. This is one example of the large time consumption this project required. They began by making sure that the student had an appropriate binder. Only a few students said privately that they could not afford a binder. Luckily, the school has donated school supplies every year, which includes binders. To discourage embarrassment, the teacher had set aside binders before the activity. Students divided sections topically and then chronologically within the first divisions. Obviously, binders should be conducive for the specific subject and classroom, as this structure worked for the high school level.

Once the students broke the binder into specific sections, they showed the teacher their organizational patterns. This was a learning experience for both students and teacher, as many questions arose that the whole class needed to have answered. Such questions included placement of the syllabus, loose-leaf paper, and random classroom assignments (ACT practice tests). Generally, students put the syllabus at the front of the binder and other items where placement benefited them the most. The students also determined the order of the units. The high school level required less guidance, but students still wanted a basic structure for their binders. Additionally, breaking students into new habits took the majority of and 84-minute class period. Older students received new ideas less favorably than younger students, thus taking more time.

Allowing flexibility in organizing benefited the students. At the start of the project, the teacher gave them dividers to use. This did not require much money or time—simple colored paper. As the semester progressed, the students found their own system or organizing. Some preferred chronological order, others by units, and still others by topics—grammar, reading, and speeches. Others still wanted the teacher to structure their binders, perhaps out of complacency. Students taking responsibility for their own organization was a thrilling and successful sign.

Students treated the organizational attempts differently. The most effective tool in the high school setting was the binder; students used other organizational tools grudgingly. For instance, students used the assignment notebook less and less as the semester progressed. This school requires all students to have an assignment notebook for a hall pass, so students still brought it to class. At the beginning of the semester, students would write down homework and future assignments in their notebook. As time progressed, students relied more on the binder. Students placed homework at the front of their binders. Because the teacher emphasized reviewing notes nightly, students took the binder home every day. Most commented that writing a small note on the assignment or at the end of the day's notes worked better—less opening and closing of books.

In a semester, it did not seem possible that solid organizational skills were imbedded with the students. Hopefully, when students become busier and make a conscious decision to be organized, they will fall back upon these skills. Students that were again in this class the next semester appear to use their binders, just not as much as last semester. This observation aligns with research that emphasizes the necessities of organization at home from a young age. Adolescence is a difficult and rebellious time and some students may find comfort in similar,

however cluttered environments. Students may not rely on their newly learned tips, but on what they have always experienced.

Strikingly, in conversation about this project, most students reiterated that applying organizational techniques outside of school posed difficulties. Most felt that ventures at organization at home would fail. Having little control over locations of televisions, etc. handicaps their influence; one young person cannot change a home he does not own. Even though many agreed with the reasoning of less television, especially while studying, they were unwilling to implement such plans. Furthermore, parents' surveys showed an inconsistency in answers. This may have been because of the difference in parental goals, expectations parents thought the teacher had, what really happens in the home, and what parents think happens in the home. Television, cell phones, stereos, and computers pervade all hours of students' lives. As so many outside instances that affect teachers' strategies, parents and students must control the balance of technology.

Data Collection and Analysis

Parents were given written notice of the research project and asked to become involved in the learning process for their children. Researchers advised parents to check student assignment notebooks to keep informed on their child's education. It was also stressed that the assignment notebook could be used as a form of communication with the teacher. Researchers struggled to get the parents actively involved in the process. While the parents wanted their child to be successful, many of them remained passive and expressed that the responsibility should fall on the teacher and child. At the completion of the research, parents again filled out the survey regarding feelings about their child's organizational skills. (See Table 4). Results showed very little difference between how parents felt before implementation of the research and after. This

demonstrates that parents want their children to receive instruction on organizational and study

skills, yet they want the responsibility to be placed on someone other than themselves.

Table 4

Parent Responses to Survey Regarding use of Assignment Notebook and Organizational Skills after Implementation of Intervention

	Frequency of Answers		
Question	Yes	No	Sometimes
Child frequently loses	5	16	1
Assignment notebook helps me feel informed	15	3	4
Child breaks big projects into sections	7	12	3
Child keeps track of social events	5	10	7
I encourage use of assignment notebook	19	3	
I go over my child's assignment notebook	16	3	3
Helps my child plan his/her time	16	1	5
Helps my child's organization	18		4
Instruction on would benefit my child	22		
Hinders my child's work	2	15	5
I use to communicate with my child's teachers	3	15	4
I view the back portion		15	7
I encourage my child to write their goals	2	17	3
I model the use of a planner	18	1	3
Child is more in control of school life with the use of assignment notebook	16	1	5

n=22

On the closing day of research, students took the student survey. (See Table 5). Results did not vary significantly from the survey administered at the beginning of the research. Many added notes at the bottom, without being asked, and these messages provide insightful and unexpected reflections. Commenting on the binder, students said "it helped organize the different ideas in class" and "it was easier to study because of the binder." Other students said, "I didn't keep a binder" and "I really didn't like it [the binder]." While the researchers made sure all students had a binder, some students either concealed their disdain for using it or have already disregarded the implementation. Similar to the results of the parent survey, the students tended to answer in the way that they thought they were supposed to. The majority of the student's answers made it seem that they were genuinely interested in organizational skills and the use of mechanisms to be more efficient; however their actions when observed during the research spoke otherwise. When comparing answers across the grade levels, it was evident that the grade school students were more likely to answer in a positive way than those students at the junior high and high school level. (See Table 6). It is not known if the grade school students answered in this way because they were trying to please the teacher, were unsure of what some of the questions meant, or were truly being honest in their responses. It was evident during the research process that the grade school students tended to be much more enthusiastic and encouraged by the instruction of organizational skills and the use of the binder than those students in the middle and upper grade levels. Some of the junior high and high school students showed interest in the instruction, the majority of them seemed uninterested, beyond the use of a teacher made organizational system, or had a system of their own already in place.

Table 5

Student Responses to Survey Regarding use of Assignment Notebook and Organizational Skills after Implementation of Intervention

	Frequency of Answers		
Question	Yes	No	Sometimes
Use assignment notebook	15	6	6
Find assignment notebook useful	14	6	7
Keeps track of my homework	13	10	4
Helps me learn to plan my time	8	15	4
Helps me get my work completed on time	13	10	4
Used to record social events	6	14	7
Helps me plan for big projects	17	7	3
Keeping track of my grades would help me	15	9	3
Used to keep track of my goals	9	16	2
Daily assignments are prioritized	7	20	0
Helps me feel in control of my homework	16	6	5
Teachers encourage the use of my assignment notebook	20	3	4
Teachers clarify assignments to write in assignment notebook	16	6	5
My parents go over my assignment Notebook	10	14	3

n=27

Table 6

Comparison of Student Responses to Survey Regarding use of Assignment Notebook and Organizational Skills after Implementation of Intervention by Grade Level

Question		Frequency of Answers		
		Yes	No	Sometimes
Use assignment notebook	Elementary	9	1	0
	Junior High	1	3	2
	High School	5	2	4
Find assignment notebook useful	Elementary	8	1	1
	Junior High	0	4	2
	High School	6	1	4
Keeps track of my homework	Elementary	10	0	0
	Junior High	0	5	1
	High School	3	5	3
Helps me learn to plan my time	Elementary	7	1	2
	Junior High	0	6	0
	High School	1	8	2
Helps me get my work completed on time	Elementary	9	0	1
	Junior High	0	5	1
	High School	4	5	2
Used to record social events	Elementary	4	3	3
	Junior High	0	6	0
	High School	2	5	4
Helps me plan for big projects	Elementary	9	1	0
	Junior High	0	4	2
	High School	8	2	1
Keeping track of my grades would help me	Elementary	9	1	0
	Junior High	0	4	2
	High School	6	4	1
Used to keep track of my goals	Elementary	8	1	1
	Junior High	1	4	1
	High School	0	11	0
Daily assignments are prioritized	Elementary	6	4	0
	Junior High	0	6	0
	High School	1	10	0
Helps me feel in control of my homework	Elementary	8	0	2
	Junior High	0	5	1
	High School	8	1	2
Teachers encourage the use of my assignment notebook	Elementary	10	0	0
	Junior High	3	2	1
	High School	7	1	3
Teachers clarify assignments to write in assignment notebook	Elementary	10	0	0
	Junior High	3	2	1
	High School	3	4	4
My parents go over my assignment notebook	Elementary	8	1	1
	Junior High	0	6	0
	High School	2	7	2

n=27

Table 7

Number of Students with Missing Assignments and Failing Grades after Implementation of Intervention

Missing Assignments	11
Failing Grades	6

$n = 31$

The comparison of missing assignments and failing grades from the beginning of the implementation of the intervention to the end showed improvement. After implementation of the program, both the number of missing assignments and failing grades decreased. The number of students with missing assignments decreased by 10, and the number of students with failing grades by 5. This improvement can be seen as a result of the implementation of the organizational program. Use of an assignment notebook helped students stay aware of assignments and their due dates, which ultimately led to fewer missing assignments. The assignment notebook maintained student attentiveness to tests and projects helping to improve the amount of time that was spent studying and working on such tasks. Improved assignment completion and test preparation led to fewer failing grades. Though little difference was seen with the comparison of the parent and student survey from the beginning to the end, the final comparison of the number of failing grades and missing assignments demonstrates an actuality of what occurred. Students and parents may not always feel that organizational skills and tools are beneficial when in reality they are.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Even though researchers studied organization in a variety of settings, with different age levels and subjects, general conclusions were the same. Researchers saw marginal improvements

with students who began the implementation with low grades. These students' bailiwick included few organizational skills, and their teachers hope that some taught skills would remain. Conversely, students who began the implementation project with high grades had little change. These students were interested in the actual project and conformed to guidelines well; nonetheless, these students probably had little room for improvement. Students who benefited the most were average in their grades and other achievement measures. These students, perhaps lost in ways to improve, adhered well to guidelines. Overall, students who smatter poorly in any academic area organized little by the end of the research; students who apply lessons from school showed a desire to continue with suggestions; and students who excel in academic settings learned very little.

A direct correlation was noted between student attendance and poor student organization and low academic achievement. Those students that missed a considerable amount of school were in general more unorganized, unprepared, and lacked the study skills needed to make up for what they missed while not in attendance. Grades were significantly lower in students with poor attendance because of the lack of the tools needed to "catch" them up to where they needed to be in the classroom. With their absences, these students missed out on opportunities for direct instruction on study skills and time to organize their materials. Schools expected them to make up for this missed time on their own plus keep up with current instruction. These absences had a spiraling effect for most of these students, which led to more disorganization, missing assignments, and failing grades.

Additionally, researchers believe the preponderance of students had parental guidance at the start of this research. Done again, the researchers would have sent home encouraging notes to remind parents of efforts in class. As the semester continued, students became wary of the

suggested guidelines, as did parents. It is unknown if dismayed parents neglected to work with their students at home, if strained students quit their roles, or if the combined pair renounced the new way and fell into the more familiar, albeit messier way.

At the conclusion of the research, all agreed that early intervention was important for an organizational and study skills program to be successful. Researchers concluded that students at the grade school level demonstrated a higher degree of interest in the program implemented during the action research. Getting students enthusiastic about learning an important educational and life skill at an early age increases the likelihood that the student will retain such skills. This retention will lead to more follow through of the skills as the student's academic career progresses. Adopting a formal district wide organizational system may help students develop these important skills. By implementing a district wide system, organizational methods would become uniform for students as they progress through grade levels. The uniformity would lend itself to easier transitions for students from one grade level to the next and make adjustment periods for students traveling from a grade school to junior high or high school much easier. Parents may feel ease with such a program as well. Direct instruction on the skills would be straightforward for teachers because set guidelines for the district would already be in place. Implementing this type of system in a district would be beneficial because all parties would know the expectations and would work toward a common goal.

Like other issues in education, parents and teachers must combat students' lack of organization together. Even if students desired to change, lack of structure elsewhere hindered efforts. Students who had support and reminders from other sources took these new tools and added to or tweaked their current skills. Other students fell within these extremes.

Professional Reflection

Reflecting upon the action research process, the researchers felt some frustration about the quantity of progress that was made. Researchers put forth tremendous amounts of effort, with little improvement. Researchers found the fact that both students and parents were interested in improving organizational skills, but weren't willing to put forth the effort to improve and maintain those skills very disheartening. It became evident to the researchers that parents try to give more and more responsibility to teachers. The researchers felt that this responsibility should balance against enabling students and parents. Researchers fear that the sent message to students and parents is that they don't have to do "it" because there will be someone else there to do it for them. Another concerning finding was the amount of apathy both students and parents felt about the overall importance of education. Failing grades and missing assignments were not enough to drive them to want to improve their skills to become a better student. Overall, researchers felt that with no connection between home and school, with any academic endeavor, regardless of efforts put forth, the school will fall short.

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APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Instructions: Do not write your name on this form. For responses, please circle your choice.

1. I am currently using my assignment notebook.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

2. I find my assignment notebook useful.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

3. My assignment notebook helps me keep track
   of my homework.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

4. My assignment notebook helped me learn how
   to plan my time.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

5. I find my assignment notebook has helped me get
   my work completed on time.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

6. I use my assignment notebook to record appointments
   and social events.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

7. I find my assignment notebook helpful to plan big
   assignments and projects.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

8. Keeping track of my grades would help me.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

9. I use my assignment notebook to keep track of my goals.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

10. I prioritize my daily assignments in my book.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

11. I feel more in control of my homework as a result
    of using my assignment notebook.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

12. My teachers encourage the use of the assignment
    notebook.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

13. My teachers clarify assignments for me to write in my
    assignment notebook.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

14. My parents go over my assignment notebook at least
    once a week.

        Yes   No   Sometimes

15. Circle the features you use most often:

Rules, Monthly Calendar, Maps, Weekly Calendar, Ruler

APPENDIX B

Parent Survey

Parent Survey—Assignment Notebook

Please answer the following questions and return to school with your child.

1. Do you find your child frequently losing his/her assignment notebook?   Yes   No   Sometimes

2. Do you find an assignment notebook helpful for keeping you informed about your child's homework?   Yes   No   Sometimes

3. Does your child use his/her assignment notebook to break big assignments down into sections that can be completed by certain dates?   Yes   No   Sometimes

4. Do you notice if your child uses his/her assignment book to keep track of special events and appointments?   Yes   No   Sometimes

5. Do you encourage your child to use his/her assignment notebook?   Yes   No   Sometimes

6. Do you go over your child's assignment notebook at least once a week?   Yes   No   Sometimes

7. Do you think the assignment notebook helps your child to plan his/her time? Yes   No   Sometimes

8. Do you think your child is more organized and gets work completed on time more often because he/she uses an assignment notebook?   Yes   No   Sometimes

9. Do you think your child would find it helpful to be taught directly how use his/her assignment notebook with regard to planning and breaking down big assignments?   Yes   No   Sometimes

10. Do you feel that the assignment notebook hinders your child's work?   Yes   No   Sometimes

11. Have you used the assignment notebook to communicate with your child's teacher(s)?   Yes   No   Sometimes

12. Do you ever view the back portion that documents trips to the restroom, library, etc.?   Yes   No   Sometimes

13. Do you encourage your child to set written goals in his/her assignment notebook and then encourage accomplishments of those goals?   Yes   No   Sometimes

14. Do you model by using a planner or calendar at home to plan family Events?   Yes   No   Sometimes

15. Overall, do you find your child to be more in control of his/her school life when the assignment notebook is used?   Yes   No   Sometimes

APPENDIX C

Technology Survey

1. List the technology gadgets that you use the most.

2. Are you limited in your amount of television viewing? If so, how?

3. Do you complete your homework in the same room as a television?

4. Does your home have a DVR/TIVO setting?

   a. How often do you use this program?

   b. In what way do you use it the most?

5. Do you have any of the following in your bedroom? Circle all that apply.

Television   Digital camera

Computer

Radio/Stereo

Cell phone

IPOD

Regular phone

6. Where do you do your homework? Circle all that apply.

Living room   School

Kitchen table

Bedroom

APPENDIX D
Materials Checklist

Name	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner
	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner	Binder Paper Pencil Homework Planner

Binder Checklist √=has it   X=missing

APPENDIX E

Study at Home Tips

Study at Home

1. Grab a bottle of water! Staying hydrated will keep you awake and your brain working!

2. Choose your location carefully. If people, electronics, or other diversions are around, you *will* become distracted.

3. Look at the clock: how *much* time do you need to spend on *which* subjects? Plan accordingly.

4. Read over your in-class notes nightly. When the test comes, you will not have to cram.

5. Quiet background music might help you focus; it might not! Do what is right for you.

6. Keep your goal in mind: do you want to finish a worksheet? memorize ten vocabulary words? diagram ten sentences? Setting a goal and accomplishing that goal brings a sense of fulfillment about your homework.

7. Think of homework as practice and not as work.

8. Know your learning style and study in a manner that best matches your learning style.

9. Mark sections that you need clarified; ask a peer or teacher tomorrow.

10. Asking questions is one of the most effective ways to learn.