Creating a standards-based classroom with low achieving students: teacher and student transformation

Edward William Perdue
St. John Fisher College

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Abstract
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A STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOM WITH LOW ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Creating a standards-based classroom with low achieving students: teacher and student transformation

Edward William Perdue
St. John Fisher
2003
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To satisfy the accountability section of the "The No Child Left Behind" Act, New York State requires all school districts to meet and maintain minimum performance standards on the assessments. Therefore, schools are focusing on cultivating standards-based classrooms as a way to best prepare their students to be successful on the assessments. In my research, I attempted to construct a standards-based classroom with a section of my eighth grade mathematics students, a large percentage of whom are children of generational poverty. From my research and observations, I have concluded that a "true" standards-based classroom cannot be achieved without student motivation. Furthermore, I have concluded that if children of generational poverty are not intrinsically motivated to succeed in school, the school as a whole must provide external motivation with the goal of replacing the current school-wide culture of disinterest and failure with a school-wide culture of hope and success.
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INTRODUCTION

I was very excited and optimistic when I accepted my first teaching position at Mount Morris in mid-July. However, many times during my first five weeks of teaching junior high school mathematics at Mount Morris, I seriously questioned my new career choice of teaching. When administration dropped into my classroom unannounced resulting in a unpleasant meeting with the principal, coupled with the unmotivated and disruptive behavior and attitude of a majority of my students, I began to doubt my teaching abilities and if I should even remain in the teaching profession. I became frustrated not being able to use the strategies, activities, and techniques that I had learned at St John Fisher and had used successfully during my student teaching experiences at Jefferson Middle School and Webster Thomas High School. Because my focus became to control the classroom, I began to feel less and less like a teacher. I began to feel increasingly like a classroom monitor whose only duties are to pass out worksheets and control the student’s behavior. Even though it was not formally stated, I believe that if I do not learn how to “control my class” as well as drastically improve Mount Morris Central School District’s scores on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment in May of 2003, that I will not be asked back to teach at Mount Morris next year.

Through my education at St. John Fisher, I had became confident as a teacher in a standards-based classroom using the tools of inquiry, cooperative learning, scaffolding, reflective writing, and discourse. My success using these strategies during my student teaching placements at Jefferson Middle School and
Webster Thomas High School only increased my comfort and confidence. After I accepted the teaching position at Mount Morris, I researched Mount Morris Central School District to familiarize myself with the school. I found the standardized test scores at Mount Morris to be low, but I was confident I could raise the scores. I reasoned that since the scores were already very low, how could the scores get any lower, they could only go up. Looking back now, I realize how naïve I was.

I was not ready for the classroom environment that I encountered in the seventh and eighth-grade mathematics classes at Mount Morris Central School. It seems to me that the majority of the students in my classes are extraordinarily culturally and cognitively diverse, unmotivated, with a very short attention span. Approximately fifteen percent of the students have an individualized educational plan and only twenty percent of this year’s eighth-graders scored above a two on the last year’s Terra Nova assessment, an indicator of how the students will perform on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

The second week of school I confronted one of my students who had not turned in any work and asked him why he was not working in class. I asked him how he could ever hope to pass the course and graduate junior high as well as high school. His response to me was “I will just do as my family and my friends ... I will collect welfare and you will take care of me”. I sat there for a minute not knowing how to respond. Then I wondered how I was ever going to motivate this student to learn mathematics let alone many more just like him. My
education at St. John Fisher had not prepared me for that response. In his mind, he had already made major life decisions and they did not include needing to learn any eighth-grade mathematics. From that day on, I knew it was not going to be easy to engage and motivate the students at Mount Morris. On some days, I seriously questioned if it was even possible for me to engage and motivate the majority of the students.

This year Mount Morris used state budget surplus of twenty-six million dollars to completely renovate the school. The renovation included one million dollars to bring the latest technology to Mount Morris classrooms. During my interview the superintendent of the Mount Morris Central School District told me “even though Mount Morris is a small, rural school, the new technology will bring Mount Morris to the world and the world to Mount Morris”. New computer labs for the senior and junior high school, forty TI-83 plus graphing calculators, a long distance learning center, and MST/CAD labs are among the new technology at Mount Morris Central School for the 2002 - 2003 school year.

I very quickly became aware of the great concern of the board of education, the superintendent, and the administration with the upcoming performance of the eighth-grade students on the 2003 New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. My first week of school, I attended a meeting with the head of the mathematics department and the principal in charge of curriculum. They informed me that over the last four years, seventy-six percent of the students at Mount Morris had scored below the minimum state standard on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment. While the scores at Mount Morris
have been going down each year, the average score of New York State's public schools have been going up each year. Eighty percent of the students at Mount Morris (Democrat and Chronicle, 2002) taking the eighth-grade mathematics assessment in May of 2002 scored below a three, the minimum state standard. In the six-county area of Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, and Wayne counties, Mount Morris had the second lowest score. The only school district with a lower percentage of students obtaining a three or four on the eighth-grade assessment was the Rochester City School District.

To improve scores on the New York State eighth-grade assessments, Mount Morris added twenty-five minutes of time to the junior high school day. The extra twenty-five minutes is used everyday as a mandatory academic intervention services class for all seventh and eighth-grade students. During these twenty-five minutes, I am expected to review materials and prepare the students for the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. I must make a weekly report to administration on the progress of students in academic intervention services. Presently, there is not a curriculum in place to use as a guide in preparing students for the mathematics eighth-grade assessment. Therefore, I must decide on and prepare activities each day that I believe will best prepare the students for the mathematics eighth-grade assessment.

After the first few weeks of teaching, I realized that raising the scores at Mount Morris was going to be an extremely difficult challenge. I conducted a pre-assessment and found that many of the students are very deficient in the basic math skills that include multiplication, long division, decimals, and
fractions. To make matters even more difficult, I found that the majority of students at Mount Morris are very difficult to manage, motivate, and keep on task in the classroom. For the first time, I began to wonder if Mount Morris’s low scores on the New York State assessments were due to a lack of student interest in learning rather than any lack of cognitive ability or incompetent teaching.

The administration of the school as well as the entire faculty has made raising the students’ scores on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment a priority. At our first union meeting, the president of the Mount Morris teacher association spent twenty minutes educating the staff on the “No Child Left Behind” Act and the consequences if Mount Morris Central School District’s scores do not improve on this year’s eighth-grade mathematics assessment. For the first time, I realized the true importance of the eighth-grade mathematics assessment and why my classroom had become a focal point. I had wondered why school administrators often looked in my door window to see if students were on task and what they are learning. Now I was beginning to understand why.

One day I was teaching a cooperative learning lesson introducing the TI-83 plus graphing calculator when an administrator looked through the window into my room. Most of the students were engaged but some of the students were out of their desks not on task. An administrator entered my classroom unannounced and reprimanded the students for being out of their seats and talking. The administrator then asked to see me in his office directly after class. I believe this severely damaged my credibility with the students. I could hear the
students saying things like “Cool, Mr. Perdue is in trouble” or “cool, we got a teacher in trouble.” I even had a student in another class come into my room and tell me that he had heard I had gotten into trouble with the principal and had to go to his office. Later in his office, the principal verbally reprimanded me for having an out of control classroom.

When I started at Mount Morris teachers warned me that some students in Mount Morris took pride in getting teachers in trouble and fired. I listened but did not take much stock in the statement as I felt I had excellent rapport with students and this would not be a problem for me. The eighth-grade at Mount Morris is split into three sections. The sections are divided loosely by the student’s performance on the English section of the Terra Nova Standardized assessments with the highest scoring students being in section 8 -3, the lowest in 8 - 1, and the rest in section 8 - 2. A few of the students are not happy that they are in the 8 - 2 section. They are aware of the grouping and want to be in the higher achieving 8 - 3 section. Two students went to the administration and told them that they could not learn in section 8 - 2 because of being distracted by other students. Fellow teachers became aware of the students' plan to be taken out of section 8 - 2 and put in section 8 - 3 so the students were not moved, but the result was even an added focus on my classroom and my classroom management by administration.

I struggled for weeks trying to find answers. It seemed as if no one was happy. Administration was not happy with my classroom management and the students’ scores on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.
The students were not happy to be in school. The students perceived school, as boring and having to take classes that they believed were worthless. Last and not least, I was very unhappy. I was trying to teach seventh and eighth-grade mathematics to students who the majority of lack the basic skills and the motivation to grasp the curriculum. I was trying to reverse a negative trend and improve student performance on the seventh and eighth-grade mathematics assessment even though most of the students are not interested in school or mathematics. Due to Mount Morris Central School District's heavy and new investment in technology, I am expected to integrate the graphing calculator into my seventh and eighth-grade curriculum even though students are not allowed to use a calculator on Part One of the eighth-grade mathematics assessment or on the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment. I must accomplish all of this as a first year teacher trying to improve and refine my craft, while under the intense scrutiny and evaluation of an administration.
INTRODUCTION

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the “No Child Left Behind” Act. The “No Child Left Behind” Act is the long delayed reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Stallings, 2002) that was first enacted in 1965. The main objective of the “No Child Left Behind” Act (United States Department of Education, 2002) is that all students have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education while at the same time meet rigorous state academic achievement standards. The “No Child Left Behind” Act supplements previous federal initiatives by providing new funding to the individual states in an effort to close achievement gaps and ensure that state standards are being met. The “No Child Left Behind” Act (Center for Educational Reform, 2002) requires students to reach a minimum proficiency on challenging state academic assessments regardless of income, background, and racial or ethnic identity for a school to receive the new federal funding. The “No Child Left Behind” Act (Lewis, 2002) envisions equity of outcomes among student populations and seeks to provide quality educational programs to all disadvantaged students. But unlike other educational laws over the past thirty-five years (Stallings 2002), the “No Child Left Behind” Act is backed by stronger state and individual school accountability.

In this literature review, I will review a number of current articles that will actively consider the issues related to the “No Child Left Behind” Act, the reasons for the “No Child Left Behind” Act, consequences of schools not meeting
the requirements set forth by the "No Child Left Behind" Act, New York State and the "No Child Left Behind Act", scoring of the New York State assessments, how Mount Morris is performing on the New York State Assessments, reaction to the "No Child Left Behind" Act, and the difficulties of setting up a standards based classroom in a diverse classroom population. At the end of the review, I offer some suggestions for future research and share my personal opinion on the problems of implementing standards-based instruction into a cognitively and culturally diverse, low functioning classroom.

THE "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND" ACT

The "No Child Left Behind" Act dramatically reshapes the federal government's role in education. The "No Child Left Behind" Act (United States Department of Education, 2002) authorizes the federal government to expect and demand results from schools, but places the responsibility for implementing the accountability standards and how they are to be assessed and measured on each state's Department of Education. Each state's Department of Education is responsible for assessing students each year, tabulating the results, and then reporting results in a timely manner.

One of the main objectives of the "No Child Left Behind" Act (Donlevy, 2002) is to promote high standards. Studies show that low student achievement often results from exposure to education of inferior quality where inadequately trained or uncertified teachers deliver instruction. The "No Child Left Behind" Act (United States Department of Education, 2002) holds schools that wish to receive the additional federal funds directly accountable. Schools must align
their curriculum with state standards, hire only appropriately trained and certified staff, develop evidence based program initiatives, and achieve measurable results on state assessments within a specified time period to receive the new federal funding.

The “No Child Left Behind” Act (United States Department of Education, 2002) requires that each state education department implement a system of accountability for schools and districts to ensure that all students meet or perform above performance standards that are set by the state. Schools not reaching the minimum performance standards or those that are not making adequate yearly progress toward meeting the state’s minimum standards face a tiered level of consequences with each consequence becoming harsher. State assessments must be aligned with state standards so that yearly progress may be measured in reading, math, and science. Provisions must be in place to account for any one-year variation in results, but adequate progress must be in evidence the other years for schools to continue to receive federal funding. The “No Child Left Behind” Act establishes a time line whereby all students enrolled in a school must meet or exceed minimum performance standards set forth by the state by the school year 2013 – 2014. Each state is required by the United States Department of Education to submit their plan for meeting the accountability provisions of legislation by January of 2003.
REASONS FOR THE "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND" ACT

If we had known fifty years ago that the United States would make astonishing improvements in technology, put an end to government enforced segregation, and spend an astonishing eight trillion dollars on education, we would expect to finish the century with all of our population proficient at reading, writing, and basic mathematics (Paige, 2002). However, the United States educational system with so many excellent schools and teachers, is failing. Too many adults and children are unable to read and write. The results of the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress survey show that only thirty-six percent of suburban, thirty-two percent of rural, and twenty-six percent of urban fourth graders can read proficiently.

In the United States (Paige, 2002), there is a noticeable and consistent achievement gap between ethnic groups. Forty percent of white fourth graders read at or above the proficiently level whereas only twelve percent of the black and sixteen percent of the Hispanic students read at or above the proficiently level. Statistics show that even though more students are attending college than ever before, that nearly one third of the college freshman must take remedial English or Mathematics courses.

President Bush (Long, 2002) believes that every child can learn and to improve overall student performance and narrow achievement gaps that schools and educators must be held accountable. President Bush’s belief that all students can learn include those students who have disabilities, those children that are
hard to teach or disruptive in the classroom, and those students that are
classified as having English as their second language.

The “No Child Left Behind” Act (Bailey, 2002) provides for no middle
ground or excuses. All educators must adapt the philosophy that every child can
learn. Educators cannot make excuses anymore for children based on race or
socioeconomic status. President Bush speaks of “the soft bigotry of low
expectations”. The “No Child Left Behind” Act is a clear indication that this kind
of thinking is no longer going to be acceptable. Yearly state assessments and
testing are an integral part of determining whether or not students have learned
what the state has decided they should know. Assessment and test scores
(United States Department of Education, 2002) will be categorized by
socioeconomic level, race, ethnicity, disability, and English proficiency so that the
federal and state’s Departments of Education as well as the individual schools
can see where the achievement gaps exist. School districts and schools that fail to
make adequate yearly progress or meet state standards will be identified. A plan
must be set in place for improvement and over time the schools will be subject to
corrective actions and restructuring with the end goal of getting the school back
on track to meet state standards.

Under the “No Child Left Behind” Act (Bainbridge & Thomas, 2002),
schools identified for improvement or corrective action, must give the parents or
guardians of students enrolled at those schools the option of enrolling their
children in another school. If the parents or guardians decide to move their child
to another school, the district identified for improvement or corrective action
must completely pay for transportation to and from the new school. Schools identified for improvement or corrective action must provide funds for low-income students seeking supplemental educational services such as tutoring.

CONSEQUENCES

Schools (American Association of School Administrators, 2002) after two consecutive years of failing to meet the minimum state standard and making adequate yearly progress, face possible consequences that include the school receiving technical assistance. After the school develops a mandatory two-year improvement plan, the school then becomes eligible for additional federal money. At this time, students of these schools must be offered the choice of attending other schools.

Schools (American Association of School Administrators, 2002) after three consecutive years of failing to meet minimum state standards and failing to make adequate yearly progress must offer supplemental services that include tutorial and other enrichment services. Supplemental services may be offered either before or after school and must be paid for by the school.

If a school (American Association of School Administrators, 2002) after four years fails to meet minimum state standards and is still not making adequate yearly progress, the school enters the first year of corrective action. Corrective action must include at least one of the following consequences. Extending the school year and day, hiring outside experts, implementing a new curriculum, and/or replacing staff. If after five years, a school fails to meet minimum state standards and make adequate yearly progress, the school enters
the second year of corrective action. In addition to the corrective action taken in year five, the school is also required to develop a restructuring plan.

If a school (American Association of School Administrators, 2002) after six years is still failing to meet minimum state standards and make yearly adequate progress, the school must begin restructuring no later than the beginning of year seven. The school must make one or a combination of the following actions that include state takeover, private management, conversion to a charter school, and restructuring. Any major restructuring the school’s governance arrangement that makes fundamental reforms must be consistent with state and local laws along with the collective bargaining agreements of the school districts.

NEW YORK STATE

The New York State Board of Regents (New York State Education Department, 2002) in the last several years has anticipated much of what the “No Child Left Behind” Act requires of a state. The New York State Board of Regents in 1996 adopted the following objectives into its strategic plan. All students must meet high standards for academic performance and personal behavior. All students must demonstrate the knowledge, understandings, and skills required by the New York State Learning Standards. All New York State educational institutions must meet the Board of Regents high performance standards by May of 2002. New York State (Stallings 2002) is just one of just twenty states in the United States whose standards, assessments, and accountability were judged by the United States Department of Education to be in full compliance with the Improving Schools Act of 1994. However, there are provisions in the “No Child
Left Behind” Act that are different or in addition to those contained in previous federal legislation. For example, New York State must make some adaptations to its accountability system to be aligned with the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” Act.

To fulfill the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” Act, New York State (New York State Education Department, 2002) had to implement a single statewide accountability system that ensures all schools are making adequate progress toward having all students meet state minimum standards. New York State had to decide how to include students who do not participate in regular New York State testing programs and that are educated out of the school as part of the school and state accountability system. The accountability system must track students from class to class and school to school. Finally, the accountability system must identify schools in need of improvement as well as identify high performing and rapidly improving schools.

New York State (New York State Education Department, 2002) uses student performance on the English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments given to the all eighth-grade students to meet the performance standard criteria required by the “No Child Left Behind” Act. The New York Education Department assigns a performance index in accordance with the system of accountability for student success. The commissioner of Education in New York has established benchmarks for acceptable performance on the English and mathematics eighth-grade assessments with one being the lowest and four being the highest. New York State’s expectation is that the percentage of
students scoring at levels one and two will decrease each year, increasing the
schools performance index.

New York State (New York State Education Department, 2002) has made a
goal of requiring schools not meeting minimum state standards to make
adequate progress toward having all students achieve proficiency by 2009 - 2010,
three or four years before what is required by the “No Child Left Behind” Act.
By the year 2005 - 2006, standardized state assessments must be developed and
taken by students in third, fifth, sixth, and seventh grade mathematics.
Therefore, students will be tested in mathematics every year from grade three to
and including grade eight. New York State must tier the school accountability
performance index to establish measurable objectives that rise in equal
increments over the next twelve years. All limited English proficient students
must be incorporated in the accountability system by the year 2003 - 2004.

**SCORING OF NEW YORK STATE ASSESSMENTS**

Level four (New York State Education Department, 2002) is a score that
falls between 760 and 882. A student scoring a four on the New York State
assessment exceeds the state standards and is moving toward high performance
on the Math A examination. These students show superior knowledge and skill
for each key idea for intermediate students and are proficient at some
commencement level skills. The students consistently demonstrate proficiency
and accuracy in processes and solutions. They clearly communicate
mathematical insights, use a wide range of mathematical problem solving
strategies, and identify the most efficient means to a solution.
Level three (New York State Education Department, 2002) is a score that falls between 716 and 759. A student scoring a three on the New York State assessment meets the state standards and with continued growth should pass the Math A examination. They show knowledge and skill for each key idea for intermediate students and some commencement level skills. They use prime numbers, factors, and rational numbers along with applying functions, visualizing three dimension shapes, understanding and using the Pythagorean theorem, and trigonometric functions.

Level two (New York State Education Department, 2002) is a score that falls between 681 and 715. A student scoring a two on the New York State assessment needs extra help to meet the state standards and pass the Math A examination. They show some knowledge and skills for each key idea for intermediate students. They use basic reasoning, understand percentage visualize two-dimensional shapes, understand properties of polygons, and use patterns.

Level one (New York State Education Department, 2002) is a score that falls between 517 and 680. A student scoring a one on the New York State assessment has serious academic deficiencies. They show no evidence of proficiency in one or more of the key ideas for intermediate students and incomplete proficiency in all seven key ideas. They can use variables and perform simple measurements. They may use simple operations and understand simple graphical displays. They can identify some patterns and functions.
The performance index (New York State Education Department, 2002) is the sum of the percentages of the students scoring at or above level two added to the percentage of students performing at or above level three. The performance index is used to assess school performance relative to state standards for English arts and mathematics. The school performance index set by the state as the minimum standard was 140 for 1999-2000, 140 for 2000-2001, 145 for 2001-2002, and is 150 for 2002-2003.

**MOUNT MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Mount Morris Central School District (New York State Department of Education, 2001) is classified, as a secondary level school in a rural district with high student needs in relation to district resources. The schools in this group are in the middle range of students needs for secondary level schools.

Mount Morris Central School District’s (Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, September 14, 2002) scores on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment have been dropping each year. In 1999, only thirty-three percent of the students scored above a two on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment. In 2000, the percentage dropped to thirty percent. In the year 2001, the percentage dropped to twenty percent where it held at twenty percent for the year 2002. In the year 2002, Mount Morris Central had the second lowest percentage of students scoring above a two of any school district in the six county areas of Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, and Wayne counties. The only school district scoring lower than Mount Morris was the Rochester City School
district with only twelve percent of their students scoring above a two on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment.

The percentage for all public schools in New York State (New York Daily News, 2002) of students scoring above a two on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment has been increasing each year. The percentage improved from thirty percent in the year 2001 to forty-eight percent in the year 2002. Therefore, forty-eight percent of the students in public school met the standards set by the State of New York by obtaining a three or four on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment. New York State's percentage score have been increasing while Mount Morris's scores have been decreasing.

REACTION

The "No Child Left Behind" Act presents a problem to smaller, rural schools (Richard, 2002) due to a lack of resources and difficulties in hiring and training teachers. The majority of the rural schools will never be able to meet the "No Child Left Behind" Act requirements without significantly more money and completely new approaches. 162.5 million dollars that had been set-aside in the fiscal year 2002 for two new rural programs was cut to zero in the 2003 United States fiscal budget. Rural schools wonder how they can improve and meet the requirements set by the "No Child Left Behind" Act when they are so far financially behind larger and more affluent school districts.

The Board of Education in the state of Vermont (Martinez, 2002) is worried about the disproportionate number of schools that could be classified as failing. The state of Vermont may forfeit federal education funding rather than
comply with the accountability requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” Act. This would be unprecedented. A state has never turned down federal money for education, however Vermont state officials believe that accepting the money would open the door to what would be an unaccepted amount of federal intrusion. The consequences are that tax-payers may become upset, as they are the ones who are going to have to bear the burden of replacing the twenty five million dollars that would have been supplied by the federal government if they had supported the “No Child Left Behind” Act.

Manuel J. Rivera, Superintendent (Liu, 2002) of Rochester City School District believes that the Rochester City School District scores on the mathematics eighth-grade assessment are unacceptable. It is clearly an indication that the Rochester City School District must take some fairly bold and aggressive steps to address not just mathematics but middle level education as well. The Rochester City School District plans to provide more-small group instruction for students as well as stress teacher training and support. The Rochester City school district plans to support mathematics overall as a district by providing opportunities for professional development for teachers specifically focusing on mathematics and language arts at the middle school level.

Manuel J. Rivera (Liu, 2002) believes he has found a solution to raising the low mathematics scores of the Rochester City School District. Rivera’s solution is the Regents Academy. The Regents Academy is an after school program for sixth and seventh grade-students designed to prepare the students for the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. The Regents Academy was
originally known as the Homework Academy when instituted in the 1990’s. Students are introduced to material ahead of time to material that will eventually be covered in class. Rivera is hoping to begin a similar program to prepare the fourth-grade students for their New York State fourth-grade mathematics assessment.

Mary Carol Smith, (Liu, 2002) an assistant principal at the Rochester Leadership Academy believes that all the responsibility cannot be placed on the eighth-grade teacher. The eighth-grade teacher cannot impart all the knowledge in eight months that the student should already have had. She believes that the responsibility lies with the total kindergarten through eighth-grade mathematics curriculum and teachers. Certain key knowledge, understandings, and skills must be mastered before students can move on to more difficult skills including inquiry and problem solving.

Naples Central School District (Breen, 2002) raised their percentage of students meeting the standards on the New York State assessments from twenty-five percent in 1999 to eighty-three percent in 2002. Superintendent of the Naples Central School District, Walter H. Zerrahan, credits everything from better aligning what the students learn with the State Education Department to simply having good people doing a good job.

The superintendent of East Irondequoit Central School District Robert Collins (Breen, 2002) believes that eighth-grade students in his district simply have not had enough time with the new curriculum to score well on the New York State assessments. He believes that he will see a big jump in his school’s
scores starting in the year 2003. In the year 2002, East Irondequoit had forty-five percent of their students score over a two on the New York State Math eighth-grade assessment.

Many schools (Bivens & Schouten, 2002) are having trouble finding good teachers. At Paholee Middle-Senior High in Florida, the percentage of black and Hispanic students is over ninety-six percent. The students are children of generational poverty. The school was one of seven schools in the Palm Beach County that earned an “F” from last year. Only fifteen percent of the students at Paholee Middle-Senior High perform at grade level. Faced with seven failing schools, Palm Beach County offered their best teachers a ten thousand dollar bonus to transfer to a low performing school. Only ten teachers agreed to transfer and not one of the teachers agreed to transfer to Paholee Middle-Senior High School.

Senator Hilary Clinton (Clinton, 2003) had high hopes the “No Child Left Behind” Act with its high accountability would provide the needed funds to help solve the serious problems that effect the children in the United States’ highest poverty districts. In these high poverty districts, seventy-five percent of the students in fourth and eighth-grade cannot read at grade level. Senator Clinton is very concerned with the United States scoring in the bottom of all developed countries in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study. She had hoped the “No Child Left Behind” Act would provide the funds along the accountability to make a real difference in the United States education system.
After eight years of increases in education funding averaging ten percent, President Bush in the year 2003 has slashed educational funding. His budget would cut 4.6 billion dollars from the “No Child Left Behind” Act programs. Senator Clinton sees a difficult challenge for schools as they try to implement and adhere to a law that she believes is under funded and under supported.

**STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOMS**

Due to the “No Child Left Behind” Act (Mix, 2002), many schools and administrators are placing a great importance on teaching the standards to every student since every student must take the state assessments. Teachers feel as if they are being torn in opposite directions as they struggle with the balance to cover the standards while trying to meet the diverse academic needs of their students. Teachers are expected to ensure that every student becomes competent in the same subject matter and can demonstrate these competencies on an assessment that is not differentiated in form or in time constraints. The curriculum for many teachers has become a prescribed set of academic standards where instructional pacing has been a race against a clock to cover the standards before the state assessment. The sole objective of these teachers is to raise the test scores of students on a single test.

Research (Tienken & Wilson, 2002) has shown that students who are the same age differ in their readiness to learn, their learning styles, and their life experiences. The differences are significant enough to make a major impact on what the students need to learn, the pace at which they learn, and the support they need to learn. Today with many schools concentrating on student
performance on the state assessments (Drickey & Dorward & Hudson, 2001), educators are forgetting that the main job of schools is to have each student reach his or her maximum learning capacity, whatever that capacity may be.

Carol Tomlinson (Tomlinson, 2002) believes that a teacher's first responsibility is to make certain that standards-based teaching practices do not conflict with what they believe are the best teaching strategies for their classes. Curriculum tells the teacher what to teach while differentiation tells the teacher how to teach the material. Differentiation in a standards-based classroom is simply the way to make the curriculum work best for a wide range of learning abilities and styles. Furthermore, Tomlinson believes that differentiated lessons can tap into student's multiple interests promoting higher learning interest in the standard being taught. Teachers can encourage student success by varying strategies that include having the students work alone, collaboratively, in auditory or visual lessons, and through practical or creative lessons.

Barbara Benson (Benson, 2002) believes that standards-based classrooms have two important components. The first component is that the teacher teaches the essential content and competencies required by the state standards. The second component is that the teachers use instruction and assessment methods that offer all children the best opportunity to meet state standards.

A standards-based classroom (Benson, 2002) will often have the desks clustered together to allow for student interaction. The standards-based classroom is occasionally noisy as students move around the room, talking, and working together. The standards-based classroom might look messy, as students
are involved in complex, long-range tasks involving multiple activities. The standards-based classroom should be full of student work for viewing. The standards-based classroom should have evidence of student collaboration in posted lists, rules, and signs.

A standards-based classroom teacher (Benson, 2002) should be hard to find among the students. They should be facilitating student learning by direct instruction combined with group and individual activities. They should be interacting with students in a respectful and encouraging way. They should be able to discuss the alignment of student activities with district and state standards. They should ask open-ended questions and help students learn the processes needed to problem solve without giving the students all of the answers.

Students in a standards-based classroom (Snyder, 2002) should be able to work alone and in small groups. They should be interacting with other students and the teacher in a respectful and encouraging way. They should be collaborative rather than competitive with their other classmates. They might be involved in different activities at the same time as they work to complete a complex task. They should have goals and focus on doing quality work constantly. They should be able to discuss what they are learning and how they can use it.

For a student (Balzano & Schlosser, 2002) to learn in a standards-based classroom they must feel accepted in the classroom. They should see the classroom as physically and emotionally pleasant. They should perceive the
classroom as orderly and view the classroom activities as valuable and relevant. They should believe that they have the ability to successfully complete the activities. They should be able to clearly understand what they are expected to learn and what they are expected to do.

LITERATURE REVIEW CONCLUSION

Implementation of the “No Child Left Behind” Act has not been without its problems. Some school districts (Olson, 2002) have reported an unreasonably low number of schools that have failed to meet state minimum standards. Some school districts that are not meeting minimum state standards are not allowing their higher scoring students to leave to attend another district. Some schools (Hare, 2002) are so far away from other schools that it is not reasonably possible for students to be given a choice to move to another school. Other schools are afraid if they let their higher achievement students transfer to another school that their scores will even fall lower. Still, President Bush and the United States Department of Education (Berry, 2002) have expressed confidence that parental involvement, adjustments in individual state’s assessment and accountability plans, improvements in data collection, and just time will solve many of the problems plaguing the “No Child Left Behind” Act.

Many educators (Serim, 2002) believe that with the added emphasis on student and school’s performance on standardized assessments that schools will be forced to eliminate any experimental programs with unproved results. Educators are afraid that many new innovative teaching strategies including
standards-based classrooms, inquiry, and differentiation will not be used in most classrooms as compliance with the "No Child Left Behind" Act gains priority.

The lowest scoring schools (Council for Exceptional Children, 2002) on the fourth and eighth-grade New York State assessments are generally the schools with the fewest resources. Research has shown that the best strategy to increase scores at lower scoring schools is to hire more qualified teachers, enforce attendance policies, invest in teacher education and training, stress greater classroom discipline, and more parental involvement.

As more schools are identified as requiring corrective action, the cost of implementing the consequences in the "No Child Left Behind" Act surely will raise concerns. Consequences for low performing schools may prove difficult to enforce as resources for restructuring, staff changes, and state takeover become strained. High poverty schools in struggling or rural neighborhoods will test the resolve of President Bush and the "No Child Left Behind" Act.

Teacher shortages are expected to increase and will only escalate due to the requirements of the "No Child Left Behind" Act. Since only certified teachers may be hired and assigned to work in schools receiving funding from the "No Child Left Behind" Act, low paying, rural, and low performing schools will have difficulty filling their teacher vacancies. "The No Child Left Behind" Act's (Hardebeck & Warme, 200) requirement of hiring only certified staff may prove difficult to achieve and places addition burdens on already struggling schools. Is a recent graduate of a educational program going to seek work in a school that is clearly having trouble meeting the minimum state standards and face the
possible consequences of the state when they can chose to work in a school that is meeting or exceeding the New York State standards? I believe the best teachers will gravitate toward working at the higher performing schools. The higher performing schools will now have the best teachers along with the most resources. I am afraid that this can only lead to widening the gap in the quality of education between the higher and lower performing schools.
INTRODUCTION

I begin my methodology by describing the Mount Morris community. I continue by describing Mount Morris Central School District, including an overall picture of the students, the school day, my classroom, and how Mount Morris divides their seventh and eighth-grade classes by using the Terra Nova assessments.

I describe my problems during the first five weeks of school with both the students and the administration leading to the explanation of why I choose section 8 – 2 for my research. I describe my mentor’s and the special education teacher’s involvement with section 8 – 2 as well as describe my interactions with administration including meetings, formal observations, and post observation conferences.

I introduce Barbara Benson and discuss her workshop on “Building a standards-based classroom and school” as well as her description of a standards-based classroom and how to create one. I present a description of my baseline information that includes observations of my teaching both formal and informal as well as my own journal reflections. I discuss the steps involved in creating a standards-based classroom as well as summarize the various data collection tools I will be using in my research including: a personal reflective journal, bi-monthly observations from my mentor and the special education teacher, goal cards, tickets out the door, interviews with other eighth-grade core teachers, interviews with the assistant principal, observations from administration, and a mock New
York State mathematics eighth-grade assessment test. Finally, I discuss my plans for analyzing the data.

COMMUNITY

Mount Morris is a semi-rural community with a population of approximately four thousand and three-hundred located approximately thirty-five minutes south of Rochester and sixty minutes southeast of Buffalo. The community is located next to the Mount Morris Dam and Letchworth State Park, often referred to as the Grand Canyon of the East. There are few large industries in the district. The largest employers in the area are the salt mine, the canning factory, and the New York State prison system.

Mount Morris Central School is a low socioeconomic district with close to fifty percent of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. Sixty percent of the students live in two large trailer parks. There is a growing Hispanic population composed of primarily Puerto Rican families. A local church sponsors battered women from Puerto Rico. They fly the women and their children from Puerto Rico, provide a place for them to live in a local trailer park and find work for them in the area. Francis Bellamy, author of the Pledge of Allegiance was born in the village of Mount Morris. Therefore, the community of Mount Morris has an active historical society, a highly visible Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Lions, and veterans' group.
MOUNT MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL

Mount Morris Central School District (New York State Education Department, 2002) has a total enrollment of six hundred and sixty-four students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. Eighty-nine percent of the students who attend Mount Morris Central School are classified as white, eight percent are classified as Hispanic, two percent are classified as black, and less than one percent are classified as American Indian, Alaskan, Asian, or Pacific Islander. Four percent of the students are classified as English Language Learners formally known as limited English language proficient students. Mount Morris Central School District is described by the New York State Board of Regents (New York State Education Department, 2002), as a rural school district with high student needs in relation to district resource capacity. The annual attendance rate of the district is ninety-four percent with six percent of the students dropping out of school and eight percent being suspended. Thirty-six percent of the students receive a free lunch with another eight percent of the student receiving a reduced lunch rate. Mount Morris Central School District has sixty-one teachers for grades kindergarten through twelfth grade.

MOUNT MORRIS CENTRAL SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

At Mount Morris Central School District, we prepare all of our students for participating in a diverse democratic society setting realistic goals and achieving their individual potential. The responsibility for achieving this purpose involves the family, the student, the community, and the school in a team effort with the mutual support of each other.
MOUNT MORRIS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

There are presently three hundred and thirteen students (New York State Education Department) in grades seven through twelve at Mount Morris Central School. The junior and high school staff consists of twenty-nine teachers and six paraprofessionals. Mount Morris Central School District has three administrators who oversee kindergarten through twelfth grade. One administrator is in charge of curriculum and the staff. Another administrator is in charge of discipline. The third administrator, an assistant principal handles discipline and the overflow responsibilities of the other two administrators.

There are presently fifty-two students in seventh grade and fifty-three students in eighth grade at Mount Morris Central School. English, Mathematics, Global Studies, and Science comprise the academic core for all of the seventh and eighth-grade students. Therefore, each core teacher teaches every seventh and eighth-grade student. Technology, Spanish, home and careers, art, music, physical education, and health are known as encore classes. The encore classes in junior high school at Mount Morris meet for forty minutes every other day.

MOUNT MORRIS SCHOOL DAY

The school day for Mount Morris junior and high school students begins at 8:10 am and ends at 3:00 pm. The junior high school at Mount Morris is on a block schedule for the core courses. The blocks are eighty minutes long. On “A” days, the eighth-grade students have mathematics and science while the seventh-grade students take English and social studies. On “B” days, the seventh-grade students have mathematics and science while the eighth-grade students take
English and social studies. Therefore, the core teachers see the students every other day for eighty minutes.

**HOW MOUNT MORRIS DIVIDES THEIR CLASSES**

Seventh grade at Mount Morris Central School is split into two sections, 7-1 and 7-2. Eighth grade is split into three sections, 8-1, 8-2, and 8-3. The sections are divided loosely by the student's performance on the English section of the Terra Nova standardized assessments taken by the students in sixth and seventh grade.

There are twenty-six students in section 7-1. On the mathematical section of the sixth-grade Terra Nova assessment, one student scored a three, twelve students scored a two, and thirteen students scored a one. There are also twenty-six students in section 7-2. On the mathematical section of the sixth-grade Terra Nova assessment, eight students scored a three, twelve students scored a two, and six students scored a one.

There are presently nineteen students in section 8-1. On the mathematical section of the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment, one student scored a three, six students scored a two, and twelve students scored a one. There are presently nineteen students in section 8-2. On the mathematical section of the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment, one student scored a three, nine students scored a two, and nine students scored a one. There are presently fifteen students in section 8-3. On the mathematical section of the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment, eleven students scored a three and four students scored a two.
The Terra Nova assessments (Wright, 2002) are composed of multiple choice and structured free response questions that measure the students' basic skills in reading, language arts, and mathematics. The assessment is closely aligned to New York State academic learning standards in each subject area. The assessment is norm referenced with national and local comparison norms available.

**HOW AND WHY MOUNT MORRIS USES THE TERRA NOVA ASSESSMENTS**

The Terra Nova assessments (Wright, 2002) identify relative strengths and weaknesses in the performance of students and in the larger picture, performance of an individual school on a standards-based assessment. The Terra Nova assessments provide a baseline for schools, teachers, parents, and students to monitor student achievement over time. Mount Morris uses the Terra Nova assessments to test all fifth, sixth, and seventh-grade students. The Terra Nova assessments are given to the students sometime between mid February and mid March. By testing all students over a three-year period, Mount Morris is able to monitor individual students and school achievement from year to year for performance gains or losses. The data proves to be especially valuable when assessing individual student's strengths and weaknesses. The data assists in identifying each student's area of strongest and weakest development. The information can be later used in planning individual instruction, approaches, and goals.


**TERRA NOVA ASSESSMENTS AND THE NEW YORK STATE EIGHTH-GRADE ASSESSMENT**

The Terra Nova assessments (Wright, 2002) produce a report that includes an evaluation summary showing the individual student's score on each test item. The report assists schools and teachers to find common student errors that may include curriculum not taught, areas of confusion, and misconceptions. The Terra Nova assessment reports also include a New York group performance level report. The report groups the students alphabetically by performance level. Performance levels provide a measure of what students can do in terms of the content and skills assessed by the Terra Nova. The Terra Nova calculates the scores based on the relationship between the Terra Novas and the corresponding New York State assessments. Therefore, a student scoring a three on the seventh-grade Terra Nova mathematics assessment is very likely, if they stay on the same educational path, to score a three on the eighth-grade New York State mathematics assessment.

In the year 2002, fifty-one students at Mount Morris Central School took the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment. Eleven students scored a three, twenty-two students scored a two, and eighteen students scored a one. Therefore, by using the Terra Nova assessment as an indicator of success on the New York State eighth-grade mathematical assessment, only twenty-two percent of this year's eighth-grade students would meet the New York State's mathematical standards, approximately the same percentage as the result of the eighth-grade mathematics assessment in 2002. In the year 2002, fifty-three
students at Mount Morris central school took the sixth grade Terra Nova assessment. Fifteen students scored a three on the Terra Nova assessment, twenty-one students scored a two, and seventeen students scored a one. Therefore, by using the Terra Nova assessment as an indicator of success on the New York State eighth grade mathematical assessment, only thirty percent of the sixth-grade students would meet the New York State’s mathematical standards for eighth grade. That is a sizeable increase from the year 2002, but still far below New York State acceptable standards.

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS**

There are thirteen students with individualized education plans in eighth grade at Mount Morris Central School plus another six students with a 504-plans in place. Seven of the students are in section 8 - 1, five of the students are in section 8 - 2, and one of the students is in section 8 - 3. To satisfy their individualized education plans specific testing modifications must be met. They include: twelve of the students need extended time, ten of the students need the questions read or rephrased, five of the students need directions read or rephrasing, one of the students needs assistance editing and organizing writing, two of the students need minimal distraction, seven of the students need the language simplified, questions, and directions read to them, five of the students need to use a calculator, thirteen of the students need separate questions or directions, two of the students need access to a word processor, and one student needs to be provided additional examples.
The number of students in seventh grade with individualized education plans is slightly smaller. There are only eight students with individualized educational plans and four students with 504 plans in seventh grade and they are all in section 7-1.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

I have three special education teachers that work in my classroom everyday. The three teachers take care of all the modifications, keep me up to date on each student, and alert me to any changes in the student’s individualized educational plans. The special education teachers work with me in sections 7-2, 8-1, and 8-2.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF MY CLASSROOM**

Mount Morris Central School used state budget surplus provided by the New York State Legislature of twenty-six million dollars to completely renovate the school. I have a large classroom on the second floor at the end of the junior high school wing of the school. I am told that before the renovation my room used to be two rooms, but that they knocked out the wall to make the classroom larger. I have one computer connected to the Mount Morris network and one printer in the room. There is a junior high computer lab a few rooms down if I need computers for my students to use. I have two large white dry erase backboards in the front of the room and four windows with a beautiful view. I have many cabinets and counters along with a large bulletin board. There is ample space for me to display student work and any math related materials I feel appropriate and helpful. I have a desk in the front of the room. Students sit in
pairs at tables that are shaped like an isosceles trapezoid. Two students are all that will fit comfortably at a table. The tables are arranged in three rows with five desks in a row. I have an overhead projector. My room is at the far end of a hall and about as far from the main entrance and office as any room in the school. Therefore, I do not get many visitors unless they are making a “special trip” to see me.

**WHY I SELECTED SECTION 8 – 2 FOR MY RESEARCH**

The eighth-grade section I selected for my research is section 8 – 2. I selected this section because the students that make up this section are the most diverse both culturally and cognitively. They also are my biggest challenge behaviorally. They have already gained a reputation around the school and they seem to be proud of that reputation. There are presently nineteen students in section 8 – 2, nine young men and ten young women. On the mathematical section of the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment, one student scored a three, nine students scored a two, and nine students scored a one. There are five students with individualized educational plans in section 8-2 and another four students with 504 plans. All five students with individualized educational plans need extended time on tests and quizzes, three of the students need the questions read or rephrased, one of the students needs assistance editing and organizing writing, one of the students needs the direction read or rephrased, one of the students needs minimal distractions, one of the students need language simplified, one of the students is allowed to use a calculator, and all five of the students need a separate location for tests. There are five students of Hispanic
decent along with eight students who receive free lunch from the school as their families are on public assistance.

MY FIRST FIVE WEEKS OF TEACHING AT MOUNT MORRIS

My first five weeks at Mount Morris, I attempted numerous cooperative learning and guided inquiry activities with my students. On September 27th, I designed a lesson where the students discover that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to one hundred and eighty degrees. The students first cut out a triangle of their choice. Next, they cut the three angles off the triangle. Finally, they pieced the angles together to make a straight angle reinforcing the concept that the sum of the angles of a triangle equals one hundred and eighty degrees, the same as a straight angle.

Reflecting on this lesson, I would for the most part classify the activity as a total disaster. Students would not stay on task and were constantly talking, leaving their seats, throwing paper, and bothering other students. I had to stop the lesson when students were threatening each other with scissors. During the activity, the few students who were interested in learning complained to me that they could not learn. They said the classroom was too noisy and out of control. Sadly, I have to admit this kind of student behavior in the classroom was the norm when I tried any kind of standards-based instruction, cooperative learning, or inquiry.
MEETING WITH ADMINISTRATION

On October 7th when I was having the students work in groups, an administrator entered my classroom unannounced and reprimanded the students for being out of their seats and talking. The administrator then informed me in front of the students to see me in his office directly after class. After the administrator left the room, I could hear the students saying things like “Mr. Perdue is in trouble” or “cool, we got a teacher in trouble.” I even had a student in another class come into my room and tell me that he had heard I had gotten into trouble and had to go to the principal’s office.

When I went to the administrator’s office later that day, I was informed that students had been complaining that my classroom was out of control and that they were not able to learn. Afterwards, I was further verbally reprimanded for having an out of control classroom. The administrator said I needed a plan and informed me that the head of the mathematics department at Mount Morris would be working with me in section 8 - 2 as a mentor.

MY MENTOR AT MOUNT MORRIS

My mentor at Mount Morris Central School District is a mathematics teacher with over twenty-five years of experience as both a mathematics teacher and a principal. Section 8 - 2 is a high-profile class to the administration at Mount Morris. Many of the students in this class scored just below a three on the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment. Therefore, to satisfy minimum state standards due to the “No Child Left Behind” act, it is critical to Mount Morris Central School that these “bubble” students score a three on the New York State
eighth-grade mathematics' assessment. Administration believes that this can be
done by engaging the students and concentrating on these "bubble" students.

**MY MENTOR'S FIRST OBSERVATION OF MY CLASS**

My mentor first observed my classroom on October 9th. Later that day we
met in his room and he shared the following opinions and suggestions. My
mentor viewed the students as rude, unruly, and not able to handle any kind of
group work. He was appalled that students would talk freely during my lessons,
not take any notes, and freely move out of their seats to bother students. My
mentor told me that he could see that they had very little respect for me as a
teacher or any interest in learning mathematics. I shared with him that I had
tried everything from talking to students privately in the hall, to lecturing the
students as a group about respect and the consequences if they do no learn
mathematics, to threatening detention, to just losing control and yelling at the
students to be quiet and get back to their seats. My mentor suggested that I pick
up the pace of my lessons because down time in lessons gave the students time
to get off task.
THE WEEK LEADING TO MY FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION

I was feeling a lot of stress because my first formal observation was coming up shortly on October 16th. With the advice of my mentor, I quickly adapted a very traditional classroom. A teacher-orientated classroom with the majority of the time spent with myself lecturing, the students taking notes, class worksheets, and very little classroom discourse.

My mentor taught an occasional lesson, but student behavior only improved slightly when he taught. For the first time I began to believe that maybe I was not such a bad teacher after all, maybe this was just a tough class. In fact, many of the students began to resent my mentor and would not work at all when he was teaching.

The student's behavior when I taught began to improve slightly with the switch to a more traditional classroom, but I still spent a considerable amount of time reminding and reprimanding students to behave and stay on task. A typical lesson consisted of me at the board lecturing while my mentor and the special education teacher walked around the room trying to control students.

MY FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION

My first formal observation at Mount Morris Central School was on October 16th. The administrator who was observing me requested that my mentor and the special education teacher not be in the room that day. The administrator wanted to see how the class reacted and behaved with just my presence in the room. With the help of my mentor, I designed a very structured teacher-based lesson using a in class student worksheet on polygons, triangles,
and quadrilaterals. My mentor shared with me while planning this lesson that this was one of the toughest classes he had worked with in all his years in education. He told me my only hope during this observation was to plan every minute of the lesson and not give the students any freedom or down time what so ever.

**MY REACTION TO MY FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION**

I was very impressed with the students the day of my observation. They were quiet and well behaved in the classroom. I did not get a lot of feedback when I asked questions, but they were not disruptive. I am sure having their principal sitting in the back of class shaped their behavior. After my observation my mentor stopped by my room to ask me how my observation had gone, I shared with him I thought it went well but that having an administrator in the back of the room made me nervous. My mentor laughed and said that was only normal during a first observation.

**POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE WITH ADMINISTRATION**

When I met with administration on October 21st in my post observation conference, I was very nervous. A few weeks ago, I was sitting in this same office being reprimanded for having an out of control classroom. The administrator told me that the major problem he observed in my classroom was that I was too teacher oriented. He suggested that I needed to include more inquiry and discourse into my lessons so that students can become engaged and create their own understandings. He told me that my lesson was well planned out, but I needed to include and engage the students more in my lessons.
MY REACTION TO THE POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

I was very relieved that there was not any mention of classroom management problems during my post observation conference. During my education at St. John Fisher, I believe that I evolved into a teacher that was very comfortable teaching in a constructivist type of classroom. I had used many inquiry, cooperative learning, and constructivist lessons very successfully in both of my student teaching placements.

Therefore after my post observation conference, I felt myself in a catch twenty-two situation. When I had tried to use inquiry and cooperative learning in my classroom, the student behavior was a major problem. When I used a teacher orientated lesson to better control the students, administration was not happy that I was not using more inquiry and cooperative learning in my classroom. I was very confused and not sure what to do next.

LATER THAT DAY WITH MY MENTOR

Later that day, I shared with my mentor what the administrator had said in my post observation conference. My mentor listened and again offered me his opinion that at this time that section 8 - 2 could not handle any kind of inquiry or cooperative learning. He felt the best strategy for section 8 - 2 at this time was to keep the class very teacher oriented. He suggested that I stay with our plan of lecturing the students, keeping them in their seats, and filling up remaining time with worksheets.
MY DILEMMA

I was not happy. I did not want to become the kind of teacher that just stood at the board and lectured while yelling at students to pay attention. I have never enjoyed that type of instruction and did not want to teach that way. I truly believe in the value of students constructing their own understandings and knowledge in the classroom. I knew in my heart to be happy and to satisfy administration, that I had to do something in my classroom to include more constructivism and student engagement, but my choices were limited due to student behavior. I was confused and clueless what to do next. I needed help and a plan.

BARBARA BENSON AND THE “BUILDING STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS” WORKSHOP

On October 25th, I attended a workshop sponsored by the Genesee Valley BOCES. The workshop’s topic was “building standards-based classrooms and school” and was conducted by Barbara Benson. I was very impressed by the workshop. Barbara spoke on many of the same problems I was having in my classroom and offered some strategies. I decided that after attending the workshop with Barbara Benson, the best way I could engage such a cognitively and culturally diverse classroom and still prepare the students for the New York State eighth-grade assessment was to turn my classroom into a standards-based classroom.
STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOMS

One of the driving forces behind the “No Child Left Behind” act is President Bush’s belief that all students can learn. The “No Child Left Behind” act holds individual school districts and teachers responsible for all students meeting the content and competences standards required by the state. In New York state, the fourth and eighth-grade assessments in English and mathematics are presently being used to monitor students and school’s progress in meeting the New York State Learning Standards.

Barbara Benson (Benson, 2002) defines a standards-based classroom as a classroom where a teacher teaches the essential content and competencies required by state standards along with using instruction and assessment methods that offer every student in the classroom the best opportunity to meet state standards.

Barbara Benson (Benson, 2002) believes there are four steps for successfully creating a standards-based classroom. The first step is to create a community of self-directed learners that are interactive, cooperative, and motivated. The second step is to make both student and teacher reflection in the classroom a routine. The third step is to teach content and processes. The fourth and final step is to move toward authentic tasks and assessments.

After the workshop, I talked with Barbara Benson about my dilemma at Mount Morris. Barbara Benson offered me the following advice for trying to create a standards-based classroom in my mathematics’ classroom at Mount Morris. She told me to take one step at a time and be patient. It may take the
students up to forty times before the students accept a new process or procedure. Do not give up; keep trying until the students are comfortable with new processes or procedures. Barbara Benson told me to think big, start small and that a standards-based classroom will take more upfront planning time and less effort in the classroom. Finally, Barbara Benson added that it is never too late in the year to start implementing a standards-based classroom.

**BUILDING STANDARD-BASED CLASSROOMS**

Barbara Benson’s first step (Benson, 2002) in creating a standards-based classroom is to cultivate a community of self-directed learners that are interactive, cooperative, and motivated. In order to create a community of learners (Benson, 2002) in a classroom, the students must feel accepted in the classroom. The students must view the classroom as physically and emotionally pleasant and perceive the classroom as orderly. The students must view their activities and lessons as valuable, relevant, and believe they have the ability to successfully complete the activities. Finally, the students must clearly understand what they are expected to learn and do.

**MY PLAN FOR MOUNT MORRIS AND SECTION 8 – 2**

Reflecting on my classroom at Mount Morris, I quickly realized that my first goal and any hope of creating a standards-based classroom was to gain control of the classroom. I needed the students to view the classroom as orderly so that we could progress into constructivism, cooperative learning, and inquiry. Therefore, I combined two of Barbara Benson’s (Benson, 2002) classroom strategies that she presented at the workshop. The first strategy was for students...
to create and take ownership in their own classroom rules. The second strategy was a tiered level of warnings and consequences for rules that are broken.

**IMPLEMENTING MY FIRST STRATEGY**

On November 7th, I implemented the first step in my plan to turn section 8 - 2 into a standards-based classroom by developing a community of learners. I spent the first sixty minutes of classroom time creating and refining with the students of section 8 - 2, a set of classroom rules. The class brainstormed as a group and generated about twenty-five rules the class felt were important. I was surprised such an unruly class could generate such an impressive list of rules. I decided at that time that the students knew and understood what was expected of them; they simply just do not choose to follow or obey them. After the students generated our classroom rules, I typed up the rules, composed a letter to the parents, and created a behavior checklist from the rules.

**CLASSROOM RULES AND THE CHECKLIST**

The first part of the checklist dealt with students being prepared for class. I felt that the students were taking too long to get class started and therefore were losing valuable classroom instruction time while they were scrambling to find pens, pencils, and notebooks. Therefore, the students decided that when a student started class they should have a pen or pencil, their math textbook, their mathematics notebook, their agenda, and all completed homework and assignments. They should bring a calculator to class if they have one, sharpen their pencil before class starts, and be in their assigned seats when the bell rang. To make the students accountable, I decided that I would check each student at
the beginning of class. If a student was not prepared, I would give them a checkmark under what material they were missing. If a student accumulated five checkmarks in a single week, the student would have to attend a math homework club with me after school.

The second part of the checklist dealt with student behavior in the classroom. The students generated the following rules of the classroom. All students must raise their hands before speaking. Shouting out answers or talking across the room to other students is not acceptable. Students will not talk when the teacher or another student is talking. Students are to use only appropriate language at all times in class and not talk back to a teacher in a rude or defiant manner. Students must stay in their seat at all times unless they have permission from the teacher to leave their seats. Students must keep their hands and feet to themselves and at no time should a student put their hands or body on another student. Students will not be disruptive to other students around them and not throw objects of any kind in the classroom. Students are expected to stay on task and pay attention in class at least eighty-five percent of the classroom time. Students are expected to complete all in class work, take notes, and ask questions if they do not understand a topic. Students are not allowed to eat or drink in the class. Cheating on a test is an immediate zero on the test and an automatic referral. Students at no time are to be involved in any unsafe actions or activities and must at all times show respect to both teachers and students. It was agreed on by a majority vote of the class that if a student breaks a rule, I would first give the student a verbal warning. If a student breaks a rule
for the second time, I would check the box of the rule they broke. If a student acquires three checkmarks in a single class period they must attend a math homework club with me after school. I decided upon reviewing my checklist strategy that there were no rewards for the students in my strategy, only consequences. So I incorporated a plan that if a student went an entire week without one check against them that I would issue them a mathematics homework pass. They could use this pass one time in place of their homework. If a student wished to save their homework passes, they could turn in five-homework passes and receive a twenty-point bonus on any quiz. Finally, if a student accumulates ten-homework passes; they can turn those in for a one hundred on any quiz.

**SHARING THE PLAN WITH ADMINISTRATION**

I met with an administrator on November 10th and shared my new strategy, classroom rules, letter home to the parents, math homework club, and my checklist plan. After reviewing my plan, the administrator told me that they would support me. The administrator said to refer any students to administration that refused to attend my math homework club or that were habitual repeaters for further disciplinary action that could possibly include expulsion from the class.
BASELINES FOR MY RESEARCH

On November 12th, I passed out two copies of the classroom rules for the students, one copy to keep in their mathematics notebooks and one copy to take home to their parents. I wrote a letter to the parents explaining the rules and consequences. The students were instructed to return the form to me signed by their parent or guardian within five school days or have to attend math homework club until they returned the form signed.

When I passed out the rules, I had the class take turns reading the rules aloud. I read the parent letter to them and explained the consequences if they did not bring the letter back signed. I showed the students the checklist I was going to use and the homework coupons that were just waiting for those who demonstrated appropriate behavior. I asked the students if they had any questions at all about anything to do with the checklist. I received no response, so I ended the presentation by telling the students that the checklist and classroom rules are now in effect.

I will use the three observations of section 8 - 2 that were done before November 7th for the purpose of establishing a baseline for my research, I will use my mentor’s assessment of my teaching and my students’ behavior from the first time he observed the class on October 9th. I will use my first formal observation with administration on October 16th. Finally, I will use an observation from the special education teacher for a class he observed on November 1st. I will use these three observations as the baseline for student engagement, student behavior in my class as well as my classroom management
strategies and effectiveness along with my own journal reflections concerning my first eight weeks of teaching section 8 - 2 at Mount Morris Central School.

**DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

Every two weeks I will have my mentor and the special education teacher observe section 8 - 2 and offer their comments on student engagement and behavior as well as my classroom management strategies and effectiveness. During this time I will be introducing various strategies and activities that are commonplace in a successful standards-based classroom. These activities include goal cards, tickets out the door, journal reflections, and cooperative learning.

**GOAL CARDS**

Barbara Benson (Benson, 2002) believes that any teacher or student without a goal is just drifting aimlessly always in limbo. She stresses that goals are essential for teachers as well as students. As a data collection tool, I will have the students fill out a goal card in class on November 25th. The goal card activity will ask the students to respond in writing to the following questions. Who are you and why are you in this class? What are your goals for this class, the school year, and your life? The students' answers to these questions should provide me insight into the mindset of the students. Is their behavior and effort in the classroom consistent with their goals? If not, is it because they have set unrealistic goals or are they just answering the questions to make themselves look good in the teacher’s eyes.
TICKET OUT THE DOOR

I will be using students' tickets out the door as a data collection tool. This activity will serve two purposes for me. My goal is for the ticket out the door activity to begin the journey to a classroom where reflection becomes a routine. An added benefit of the ticket out the door activity is that it gives me immediate feedback on how the students feel about the changes in the classroom. Are the students seeing an improvement in the orderliness of the classroom? Are the students learning more? Are the students enjoying class more? Do they have any questions or concerns? How do they feel about the behavior checklist?

PERSONAL JOURNAL

A large part of my data collection will be keeping a personal reflective journal. The journal will serve as a tool for me to reflect as I strive to create a standards-based classroom. I will keep track of dates and times. I will take special note of how the students with individualized educational plans are reacting to the checklist as well as the Hispanic students and the students that come from poverty. I will reflect on how certain problem students are progressing in class. Are the students staying on task more often? Are the students staying in their seats and not bothering other students? Are the students talking during class? Is the students' behavior deteriorating?
INTERVIEW WITH OTHER EIGHTH-GRADE TEACHERS

I will be interviewing the other eighth-grade core teachers at Mount Morris Central School. The social studies teacher has twenty-eight years of teaching experience at Mount Morris and is our team leader. The science teacher has thirteen years of teaching experience and the English teacher has eleven years of teaching experience. They should provide me with added insights into the students in section 8 - 2, since they taught most of these students last year as seventh graders.

NEW YORK STATE MATHEMATICS EIGHTH-GRADE ASSESSMENT

I will conclude my research on March 5th with observations by my mentor and the special education teacher. On February 26th and February 28th, I will administer an assessment to the students that I have structured similar to past New York State eighth-grade mathematic assessments. I will model all the testing condition of the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment including administering the test over a two day period and not allowing a calculator to be used on part one of the test. I will administer part one of the mock assessment on February 26th and part 2 of the mock assessment on February 28th. I will score the mock mathematics eighth-grade assessment based on the rubric issued by New York State along with last year’s eighth-grade mathematics assessment.
JUNIOR HIGH TEAM COMES TO MY DEFENSE

On December 1st, I was collecting the students' homework at the beginning of the period when the principal came into my classroom unannounced. Only fifty percent of the students had completed their homework. The principal immediately questioned me why the percentage was so low. Then in front of the students, he demanded to know why a large percentage of the students were not doing their homework. I felt like asking the principal, why don't you ask the students why they did not do their homework, but I thought better of it. Finally before leaving the classroom, the principal demanded that I see him in his office my first free period that day to talk about the homework problem in my mathematics classroom.

During lunch I shared with my junior high team teachers what had transpired during class with the principal. They asked the names of the students who did not turn in their homework and they informed me that those students were not doing homework in their classes either. They told me that the percentage of students in section 8-2 turning in homework was very similar to mine if not even lower. Surprisingly, a few students were doing homework for me and not any other junior high teacher. What transpired next I was totally not prepared for. My junior high team told me that they were all going to the principal's office with me because this was not my problem, it was a problem with section 8-2 in every class.

The principal had a puzzled look when I entered his office followed by the rest of the junior high team. Our team leader informed the principal that the
homework problem he witnessed was a problem with section 8-2 in all their
classes, not just a problem in the mathematics' class. She told the principal that
many of the students of section 8 – 2 were unmotivated, would not accept
responsibility, and that getting the students to complete assignments was an
ongoing problem for all of the junior high teachers. The principal questioned the
other junior high team members about the homework problem and then told us
he would look into the situation. Interestingly, he never asked me one question
and to this day I have not heard anything more about it.

**REFLECTION ON TEAM MEETING WITH THE PRINCIPAL.**

I could not believe what had transpired that day. The day started with the
principal entering my room and demanding to see me in his office, a scenario
that had happened many times before this school year. However, something
different happened this time. My junior high team members had come to my
defense. They took it upon themselves to confront the principal and inform him
it was a student problem not a Mr. Perdue problem. Their support meant a lot to
me. For the first time, I did not feel alone and isolated as a teacher at Mount
Morris. I had the support from my junior high team members and they would
ever go as far as to confront administration to support me.
WEEKLY MEETING WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Shortly after my junior high team showed support toward me in the meeting with the principal, I received a memo from the principal stating that I needed to start meeting weekly with the assistant principal. The memo stated that during the meetings we would work on classroom management strategies as well as planning strategies for block scheduling.

MY FIRST MEETING WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

My first meeting with the assistant principal took place on December 9th. I was very nervous before my first meeting with the assistant principal, however I was very pleasantly surprised. She displayed a very positive attitude and I felt very much at ease. It was very refreshing to have someone recognize my strengths in the classroom and not dwell on the negative or my perceived weaknesses as a teacher. This was the first administrator at Mount Morris that I could talk and share ideas with instead of being told what I needed to do in my classroom. For the first time, I felt like I had someone in administration on my side that would work with me to become a more effective teacher, not just lecture me and tell me my shortcomings and what they expected. As the weeks passed, I came to enjoy and depend more and more on my weekly meetings with the assistant principal.
TROUBLE WITH A MALE STUDENT

I have a male student who is very bright, but has severe problems behaving in class. He is constantly bothering other students both physically and verbally. I have written many referrals on this student resulting in detentions, but they have had little effect. He will behave appropriately the day after the detention and then revert back to his disruptive behavior the next week.

I mentioned the problems with this student at one of my weekly meetings with the assistant principal. On January 8th, the assistant principal called the student down to the office and informed the student that if he caused any further problems in my classroom there would be the following consequences. The first occurrence of any behavior problems, the student will be assigned an in-school suspension. Three in-school suspensions will result in suspension from school. Finally after serving a suspension, if the student is still not able to get his behavior together in class, he will be removed from the class and have to take the class over again next year.

Since that day, the students' behavior has been excellent. When I see him getting off task, I warn him of the consequences. My success with this student is definitely a product of my weekly meetings with the assistant principal and the relationship I have developed with her. She supported me and provided a plan of action with her full and total support. I began to feel even less alone as I felt the support from administration and my junior high team. I was beginning to feel like a teacher that had a classroom with tough kids instead of a teacher that could not control his classroom.
My goal now was for all administration to see me as an effective teacher, not just my junior high team members and the assistant principal.

**PLANNING MY OBSERVATION WITH AND FOR THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

During our weekly meeting on January 9th, the assistant principal informed me that she would like to observe the students in my class during a writing activity. One of her main goals as an administrator is to introduce more reading and literacy into Mount Morris classrooms especially mathematics and science classrooms. Together, we decided on the note to a friend writing activity for my observation. In the note to a friend activity, students must write to a sick friend who missed a class. They must fill the student in on everything they missed in class that day. The lesson I would be teaching during my observation was how to solve a two-step equation. Therefore, the students would have to write a letter to a sick friend on how to solve two-step equation.

**MY OBSERVATION WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

On January 14th, the day of my observation, when I showed up to school, I found a note in my mailbox that my special education teacher was ill and would not be in my classes today. Then I began to wonder how this was going to affect my observation with the assistant principal. How would the class respond to the different classroom dynamics of having only one teacher in the room?

The answer was that I was very pleased with my teaching performance, the classroom dynamics, and the students' behavior and engagement during my observation. For the most part, the students were engaged and stayed on task.
To start the note to a friend activity, I first outlined the steps to solve a two-step equation. Then I modeled how I would begin a note to a friend. When I initially passed out the activity, the students seemed hesitant. They were unsure where and how to start the activity. Outlining the steps on the board and modeling the beginning of the letter seemed to give the majority of students a place to start. I was very impressed with the student’s engagement and quality of work.

**POST OBSERVATION MEETING WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

I was very pleased with the result of my post observation meeting with the assistant principal. She told me that she was impressed with the way the students had behaved and she had seen growth in me as a teacher. She complemented me on my checklist system and told me to keep up the good work. She especially liked the rubric I had created for the note to a friend activity.

**REFLECTION ON MY POST OBSERVATION WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

Obviously, I was very pleased with what the assistant principal had to say about my classroom management. I have worked very hard to improve. It was nice to hear someone in administration finally say something positive about my classroom management. The assistant principal’s positive attitude was a breath of fresh air for me. I honestly for the first time felt that administration saw value in me as a teacher and that they felt I was doing a “good” job.
PLANNING FOR MY OBSERVATION BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

The superintendent sent me a memo that she would be observing my class on January 21st. For my observation, I prepared a lesson that begun with a warm up activity to get the students in their seats, quiet, focused, and engaged. Next, I used the TI 83+ overhead graphing calculator to present an application on the area of quadrilaterals. The application defined the quadrilaterals, stated their definitions, presented the area formula for each quadrilateral, and presented a visual representation of how that quadrilateral's area formula was derived from area equals base times height. I followed that with a cooperative group learning activity where students assumed various roles in the group and used a straight edge to measure quadrilaterals, triangles, and circle. They used these measurements to find the area of the different polygons. To conclude the lesson, the students reported their findings and the class ended with the students turning in a ticket out the door reflection.

MY OBSERVATION BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

My first observation with the superintendent was on January 21st. The students were excellent. They entered the room quietly, in control, stayed focused, engaged, and asked very high level questions. I felt they worked well in their cooperative groups of two students. I was very impressed. I did not see any classroom behavior by any of the students that could be misconstrued as unacceptable, problematic or distracting. I was excited and could not wait until my post observation meeting with my superintendent. I was sure that she would be pleased with my teaching and the student's excellent behavior.
POST OBSERVATION MEETING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

My post observation meeting with the superintendent was on January 30th. I was very nervous all day leading up to my post observation meeting with the superintendent. Adding to my anxiety was that the superintendent had postponed the meeting twice before within the last week. I believed that I had taught an effective lesson and that the students were engaged and behaved exceptionally, but I was warned by another teacher earlier in the day to not expect many compliments. The teacher told me that the superintendent believes every teacher can improve no matter how many years he or she have been teaching. She added that the superintendent usually focuses on student engagement and behavior during her observations.

The first criticism the superintendent made was concerning the students in the previous period. She noted that when the bell rang to end class, the students got out of their seats and left the room. The superintendent informed me that this was not acceptable. She added that as a teacher, I have a responsibility to control the students and they are not allowed to leave their desks or seats until I have dismissed them from class.

The second criticism the superintendent made was on my questioning technique. She stressed that students must raise their hand before they answer and that all students must have time to assimilate the question before the teacher or another student answers the question. She stressed that I must always keep the students guessing whom I was going to call on to answer a question. She believes that this keeps all the students on edge and engaged.
The third criticism the superintendent made was concerning the cooperative group lesson on measuring polygons and then calculating their area. She observed that two of the groups were not engaged when I was giving directions for the activity and had asked me for help at the beginning of the activity. Personally, with this class’s behavior issues, I believed that for eight of the ten groups to be engaged and on task was excellent. However, she found this unacceptable. The superintendent wanted all ten groups to be engaged and on task at all times. Finally, she informed me she would be observing my class again in a few weeks to check for improvement.

**REFLECTION OF MY POST OBSERVATION MEETING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT**

I was very disappointed after my post observation meeting with the superintendent. I believed that I had taught an effective lesson and that the students were exceptionally behaved, engaged and on task. I believed that her criticisms were very small and picky. I am very proud of my growth as a teacher and a classroom manager. I was disappointed that administration did not recognize or comment on my growth. What really confused me was that I felt that the students were much more engaged and on task then during either my observations with the principal or the assistant principal. In retrospect, I began to believe that maybe the teacher’s advice to me was right on target. The superintendent felt every teacher could improve and that she would always find something to criticize a teacher on no matter how small.

Mostly, I was disappointed that in a few weeks the superintendent was going to be back in my classroom observing me again. Just when I was
beginning to relax and feel good about my classroom management, it seemed to me like again my classroom was a focus of administration and this time I saw no reason for that focus. I began to wonder what their expectations were of me and if those expectations were even possible for me to obtain. Administration talked about the importance of cooperative learning, but I began to question if they really knew what type of classroom environment is needed in a standards-based classroom in order for a standard-based classroom to work effectively. I seriously considered confronting the principal and superintendent concerning my students' behavior. I believed that for the most part my students were behaving very well and typical for a standards-based classroom. I had observed other teachers' classrooms as I walked by in the hall. I began to wonder if administration's expectations of me were different. Was the upcoming mathematics eighth-grade assessment the reason for the different expectation and administrations focus on my classroom? The superintendent and principal are constantly reminding me that I do not have tenure yet. Therefore, I thought better of questioning them. I began to wonder if administration was setting me up as the scapegoat if Mount Morris scores do not improve on this year's eighth-grade mathematics assessment. If the students score poorly, are they going to blame me because I could not control my students and the classroom, thus effecting student achievement? Five month into my teaching career, I believed that I had gained the confidence and support of my junior high team and the assistant principal, but that the main administrators at Mt. Morris still did not
have any confidence in my abilities as a teacher to control a classroom or raise student achievement.

**A DAY TO FORGET- FEBRUARY 3rd**

I started the morning of February 3rd in an exceptionally good mood. I was starting a new unit on graphing. I was particularly excited because I would be able to use the TI 83+ graphing calculators in the unit. The students always seem to enjoy when they are able to use them in a lesson. My morning went very well. I had a few discipline problems. The checklist system worked well and all the students were able to get on task and stay engaged.

Since the eighth-grade students had recently taken the ELA English assessment, the junior high team empowered me to adjust the students' AIS assignments to better align the students by their mathematical strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Today was the day we decided as a team to change the students' AIS assignment. To accomplish this, I first had all the students meet in my room where I would inform each student what AIS assignment they would have for the next fifteen weeks.

AIS is directly after lunch and the students are very animated when they enter the room from lunch. The students take a lot longer to settle down after AIS than any other period. Today was especially chaotic because the students were not sure where they should be and because of the confusion, I ended up with forty-five students in my room and only twenty-six chairs. As I was checking my list and directing students to the correct rooms, all of a sudden ten students busted into my room, laughing, screaming, exhibiting totally
unacceptable behavior. Before I even had a chance to reprimand the students and get them under control, the superintendent busted into my room and began yelling and screaming about the students' behavior. Because of the students' disruptive behavior in the hall outside the cafeteria, she had followed the students from the cafeteria, down the hall to my room. She screamed that the students had been very loud and wild on their way up from the cafeteria, and that they were too loud now. Then looking around the room, she turned and screamed at me that I needed to get control of these students at the beginning of the period and make sure they were all seated and quiet at their desks. She left the room before I could explain to her the situation and why I had so many students standing in the room.

After making sure that every student was in his or her correct AIS assignment, I began my AIS lesson I had planned for the day. My first activity was to divide the class into five groups of three students. The students had taken the mathematics midterm last Tuesday and did not know their scores yet. I decided to make the captains of the teams, the five students that had scored the highest on the midterm. The student with the highest score would get the first choice and so on.

I began the lesson by announcing the five captains who happen to be the five highest scores on the midterm. The students were very excited when I announced the captains because it meant they were one of the five high scores and had done well on the midterm. When I called the name of the second captain, the young man jumped up, cheered, and ran to the front of the room to
take his place with the other captains. Unfortunately with his excitement and enthusiasm of getting a high midterm grade, he jumped over a chair on his way to the front of the room. Before I could even say anything to the young man, the superintendent again burst in my classroom and started yelling and screaming at the students and me. She must have been looking in the window in my door. The superintendent screamed about how the student’s actions in the classroom were unacceptable, and that students had no regard for property and were out of control. Then she turned and yelled at me to get control of the students. Again, she did not give me a chance to talk with her and explain the situation.

After the superintendent left the classroom, the students finished picking their teams and we had a very productive class. One of my students in the classroom became very physically upset with all the screaming and yelling and asked if he could go the nurse.

My last block of the day is section 8 – 1. About ten minutes after the start of class, the two principals entered my class unannounced. All of the students were in their seats, on task, and engaged. The principals stayed about five minutes and then left. The principals stopped back again in about thirty minutes, but again all the students were in their seats and engaged, so they only stayed about five minutes.
MY REACTION TO THE EVENTS OF FEBRUARY 3rd

I was very disappointed in the events that transpired on February 3rd. I admit that when the superintendent burst into my room the first time the students were chatty and probably louder than they should be. In retrospect, I probably should have quieted the group before assigning students to correct rooms.

The second incident when the superintendent burst into the room I felt was totally uncalled for. The student was showing genuine emotion and excitement because he received a high midterm grade and was selected as a captain. Maybe he showed bad judgment jumping over a chair, but I did not feel that behavior warranted the kind of tongue lashing we all took. I was both embarrassed and dismayed as an educator. I have spent half a year trying to motivate these students and trying to get them interested in their grades. I finally have some students showing general emotion and excitement about their grades and the superintendent reprimands them.

I believe the most frustrating part of the afternoon was that I felt like I was back to where I started if not even further back. Now instead of just one principal making my classroom a focus, I also had the superintendent making my class a focus. I had worked so hard these past few months to improve my classroom management skills and the students' behavior. I was very disappointed. I was back to feeling that administration was not trusting or supporting me in my classroom management and a feeling inside that my teaching career at Mount Morris may be a very short one.
STUDENTS VISIT ME AND APOLOGIZE

Later that day after school, I had a number of students stop by my room and apologize to me for their behavior. They told me they were very sorry their behavior led to the superintendent coming into my room. I was very touched by what these students had to say. They were very articulate and seemed very sincere in their apologizes. I believe they knew how it felt to be reprimanded by the superintendent and the principal, could relate to my situation, and wanted me to know that they knew how I felt.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

The next morning during first period, my door opened and it was the superintendent. She came in and observed for about ten minutes. On her way out of the room, she asked me if I would meet her in her office that afternoon. During that morning, the two principals stopped into my room a total of six times. Each time they stayed a couple of minutes and left. They never stayed for more than five minutes at one time. I felt very fortunate. Each time an administrator stopped into my room, the students were engaged, in their seats, with minimal noise.

Later that day I was extremely nervous and apprehensive as I headed toward the supervisor's office. To begin our meeting, she apologized for coming into my room and raising her voice yesterday, but that she had many issues with my classroom management. She suggested I continue to work with both the principal and the vice principal on my classroom management.
During the meeting, the superintendent lectured me on the importance of "controlling" the students. However, she did not offer any strategies or suggestions how to accomplish this. Not once did she mention that the majority of the students at Mount Morris are children of generalization poverty and that they may need to be disciplined differently. She mentioned she had seen growth in me as a teacher, but that I did not have tenure and needed to improve. This was not exactly the vote of confidence I was looking for. The one positive part of the meeting was that it gave me a chance to explain the situation in my classroom both times she burst into my room.

**REFLECTION OF MY MEETING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT**

I was very disappointed in the whole situation involving the superintendent. The superintendent had followed the students from the cafeteria to my room and was very upset by their behavior. She finally caught up with the students to reprimand them, but unfortunately that happened to be in my classroom. I have worked very hard on my classroom management and now in a ten-minute time span, it seems like all that work was for nothing. I was again the focus of administration because they felt I could not control my classroom. However, deep in my heart, I knew I was able to effectively manage a classroom. My mentor and the special education teacher have confirmed this through their observation. After the incident involving the superintendent, administration had stopped in my room numerous times only to find the students on task, engaged, in their seats, and for the most part quiet.
MEETING WITH THE PRINCIPAL, MY MENTOR, AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

The principal left a message he wanted to meet my mentor, the special education teacher, and myself after school on February 6th. The principal started the meeting by informing us we would have to attend a conference in Batavia on March 3rd concerning the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. The conference is by invitation only from the state of New York and is extended only to schools that have scored poorly on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

The principal then showed us the notes of three mathematics students from section 8-2 that he randomly had called down to the office and asked to bring their mathematics' notes. He made copies of their notes and told them to not tell everyone why they had been to the principal's office. The first set of student notes that the principal showed us were very complete. The other two students' notes were incomplete and sloppy. The principal told us that it is my responsibility as a teacher to make sure the students took complete and accurate notes. He believes if a student does not have organized and complete notes, it seriously hinders the student academically.
REFLECTION ON THE MEETING WITH THE PRINCIPAL, MY MENTOR, AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

What bothered me about this meeting was the inference that I was responsible for the last five years of bad scores on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. The principal is looking for over fifty percent of the students to score over a 2 on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment this year. That is a large jump from twenty percent, the average percentage of the students passing the last three years. I believe it is unfair to assume that I am able to reverse this performance trend in one year. For the first time, I could sense panic in administration concerning the scores on the upcoming 2003 New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

I began to wonder if this was the underlying reason for administration’s focus on my classroom. I began to feel that the administrators were looking to make me the scapegoat if the students’ scores were poor again on this year’s New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. During our meeting, the principal did not want to hear about the holes in the eighth-grade students’ mathematical abilities. The principal did not want to hear that the majority of the eighth-grade students at Mount Morris couldn’t long divide, add fractions, or multiply decimals. All the principal was concerned about was the scores going up on this year’s New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

In the cafeteria, my junior high team told me that they see the holes in the eighth-graders’ mathematical abilities and that I should not be held responsible for what the student should have learned in elementary school. I cannot be
expected to cram seven years of education into a six month time period in eighth grade. However, unfortunately their view is not shared by administration. Administration cannot seem to understand why the students are unable to master solving two-step equations and problem solving when they cannot divide forty-by-eight.

**FINAL OBSERVATION BY MY MENTOR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER**

On March 5th, I taught a lesson on graphing linear equations in \( y=mx+b \) form. I used this lesson for the final observation by my mentor and the special education teacher. I also used the ticket out the door activity for the last time.

My mentor was very complementary. He said I had come a long way since November. He said the students were well behaved, engaged, and on task. He said that when he walked around the room and questioned the students, he found them to be polite and were able for the most part to answer his questions. He said that there was a noticeable difference from November when the students were rude, off task, and not able to control themselves.

The special education teacher was also very complementary. He said the students seemed engaged, on task, and well behaved. He said the pacing of my lesson was better but to be careful and not to rush the lesson. He said I needed to make sure that I gave the students enough time to synthesize the material and answer questions.
SURPRISE OBSERVATION BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

On March 7th, the school secretary called to inform me that in five minutes the superintendent was on her way to my classroom to observe section 8 - 2. My mentor was off today and I had not prepared anything special for class that day. I did not even have time to get nervous when the door opened and the superintendent came into the classroom and sat in the back of my classroom.

The students were working on a warm up exercise and for the most part on task and engaged when the superintendent entered the room. I reviewed the homework and taught a lesson on finding the solution of a system of equations by graphing. I followed the lesson with some examples and the students started their homework in class.

I felt the class went very well. The students were very well behaved. They raised their hands to answer questions and seemed engaged through the lesson. I was very impressed with the students. It was a pleasure to teach this class today. On her way out the door after class, the superintendent asked me to stop by her office after school today. I was very anxious to find out what she was going to say about my classroom management now.
MEETING WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT

On my way to the superintendent's office, the junior high science teacher asked me where I was heading. I responded, "the superintendent's office". He laughed and said I should have kept a calendar of the number of days and hours I have spent in administrators' offices. I laughed and replied, "probably a whole lot more than I want to know". We both shared a laugh and I thought how great it was to have someone in the school that understood what I had been going through.

Our team leader, the social studies teacher, caught up with me on my way to the superintendent's office. She told me that she had just met with the superintendent and that she was not in a good mood. She added the superintendent had talked to her about my observation and that she had seen great improvement. She said the superintendent shared with her that she really wanted to keep me teaching at Mount Morris. Our team leader said that often the administration at Mount Morris focuses on the negative and does not emphasize the positive. So she said to remember no matter what the superintendent says that during her meeting the superintendent believes that I had made considerable progress as a teacher and she wants me to continue teaching mathematics at Mount Morris.

My meeting with the superintendent was very pleasant. She was very complementary and told me she had seen considerable improvement in my teaching, especially my classroom management. She told me that there were a few areas that she would like to see me improve, but they were minor and I
could work on those in my weekly meetings with the assistant principal. Obviously, I was very pleased with this meeting.

**PLAN TO ANALYZE THE DATA**

To analyze the data I have collected, I will be comparing the observations from my mentor, the special education teacher, administration, along with my journal reflections. Because my mentor and the special education teacher will be observing my classroom every two weeks, they should provide me with valuable information on the pulse of my classroom. They should provide me with valuable feedback to questions such as: "Are my strategies improving student engagement and producing a more orderly learning environment, having no effect, or does the situation seem to be getting worse?" The first formal observation and the final formal observation conference should provide an interesting comparison. The two observations should provide an interesting contrast and indication of Mount Morris' official assessment of my teaching. Do they believe I have improved, regressed, or stayed the same?

I will be extensively analyzing my own reflective journal to highlight any themes, concerns, or pertinent information. I will be comparing my point of view of how the class went with that of my mentor, the special education teacher, and administration. Are we looking for the same things in the classroom? And if we saw them, did we see them the same way?

I will be analyzing the interviews of the other eighth-grade core teachers and my notes from weekly meetings with the assistant principal to see how the students behave in their classrooms. Are the same students having problems in
their classes? Who are the students that are misbehaving in their classroom? What strategies have they used to successfully deal with these students? Are there any strategies I can successfully use in my classroom to modify student classroom behavior, achievement, and engagement?

I will be reviewing the students' goal cards. Did the student reach their goals? Were their goals unrealistic? What does the student have to do in the next ten weeks to make their goals come true? I will be reviewing and analyzing students' tickets out the door to see how they feel about the classroom. Is the classroom more orderly? Are they learning more? Is class more interesting? Is reflection becoming a routine? Is their writing improving?

Finally, I will be comparing the seventh-grade Terra Nova assessment scores with the mock New York State mathematics eighth-grade assessment I administered in class. What was the effect of my research on student achievement? Did the student grades improve, stay the same, or drop. What is my projection of the students' scores on the 2003 New York State mathematics eighth-grade assessment score based upon the 2002 New York State Mathematics eighth-grade assessment I administered in class along with last years seventh-grade Terra Nova scores. What effect will these projected scores have concerning the "No Child Left Behind" Act and Mount Morris Central School? If the scores drop even lower, what consequences will Morris Central School District face due to the "No Child Left Behind" Act and personally my question: If the scores do not improve, will I have a job next year?
METHODOLOGY TIME LINE

9/5/2002  First day of school at Mount Morris
9/27/2002 Unsuccessful lesson on the sum of the angles in a triangle
10/7/2002 Administrator reprimands student and myself for out of control classroom
10/9/2002 Mount Morris teacher association meeting
10/9/2002 My mentor’s first observation of section 8 – 2
10/16/2002 First formal observation with administration
10/21/2002 Post observation conference with administration
10/25/2002 Barbara Benson workshop
11/1/2002 Special education teacher’s first observation of section 8 – 2
11/7/2002 Brainstorm activity to create classroom rules with 8 – 2
11/10/2002 Meeting with administration to approve checklist plan
11/12/2002 Students presented official classroom rules and letter sent home to parents
11/25/2002 First ticket out the door activity / Goal card activity
12/1/2002 Junior High team comes to my defense
12/9/2002 My mentor and special education teacher’s observation of 8 – 2
12/9/2002 First meeting with the assistant principal
12/11/2002 Ticket out the door activity
1/6/2003 My mentor and special education teacher’s observation of 8 – 2
1/14/2003 Observation by the assistant principal – Note to a friend activity
1/14/2003 Ticket out the door activity
1/15/2003 Interview with Science teacher
1/21/2003 First formal observation with the superintendent
1/21/2003 Ticket out the door activity
1/23/2003 My mentor and special education teacher’s observation of 8 – 2
1/23/2003 Ticket out the door activity
1/30/2003 Post observation meeting with superintendent
2/3/2003 My mentor and special education teacher’s observation of 8 – 2
2/3/2003 A day to forget – the superintendent bursts into my classroom
2/4/2003 Meeting with the superintendent
2/5/2003 Ticket out the door activity
2/6/2003 Meeting with the principal, my mentor, special education teacher
2/12/2003 Interview with English teacher
2/18/2003 My mentor and special education teacher’s observation of 8 – 2
2/20/2003 Ticket out the door activity
2/24/2003 Interview with Social Studies teacher
2/26/2003 Mock New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment test Part One
2/28/2003 Mock New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment test Part two
3/5/2003 Final ticket out the door activity
3/5/2003 My mentor and special education teacher’s final observation of section 8 – 2
3/7/2003 Surprise observation with the superintendent
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

I will begin by summarizing and analyzing my weekly meetings with the assistant principal. I will summarize our conversations concerning children of generational poverty including their characteristics, and how to effectively discipline them.

I will continue by summarizing and analyzing my interviews with the junior high English, science, and social studies teachers. Later, I will discuss Adlai E. Stevenson High School, a large high school in Illinois that successfully educates a large population of children of generational poverty.

I will continue by summarizing and analyzing the goal card activity, the ticket out the door activity, the observations from my mentor and the special education teacher, my personal journals, and my mock New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessments.

I will finish by summarizing my analysis of the data as well as discuss standards-based classrooms, low mathematical ability, and student motivation as they pertain to my data, my students, and my classroom at Mount Morris.

WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

My weekly meetings with the assistant principal began on December 9th at the request of the principal. During the month of December, the assistant principal and I talked at length about children of generational poverty, their characteristics, and how to best teach and discipline them. Her goal is that I gain a better insight and understanding of these students. She believes that the single
most important aspect of effectively disciplining and controlling a classroom with a large number of children of generational poverty is emphasizing structure and choice. Students’ expected behaviors and their consequences for not choosing these behaviors should be clearly in place and understood by all the students.

From her experiences, the principal believes that children of generational poverty live for the present. Their decisions are made for the moment based on their feelings at that moment. According to the assistant principal, this is directly the opposite of children born to middle class and wealthy parents. These children generally make decisions based on future ramifications. The future is most important to them. Many of their decisions are made on the basis of tradition. Often, they go to the same school or follow in the same career as a parent. Middle and upper class children generally believe that they can change their future with good choices and decisions. In contrast, children of generational poverty generally believe in fate and there is not much they can do to change or improve their future.

The assistant principal talked about the children of generational poverty valuing people as possessions in contrast to children of middle class parents who place a higher value on material things and one of a kind objects. A child of generational poverty’s circle of friends is often as important to them as a car is to a child of middle class.

The assistant principal talked with me at length about the decision-making process of children of generational poverty. She believes that driving
force behind the decision-making of children of generational poverty is survival, relationships, and entertainment. People are possessions to children of generational poverty. It is worse to steal someone's girlfriend than his or her car. A relationship is valued as an achievement. Losing a relationship is viewed as a failure. That is why many parents defend their child no matter what he or she has done wrong. Having too much education is feared because the individual might go to college, be successful, and leave the community, family, and friends behind.

The assistant principal talked about how a child of generational poverty's world is defined in local terms. Many times, I have heard the students in my classroom at Mount Morris talk about a trip to the Wal-Mart in Geneseo during spring break in the same vein as the students in Webster talked about a trip to Florida.

The assistant principal talked about how physical fighting is the way children of generational poverty resolve conflict. Respect is accorded to those who can physically defend themselves. Children of generational poverty are concerned about their "face" or "image" and do not have the language skills, vocabulary, or conflict resolution skills to solve problems peacefully.

The assistant principal's experience is that students of generational poverty often laugh when they are disciplined as a way to save "face". They often argue loudly with the teacher because the culture of generational poverty is participatory and the culture of generational poverty has a distrust of authority and the system. Often, it is simply that they do not know any adults worthy of
respect and admiration. Their angry response is based on fear and loss of "face" in front of their peers. Their mother is the most important person in their life. Their mother is the keeper of their soul. Any insult against their mother is unforgivable.

The assistant principal has found that a classroom of students of generational poverty have a higher than average noise level because non-verbal information is more important than verbal. Emotions are generally openly displayed and the value of their personality and worth to the group is their ability to entertain. Children of generational poverty are constantly talking and making noises as poverty is very participatory. They are very physical and their hands are always on someone else.

Children of generation poverty generally have trouble following directions and are disorganized. They lack planning, scheduling, and prioritizing skills. These skills are not important or taught in families of generational poverty as often the students do not have a place at home they can put or organize things. Children of poverty often do not see the whole picture or task. Therefore, completing only part of a task or assignment is the norm. Destiny and fate govern their life. Since they live for the moment, they are easily distracted. The notion of having choices is foreign to them. Discipline is about penance and forgiveness, not change.

The assistant principal offered me many suggestions and strategies for teaching students of generational poverty. Her first suggestion is to understand and identify student behaviors related to being raised in generational poverty
and to identify discipline interventions that are effective. She talked about when you discipline children of generational poverty you should always try to use your "adult" voice and provide choices. If you must resort to using your "parent" voice to stop behaviors, you must use your "adult" voice to then change the behaviors. To avoid arguments with parent or children born in generational poverty, you need to use your "adult" voice. Always try to use discipline interventions as an opportunity for instruction on how to change their behavior for the better. The assistant principal reminded me that the culture of generational poverty does not provide for success in the "real world", because the "real world" largely requires the self-governance of behavior to be successful in school and in work.

**MY NEW BEHAVIOR PLAN FOR CHILDREN OF GENERATIONAL POVERTY**

Reflecting on my meetings with the assistant principal and taking my classroom teaching experience into account, I could not believe how on target she had been. It was as if she had a video camera in my room. I saw all the behaviors and characteristics in my classroom that she talked about concerning children of generational poverty. Their behaviors when I disciplined them were exactly what she said they would be. They were confrontational and often laughed when I disciplined them. I thought to myself, why did not administration share all this information with me during new teacher orientation at the beginning of the school year. It would have made large difference in the way I initially disciplined the students.
According to the assistant principal, the two anchors for effective discipline and control in the classroom are structure and choice. With my checklist list in place, it was clear to the students what behaviors I expected of them in class and what consequences would be imposed if they did not meet these behaviors. An individual student always has the choice to follow or not follow an expected behavior. With that choice, comes a reward that may be desirable or a consequence that may be undesirable. However, the students must understand that the choice is always theirs and once they make that choice that they must live with the reward or the consequence. They must be taught that when they make a choice that they must live with the consequences of that choice, either good or bad.

After my meetings with the assistant principal, I believed I had a much better understanding of the children of generational poverty in my classroom. From this understanding, I decided I needed to change how I disciplined the students in my classroom. I decided I must never shout, yell, or argue with the students. Instead when disciplining children of generational poverty, I must talk to them in an “adult” voice and present alternative behaviors that would have been more appropriate. I must always try to respond in an “adult” voice. If students become conformational when I am disciplining them, I must wait until the students calm down and then calmly discuss other responses with the students that would have been more appropriate. I must stress that fighting is unacceptable in school at all times. I must examine with the students options that they could use instead of physically fighting. I must give the students as many
realistic hands on activities as possible so that they use their hands in constructive ways and not on each other.

I decided I must teach the students of generational poverty that there are two sets of behaviors from which to choose from. One set for the street and one set for school and work. The purpose of my discipline must be to promote successful behaviors at school. I must stress choice as the major component of behavior. I must teach discipline the same way I teach exponents and square roots. I must teach it, re-teach it, and review discipline and "good choices" constantly so that it is fresh in the students' minds at all time. I decided a good time to start this my behavior plan and they way I disciplined students was when the students returned from winter break, January 2, 1003.

INTERVIEW WITH THE JUNIOR HIGH ENGLISH TEACHER

On February 12th, I interviewed the junior high English teacher. She was one of the few teachers at Mount Morris that was under the same pressure as I was. She had just finished preparing her students to take the New York State eighth-grade ELA English assessment in January. These scores are as important to administration as the mathematics scores, the one difference is that the English scores at Mount Morris have been higher the last few years. Therefore, they were not as large of a concern to administration.

I asked her what her strategy was for motivating the students to do well on the New York State assessment. In my time at Mount Morris, I have seen little motivation from most of the students to earn any kind of grade. She shared with me the following strategy.
She made a deal with the students that if their score on the New York State eighth-grade ELA English assessment was an improvement over their Terra Nova scores from seventh grade and a mock ELA assessment she administered in December, that she would exempt the students from taking the midterm. She told me that it had been a very successful. Fifty-five percent of her students taking the New York State eighth-grade ELA English assessment improved their scores from the seventh grade Terra Novas and the mock ELA assessment. Therefore, they did not have to take the midterm. The English teacher estimates that approximately fifty percent of the students that took the New York State eighth-grade ELA English assessment this year in January scored over a three. That is a figure both the English teacher and administration are very happy with.

**INTERVIEW WITH THE JUNIOR HIGH SCIENCE TEACHER**

On January 15th, I interviewed the junior high science teacher. The junior high science teacher noticed I had begun to use homework passes in my classroom. He told me about five years ago, he tried using homework passes in his class to engage the students. He was very interested how they were working for me. He said that they had been successful for him for a short time, but then problems arose. Students began to steal homework passes from other students, tried to forge passes, or steal them from his desk area. Students would come to him begging that they had lost their homework passes and could he give them new ones. He said that the homework passes became more of a distraction in the classroom than a benefit, so he stopped issuing homework passes.
I found this interview ironic as I had begun to experience the same behaviors in my classroom concerning the homework passes. At least fifteen students have come to me and told me they had lost or misplaced their homework passes. They asked me if I would replace them and when I refused and told them they were eighth graders now and it was their responsibility to take care of the passes, they became agitated with me. On five separate occasions I have caught students going through my desk looking for homework passes. I have a special stamp that I use on the homework passes to validate them before I pass them out. I have caught students trying to turn in homework passes that have obviously been copied. I even had one student try to turn in a homework pass with a student’s name crossed out and his name sloppily written on the pass. What really disturbed me was that I heard some students were selling their homework passes to other students.

Therefore, after interviewing the junior high science teacher and reflecting on my own experiences with the homework passes, I decided to discontinue using them in my classroom. The homework passes had become much more a distraction and a problem than a solution and a benefit.

INTERVIEW WITH THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER

The social studies teacher in the Junior High School has been teaching at Mount Morris for over twenty-five years and is our junior high team leader. I interviewed her on February 24th, shortly after she returned from a trip to Lincolnshire, Illinois that was sponsored by BOCES. She spent three days in Illinois observing Adlai E. Stevenson High School. The reason for the social
study teacher’s trip to Stevenson High School was to observe a successful school where the majority of the students are children of generational poverty.

When Stevenson High School first opened in 1964, most of the classrooms were without desks, the library was empty, and there were no athletic fields. Presently, Stevenson High School is an award winning high school. In 1998 and 2000, Newsweek Magazine named Stevenson one of America’s top 100 high schools. Stevenson High School has adapted the following motto, “born of conflict, nurtured by adversity, and destined for greatest”. Administration believes this holds true for both the school and the students who attend Stevenson High School.

The teachers, the community members, the students, and the board of education of Stevenson High School have worked together to define their expectations for the students. These expectations can be broken down into six main principles that the students must observe if they are to get the most from their educational opportunity and for Stevenson to remain a top High School. The first main principle is that the students must accept responsibility for their education, their decisions, their words, and their actions. The second main principle is that students must act in a way to promote a safe, healthy environment that best represents the school, their parents, and the community. The third principal is that the students must be active in the school and the community. The fourth principle is that students must maintain a balance between academics, co-curricular activities, and community projects giving their best to each effort. The fifth principal is that the students must support other
students and their activities. The sixth and final principle is that students must respect cultural diversity, individuality, and the choices and rights of others.

Educators at Stevenson High School believe that the classroom is the most critical area of an educational institution. Educators expect students at Stevenson High School to be on time to class. Students are to be prepared for class with all the materials necessary for that day in class. Students are to be attentive to the task at hand until dismissed by a teacher. Finally, students must demonstrate care and consideration for school property and the property of others.

Stevenson High School is structured on the premise that freshman benefit from a highly structured school day. Therefore, freshmen are in either a class or study hall the entire day with the exception of a twenty-five minute lunch period. However, sophomores who meet the stipulated criteria are given the privilege of an extended lunch period. Educators at Stevenson High School believe that as you become an upperclassman, you are nearing a time in your life when you must begin to assume more responsibility for your decisions. However, the freedom the student has to make these decisions at Stevenson High School is considered a privilege and can be taken away from a student if they do not observe the rules of the school. If you violate a rule at Stevenson High School, certain consequences will follow. These consequences include detention, Saturday school, in school suspension, out of school suspension and loss of privileges.
The social studies teacher was truly amazed at this school. At this school of over four thousand students, she said after the bell rang for class the hall was completely empty and quiet. Some upperclassmen had the privilege to walk freely around the school with no disruptions. When the junior high science teacher observed classrooms, they were orderly, engaged, with the majority of the students on task.

The social studies teacher will be meeting with superintendent and the administration at Mount Morris soon to report on her trip. She hopes that after hearing her, Mount Morris will begin to adapt many of the strategies that have made Stevenson High School a successful and award winning school. She believes that Stevenson High School places the responsibility for a student's success squarely on the student's shoulders. The school may provide privileges and consequences to help guide the student into making the correct decisions, but ultimately each student controls their own destiny and success in school by the decisions they make.

**GOAL CARDS**

Analyzing the students' goal cards from class on November 25th, I found interesting similarities in the students' goals. I was very surprised to find very little variance in the students' responses. The first question I asked on the goal cards was "Why are you here?" I was not surprised that a majority of the students answered because they had to be here, but I was surprised many answered because it is the law. The majority of the students answered the second and third question the same way. Their "goal" for the class and the
school year were the same, to pass. Only two students answered that their goal was to be on the honor role. The fourth and final question I asked on the goal cards was “What are your goals for life”? I found it interesting that the majority of the students answered that they wanted to get a “good” job, be successful, and make a lot of money. A few wanted to be professional athletes and many answered they wanted to get out of Mount Morris. However, what surprised me the most was that not one student answered they wanted to go to college, not even the ones that answered they wanted to be an architect or an accountant and make a lot of money. I wondered how they thought they were going to get to be an architect or an accountant without going to college?

**MOCK EIGHTH GRADE NEW YORK STATE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT**

On February 26th and 28th, I administered my mock eighth-grade New York State mathematics assessment to the students of section 8-2. In administering the assessment, I simulated the testing conditions of the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. I administered part 1 on February 26th and the students were not allowed to use a calculator. I administered part 2 on February 28th and the students were allowed to use a calculator. In creating the mock assessment, I modeled questions from the 2000, 2001, and 2002 eighth-grade New York State mathematics assessment. The test consisted of fifty multiple-choice questions on part 1. Part 2 consisted of three questions worth two points and three questions worth three points. Therefore, the students’ scores would be out of a maximum of sixty-five points.
To align my exam with the eighth-grade New York State mathematics assessment, I coded my mock assessment as follows. A score of ninety-five and over on my mock assessment, I aligned with a score of four on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. A score on my mock assessment between seventy-five and ninety-four, I aligned with a score of three on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. A score on my mock assessment between fifty and seventy-four, I aligned with a two on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. Finally, a score under fifty on my mock assessment, I aligned with a one on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

I had nineteen students in section 8-2 take my mock mathematics assessment. Using my coding system, I had five students score a three, six students score a two, and eight students score a one. Using my mock assessment, I predict that five out of the nineteen students in section 8-2 will score a three on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. Five out of nineteen students, translates to twenty-six percent of the students in section 8-2 meeting the minimum standard for New York State on the eighth-grade mathematics assessment.

The Terra Nova assessment the students had taken in seventh grade predicted that only one student in section 8-2 would score a three on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. The Terra Nova assessment section 8-2 took in seventh grade further predicted that nine students would project to score a two on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment.
assessment and that nine students would score a one on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. One out of nineteen students is a percentage of five percent scoring a three on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment. Therefore, using my mock assessment as a comparison of section 8-2s' success on this year's eighth-grade New York State mathematics assessment with the Terra Nova assessment the students took in seventh grade, I predict a twenty-one percent increase of students in section 8-2 scoring a three on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment in May of 2003.

I further compared the data between my mock assessment and the students' scores on the Terra Nova assessment the students took in seventh grade and found that the one student scoring a three on the Terra Nova assessment scored a three on my mock assessment. Three students scoring a two on the Terra Nova assessment scored a three on my mock assessment. One student scoring a one on the Terra Nova assessment scored a three on my mock assessment. Three students scoring a two on the Terra Nova assessment scored a two on my mock assessment. Three students scoring a one on the Terra Nova assessment scored a two on my mock assessment. Three students scoring a two on the Terra Nova assessment scored a one on my mock assessment. Five students scoring a one on the Terra Nova assessment scored a one on my mock assessment.
THE LONG ROAD TO A STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOM

Much of the advice veteran teachers at Mount Morris shared with me at the beginning of the school year concerned classroom management. Their advice was to start out the year very strict, and deal with any inappropriate behaviors quickly and consistently. They told me that if the students sense you are weak, they will take advantage of you and the discipline problems will escalate. You can loosen up as the year progresses, but you must have that initial control of the classroom.

Therefore, I started the year believing I was being "tough" on the students. During my first class, I shared with the students my expectations for them academically as well as behaviorally. However, reflecting back now, I realize I was not even close to being "tough" enough on the students. The students looked at the freedom I allowed in my classroom and interpreted that as weakness. The students liked me but did not respect me. Administration's frequent unannounced visits to my classroom only fueled the students' lack of respect for me as a teacher. If administration was not showing me any respect, why should the students in my classroom show me any respect? Every time an administrator entered my room and demanded that I see them in their office immediately after class, I lost more credibility with the students. I believe the students enjoyed seeing a teacher get in trouble and that only fueled their unacceptable behavior in my classroom. I began to wonder if I would ever be able to control these students. Each time my door opened, I felt anxiety throughout my body. Was it an administrator coming into the classroom again
to reprimand me? Some days, I felt like I spent more time in the administration’s offices than my own classroom. There came a point in October and early November that I dreaded coming to work each day.

However, by working with my mentor, I began to feel better in the classroom. I felt my lessons becoming more efficient as I began to use the overhead more and more in the classroom. My mentor suggested I use the overhead in class as much as possible so that I would never have to turn my back to the students and they would always be in my sight. Student behavior somewhat improved, but still had a long way to go before I felt I could successfully use cooperative learning groups and inquiry without facing the scrutiny of administration.

The next few months were a long journey. My checklist proved to be a very useful tool. In the beginning, students laughed when I put their name on the board or placed a checkmark next to their name. After a few weeks of students having to attend my mathematics homework club after school, the laughter stopped. When students realized I was serious about gaining control of the classroom, their behavior in class started to improve greatly. With this improved behavior in the classroom, came a new respect for me as a teacher from the students. I found now that after most students had their name on the board with one or two checkmarks, their behavior improved greatly. They did not want to get the third checkmark. They did not want to be assigned to the mathematics homework club after school and possibly be given a referral.
Slowly, I began to bond with the students. Students started stopping by my class during advisement and after school for help in mathematics. Some students just stopped by to say, “hello” and talk about a problem they had with another student or teacher.

January was an excellent month for me in the classroom. The students’ behavior in class was improving everyday. With the help of my mentor, I was refining my teaching. My lessons were more efficient and more effective. My meetings with the assistant principal played a major part in my progress. The information she shared with me about children of generational poverty was particular relevant and useful to me. It totally changed the way I handled discipline in my classroom and it helped me to better understand my students and their behaviors. I wondered why administration had not shared this information with me during new teacher orientation. It would have saved me a lot of frustration and anxiety the first few months of school. My checklist system was working and I did not have one student that had to stay after school for mathematics homework club in January for behavior reasons.

The events of February 3rd were particularly upsetting to me because I had worked very hard to gain control of my classroom. I knew my classroom management skills had greatly improved, the checklist system was a success, and I believed I had the students under control in all my classes. In the month of January, every time an administrator entered my room, the students were at their desks, engaged, on task, and quiet. Observations from my mentor and the special education teacher, along with the students’ tickets out the door were all
very positive with no mention of any behavior problems in the classroom. I finally felt after seven months of teaching at Mount Morris, I had my classroom under control and could begin my journey of creating a standards-based classroom.

**BARBARA BENSON AND THE STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOM**

Barbara Benson at her conference provided a snapshot of what a successful standards-based classroom should look and sound like. I am using my classroom on March 5th, as a basis for comparison with that snapshot.

In Barbara Benson's snapshot of a standards-based classroom, the desks may be arranged in rows, but more often the desks will be clustered or tables will be used to allow for student interaction. The room might be noisy as students talk, move around the room, and work together. There are no boundaries in the room as students move freely around the room working together cooperatively to solve problems. Examples of student work are posted for viewing throughout the room.

My classroom has tables shaped like isosceles trapezoids that allow two students to sit together. The tables can be pushed together to form one large table that will seat four students. Examples of student work that I consider outstanding are posted throughout my room. This provides models and examples of the quality of work I expect from my students plus student recognition for quality work. Posted in the back of the room at the present time are ten notes to a friend I considered outstanding. I hope that the students will
The major difference between the Barbara Benson's snapshot of a standards-based classroom and my classroom is the amount of freedom the students have in my class. In my classroom, the students are expected to be quiet and stay in their seats. Students are not allowed to move freely around the room without permission from a teacher. However, this was not always the case. In the beginning of the year, my classroom very much modeled Barbara Benson's snapshot of a standards-based classroom. Students moved freely around the room working collaboratively in groups. The room was often noisy with students moving around the room questioning each other, helping each other, and learning from each other. When the principal burst into my room and reprimanded me for having an out of control classroom, I actual believed I was having a successful lesson. The students were learning the basics of how to use the TI - 83+ graphing calculator and the students who understood how to use the calculator where helping other students learn how to use the calculator. I was staying in the background enjoying the learning environment. Yes, the room was noisy and students were out of their seats, but I believe a lot of learning was taking place.

However, administration has made it clear to me that this type of classroom environment is unacceptable at Mount Morris. Countless times in my seven months of teaching at Mount Morris, an administrator has walked past my room and looked into my window. If they heard any noise or saw a student out
of their seat, they had burst into my room, disciplined the students, reprimanded me, and asked to see me in their office as soon as possible.

Therefore, I maintain a very structured classroom where I try to keep student noise and movement to a minimum to satisfy administration. I use some group activities but with never more than two students at one time. I am afraid to let students talk, work together, or move around the room freely. My fear is that an administrator will look in the window and again I will be accused of having an out of control classroom. I am tired of having administration in my classroom and spending my planning time in administration's office discussing my classroom management skills.

Reflecting on my classroom in November, observations from my mentor and the special education teacher as well as the students' tickets out the door indicate a classroom that was disruptive and not conducive to learning. Students wrote about the classroom being loud and noisy and that they wish the class would pay more attention. My mentor and the special education teacher wrote about how disrespectful and rude the students were to me as a teacher and to other students. The classroom environment was definitely challenging. Not a lot of learning was taking place.

However with the introduction of the checklist and mathematics homework club, I believe the classroom environment has definitely improved. On March 5th, there was no mention on any students' "ticket out the door" of any behavior issue. My observations on March 5th from my mentor and special education teacher confirm that the student's behavior in the classroom has
improved. In November on their observation, my mentor and the special education teacher graded me with mainly twos. But on March 5th, both my mentor and special education graded me with mainly fours and an occasional five. The classroom dynamics and learning environment in my classroom have changed completely. Students now raise their hands before they answer questions instead of just blurting out the answers. Students stay in their seats until they have permission to leave them, and the students are respectable to the teachers in the room as well as to other students.

One of the criticisms that came from the observations of my mentor and the special education teacher is that I am still too lecture orientated. When I ask questions, I must give the students adequate time to think about the problem, problem-solve, and then raise their hand to answer the question. I believe this criticism goes back to my fear of administration looking in my classroom and the resulting consequences. I still get nervous when it takes a student a while to answer a question. Most of my discipline problems happen when students are not engaged and there is a lull in the classroom. At the advice of my mentor, I need to concentrate on keeping the pace of the class fast and structured to give students as little time to act out as possible. I must find that fine line between rushing a lesson and waiting for students to synthesis the information, raise their hand, and answer the question.

In Barbara Benson’s snap shot of a standards-based classroom, student work can be graded in a traditional way, evaluated by rubrics, or a combination of both. The last few months, I have graded assignments by both traditional
grades and rubrics. Tests, quizzes, and the midterm were graded by traditional grades. One hundred to ninety percent is an A. Eight-nine to eighty percent is a B. Seventy-nine to seventy percent is a C. Sixty-five to sixty-nine percent is a D and less than sixty-four percent is a failing. In many reflective writing activities like the “note to a friend” activity, I used a rubric that I specifically created for that activity. I found that my students did not have any problem adjusting to either scoring system.

When I compare a snapshot of my classroom on March 5th with Barbara Benson’s snapshot of a standards-based classroom, I believe that I have done an excellent job modeling a standards-based classroom. I have gained control of my classroom by using my behavior checklist and the mathematics homework club as a consequence. The major difference between my classroom on March 5th and Barbara Benson’s vision of a standards-based classroom is that I do not allow my students the freedom to work in larger groups or move around the room. This freedom would create a nosier, more hectic classroom, but the administration at Mount Morris has made it clear to me that a noisy, hectic classroom is unacceptable. Therefore, I do not allow much student freedom in my classroom.

I believe that the administration at Mount Morris would never allow a snapshot of my mathematics classroom to fully model Barbara Benson’s snapshot of a standards-based classroom. My opinion of the administration at Mount Morris is that they cannot seem to handle students being out of their seats and the noise level cooperative group learning generates.
Barbara Benson’s first step in creating a standards-based classroom is to create a community of learners. She believes that in order for students to learn they must feel accepted in the classroom. They must view the classroom as physically and emotionally pleasant and perceive the classroom as orderly. The students must view the activities as relevant and believe they have the ability to do the activities. Finally, they must clearly understand what they are expected to learn and do.

In the beginning of the year, section 8-2 was definitely not a community of learners. Many students wrote on their “tickets out the door” that the class was noisy and they were not able to learn. My mentor and the special education teacher wrote in their first observations about the rudeness of the students, the distractions in the classroom, and the lack of respect for myself as a teacher as well as the other students.

But I believe my checklist, support from the assistant principal, my mentor, the junior high team, and the mathematics homework club changed the class environment. The checklist clearly stated what was expected of the students when they entered the classroom and during class. The students clearly understood what behaviors were acceptable and unacceptable in my classroom. There were no gray areas. My expectations were the same for every student, very class, every week, every month.

I began to see a change in the classroom environment around the beginning of January. The students started to become more focused, engaged, and able to stay on task longer. Students started taking better notes. I was able to
cover more material, because I was spending less time disciplining the students. The extra time I gained allowed me to be able to present more real life examples so that the students could see why they were learning the material. My mentors and special education teacher's observations in January note this change in classroom environment. They noted the improved behavior of the students as well as new aura of respect in the classroom. Students were more respectful to the adults in the classroom. Students started working together instead of working against each other. The student's tickets out the door from the month of January confirm the shift in the classroom environment. They perceived the classroom, as more orderly and I felt more accepted in the classroom.

Comparing the initial and final observations of my mentor and the special education teacher, I noticed a remarkable difference. My mentor and special education teacher now view my classroom as orderly as well as physically and emotionally pleasant. They now observed the activities in my lessons to be valuable and relevant. Their observation is that the students clearly understand what they are learning, why the topic is relevant in the real world, and how I expect them to behave in my classroom.

I reviewed the students' tickets out the door for the last four weeks as well as the observations from my mentor and special education teacher for that same time period and I saw no mention of the class being too loud, students not being able to learn, disruptive students, or students disrespecting teachers or other students.
Therefore, on March 5th, the students in section 8-2, my mentor, and the special education teacher viewed my classroom as physically and emotionally pleasant. The students understood what was expected of them in the classroom both academically and behaviorally. The students excellent behavior allowed me to use more activities that are authentic, so that the students would be able understand why they are learning a skill, not just learning the skill itself. My classroom was under control, but something was missing.

Students in section 8-2 now had a safe, orderly, and quiet environment to learn. Students understood the behavior I expected of them in the classroom and my expectations of them both academically and behaviorally. Students were well behaved in class, took notes, and no longer disturbed the learning of the other students in section 8-2 that really wanted to learn. However, with the exception of the three or four students whose grades flourished because they could now concentrate on the material, the majority of the students’ grades were dropping. As student behavior in the classroom improved, students started turning in less and less homework. Scores on tests and quizzes dropped and the students did not seem to care. I would give a student back a quiz with a grade of fifty on it and the student would smile, look at the grade, tear up the quiz, and throw it in the waste basket. I gave section 8-2 the option of correcting their tests and getting a higher grade or taking a re-test and only two students corrected their tests and turned them in for a higher score. Of course, these were two of the four students in the class who had scored over an eighty-five on the test. The rest of the students did not seem to care. I was very confused. My classroom was
now under control, but overall student achievement was dropping. This was a
direct contradiction to the result administration expected.

LOW MATHEMATICAL ABILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

When I first started teaching at Mount Morris, I assessed the seventh and
eighth-grade students' mathematical abilities and competencies with a pre-test. I
found many of the student's mathematical abilities and competencies to be very
low. Many of the students had trouble with simple long division. In fact, during
my student teaching and practicum experiences, I had not been exposed to any
students with as low mathematical abilities as the average Mount Morris seventh
and eighth-grade student.

I wondered what the reasons were for the students' low mathematical
abilities. I thought back to what the superintendent had said about Mount Morris
not having dumb students. Many reasons for the students' low mathematic
abilities and competencies passed through my mind. Were the students just not
intelligent? Was their elementary school education at Mount Morris not stressing
enough mathematics? Was their early education at Mount Morris not stressing
the basic operations of mathematics enough? Was their early education at Mount
Morris allowing the students to depend to heavily on calculators and
manipulatives?
THE STUDENTS' LOW MOTIVATION

I have observed that the majority of the students at Mount Morris do not study for tests. On two occasions, I assigned for homework an activity of creating a note card to use as an aid during a test. The percentage of students that created and used the cards on the test was approximately fifteen percent. Of that percentage, I would estimate that ninety percent of the students that created and used the note cards on the test were the students that did not need them to pass the test.

In my seven month of teaching at Mount Morris, I have found there are two times when the majority of the Mount Morris students are concerned about their grades. The two times are when the students are playing a sport and a week before reports cards are due to come out. To play sports at Mount Morris, a student must maintain at least a sixty-five average in all of their classes. Once a week, the coaches check with each athlete's teachers to see if they are passing all their classes.

Students at Mount Morris are very aware of their averages when they are playing a sport. They ask me almost every day the same question, "What is my current average"? When a student participates in a sport at Mount Morris, they turn in more homework, participate more in class, do better on tests and quizzes, and are more focused and better behaved in the classroom. However, after the sport has ended, the students fall back into their regular habits and classroom behavior.
The other time the majority of the Mount Morris students are concerned about their grades is about a week before report cards are due to come out. Students will ask me about their grades and if they are failing, they will ask me how they can raise their grade. The students ask for makeup homework, extra credit, and to retake tests they have done poorly on. I find it interesting that when the typical Mount Morris student asks me about their grade they are not concerned about their actual grade but only that their grade is passing. Anything over a seventy is satisfactory to the majority of the students at Mount Morris. I also find it interesting that when I give the students extra work to raise their grades, they normally complete it overnight and hand it back to me the next class period. This shows me that the students have the ability to get the work done when they are motivated.

The lack of motivation and low achievement of the average Mount Morris students also affects the higher achieving students at Mount Morris. The higher achieving students feel intellectually superior when they compare themselves with the many low achieving students at Mount Morris. The "I know it all already" attitudes the higher achieving students at Mount Morris have developed make them very difficult to teach. The higher achieving students are nearly as unmotivated as the lower achieving students at Mount Morris because they believe that they do not have to concentrate or do work in class because they already know the answers. When in actuality their ability is below what it should be at their level when you compare Mount Morris with other schools.
After analyzing my interview with the junior high English teacher and my personal observations of the students' motivation to learn, I began to reflect on the question of why Mount Morris has scored so low on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment test the last four years. I came to the conclusion that was not the students' low mathematical competencies nor the lack of preparation by Mount Morris' elementary school program to prepare the students for middle school that is the major reason for the low scores, but the students' lack of motivation that is the primary cause for the low scores. The students simply do not care about school or taking the assessments. I believe many of the students just go through the motions and write in any answer just to get the assessments over with.

Many times in my classroom, I have conducted a complete comprehensive review just before a test and the students' scores did not improve. On January 7th, I even went as far as to review every question and answer that was going to be on the next quiz, basically I was giving the students the answers to the quiz. To my amazement, the students' quiz scores still did not noticeably improve. This showed me no matter how much and how well I prepare my students for New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment, it is most likely not going to effect the scores. In my classroom on January 7th, I had basically given the students the answers to an important quiz and the majority of the students failed the quiz. How could I ever expect to prepare these students and expect these students to be successful on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment?
During my interview with the junior high English teacher on February 12th, she talked about how she motivated the students to do well on the New York State eighth-grade ELA English test by waiving their midterm if they scored well on the assessment. Therefore, I believe that a key for Mount Morris to raise their scores on the New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment rests on finding someway or something to motivate the students, not on keeping the students quiet in their seats and taking detailed notes like administration believed.

**MOTIVATING THE STUDENTS**

I have found that motivating students at Mount Morris is not easy. Experienced teachers might be able to control the students and their classrooms by keeping the students quiet and in their seats, but I believe that any one teacher at Mount Morris cannot successfully motivate the students for any length of time. The task of motivating students must be approached and accomplished school wide. The junior high science teacher and myself have both unsuccessfully tried homework passes. They worked for a short period of time and became ineffective. I have tried using candy, extra computer time, and bonus points in my classroom to motivate students. All have worked in some regard for a short period of time, but none has been the long-range answer.

Where is the student's motivation to do well in school going to come from? If the students are not intrinsically motivated, the motivation to succeed in school must be provided by the school. It is my experience that the majority of the students at Mount Morris are not intrinsically motivated to do well in school.
It is also my experience at Mount Morris that the majority of my students' parents show little interest in school activities. At the last parent teacher open house on March 12th, only four parents showed up to meet me and talk about their child. They were the parents of my four highest average students. It is important to remember that the majority of the parents of the students are also children of generational poverty. It is the cycle of generational poverty. The parents of the students at Mount Morris for the most part have resigned themselves to the fact that their child is going to follow in their footsteps.

From my research and observations, I believe the motivation for children of generational poverty to succeed in school must be provided by the school as a whole, not from individual teachers. I believe to successfully motivate the students at Mount Morris it must take a total team effort from the school board, the administration, the parents, the students, and the staff as well as a major change in the school philosophy and polices at Mount Morris. However, many of the resources and technologies are already in place to make the "transition to success".
I HAVE COME A LONG WAY AS A TEACHER ... BUT...

I have grown considerably both personally and professionally since I started my first year of teaching last September at Mount Morris. I have learned how to more effectively control my classroom and discipline students. I have developed a better understanding of children of generational poverty and I have survived a year of scrutiny from the administration at Mount Morris. However, I believe that I have reached a point of stagnation along with many other veteran teachers at Mount Morris. We know how to write effective lesson plans and know how to keep our classes under control, but we are all faced with the students’ lack of motivation to learn and behave in our classrooms.

I believe only way to motivate the students at Mount Morris is to make a major change in Mount Morris school philosophy and policies. However, for these new philosophies and school polices to effectively motivate the students, they must be supported completely by the school board, the parents, the administration, the faculty, and the students.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL

A successful school must have a clear sense of its goals, the characteristics of its population, a vision of the school it seeks to become, and an understanding of the contributions that the various stakeholders in school must make in order to transform the school goals into reality.

A school with a large population of children of generational poverty must provide strong, consistent consequences for students who break the rules or
violate school policy. However, these strong consequences must be balanced by creative and meaningful rewards and privileges in order to motivate the students to succeed in school. Students must understand when they do "right" they will be rewarded and when they do "wrong" they will suffer pre-determined consequences. The privileges and consequences must be clearly stated and understood by all the students. Students must be taught that they alone are accountable for their actions and that they must accept responsibility for their learning, decisions, and actions.

**HOW WOULD I CHANGE MOUNT MORRIS**

How do I feel Mount Morris could be structured differently to provide external motivation to the students? I believe Mount Morris needs to structure their educational goals, philosophy, and polices after Adlai Stevenson High School. Adlai Stevenson is an award winning school that services a large population of children of generational poverty by stressing structure and student choice, the most effective anchors for discipline and control. The restructuring at Mount Morris would need the full backing and support of the superintendent, the board of education, the administration, the parents, the students, and the faculty. For the most part, Mount Morris has the staff, the resources, the facilities, and the technology in place to make these changes.
HOW I WOULD STRUCTURE THE STUDENTS DAY

A middle school students' school day should be highly structured in order to prepare and ease their transition into high school. Therefore, seventh grade students should be in class or study hall the entire day with the exception of a twenty-five minute lunch period. My theory on using privileges and consequences to create external motivation to students to succeed in school is based on the assumption that as students near their senior year they are entering a time in their life when they must begin to assume more responsibility for their decisions. If students are given more responsibility to determine how they will use their lunch hours and free periods, they will take more ownership in their decisions, behavior, and actions. However, the students' freedom to make these decisions is a privilege that may be taken away if they fail to observe the rules of the school. If students violate the rules of the school, students will be subject to predetermined consequences. Repeated or extreme breakage of the rules by a student will result in administration determining the consequence based on the severity and frequency of the offense.

PRIVILEGES

As students advance from seventh grade to twelfth grade, students may receive certain privileges. However, students may forfeit these privileges and be issued consequences if they do not comply with school rules.

Students start seventh grade at privilege level 0 and stay at the level for the entire year. To become eligible for privileges at the beginning of eighth grade, seventh grade students must meet the following criteria. They must not have
received a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out-of-school suspension in the months of April, May, and June. Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible to be promoted to the next level. If a seventh grade student has met all the criteria they will be honored at an award ceremony at the end of the year and promoted to level 1 privileges.

Students at level 0 have twenty-five minutes to eat lunch and then must spend the other twenty-five minutes of the period in a structured study hall. Students reaching level 1 are allowed to stay in the lunchroom for the entire fifty minutes. Of course, if a student at privilege level 1 wants to study or do homework, they can still choose to go a study hall. They just have to notify administration.

A student's level is based solely on their behavior. Therefore, a student constantly breaking the rules may stay on level 0 though out middle and high school. Just because a student graduates to the next grade that does not change their level, a student's level is based on behavior and compliance.

The highest privilege level a student in eighth grade can reach is level 1. Eighth grade students at level 1 who do not receive a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out of school suspension in the months of April, May, and June will be promoted to level 2 in an awards ceremony when they enter ninth grade. Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible to be promoted to the next level.

During the school year, eighth grade students at level 0 can be promoted to level 1 by not receiving a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension,
or an out-of-school suspension for two consecutive months. Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible to be promoted to any level.

The promotion system works the same way at the end of grades nine, ten, and eleven. Students who do not receive a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out-of-school suspension in the months of April, May, and June will be promoted to the next level in an awards ceremony. Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible for promotion to the next level.

The highest level a ninth grade student can reach is level 2. The highest level a tenth grade student can reach is level 3. The highest level an eleventh grade student can reach is level 4. The highest level a twelfth grade student can reach is level 5. Level 5 is the highest level a student can obtain. A student not at their highest level can be promoted one level by not receiving a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out-of-school suspension for two consecutive months. Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible to be promoted to any level. An award ceremony is held at the end of year to honor those students being promoted to new privilege levels.

**WHAT ARE THE PRIVILEGES AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS**

Students at level 0 have no privileges. Their day is very structured and consists only of classes and study halls. Students at level 1 have the privilege of the extended lunch period. Students at level 2 have the privilege of going to the computer lab, library, or resource room instead of the extended lunch period. Students at level 3 have all the privileges of students at level 2 plus the privilege of going to the gymnasium where students can shoot baskets or lift weights.
during the extended lunch period. Students at level 4 have all the privileges of students at level 3 plus access to the student lounge during their free periods. The student lounge has comfortable chairs and sofas, vending machines that include soda and snacks, televisions, computers, and music. Students at level 5 have all the privileges of students at level 4 plus the privilege of having a parking permit to drive to school. Students at level 5 do not need passes to move during their free time. They can move from the computer lab to the cafeteria to the student lounge without having a pass.

**DETENTION**

A normal school day runs from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Detention runs every school day from 3:05 PM to 4:00 PM with a late bus run at 4:00 PM to take the students home. The sole activity permitted during detention is silent, individual study.

**SATURDAY SCHOOL**

A student may be assigned to Saturday school as a consequence. Saturday school is held from 8:00 AM to 12:00 M each Saturday. The Saturday school allows students the opportunity to fulfill disciplinary consequences without missing valuable classroom time. The sole activity allowed at Saturday school is silent, individual study.
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

The length of in-school suspension may vary from one period to a full school day. The sole activity allowed during in-school suspension is silent, individual study. Students will be allowed to leave the in-school suspension room only during specified restroom breaks. Students will be escorted at the same time to the cafeteria and must bring their lunch back to the in-school suspension classroom. Students must complete all assigned course work by the end of the school day or face more consequences. Students are not allowed to participate in any athletic practice session, contest, or any co-curricular practice, rehearsal, or performance on the day of an in-school suspension.

LOSS OF PRIVILEGES

If a student losses their privileges as a consequence for breaking a rule or regulation, they are back at level 0. After one month, administration will review the student’s record and determine if the student can return to his previous level of privileges or have to earn their level back from level 0.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

When a student receives an out-of-school suspension, they may not be on campus or attend any school function for any reasons.

EXPULSION

In the case of repeated or extreme behavior, administration may recommend to the Board of Education that expulsion proceedings be initiated against a student.
CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDY HALLS

All students have an assigned seat in study hall. They are expected to be in that seat when the bell rings to begin class. Talking or working together in study hall is not allowed. Students in study hall must be engaged in a constructive activity at all times. Restroom and locker passes will be issued in emergency cases only.

The consequence for the first incident of misbehavior in a study hall is one detention. The consequences for the second incident of misbehavior in a study hall are two detentions, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the third incident of misbehavior in a study hall are three days of detention, one day of in-school suspension, two days of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the fourth and fifth incident of misbehavior in a study hall are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR IN APPROPRIATE, LANGUAGE, GESTURES, OR CLOTHING

Obscene language, gestures, and clothing are prohibited on school grounds. The consequences for a first incident are two detentions. The consequences for a second incident are one day of in-school suspension, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a third incident are three days of in-school suspension, three days of Saturday school, and a loss
of privileges. The consequences for a fourth and fifth incident are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR BEING TARDY**

In order to maximize instruction time, students are expected to arrive at all classes, detentions, and study halls before the bell rings. If a student arrives at class less than five minutes after the bell, it will be considered a tardy. If a student arrives at class five or more minutes after the bell, it will be considered an unauthorized absence or skipping a class. Tardies are accumulated within ten-week semesters. Tardies do not accumulate from semester to semester or year to year. The consequence for one tardy to the same class during a ten-week semester is a verbal warning to the student. The consequence for two tardies to the same class during a ten-week semester is one detention. The consequence for three tardies to the same class during a ten-week semester is two detentions, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for four tardies to the same class during a ten-week semester are one day of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for five days of tardies to the same class determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or the student being removed from the class, given a failing grade, and have to spend the rest of the year during that class at in-school suspension.
CONSEQUENCES FOR CLASSROOM DISRUPTIONS

Student behavior in the classroom that interferes with instruction is unacceptable. The severity of the consequences will depend on the extent of the disruption. The consequence for the first incident of classroom disruption is two detentions. The consequences for the second incident of classroom disruption are two days of in-school suspension, one day of Saturday school, and loss of privileges. The consequences for the third incident of classroom disruption are five days of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a fourth and fifth classroom disruption is handled by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or the student being removed from the class, given a failing grade, and have to spend the rest of the year during that class at in school suspension.

CONSEQUENCES FOR SKIPPING CLASSES

Students are required to attend all classes unless their absence is authorized. The consequence for the first incident of skipping a class is two detentions. The consequences for a second incident of skipping a class are one day of in-school suspension, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privilege. The consequences for a third incident of skipping classes are two days of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a fourth incident of skipping classes are three days of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The
consequences for skipping five classes are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parents or guardian, or the student being removed from the class, given a failing grade, and have to spend the rest of the year during that class at in school suspension.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INSUBORDINATION AND DISRESPECT TO FACULTY MEMBER

Students are expected to respond promptly and without argument to the directions of faculty members and to act respectfully to faculty members at all times. The consequence for the first incident of insubordination or disrespect to a faculty member is two days of in-school suspension, two days of detention, two days of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences of a second incident of insubordination or disrespect to a faculty member is five days of in-school suspension, five days of detention, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences of a third, fourth, and fifth incident of insubordination or disrespect to a faculty member is handled by administration and will include a conference with parents or guardian, out-of-school suspension, a permanent loss of privileges, and possible expulsion from school. Gross insubordination and disrespect to a faculty member with result in at least a three-day out-of-school suspension and possible expulsion from school.
CONSEQUENCES FOR NOT HAVING A PASS IN THE HALLWAY OR BEING IN AN UNSUPERVISED AREA WITHOUT PERMISSION

In order to ensure that there are no interruptions or distractions during instruction time, students may not be in the hallways during class time without a pass from a staff member. The consequence for the first incident is one detention. The consequences for the second incident are two detentions, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the third incident are two days of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the fourth and fifth incident are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN THE LIBRARY, THE STUDENT LOUNGE, AND CAFETERIA

Students are to use the library for independent, quiet study and research. The cafeteria and student lounge are the only areas on the school grounds that students are allowed to eat and drink. Inappropriate behavior in the library, cafeteria, or the student lounge will result in consequences. The consequence for the first incident is one detention. The consequences for the second incident are three detentions, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the third incident are two days of in-school suspension, two days of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the fourth and fifth incident are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of
privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR GENERAL MISBEHAVIORS

Students are expected to walk through the hallways and not loiter in the hallways, washrooms, music area, gymnasium, walkways, or main foyer. Students are expected to help maintain a clean and sanitary school. Therefore, students are expected to use the trashcans and not litter. Cell phones, pagers, laptop computers, cassette players, compact disc players, and game boys are prohibited on school grounds during instruction time. There will be no prolonged displays of affection on school grounds. Gambling of any type is prohibited on school grounds. The consequence for the first general incident is one detention. The consequences for the second general incident are three detentions, one day of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the third general incident are two days of in-school suspension, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the fourth and fifth general incident are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.
CONSEQUENCES FOR DISHONESTY

Students are expected to be honest. Dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. The consequences for a first incident of a student cheating or plagiarizing are a zero on the assignment, one-day in-school suspension, one day of Saturday school, a loss of privileges. The consequences for a second incident of a student cheating or plagiarizing are a zero on the assignment, two days of in-school suspension, a month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a third, fourth, and fifth incident of cheating or plagiarizing are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or the student being removed from the class, given a failing grade and have to spend the rest of the year during that class at in school suspension.

CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING, HAZING OR INTIMIDATION

Every student had the right to attend school free from harassment, threats, hazing, and fear. The consequences for a first incident of bullying, hazing, or intimidating another student will result in a one day in-school suspension, two days of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a second incident are two days of in-school suspension, a month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a third, fourth, and fifth incident of bullying, hazing, or intimidating another student are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or
guardian, or expulsion from the school. Students witnessing humiliation or harassment of another student and failing to report it to faculty or administration will face the consequence of loss of privileges.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR OBSCENE OR LIBELOUS MATERIALS**

Materials that are obscene or libelous are prohibited on school grounds. This includes pornography on the computer or Internet. The consequences for the first incident are a meeting with parents or guardian, a five-day out-of-school suspension, and loss of privileges. The consequences for second incident are determined by the administration and may include out-of-school suspension, a conference with the parent or guardian, a permanent loss of privileges, or expulsion from school.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR FIGHTING**

Fighting on school property is prohibited. Disputes between members of the school community are normally resolved through proper channels. Pushing, shoving, and wrestling will be considered fighting regardless of the intent. If a student is involved in a fight, charges of assault or battery may be charged against them. The consequences for incidents of fighting are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a conference with parent or guardian, a permanent loss of privileges, or expulsion from school.
CONSEQUENCES OF DANGEROUS CONDUCT

Any action that endangers the safety and well-being of students or faculty will not be tolerated. Acts of dangerous conduct include sounding a false fire alarm, possession of a weapon, possession of a dangerous material, negotiating to sell and distribute illegal or controlled substances, and causing physical harm to a student or faculty member. The consequences of incidents of dangerous conduct are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or expulsion from school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR POSSESSION OF TOBACCO

Possession of tobacco by students in any form on school property is prohibited. Tobacco includes cigarettes, cigars, or chewing tobacco. The consequences for the first incident of possessing tobacco are an automatic three-day in-school suspension, a conference with parents or guardian, one month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for the second incident of possessing tobacco are an automatic five-day in-school suspension, a conference with parents or guardian, a month of Saturday school, and a loss of privileges. The consequences for a third, fourth, and fifth incident of possessing tobacco are determined by administration and may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or possible expulsion from school.
CONSEQUENCES OF ALCOHOL, ILLEGAL DRUGS, OR PARAPHERNALIA

Students possessing, selling, distributing, or under the influence of illegal drugs are subject to school consequences as well as subject to arrest. Illegal drugs include alcohol, controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia. There is a no tolerance policy on possession of illegal drugs. The consequences of the first incident of possessing illegal drugs are determined by the administration. The consequences will include a conference with parents or guardian, an out-of-school suspension, permanent loss of privileges, and possible expulsion from school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VANDALISM AND THEFT

Vandalism, theft, and destruction of school property will be prosecuted with local authorities. Losses of less than three hundred dollars are considered a misdemeanor. Losses of more than three hundred dollars are considered felonies. There is a no tolerance policy on vandalism and theft. The consequences will depend on the extent of the vandalism and theft and will be determined by the administration. These consequences may include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, Saturday school, permanent loss of privileges, a permanent loss of privileges, a conference with parent or guardian, or expulsion from school.
Mount Morris presently has computers in every classroom. Teachers at Mount Morris use a computer program named Classroom XP for student record keeping and to take period attendance. At the beginning of a period, a grid appears with pictures of the students in that class on the screen. Teachers at Mount Morris are required to take period attendance on the grid. The pictures of the students can be moved on the grid to create a seating chart. When you click on a student's picture, a world of information becomes available about the student. The information available includes the student's address, phone number, parent of guardian and their phone numbers, the student's last report card, the student's schedule, if the student has a 405 plan, and any IEPs the student may have.

I would upgrade Classroom XP to include a student's level under the student's picture on the seating chart grid. A teacher could then simply scan the screen and know what a student's current level is at any particular moment. If a student has lost his or her privileges, it will be noted under the student's picture on the grid.

I would also upgrade Classroom XP so that teachers can write referrals through the computer. That way an administrator can retrieve the referrals electronically and deal with the referral and the student immediately.

To be truly effective, Classroom XP must be monitored and updated at all times. If a student is given consequence or loses their privileges, administration must immediately report it to the system administrator who in turn updates
Classroom XP. That way in few moments after the administration's decision, all faculty and staff are able to check Classroom XP and see a student's current privilege level and any consequences a student may have. Classroom XP would effectively solve the problem of keeping track of study hall, detention, and Saturday school attendance. As students lose privileges and students gain privileges, the make up of study hall, detention, and Saturday school will be different each day and period. Classroom XP allows the teacher to simply look at the monitor, see who should be in detention that day, and take attendance on the grid. Classroom XP takes the guessing out of where a student should be and who should be in what classroom.

The other piece of technology that is presently in place at Mount Morris is a schedule program available on palm pilots named Schedule Find. Every teacher at Mount Morris is given a palm pilot. Schedule Find interfaces with Classroom XP and tracks every student in the school. If a teacher encounters a student in the hall without a pass, they can simply take out their palm pilot and every student's schedule is available through Schedule Find. By simply using their palm pilot, a teacher will know where every student is supposed to be at any time and the student's current privilege level.
MY PLAN FOR MOUNT MORRIS

I believe Mount Morris could closely model my privileges and consequences school program without a lot of extra resources, staff, and cost. The only physical resources Mount Morris would need add to their school is a lounge area for the students and two large rooms with individual desks and computer capability to use for in-school suspension and detention. The only staff positions Mount Morris would need to hire are a system administrator for Classroom XP, additional staff for detention, in-school suspension, Saturday school, and possibly an administrator to handle the electronic referrals. An added cost would be the upgrade to Classroom XP.

If Mount Morris adopted my plan, it would take five years to implement fully. The first step would be to review the records of the present seventh grade students. Any seventh grade student not receiving a referral, detention, or a suspension in April, May, or June would be promoted to level 1 privileges when they enter eighth grade. Seventh grade students not meeting the criteria will enter eighth grade at level 0. All students entering seventh grade will begin at level 0 privileges. It will take five years before the eighth graders reach twelfth grade and all the grades in the school will be using the same privilege and consequences plan.
CONCLUSION

Reflecting back to the beginning of the school year in September, I realize now that I needed to improve my classroom management skills, but not to the extent that the administration at Mount Morris believed. I do not believe the administration at Mount Morris truly understands what a standards-based classroom looks or sounds like. It is my belief that the administration at Mount Morris believes that if students are not in their seats, sitting at attention, head and eyes facing the board, and taking notes when the class begins that the students are not learning and that the teacher does not have control of the classroom. However, based on my education in the GMST program at Saint John Fisher College and Barbara Benson's snapshot of a standards-based classroom, it is obvious that such is not always the case.

The large population at Mount Morris of children of generational poverty proved especially challenging to me in the classroom. However, with the help of the assistant principal, my mentor, the junior high team, my fiancé, my advisor at Saint John Fisher, and this thesis, I turned weakness of mine into a strength. I believe I have grown a great deal as a teacher and an educator. I have moved from a position in October where I believed I was going to be fired at any minute to being told in March by the union president and the junior-high team leader that the superintendent was satisfied by my work and would like me to return to teach at Mount Morris next year.

In my research, I closely followed Barbara Benson’s steps to successfully create a standards-based classroom. As a result, I was successful in gaining
control of my classroom, but I did not witness a noticeable difference in student achievement and understanding. I believe the main reason that I was unable to successfully engage the students is that the students are just not motivated to do well in school. That is what is missing in Barbara Benson’s plan to create a standards-based classroom. Barbara Benson does not take into account students, lack of intrinsic motivation and the desire to succeed in school.

Both Mount Morris Central School District and the Rochester City School District have a large percentage of its student population that are children of generational poverty. However, based on observations through my teaching experience, I believe that there are two kinds of generational poverty, urban and rural.

The major difference between urban and rural poverty is opportunity. The majority of the population at Mount Morris is impoverished both economically and culturally. The majority of the adult population at Mount Morris works at either the salt mine, the state prison, or the canning factory. The majority of the population whom have children attending Mount Morris School live in one of two trailer parks in town. The center of entertainment at Mount Morris is the bowling center. The closest movie theatre is in Geneseo over twenty miles away. Opportunities for students interested in a part-time job are extremely limited in Mount Morris. Their choices are McDonalds, Rite Aid, or the Big M. A noticeable difference when compared to the city of Rochester, where adults and students have a much greater chance to get a job and to learn how to work and be successful in the real world.
Students at Mount Morris Central School do not have the same opportunities as the students at the Rochester City School District both scholastically or athletically. The Rochester School District has enrichment programs for students sponsored by large businesses such as Xerox, that fund projects for students. The Rochester School District offers a complete sports package. Students can choose to play football, play basketball, play baseball, wrestle, play volleyball, bowl, etc for their school. Many students attending Rochester City Schools earn scholarships not only based on their scholastic achievement, but also on their athletic ability as well.

Students attending Mount Morris School district have few of those opportunities. The male team sports presently at Mount Morris are swimming, baseball, basketball, soccer, and track. The female team sports presently at Mount Morris are soccer, swimming, basketball, and track. What if Jim Kelly, the hall of game quarterback from the Buffalo Bills had gone to school at Mount Morris? Mount Morris does not have a football team. Jim Kelly received a full scholarship to Miami University based on his ability to play quarterback. If Jim Kelly had been born and raised in Mount Morris, would he be working as prison guard now because he did not have the opportunity to play football in high school?

Children of urban generational poverty often use sports as an opportunity to go to college and become a success in life. My students at Jefferson Middle School would sit with me on a Monday after a Buffalo Bills game and talk about how good they were at football and someday how I would be watching them in
National Football League. They shared their hopes and dreams with me. In my seven months at Mount Morris, I have heard little from students about their hopes and dreams.

What do the children of rural generational poverty have to hope and dream about? They have to fight with about two hundred students for the few part-time jobs there are in Mount Morris. The only entertainment in town is the Bowling Center. The students in the urban Rochester schools often wear trendy cloths that come from the mall stores like Abercrombie and Fitch. Most students at Mount Morris have never been to a mall. Students at Mount Morris get excited when they get to go to Wal-Mart in Geneseo. I have heard students at Mount Morris talking about planning a big Friday night at Wal-Mart in Geneseo where they would eat at the snack bar, browse in the store, and see a movie.

My observation is that children of rural generational poverty do not see a way out of Mount Morris-- even in their dreams as evidenced by the fact that not one of the students mentioned college as a goal. Recently, one of my students told me that someday she would like to become a teacher and be the first person in her family to go to college. However, she told me it would never happen because her family could not afford to send her to college and she was not smart enough to earn a scholarship.

I believe many students at Mount Morris would like to further their education and attend college, but they do not see a way to make that dream a reality. They do not see financially how it could happen. Mount Morris does not offer the types of sports where a student can earn full scholarships to college.
That is one reason the armed forces is a popular choice for Mount Morris students when they graduate. That is a way for them get out of Mount Morris and receive education, training, and respect while receiving a paycheck. The armed forces does not care if you are a child of wealth, middle class, or generational poverty-- they treat every soldier the same way and offers them the same opportunities and pay.

It is my belief that many of the students at Mount Morris would like to attend college and are unable visualize how it is possible because of the expense of college. I believe to mask their disappointment; they act as if attending college is no big deal to them and express the attitude, why do I need college anyway? Unfortunately, this attitude trickles down into the classroom. Grades become less and less important because the students do not visualize themselves going to college; they just need grades good enough to pass. The students begin to think of school as more social than scholastic. Who is going out with whom and who bowled a 200 game last night is more important that their score on the last mathematics test.

I have concluded through my observations and research that the reason for the low student achievement at Mount Morris is the lack of intrinsic motivation within the students. Therefore I ask the question, “How can the students of rural generational poverty be intrinsically motivated in a classroom if they are not motivated in life?” I have come to the realization that I have reached a point where I can go no further in my classroom at Mount Morris. I believe that I am at the same point as many of the veteran teachers at Mount Morris. I
am able to control the students in my classroom and present interesting and relevant lessons, but I am unable to individually motivate the students to care about their education and their future. I do not see any hope to get past this point without changes in Mount Morris philosophy and policies that would provide external motivation to the students to succeed and behave in school.

It is my belief that the best solution to provide external motivation for the students at Mount Morris is a school-wide cultural transformation in educational philosophy and polices. I believe this can be done best by modeling the privileges-and-consequences philosophy of Adlai Stevenson High School that stresses structure, rewards, consequences, and student choice. For a school to be successful, strong incentives must be balanced by strong consequences. I believe that you cannot have one without the other. Discipline issues must be dealt with quickly and consistently. Student motivation and incentive comes from students seeing their friends and classmates who have earned privileges shooting baskets and freely walking around school while they, the censured, have to sit in structured study halls or in-school detention doing extra work.

Many of the resources and technology are already in place at Mount Morris for my plan to become a reality. The major hurdles are the change in the school’s philosophy and policies along with a total support of the school board, the administration, the parents, the students, and the staff. Mount Morris’ scores on the last three eighth-grade New York State Mathematics assessments prove that changes need to be made before New York State intervenes and imposes state-mandated changes. The current philosophies and polices are not working.
Many of the students' parents are also children of rural generational poverty and have the same expectations and experiences as their children -- completing the cycle of generational poverty. Therefore, the school must assume a more explicit parenting role and teach the students what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Appropriate behavior will be rewarded, while unacceptable behavior will be punished.

My recommendation for future research on my thesis topic would center on other ways to provide external motivation for students who lack the intrinsic motivation, the parental support, or socio-economic status and mobility to succeed in school.

To conclude my thesis, I revisit my topic: "Creating a standards-based classroom with low achieving students: teacher and student transformation". Can it be done? The answer is yes. However, this research suggests that rural schools consisting of a large population of students born to generational poverty must provide the external motivation for students to succeed so that a school-wide culture of hope and success replaces the current culture of disinterest and failure.
APPENDIX A (LESSON PLANS)

LESSON PLAN FOR FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION WITH PRINCIPAL

OBSERVATION: Wednesday October 16, 2002

CLASS: 8th grade mathematics / section 8 - 2

TIME: 80 minutes

UNIT: Patterns in Geometry

PREVIOUS DAY: Test on inscribed and central angles, parts of a circle, supplementary and complimentary angles, vertical and adjacent angles.

TODAY'S LESSON: Classifying polygons by sides, regular polygons, formula to calculate sum of interior angles of a polygon, classifying triangles by sides and angles, classifying quadrilaterals, properties of squares, rectangles, parallelograms, rhombuses, trapezoids, kites, tessellations.

MATERIALS NEEDED: In Class Worksheet/ Worksheets 2-6 and 2-7 / Overhead

STANDARDS: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 6.5, and 6.6.

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to classify polygons by the number of sides. The students will be able to distinguish between polygons and regular polygons. The students will be able to find the sum of the interior angles of any polygon. The students will be able to classify triangles by sides and angles. The students will be able to classify quadrilaterals. The students will be able to compare and distinguish between different quadrilaterals (square, rectangle, parallelogram, rhombus, trapezoid, kite). The students will be able to use tessellations to produce a short pattern.

WARM UP ACTIVITY: The student will look around the room and write down any geometric shapes they see in the room. Have the students save their results, it will be used later in class.

ACTIVITY: 1) Pass out worksheet
2) Discuss polygons, regular polygons, diagonals.
3) Fill in polygon table.
4) Introduce formula for finding the sum of the interior angles of a polygon.
5) Model the formula for triangles, quadrilaterals, and pentagons.
6) Discuss classifying triangles by sides and angles.
7) Review exercises in worksheet on triangles
8) Discuss quadrilaterals
9) Define, compare, and contrast different quadrilaterals.
10) Fill in Properties of Parallelograms table.
11) Discuss Venn diagram as it pertains to quadrilaterals.
12) Have students work individually at their desks on polygon worksheet (they may need color pencils to sketch)
13) Discuss and define tessellations. (a repeated Geometric design that covers a plane with no gaps or overlaps)
14) Model tessellations using worksheet 2 - 7

CLOSURE: Have the student go back and classify the geometric figures they saw in the room.

HOMEWORK: Worksheet 2-6

ASSESSMENT: From in class work on worksheet, classroom discourse, students’ questions.

NEXT DAY'S LESSON: Parallel lines and square roots
Polygons are many-sided figures, with sides that are line segments. Polygons are named according to the number of sides and angles they have. The most familiar polygons are the triangle, the rectangle, and the square. A regular polygon is one that has equal sides. Polygons also have diagonals, which are segments that join two vertices and are not sides.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polygons</th>
<th>no. of sides</th>
<th>no. of angles</th>
<th>no. of vertices</th>
<th>no. of diagonals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word polygon is a combination of two Greek words: "poly" means many and "gon" means angle. Along with its angles, a polygon also has sides and vertices. "Tri" means "three," so the simplest polygon is called the triangle, because it has three angles. It also has three sides and three vertices. A triangle is always coplanar, which is not true of many of the other polygons.

A regular polygon is a polygon with all angles and all sides congruent, or equal. Here are some regular polygons.

We can use a formula to find the sum of the interior angles of any polygon. In this formula, the letter n stands for the number of sides, or angles, that the polygon has.

$$\text{sum of angles} = (n - 2)180^\circ$$

Let's use the formula to find the sum of the interior angles of a triangle. Substitute 3 for n. We find that the sum is 180 degrees. This is an important fact to remember.

$$\text{sum of angles} = (n - 2)180^\circ$$
$$= (3 - 2)180^\circ = 180^\circ$$

To find the sum of the interior angles of a quadrilateral, we can use the formula again. This time, substitute 4 for n. We find that the sum of the interior angles of a quadrilateral is 360 degrees.
Just as the rectangle and the circle are very popular in the real world, so is the triangle! You'll find triangles at work bracing a structure or bridge, racking billiard balls, or holding up a shelf. Triangles are classified in two general ways: by their sides and by their angles. First, we'll classify by sides: a triangle is the simplest polygon, having three sides and three angles. The sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to 180 degrees.

A triangle with three sides of different lengths is called a scalene triangle. An isosceles triangle has just two equal sides, called legs. The third side is called the base. The angles that are opposite the equal sides are also equal. An equilateral triangle has three equal sides. In this type of triangle, the angles are also equal, so it can also be called an equiangular triangle. Each angle of an equilateral triangle must measure 60 degrees, since the sum of the interior angles of any triangle must equal 180 degrees.

Now let's classify by angles. An acute triangle has three acute angles, or three angles with a measure of less than 90 degrees. An obtuse triangle has one angle that is greater than 90 degrees. If one of the angles in a triangle is a right angle, then the triangle is called a right triangle. Notice we draw a square at vertex C to show a right angle.

You can use two labels for a triangle. For example, triangle MNO is both an acute and an isosceles triangle. Triangle PQR is an obtuse, scalene triangle.
1. Which of these types of triangles are real and which are not?
   a. acute equilateral
   b. right obtuse
   c. right equilateral

   Answer:
   a. real, because all angles of an equilateral triangle are acute.
   b. not real, because a triangle can’t have a right angle and an angle greater than 90° (it would add up to more than 180°)
   c. not real, because all three angles can’t measure 90° (it would add up to more than 180°)

2. Classify each triangle described.
   a. angles 30°, 60°, 90°
   b. angles 40°, 40°, 100°
   c. sides 15 cm, 15 cm, 15 cm

   Answer:
   a. right scalene
   b. obtuse isosceles
   c. equilateral (also acute, but all equilateral triangles are acute)

Match each angle description below with the correct classification in the list on the right by typing its letter in the box provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Angle Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. equilateral</td>
<td>angles 30°, 40°, 110°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. right scalene</td>
<td>angles 90°, 45°, 45°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. right isosceles</td>
<td>sides 2 inches, 2 inches, 2 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. obtuse isosceles</td>
<td>angles 57°, 88°, 35°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. acute scalene</td>
<td>angles 110°, 30°, 40°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. acute isosceles</td>
<td>sides 10 cm, 10 cm, 18 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. obtuse scalene</td>
<td>angles 60°, 60°, 60°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sides 3 cm, 4 cm, 5 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUADRILATERALS

A quadrilateral is a four-sided polygon with four angles. There are many kinds of quadrilaterals. The five most common types are the parallelogram, the rectangle, the square, the trapezoid, and the rhombus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Parallelogram</th>
<th>Rectangle</th>
<th>Rhombus</th>
<th>Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Opposite sides are parallel</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Opposite sides are congruent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Opposite angles are congruent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Consecutive angles are supplementary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A diagonal forms two congruent triangles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Diagonals bisect each other</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Diagonals are congruent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Diagonals are perpendicular</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A diagonal bisects two angles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. All angles are right angles</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. All sides are congruent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Venn diagram uses overlapping circles to show relationships between groups of objects. All "quadrilaterals" can be separated into three sub-groups: general quadrilaterals, parallelograms, and trapezoids.

Is a rectangle always a rhombus? No, because all four sides of a rectangle don't have to be equal. However, the sets of rectangles and rhombuses do intersect, and their intersection is the set of squares—all squares are both a rectangle and a rhombus.

We can put squares in the intersection of the two circles.

From this diagram, you can see that a square is a quadrilateral, a parallelogram, a rectangle, and a rhombus!

Is a trapezoid a parallelogram? No, because a trapezoid has only one pair of parallel sides. That is why we must show the set of trapezoids in a separate circle on the Venn diagram.

What about kites? Kites are quadrilaterals that can be parallelograms. If their two pairs of sides are equal, it becomes a rhombus, and if their angles are equal, it becomes a square.
Polygon Worksheet

On the triangle grid paper below, find the following and shade in the shape:

1. equilateral triangle
2. isosceles triangle (non-equilateral)
3. right triangle
4. scalene triangle
5. parallelogram (not a rectangle or rhombus)
6. rectangle
7. trapezoid (non-isosceles)
8. isosceles trapezoid
LESSON PLAN FOR FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION WITH SUPERINTENDENT

OBSERVATION: Tuesday January 21, 2003

CLASS: 8th grade mathematics / section 8 - 2

TIME: 85 minutes

UNIT: Review on Formulas (Area / Central Tendencies)

PREVIOUS DAY: Solving two-step inequalities

TODAY'S LESSON: Review on area of polygons (Squares, Rectangles, Parallelograms, Triangles, and Trapezoids) and measurement using a cooperative learning activity

Review of Mean, Median, Mode, and Range

Review on Box and Whisker Plot

MATERIALS NEEDED: Area Worksheet
Area Worksheet overhead
Overhead Calculator
Rulers
Calculators
Midterm Review Packets
3 x 5 Note Cards

STANDARDS: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 6.5, and 6.6.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
1. How do you calculate the area of a square, rectangle, triangle, trapezoid, and parallelogram?
2. How do you estimate the area of a polygon?
3. How do you calculate the mean, median, mode, and range of statistical data?

WARM UP ACTIVITY: 1) Solve and Graphically represent $3x + 4 > 19$.
(5 Minutes Time Limit)

2) Solve and Graphically represent $\frac{x}{2} - 3 \leq -2$.

ACTIVITY:
1) Review selected problems from homework.
2) Visual review of area using the TI-83 and the overhead projector.
3) Cooperative group activity measuring and calculating the area of polygons.
   a. Select groups by drawing names out a cup.
   b. Each group must select a recorder and a reporter.
4) Each group will record their answer for problem number 8 on the board and report their strategies for solving the problem.
5) With the data recorded from solving problem number 8 the students will calculate the mean, median, mode, and range of the statistical data.
6) The students will then create a box and whisker plot from the statistical data.

CLOSURE: Through classroom discourse discuss mean, median, mode, range, and box and whisker plots.

HOMEWORK: Midterm review packet and prepare note cards for midterm.

ASSESSMENT: From in class work on worksheet, classroom discourse, students' questions, observation of group work, student presentations of group work.

NEXT DAY'S LESSON: Review for midterm examination.
Compute the area of each figure below by using the given formulas, a metric ruler, and a calculator. Record your answers in the table below, to the nearest tenth of a centimeter. The first problem has been done for you.

### Formulas for finding area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Sample Figure</th>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Sample Figure</th>
<th>Formula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td></td>
<td>$A = \frac{1}{2}bh$</td>
<td>Parallelogram</td>
<td></td>
<td>$A = bh$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangle</td>
<td></td>
<td>$A = bh$</td>
<td>Trapezoid</td>
<td></td>
<td>$A = \frac{1}{2}h(a + b)$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Measurements</th>
<th>Formula Used</th>
<th>Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rectangle</td>
<td>$b = 3.7 \text{ cm}$  [h = 1.9 \text{ cm}]</td>
<td>$A = b \times h$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE TO A FRIEND ACTIVITY FOR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

NOTE TO A FRIEND ACTIVITY

Plan and write a note to a friend who is home sick. Your note should correctly and effectively describe how to solve a two-step equation. Your note should also include how your friend can check his answer.

The note should be:
- Accurate
- Correct
- Complete
- Logically organized
- Have correct sentence structure
- Have correct grammar
- Have correct spelling
- Free of mechanical errors
- Easy to understand
- Neat and easy to read (preferably typed)

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVE:
To demonstrate the ability to communicate mathematical procedures, concepts, and reasoning in writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>CONTENT ACCURACY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>THOROUGHNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The note is free of any math errors</td>
<td>The description is logical, accurate, well organized and very thorough as well as easy to understand</td>
<td>A minimum number of grammar, sentence structure, or spelling errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The note contains only one or two inconsequential errors All essentials skills and concepts are apparent</td>
<td>The description is mostly logically, accurate, and organized</td>
<td>A few grammar, sentence structure, and spelling errors are present in the note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A major math conceptual error is present, but much of the note is correct and shows &quot;essential&quot; understanding</td>
<td>The description is incomplete, illogical, inaccurate, and/or unorganized.</td>
<td>Many grammar, sentence structure, and spelling errors are present in the note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The assignment is not turned in</td>
<td>or is totally incomprehensive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B (DATA COLLECTION)

CLASSROOM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS - DATA COLLECTION TOOL

As a student, you have the right to interact with an instructor and fellow students in a classroom environment that is well ordered, peaceful, safe, non-threatening, and conductive to learning. It is the responsibility of each student to participate in class activities only in a way that makes a positive learning environment possible and accessible to all students. Therefore, to maintain a positive learning environment in my classroom, I have listed my expectations, requirements, and consequences for all students in my classroom.

When the bell rings to signal the beginning of class, students are expected to:

1) Have either a pen or pencil to write with.
2) Have their math notebook.
3) Have their math textbook.
4) Have their agenda.
5) Have all completed homework and assignments.
6) Bring a calculator if they have one.
7) Sharpen pencil before class starts.
8) Be in their assigned seat when the bell rings.

A violation of any of the above will result in a check on the Class Checklist.

Five checks during the week will result in mandatory math homework club.

During classroom time, students are expected to:

1) Raise their hand before speaking. Shouting out answers or talking across the room to other students is not acceptable.
2) Not talk when the teacher or another student is talking.
3) Use only appropriate language at all times in class.
4) Not talk back to a teacher in a rude or defiant manner.
5) Stay in their seat at all times unless they have permission from the teacher to leave their seats.
6) Keep their hands and feet to themselves. At no time should a student put their hands or body on another student.
7) Not be disruptive to other students around them.
8) Not throw objects of any kind in the classroom.
9) Stay on task and pay attention in class at least 85 percent of the classroom time.
10) Complete all in-class work.
11) Take notes and ask questions if they do not understand a topic.
12) Not to eat or drink in the class.
13) Not cheat on a test. An immediate zero on the test and an automatic referral.
14) Not be involved in any unsafe actions or activities.
15) Show respect at all times to both teachers and students

A first violation of any of the above will result in a verbal warning. A second violation of any of the above will result in a check on the Class Checklist.

Three checks in one class block will result in mandatory math homework club.

The student and their parent/guardian will be notified of the day and time.

Students will be responsible for their own transportation home after math homework club.

Students who do not deliver the math homework club notice to their parent/guardian, do not attend assigned math homework club, or are habitual repeaters, will be referred to the principal.

Habitual repeaters face the possibility of permanent removal from the class.
Dear Parent/Guardian,

In order to have a positive classroom environment that is conducive to learning, I have created a class checklist to be used every time math class meets. I have reviewed my classroom expectations, requirements, and possible consequences with your child. I have given your child two copies of the checklist I will be using to monitor classroom behavior. Please keep one for yourself and have your child place one in their math notebook. If your child violates the classroom rules and expectations they will have to attend math homework club after school. You will be notified by letter of the date and time of the next math homework club and why your child needs to attend math homework club. You and your child will be responsible for transportation home after the detention. I have full backing from administration and they have informed me if your child skips math homework club or is a habitual repeater that I am to refer that student to them for further action. Please review my expectations with your child and have your child return the form to me within five school days. I have been instructed by administration to report any student who does not return this form to me signed by a parent or guardian.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Mr. Perdue, Junior High School Math Teacher

STUDENT NAME: ________________________________

PARENT/ GUARDIAN ________________________________

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _______________________

BEST TIME AND NUMBER TO REACH YOU ________________

ANY COMMENTS _____________________________________
NOTIFICATION LETTER TO PARENT/GUARDIAN OF MATHEMATICS HOMEWORK CLUB

Dear Parent/Guardian, Date __________

This notice is being sent to inform you that your son/daughter ____________________ is being assigned to the math homework club for the following reasons:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The math homework club will be held in my room on __________________________ from __________________________.

Students will be responsible for their own transportation home after the homework club.

Please sign the slip below and return it to me.

Thank you,

Mr. Perdue  Junior High Math Teacher

____________________________________________________________________

I have received notification of the math homework club assigned to my son/daughter

Signature (parent/guardian) ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

I have arranged for transportation home after the math homework club or have given my son/daughter permission to walk home.

Signature (parent/guardian) ____________________________________________
## HOMEWORK REWARD COUPON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
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<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
<th>Homework Coupon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
<td>This coupon is good for one homework free night for Math class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
<td>Fill in your name, date and class that you are using this for Keep up the great work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No writing utensil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No math notebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No textbook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No homework or partially</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in seat when bell rings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not raising hand to speak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking when someone else is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking back to a teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not staying in seat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not keeping hands and feet to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruptive to other students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing objects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not on task 85 percent of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusing to complete in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not taking notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating or drinking in class w/o</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>permission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not keeping area clean /</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garbage on floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating on test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| DAILY TOTAL                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| WEEKLY TOTAL                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| FREE PASS TOTAL               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
OBSERVATION FORM FOR SECTION 8 - 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON:</th>
<th>GRADE:</th>
<th>SECTION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATE:</td>
<td>GRADE:</td>
<td>SECTION:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED - DEVELOPING - ACCOMPLISHED

1 2 3 4 5
NA - NOT APPLICABLE

**TEACHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>NA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carried out lesson plan effectively</td>
<td></td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively engaged all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paced lesson appropriately</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction)</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer</td>
<td></td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed effective discipline strategies</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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</table>

**STUDENTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked well alone</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked well with a partner or in groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were actively engaged / Stayed on task</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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</table>

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom was orderly</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities were valuable and relevant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?

How successful do you think the lesson was?

Additional comments / suggestions?
ONE THING I LEARNED IN CLASS TODAY WAS ....

ONE THING I WAS NOT SURE ABOUT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...

ONE THING I WISH WAS DIFFERENT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...
GOAL CARD - DATA COLLECTION TOOL

GOALS

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CLASS?

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE?
PART 1

Be sure to answer all questions. If you find that one particular question is giving you trouble, skip that question and go back and work on that question later.

1. Josh bought packs of baseball cards for $0.79 each and a card container for $3.98. The total cost of Josh's purchases was $7.93. Which equation can you use to determine how many packs of cards Josh bought?

   [A] $0.79 + $3.98 = $7.93
   [B] $3.98C + $0.79C = $7.93
   [C] $0.79C + $3.98 = $7.93
   [D] $7.93 - $3.98C = $0.79

   [1] ______

2. Draw a histogram for the intervals 3-5, 6-8, 9-11, and 12-14 using the following data: 13, 3, 4, 3, 9, 5, 9, 10, 4, 7, 5, 13, 6, 12, 9, 11, 9, 5, 3, 10

   [A]  
   [B]  
   [C]  
   [D]  

   [2] ______
3. The table below shows the number of games each team won last season. Choose the bar graph that best represents the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Games Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose the bar graph that best represents the data.

[A] [B] [C] [D]

4. The hourly parking fees for the local airport from 1986 through 1996 are shown on the line graph below. Using this information, predict what the hourly parking fee was for 1998.

[A] $1.37 per hour  [B] $1.50 per hour  [C] $1.25 per hour  [D] $1.00 per hour
5. The comparison line graph compares rainfall, in centimeters, in Sydney and Canberra in March 1993. Determine the day of the highest rainfall in Canberra.

![Comparison line graph]

[5] ________

6. What data are represented by the stem-and-leaf plot below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7</th>
<th>5 6 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[C] 75, 76, 77, 85, 88, 89, 95, 96  [D] 5, 6, 7, 5, 8, 9, 5, 6

[6] ________

7. Tell whether x and y have a positive correlation, a negative correlation, or no correlation.

[7] ________

8. Arrange these decimal numbers from least to greatest: 0.05, 0.04348, 0.04, 0.05238.

[A] 0.04348, 0.05, 0.04, 0.05238  [B] 0.04, 0.04348, 0.05, 0.05238  
[C] 0.04, 0.05238, 0.05, 0.04348  [D] 0.04348, 0.05238, 0.05, 0.04

[8] ________
9. Round 0.945949 to the hundredths place.  
   [A] 0.946  [B] 0.947  [C] 0.94  [D] 0.95

10. Which property is illustrated by the following statement?
   \[69.1 + (56.8 + 66.7) = (69.1 + 56.8) + 66.7\]
   [A] addition property of zero  [B] associative property of addition
   [C] distributive property of addition  [D] commutative property of addition

11. In the school fund-raising marathon, Robert walked 6.3 miles, Marie walked 4.15 miles, and Scott walked 5.1 miles. How much farther did Robert walk than Scott?
   [A] 0.95 mile  [B] 2.25 miles  [C] 1.2 miles  [D] 2.15 miles

12. Which of the following decimals represents the fraction \(\frac{5}{11}\)?  
   [A] 0.511  [B] 0.11  [C] 0.515  [D] 0.45

13. Find the missing number. \(8.4(1.5 + 2.3) = 12.6 + ?\)

14. Evaluate \(20 - a\) for \(a = 9\).  

15. Write as a variable expression: a number less 49  
   [A] \(x - 49\)  [B] 49\(x\)  [C] \(x + 49\)  [D] 49\(-x\)

16. Write the integers 9, -1, 3, -5, 11, in order from greatest to least.  

17. What is the sum of: \(-8 + (-7) + 3\)  

18. Add: \(-17 + 16\)  
19. The temperature in your town is 29°F. The radio announcer says that the temperature will drop 30 degrees. Which sum can be used to compute the predicted temperature?


20. During the day, the temperature in Nome, Alaska rose 23°. The low temperature for the day was -38°F. What was the high temperature for the day?


21. Jamie borrowed $5.00 from you, then he borrowed $3.00 a few days later. Which of the following may be used to compute Jamie's total debt?

   [A] -5 + (-3)       [B] -3 + 5       [C] 5 - 3       [D] -5 + 3

22. (+13) - (-3) =


23. Multiply: -5 · (-11)


24. Divide: 30 ÷ (-6)


25. Solve: \( \frac{y}{7} - 7 = 4 \)


26. Estimate the measure of the angle:

27. The measures of two angles of a triangle are 22° and 56°. Find the measure of the third angle.

28. A triangle which is congruent to the one shown below must have which of the following total side lengths?

   [A] 23 cm   [B] 18 cm   [C] 15 cm   [D] 28 cm

29. Identify the dotted line.  

30. Name the polygon inscribed in the circle below.


31. Which of the following rules describes the number pattern?  
   2, 8, 32, 128
   [A] Start with 4 and multiply by 2 repeatedly.  
   [B] Start with 2 and add 4 repeatedly.  
   [C] Start with 2 and add 8 repeatedly.  
   [D] Start with 2 and multiply by 4 repeatedly.
32. 22.6 is an outlier for which of the following sets of data?

[A] 2.4, 5.3, 3.5, 22.6, 1.8, 2.1, 4.6, 1.9  
[B] 13.6, 31.7, 25.8, 22.6, 18.9, 21.6, 30.5  
[C] 22.6, 21.5, 23.7, 22.6, 28.9, 22.6, 20.9  
[D] 20.5, 20.8, 21.6, 22.6, 23.7, 24.5, 25.1

33. Which set of data is represented by the box-and-whisker plot?

[A] 41, 36, 22, 35, 44, 40, 28  
[B] 41, 36, 22, 44, 44, 40, 28  
[C] 41, 36, 22, 35, 46, 40, 28  
[D] 41, 34, 22, 35, 44, 40, 28

34. What type of graph uses an x to represent a number?

[A] pictograph  
[B] line graph  
[C] line plot  
[D] stem-and-leaf-plot

35. Which of these questions is a biased question?

[A] Do you prefer yogurt or pudding for dessert?  
[B] Do you prefer to sit on the couch and watch TV or do you like to exercise and stay in shape?  
[C] What sport do you play?  
[D] What is your favorite food?

36. Which of these questions is closed-option?

[A] What is your favorite color?  
[B] How old are you?  
[C] Which do you prefer: vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry?  
[D] What career interests you?

37. Write as a power: $8 \times 8 \times 8 \times 8$  
[A] $8^{-1}$  
[B] $(5)^{5}$  
[C] $8^{6}$  
[D] $8^{5}$

38. Which is equivalent to $5^6 \times 5^7$?

[A] $25^{13}$  
[B] $25^{12}$  
[C] $5^{19}$  
[D] $5^{14}$

39. Simplify: $4(x + 1) + 5(x + 1)$  
[A] $4x + 9$  
[B] $9x + 1$  
[C] $9x + 9$  
[D] $4x + 1$
Solve:

40. \( x + 2.9 = 6.3 \)  
    \( [40] \)  

41. \( 5x - 15 = 25 \)  
    \( [41] \)  

42. \( 3x + 17 - x + 17 = -2 \)  
    \( [42] \)  

43. Simplify: \( \sqrt{144} \)  
    \( [43] \)  

44. \( \angle AED = 113^\circ \) Find the measure of \( \angle BEC \).  
    [A] 67^\circ  [B] 77^\circ  [C] 103^\circ  [D] 113^\circ  
    \( [44] \)  

45. In the diagram below, \( \angle ABC \) and \( \angle CBD \) are  
    \( [45] \)  

46. Classify the triangle with sides of length 23, 23, and 7.  
    \( [46] \)
47. Choose the correct answer to find the sum of the measures of the angles of a hexagon.

[A] $6 \times 180^\circ$  
[B] $(6 \times 180^\circ) - 2$  
[C] $6(2 \times 180^\circ)$  
[D] $(6 - 2) \times 180^\circ$

[47] ___

48. Which of the following represents a tessellation?

[A] a newspaper page  
[B] none of these answers  
[C] a checkerboard  
[D] a map of the U.S.A.

[48] ___

49. What is the approximate circumference of circle $r$? [Use $\pi = \frac{22}{7}$]

[A] 44 inches  
[B] 88 inches  
[C] 22 inches  
[D] 616 inches

[49] ___

50. Find the area of a circle with the given radius. Use $\frac{22}{7}$ for $\pi$.

$r = 21$ yd

[A] 132 yd$^2$  
[B] 346.5 yd$^2$  
[C] 1386 yd$^2$  
[D] 264 yd$^2$

[50] ___
Part 2

Be sure to **show all work** and **answer all parts** of the question.

If you find that one particular question is giving you trouble, skip that question and work on that question later.

1) Dan is bowling in a tournament at Mount Morris Bowling Center. Dan bowled 212, 210, and 223 his first 3 games. To make the finals a bowler must average 220. What is the lowest score that Dan needs to bowl in his 4th game to average 220 and make the finals? (Show all work)

```
Explain in words how you found what score Dan needed to bowl in his 4th game to average 220 in the space below?
```

2) The sum of 3 consecutive integers equals 90. What are the 3 integers? (Show all work)

```
Explain in words what strategy and steps you used to find 3 consecutive integers?
```
3) Is 63 a perfect square?

Explain in words why or why not 63 is a perfect square?

4) The scores last year on Mr. Perdue’s Mathematics midterm were:
   92, 100, 54, 78, 92, 76, 99, 89, 83, 67, 62, 90

   a) What is the mean of the midterm scores?

   b) What is the mode of the midterm scores?

   c) What is the range of the midterm scores?

   d) What is the median of the midterm scores?

   c) Explain in words how you calculated the mean of the midterm scores?
5) Angle A and angle B are complementary. In addition, angle A is supplementary to angle C. What are the measures of angle A and angle C if angle B measures 40 degrees.

a) Angle A ________ degrees

b) Explain in words how you found the measure of Angle A

c) Angle C ________ degrees

d) Explain in words how you found the measure of Angle C?

6) In the equation below, each of the variables represent a different value.

\[ C + 0 = 3 \]
\[ C + C = A \]
\[ A + C = B \]
\[ A - B = D \]

Find the value of

a) variable A ______

b) variable B ______

c) variable C ______

d) variable D ______

e) Explain in words how you found the value of variable C?
APPENDIX C (OBSERVATIONS)

FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION WITH PRINCIPAL

Teacher: Mr. Ed Perdue  
Subject: Math  
Grade: 8  
Section: 2

Date: 10/16/02  
Time: 8:12 - 9:30

LESSON OBSERVED: I observed Mr. Perdue teaching a lesson on geometric patterns. His objective for the morning's lesson included the following: 1) having students understand how to classify polygons, 2) having students understand the formulas to calculate the sum of interior angles of polygons and 3) having students understand how to classify quadrilaterals.

To start the anticipatory set Mr. Perdue asked the class to do a warm-up exercise. The students were asked to write what they knew about geometric shapes. Upon completion of the task, Ed collected the papers and then handed each student a packet of worksheets. He displayed the first page of the packet via an overhead projector. One student was asked to read aloud the first definition from the packet. When the child finished, Ed proceeded to reiterate the information and explain the meaning to the group. He then wrote notes on the overhead as the children copied. Upon completion, Ed modeled the relationships between equal sides, angles, diagonals and congruency.

Once he was assured the students understood the concepts, he had the children fill in a table indicating the characteristics of polygons. He then introduced formulas for finding the sum of interior angles. The class discussion then turned to classifying triangles by sides and angles. The children did several exercises from the worksheet for triangles. Upon completion, Ed introduced characteristics for quadrilaterals. The students were asked to define, compare and contrast different quadrilaterals. Ed did most of the modeling.

As a follow-up exercise, he started to have the children fill in the properties of parallelograms as a table from the worksheet. With about 20 minutes left of class time, Ed stopped the lesson. He told the group they would finish the exercise during the next class and then proceeded to explain the homework. He asked the children to write the assignment in their Agenda books and gave the class the balance of the period to start the work. At this juncture, I left the room.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM: We teach in a very subjective profession. It is my belief that true perfection in teaching can never be achieved. It is with that thought in mind that I make the following recommendations: 1) the immediate need is to improve student organizational abilities and 2) to make your lessons more interactive and student friendly. Right now your method of presentation is lecture and teacher explanation. The object will be to create scenarios where the children discover concepts and come to certain conclusions.

Student Organization

All students should have a three ring binder, or be provided with unit learning packets that can be placed in folders. Having binders, however, is preferable. If you construct unit packets, please include the following: 1) examples of concepts to be learned, 2) the essential elements to be mastered and space to demonstrate
knowledge. For example, the learning packet for geometric shapes should include graph paper for design purposes.

**Constructivist Interaction**

Start each lesson by posting your essential question (e.g., Understanding the classification properties of polygons and quadrilaterals). You should consistently refer to the essential question when checking for mastery.

Part of the difficulty you have been experiencing is due to a need to make the class more interactive by constructing discovery learning exercises. I would adjust your learning packets to include a space to draw, compare and contrast certain properties along with vocabulary and definitions (e.g., I have drawn a triangle on the board. Using what you observe about the sides and angles, what properties exist? Please list those properties in your packet on page 4).

When you have children read a passage aloud, allow the reader to summarize and give information. Do not do it for the child.

Create a means for a fast paced review of mastery. Perhaps using individual white boards and marker would help. This would enable you to have the students quickly replicate skills and display those skills for you to observe. (e.g., On your white board create an obtuse triangle).

The bottom line is this: you need to generate fast paced exercises that encourage discovery learning. Active hands and active minds leave little room for daydreaming and inappropriate behavior.

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** You will have to change some organizational structures and the delivery of instruction to ensure greater students success.

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:** Planning and preparation, delivery of instruction, classroom environment and professional responsibilities comprise the elements applicable to the professional competencies portion of this evaluation. As a member of the staff, it is expected that you will demonstrate strong competencies with short and long range planning. The new junior high lesson plan format should go a long way in helping teachers monitor map completion. I have reviewed your current lesson plans. They are meticulously done and show a great deal of planning on your part. Please use your weekly plans as a means to refine the curriculum map for 8th grade. In addition, please note that I have read your course descriptor that is posted on our web site. For the most part it is well written. You will need, however, to update the section on required assignments. Parents will find it helpful to know a set of tentative test dates and due dates for projects. If you have a specific project that is coming due, post the criteria for grading along with a descriptor of what is expected. You should also include a section on expectations of quality (e.g., assignments all have due dates and are expected on time. Lack of preparation will result in a lower grade point average. Assignments must follow the Quality of Assignment criteria found in the MMCS 5-8 Student Parent Handbook, etc.)

The overall classroom environment and delivery of instruction will improve by following some of the suggestions noted in the constructive criticism portion of this evaluation.

The delivery of instruction was well done. I hope you will reflect upon the recommendations mentioned. I believe by making a few adjustments, you will increase the quality, as well as the critical thinking abilities of your students.

I am looking forward to our post observation conference when we will have a chance to discuss the means by which you communicate with parents, maintain data and the future plans you have for contributing to the school improvement process. It should also be noted that I am very pleased with your willingness to gather data on the junior high effort and your willingness to help improve the math program at our school.
FIRST FORMAL OBSERVATION WITH SUPERINTENDENT

Ed Rende

End of class - suggest they wait for your permission to leave.

7:42 AM - Warm-up ends - kids stop talking.

7:43 - Handclap - they settle down quickly.

7:45 - Waking around.

We're explaining a lot - how do you know you have everyone's attention?

Are we explaining warm-up?

Turn name cards - [repeated]

[cue] on screen - quadratic equation?

What do we know about sides?

[hand] from cue - [repeated]

Why is Matt sitting by himself?
FIRST OBSERVATION BY MENTOR - 10/9/2002

OBSERVATION FORM

LESSON:  CIRCLES
DATE:  10/9/2002  GRADE:  8  SECTION:  2

IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED  DEVELOPING  ACCOMPLISHED
1  2  3  4  5
NA - NOT APPLICABLE

TEACHER
Carried out lesson plan effectively  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Actively engaged all students  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Paced lesson appropriately  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction)  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Employed effective discipline strategies  1 2 3 4 5 NA

STUDENTS
Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were respectful to the teacher and other students  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well alone  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well with a partner or in groups  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were actively engaged / Stayed on task  1 2 3 4 5 NA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS
Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Classroom was orderly  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Activities were valuable and relevant  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level  1 2 3 4 5 NA
Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained  1 2 3 4 5 NA

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?

NO - STUDENTS WERE NOT ENGAGED

How successful do you think the lesson was?

BELIEVE THE MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS RETAINED VERY LITTLE FROM THE LESSON

Additional comments / suggestions?

- NEED TO PICK UP PACE OF LESSON
- TOO MUCH DOWN TIME
OBSERVATION BY MENTOR - 1/23/2003

OBSERVATION FORM

LESSON:
DATE: 1/23/2003
GRADE:
SECTION:

IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED - DEVELOPING - ACCOMPLISHED
1  2  3  4  5
NA - NOT APPLICABLE

TEACHER
Carried out lesson plan effectively 1 2 4 5 NA
Actively engaged all students 1 2 4 5 NA
Paced lesson appropriately 1 2 4 5 NA
Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction) 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Employed effective discipline strategies 1 2 4 5 NA

STUDENTS
Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were respectful to the teacher and other students 1 2 4 5 NA
Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students 1 2 4 5 NA
Worked well alone 1 2 4 5 NA
Worked well with a partner or in groups 1 2 4 5 NA
Were actively engaged / Stayed on task 1 2 4 5 NA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS
Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant 1 2 4 5 NA
Classroom was orderly 1 2 3 4 NA
Activities were valuable and relevant 1 2 4 5 NA
Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?
YES

How successful do you think the lesson was?
Classroom behavior and engagement has improved

Additional comments / suggestions?
YOU NEED TO PICK UP THE PACE OF THE LESSON.
SOME STUDENTS WERE BORED - KEEP STUDENTS ACTIVELY ENGAGED
FINAL OBSERVATION BY MENTOR - 3/5/2003

OBSERVATION FORM

LESSON: Graphing Linear Equations in Standard Form
DATE: 3/5/2003 GRADE: 8 SECTION: LA

TEACHER
Carried out lesson plan effectively 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Actively engaged all students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Paced lesson appropriately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction) 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Employed effective discipline strategies 1 2 3 4 5 NA

STUDENTS
Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were respectful to the teacher and other students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well alone 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well with a partner or in groups 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were actively engaged / Stayed on task 1 2 3 4 5 NA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS
Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Classroom was orderly 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Activities were valuable and relevant 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?
Yes. I walked around the room and all students seemed to be "getting" the material and concepts.

How successful do you think the lesson was?
Very Successful. All students seemed engaged and on task.

Additional comments / suggestions:
Wine - Students for the most part were well behaved and on task.
FIRST OBSERVATION BY SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - 11/1/2002

OBSERVATION FORM

LESSON: [Handwritten label]  DATE: [Handwritten label]
GRADE: [Handwritten label]  SECTION: [Handwritten label]

TEACHER
Carried out lesson plan effectively 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Actively engaged all students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Paced lesson appropriately 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction) 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Employed effective discipline strategies 1 2 3 4 5 NA

STUDENTS
Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were respectful to the teacher and other students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well alone 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Worked well with a partner or in groups 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Were actively engaged / Stayed on task 1 2 3 4 5 NA

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS
Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Classroom was orderly 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Activities were valuable and relevant 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level 1 2 3 4 5 NA
Lesson / Instruction / Activities clearly explained 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?
How successful do you think the lesson was?
Additional comments / suggestions:

(Student need to be better behaved - They are disrupting the learning of other students.)
OBSERVATION BY SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - 1/23/2003

OBSERVATION FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON: Solving equations</th>
<th>DATE: 1/23/2003</th>
<th>GRADE:</th>
<th>SECTION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>ACCOMPLISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NA - NOT APPLICABLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEACHER**

- Carried out lesson plan effectively
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Actively engaged all students
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Paced lesson appropriately
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction)
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Employed effective discipline strategies
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

**STUDENTS**

- Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Were respectful to the teacher and other students
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Worked well alone
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Worked well with a partner or in groups
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Were actively engaged / Stayed on task
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

- Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Classroom was orderly
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Activities were valuable and relevant
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained
  - Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

How successful do you think the lesson was?

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Additional comments / suggestions?

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Feel comfortable with the material

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Ski slope lesson will have to be reviewed many times after student

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

Students need to be more engaged / feel more comfortable with the material

- Improvement Required: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
### OBSERVATION FORM

**LESSON:**

**DATE:**

**GRADE:**

**SECTION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>ACCOMPLISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NA - NOT APPLICABLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TEACHER

- Carried out lesson plan effectively: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Actively engaged all students: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Paced lesson appropriately: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Accounted for needs of all students (Differentiated Instruction): 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Asked open ended questions / Waiting for students to answer: 1 2 3 4 5 NA
- Employed effective discipline strategies: 1 2 3 4 5 NA

#### STUDENTS

- Were prepared for class and in seat when bell rung: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Were respectful to the teacher and other students: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Were collaborative rather than competitive with other students: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Worked well alone: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Worked well with a partner or in groups: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Were actively engaged / Stayed on task: 1 2 3 5 NA

#### GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

- Classroom was physically and emotionally pleasant: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Classroom was orderly: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Activities were valuable and relevant: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Instruction / Activity at student's cognitive level: 1 2 3 5 NA
- Lesson/Instruction / Activities clearly explained: 1 2 3 5 NA

---

Do you think the students were able to answer the essential questions at the end of the lesson?

---

How successful do you think the lesson was?

---

Additional comments / suggestions:

---

In your overall judgment of the lesson, how would you rate the student's engagement?
TICKET OUT THE DOOR

ONE THING I LEARNED IN CLASS TODAY WAS ....

how to figure out the area of the trapezoid

ONE THING I WAS NOT SURE ABOUT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...

how to figure out the area of the trapezoid

ONE THING I WISH WAS DIFFERENT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...

people were loud and noisy they should shut their mouths
TICKET OUT THE DOOR

ONE THING I LEARNED IN CLASS TODAY WAS ....
   How to solve a step equations.

ONE THING I WAS NOT SURE ABOUT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...
   The area section.

ONE THING I WISH WAS DIFFERENT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...
   The class would pay more attention.
ONE THING I LEARNED IN CLASS TODAY WAS ....

The formula to a parallelogram

ONE THING I WAS NOT SURE ABOUT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...

The word problems.

ONE THING I WISH WAS DIFFERENT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...

Nothing, it was kool.
ONE THING I LEARNED IN CLASS TODAY WAS ....
Aera and perimeter

ONE THING I WAS NOT SURE ABOUT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...
Practically everything

ONE THING I WISH WAS DIFFERENT IN CLASS TODAY WAS ...
I was hoping we could do this everyday
GOAL CARD

NAME

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE? I'm here to learn stuff.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CLASS? To pass the class.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR? To pass and go to 9th grade.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE? To live and have a good life.
GOAL CARD

NAME

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?
My name is and I'm here because we have to be.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CLASS?
My goals for this class are to do my homework and pay attention in class.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?
My goals for the year is to get a good grade in math.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE?
My goals for life are to become a pro snowboarder and make a lot of money.
GOAL CARD

NAME:

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I am here to learn math to prepare me for high school.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CLASS?
My goals for this class are to get above a 95 average.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?
To end up with the highest overall average in the grade.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE?
To become an architect. Retire in my late thirties and then move somewhere warm with my family and enjoy the rest of my life.
GOAL CARD

NAME

WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I am here cuz
my parents make me.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS CLASS?
Pass

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR?
Go to 9th grade

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR LIFE?
Get married have kids
and live a good life
Dear Atariell,

I was sorry that you were not in school today. Math is really boring without you. Today in math we learned about solving two step equations. Since I keep in touch with you a lot, Mr. Perdue asked me to debrief you on the process. Here it goes, hope I don’t mess up (you know how he is-he’ll kill me if I teach you wrong).

Here is a sample problem: 5x-13=16. The first step is to use the opposite operation for the operations there, in the order of PEMDAS backwards, or SADMEP. So what we would do in this case would be to use the opposite operation for subtraction, which would be addition, of course. And it is like a teeter-totter in the fact that whatever you do to one side you do to the other. So 5x-13=16 becomes 5x=16+13, which is simplified to 5x=29. Then you do the same with 5, the opposite operation and the teeter-totter example. In the end, x=24. Do you get it? I sure hope so, ‘cuz I am not explaining it again.

Your good friend,

Dan
Dear Brianna,

Today in math we learned about two step problems. They’re really easy to do, so you shouldn’t have any problems.

One problem was $3w + 2 = 5$. To solve this problem you must subtract 2 from both sides to get $3w = 3$. Then you must divide 3 from both sides to get $w = 1$. After you complete these steps you have answered the problem.

I have to go (chorus). See you tomorrow.

Ciao!!

Your Friend,

Hannah

ps. If you don’t understand feel free to ask.

[Image of a duck with measurements]
## ANALYSIS OF MOCK 8th GRADE NEW YORK MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT

### Table 1: Mathematics Topics Covered in the Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers and Operations</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability and Statistics</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement and Data Analysis</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Sample Questions

1. What is the solution to the equation $2x + 3 = 7$?
2. Calculate the area of a circle with radius $r$.
3. What are the angles of a triangle?

### Graph 1: Performance by Topic

- Algebra: 80%
- Geometry: 75%
- Statistics: 65%
- Numbers and Operations: 50%
- Probability and Statistics: 40%
- Measurement and Data Analysis: 30%

### Graph 2: Performance Analysis

- Students performed well in Algebra and Geometry.
- There was room for improvement in Statistics and Numbers and Operations.

---

### Pie Chart: Distribution of Topics

- Algebra: 30%
- Geometry: 25%
- Statistics: 20%
- Numbers and Operations: 15%
- Probability and Statistics: 10%
- Measurement and Data Analysis: 5%
8th Grade Midterm  PART 1

Be sure to answer all questions. If you find that one particular question is giving you trouble, skip that question and go back and work on that question later.

1. Josh bought packs of baseball cards for $0.79 each and a card container for $3.98. The total cost of Josh's purchases was $7.93. Which equation can you use to determine how many packs of cards Josh bought?

   [A] $0.79 + $3.98 = $7.93
   [B] $3.98C + $0.79C = $7.93
   [C] $0.79C + $3.98 = $7.93
   [D] $7.93 - $3.98C = $0.79

   [I] C

2. Draw a histogram for the intervals 3-5, 6-8, 9-11, and 12-14 using the following data: 13, 8, 9, 3, 6, 12, 9, 11, 9, 13, 10, 4, 7, 5, 13, 6, 12, 9, 11, 9, 5, 8, 10

   [A] [B]

   [C] [D]

   [2] D
3. The table below shows the number of games each team won last season. Choose the bar graph that best represents the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Games Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[A] [B] [C] [D]

4. The hourly parking fees for the local airport from 1986 through 1996 are shown on the line graph below. Using this information, predict what the hourly parking fee was for 1998.

[A] $1.37 per hour  [B] $1.50 per hour  [C] $1.25 per hour  [D] $1.00 per hour

[4] [C]
5. The comparison line graph compares rainfall, in centimeters, in Sydney and Canberra in March 1993. Determine the day of the highest rainfall in Canberra.

![Comparison line graph](image)


5. Determine the day of the highest rainfall in Canberra.

6. What data are represented by the stem-and-leaf plot below?

7 5 6 7
8 5 8 9
9 5 6

[C] 75, 76, 77, 85, 88, 89, 95, 96  [D] 5, 6, 7, 5, 8, 9, 5, 6

6. [C]

7. Tell whether x and y have a positive correlation, a negative correlation, or no correlation.


7. [A]

8. Arrange these decimal numbers from least to greatest: 0.05, 0.04348, 0.04, 0.05238.

[A] 0.04348, 0.05, 0.04, 0.05238  [B] 0.04, 0.04348, 0.05, 0.05238
[C] 0.04, 0.05238, 0.05, 0.04348  [D] 0.04348, 0.05238, 0.05, 0.04

8. [A]
9. Round 0.945949 to the hundredths place.
   [A] 0.946  [B] 0.947  [C] 0.94  [D] 0.95
   [9] 0

10. Which property is illustrated by the following statement?
    \[ 69.1 + (56.8 + 66.7) = (69.1 + 56.8) + 66.7 \]
    [A] addition property of zero  [B] associative property of addition
    [C] distributive property of addition  [D] commutative property of addition
   [10] A

11. In the school fund-raising marathon, Robert walked 6.3 miles. Marie walked 4.15 miles and Scott walked 6.1 miles. How much further did Robert walk than Scott?
    [A] 0.95 mile  [B] 2.25 miles  [C] 1.2 miles  [D] 2.15 miles

12. Which of the following decimals represents the fraction \( \frac{5}{11} \)?
    [A] 0.511  [B] 0.11  [C] 0.515  [D] 0.45
   [12] D

13. Find the missing number. \( 8.4(1.5 + 2.3) = 12.6 + ? \)
   [13] D

14. Evaluate \( 20 - a \) for \( a = 9 \).
   [14] B

15. Write as a variable expression: a number less 49
    [A] \( x - 49 \)  [B] 49x  [C] \( x + 49 \)  [D] \( 49 - x \)
   [15] A

16. Write the integers 9, -1, 3, -5, 11, in order from greatest to least.
   [16] C

17. What is the sum of: \( |-8| + |-7| + 3 \)
   [17] C

18. Add: \(-17 + 16\)
   [18] B
19. The temperature in your town is 29°F. The radio announcer says that the temperature will drop 30 degrees. Which sum can be used to compute the predicted temperature?


20. During the day, the temperature in Nome, Alaska rose 23°. The low temperature for the day was -38°F. What was the high temperature for the day?


21. Jamie borrowed $5.00 from you, then he borrowed $3.00 a few days later. Which of the following may be used to compute Jamie's total debt?

[A] -5 + (-3)  [B] -3 + 5  [C] 5 - 3  [D] -5 + 3

22. (+13) - (-3) =  


23. Multiply: -5 \cdot (-11)  


24. Divide: 30 \div (-6)  


25. Solve: \frac{y}{7} - 7 = 4  


26. Estimate the measure of the angle:  

27. The measures of two angles of a triangle are 22° and 56°. Find the measure of the third angle.
   [27] 6

28. A triangle which is congruent to the one shown below must have which of the following total side lengths?

```
 6 cm  8 cm
 A     C
 9 cm
```
   [A] 23 cm  [B] 18 cm  [C] 15 cm  [D] 28 cm
   [28] A

29. Identify the dotted line.  

30. Name the polygon inscribed in the circle below.

```
      \ /
     /  |
    /___|
```
   [30] A

31. Which of the following rules describes the number pattern?
2, 8, 32, 128
   [A] Start with 4 and multiply by 2 repeatedly.
   [B] Start with 2 and add 4 repeatedly.
   [C] Start with 2 and add 8 repeatedly.
   [D] Start with 2 and multiply by 4 repeatedly.
   [31] D
32. 22.6 is an outlier for which of the following sets of data?
   [A] 2.4, 5.3, 3.5, 22.6, 1.8, 2.1, 4.6, 1.9
   [B] 13.6, 31.7, 25.8, 22.6, 18.9, 21.6, 30.5
   [C] 22.6, 21.5, 23.7, 22.6, 28.9, 22.6, 20.9
   [D] 20.5, 20.8, 21.6, 22.6, 23.7, 24.5, 25.1
   [32] A

33. Which set of data is represented by the box-and-whisker plot?
   [A] 41, 36, 22, 35, 44, 40, 28
   [B] 41, 36, 22, 27, 44, 40, 28
   [C] 41, 36, 22, 35, 46, 40, 28
   [D] 41, 34, 22, 35, 44, 40, 28
   [33] A

34. What type of graph uses an \( x \) to represent a number?
   [A] pictograph
   [B] line graph
   [C] line plot
   [D] stem-and-leaf-plot
   [34] C

35. Which of these questions is a biased question?
   [A] Do you prefer yogurt or pudding for dessert?
   [B] Do you prefer to sit on the couch and watch TV or do you like to exercise and stay in shape?
   [C] What sport do you play?
   [D] What is your favorite food?
   [35] D

36. Which of these questions is closed-option?
   [A] What is your favorite color?
   [B] How old are you?
   [C] Which do you prefer: vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry?
   [D] What career interests you?
   [36] C

37. Write as a power: \( 8 \times 8 \times 8 \times 8 \times 8 \)
   [A] \( 8^{-5} \)
   [B] \( (5)^4 \)
   [C] \( 8^5 \)
   [D] \( 8^6 \)
   [37] B

38. Which is equivalent to \( 5^6 \times 5^2 \)?
   [A] \( 25^{12} \)
   [B] \( 25^{14} \)
   [C] \( 5^{13} \)
   [D] \( 5^{11} \)
   [38] C

39. Simplify: \( 4(x + 1) + 5(x + 1) \)
   [A] \( 4x + 9 \)
   [B] \( 9x + 1 \)
   [C] \( 9x + 9 \)
   [D] \( 4x + 1 \)
   [39] A
NCLB&STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOMS 203

Solve:

40. \[ x + 2.9 = 6.3 \]  \hspace{1em} [A] 3.4 \hspace{1em} [B] -3.4 \hspace{1em} [C] 9.2 \hspace{1em} [D] 18.27 \hspace{1em} [40] \underline{A}

41. \[ 5x - 15 = 25 \]  \hspace{1em} [A] 8 \hspace{1em} [B] 2 \hspace{1em} [C] 3 \hspace{1em} [D] -13 \hspace{1em} [41] \underline{X}

42. \[ 3x + 17 - x + 17 = -2 \]  \hspace{1em} [A] 18 \hspace{1em} [B] 16 \hspace{1em} [C] -16 \hspace{1em} [D] -18 \hspace{1em} [42] \underline{X}

43. Simplify: \( \sqrt{144} \)  \hspace{1em} [A] 120 \hspace{1em} [B] 144 \hspace{1em} [C] 1.2 \hspace{1em} [D] 12 \hspace{1em} [43] \underline{D}

44. \( \angle AED = 113^\circ \) Find the measure of \( \angle BEC \).  \hspace{1em} [A] 67^\circ \hspace{1em} [B] 77^\circ \hspace{1em} [C] 103^\circ \hspace{1em} [D] 113^\circ \hspace{1em} [44] \underline{D}

45. In the diagram below, \( \angle ABC \) and \( \angle CBD \) are  

\[
\begin{array}{c}
A \\
\_ \\
\_ \\
B \\
\_ \\
\_ \\
C \\
\_ \\
\_ \\
D
\end{array}
\]

[A] supplementary. \hspace{1em} [B] acute. \hspace{1em} [C] vertical. \hspace{1em} [D] complementary. \hspace{1em} [45] \underline{A}

46. Classify the triangle with sides of length 23, 23, and 7.  \hspace{1em} [A] isosceles \hspace{1em} [B] straight \hspace{1em} [C] scalene \hspace{1em} [D] equilateral \hspace{1em} [46] \underline{A}
48. Which of the following represents a tessellation?
   [A] a newspaper page  
   [B] none of these answers  
   [C] a checkerboard  
   [D] a map of the U.S.A.  

49. What is the approximate circumference of circle \( r \)?  
   Use \( \pi = \frac{22}{7} \)  

45 in.  

[A] 44 inches  
[B] 88 inches  
[C] 22 inches  
[D] 616 inches  

50. Find the area of a circle with the given radius. Use \( \frac{22}{7} \) for \( \pi \).  

\( r = 21 \text{ yd} \)  

[A] 132 yd\(^2\)  
[B] 346.5 yd\(^2\)  
[C] 1386 yd\(^2\)  
[D] 264 yd\(^2\)
6th Grade Midterm  Part 2

Be sure to show all work and answer all parts of the question.

If you find that one particular question is giving you trouble, skip that question and work on that question later.

1) Dan is bowling in a tournament at Mount Morris Bowling Center. Dan bowled 212, 210, and 223 in his first 3 games. To make the finals a bowler must average 220. What is the lowest score that Dan needs to bowl in his 4th game to average 220 and make the finals? (Show all work) 

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Average} &= \frac{212 + 210 + 223 + x}{4} \\
220 &= \frac{645 + x}{4} \\
880 &= 645 + x \\
x &= 235
\end{align*}
\]

Explain in words how you found what score Dan needed to bowl in his 4th game to average 220 in the space below?

So I would know that that would have to be his score. Then I added the previous scores to get 645 and subtracted that from 880.

2) The sum of 3 consecutive integers equals 90. What are the 3 integers? (Show all work)

Let \( x \) be the 2nd integer.

\[
\begin{align*}
2nd \text{ integer} &= x \\
3rd \text{ integer} &= x + 1 \\
x + (x + 1) + (x + 2) &= 90 \\
3x + 3 &= 90 \\
x &= \frac{87}{3} \\
x &= 29
\end{align*}
\]

Explain in words what strategy and steps you used to find 3 consecutive integers? I used variables to represent the three integers. Then, I set up an equation and solved the equation.
3) Is 63 a perfect square? 

Explain in words why or why not 63 is a perfect square?

No, because the square root of 63 is not a whole number.

4) The scores last year on Mr. Perdue's Mathematics midterm were:

92, 100, 54, 76, 92, 78, 99, 89, 83, 69, 69, 34, 43, 87, 71, 71, 83, 89, 71, 82, 92, 96

a) What is the mean of the midterm scores?

\[ \text{Mean} = \frac{92 + 100 + 54 + 76 + 92 + 78 + 99 + 89 + 83 + 69 + 69 + 34 + 43 + 87 + 71 + 71 + 83 + 89 + 71 + 82 + 92 + 96}{20} \]

b) What is the mode of the midterm scores?

92

c) What is the range of the midterm scores?

46

d) What is the median of the midterm scores?

83.5

e) Explain in words how you calculated the mean of the midterm scores?

I added all the scores up and divided the total by the number of scores (20).
5) Angle A and angle B are complementary. In addition, angle A is supplementary to angle C. What are the measures of angle A and angle C if angle B measures 40 degrees.

a) Angle A \[ 60 \] degrees

b) Explain in words how you found the measure of Angle A

I know that complementary angles add up to 90 degrees. So I subtracted 40 from 90 and got 50.

c) Angle C \[ 130 \] degrees

d) Explain in words how you found the measure of Angle C?

I know that supplementary angles add up to 180 degrees. So I subtracted angle A from 180 and got 130.

6) In the equation below, each of the variables represents a different value.

\[
C + 0 = 3 \\
C + C = A \\
A + C = B \\
A - B = D 
\]

Find the value of

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a) variable } A & = 6 \\
\text{b) variable } B & = 9 \\
\text{c) variable } C & = 3 \\
\text{d) variable } D & = -3 
\end{align*}
\]

e) Explain in words how you found the value of variable C?

The equation had \[ C + 0 = 3 \] which said that something plus nothing equals three. So I knew that the three had to come from the C.
APPENDIX E (TRANSITION TO SUCCESS)

RATIONALE

To successfully educate children of generational poverty, Mount Morris must provide strong, consistent consequences for students who break the rules or violate school policy. However, these strong consequences must be balanced by creative and meaningful rewards and privileges to motivate the students to succeed in school.

WHY SHOULD MOUNT MORRIS ADOPT TRANSITION TO SUCCESS

- Mount Morris scores on the last three New York State eighth-grade grade mathematics assessments are 20, 20, and 20. Therefore, due to the “No Child Left Behind” Act, Mount Morris is in danger of sanctions by New York State on account of their low assessment scores.
- On the 2002 New York State eighth-grade mathematics assessment, Mount Morris had the second lowest percentage of students scoring above a two of any school district in the six county areas of Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, and Wayne counties. The only school district scoring lower than Mount Morris was the Rochester City School district.
- Over 50 percent of the students at Mount Morris are children of rural generational poverty.
- Research shows children of rural generational poverty can best succeed in an environment that offers both rich rewards on the one hand and strong consequences on the other hand.
- Individual teachers by themselves cannot create this environment. It requires establishing and maintaining a pervasive school-wide culture of structure and student accountability.
- This pervasive school-wide culture must teach Mount Morris students that they alone are accountable for their actions and that they must accept responsibility for their learning, decisions, and actions.

HOW TRANSITION TO SUCCESS IS STRUCTURED (PRIVILEGES AND CONSEQUENCES)

Privilege Levels

| LEVEL 0 | No privileges. |
| LEVEL 1 | 25-minute extended lunch period. |
| LEVEL 2 | 25-minute extended lunch period with option of going to the computer lab, library, or resource room during extended lunch. |
| LEVEL 3 | LEVEL 2 privileges plus option of using Gym during extended lunch. |
| LEVEL 4 | LEVEL 3 privileges plus use of student lounge. |
| LEVEL 5 | LEVEL 4 privileges plus parking permit, and freedom around building. |
Highest Level of Privileges

SEVENTH GRADE - LEVEL 0 PRIVILEGES
EIGHTH GRADE - LEVEL 1 PRIVILEGES
NINTH GRADE - LEVEL 2 PRIVILEGES
TENTH GRADE - LEVEL 3 PRIVILEGES
ELEVENTH GRADE - LEVEL 4 PRIVILEGES
TWELFTH GRADE - LEVEL 5 PRIVILEGES

Advancement to the Next Privilege Level

➤ Students in seventh grade start the year with level 0 privileges and maintain level 0 privileges for the entire seventh-grade school year.
➤ At the end of the school year, students may graduate to the next level of privileges by not receiving a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out of school suspension for the months of May, June, July.
➤ Students having a D or F in any class are ineligible to be promoted to the next privilege level at any time.
➤ Students not at their highest level of privileges may be promoted to the next level if they have not received a detention, Saturday school, an in-school suspension, or an out of school suspension for two consecutive months.
➤ A student’s privilege level is based solely on their behavior, not their grade level.

Bell Schedule to Accommodate Transition to Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Start Time</th>
<th>End Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeroom</td>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>8:07 (Morning Announcements)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Period</td>
<td>8:10</td>
<td>8:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Period</td>
<td>8:55</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Period</td>
<td>9:35</td>
<td>10:15</td>
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<td>4th Period</td>
<td>10:20</td>
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<td>5th Period</td>
<td>11:00</td>
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<td>6th Period</td>
<td>11:45</td>
<td>12:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Period</td>
<td>12:25</td>
<td>12:50 (Lunch)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th Period</td>
<td>12:55</td>
<td>1:20 (Extended Lunch/Study Hall)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th Period</td>
<td>1:25</td>
<td>2:05</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th Period</td>
<td>2:10</td>
<td>2:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeroom</td>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>3:00 (Afternoon Announcements)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Detention</td>
<td>3:05</td>
<td>4:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>MISBEHAVIOR IN STUDY HALL</td>
<td>1st INCIDENT CONSEQUENCE</td>
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<td>1 Detention</td>
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<tr>
<td>INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE, GESTURES, CLOTHING</td>
<td>2 Detentions</td>
<td>3 Days Saturday School</td>
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<td>1 Day In-school Suspensio n</td>
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<td>TARDINESS (&lt;5 minutes late)</td>
<td>Verbal Warning</td>
<td>1 Detention</td>
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<td>CLASSROOM DISRUPTIONS</td>
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<td>SKIPPING CLASSES (&gt;5 minutes late)</td>
<td>2 Detentions</td>
<td>1 Day In-school Suspen sion</td>
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<td>BULLYING, HAZING, OR INTIMIDATION</td>
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<td>VANDALISM AND THEFT</td>
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CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE DETERMINED BY ADMINISTRATION MAY INCLUDE DETENSIONS, SATURDAY SCHOOL, IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, PERMANENT LOSS OF PRIVILEGES, CONFERENCE WITH PARENT OR GUARDIAN, AND EXPULSION

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Study Hall

- All students have assigned seats in study hall.
- Students are expected to be in their seats when the bell rings to begin class.
- Talking or group work is not allowed in study hall.
- Students must be engaged in silent, individual study at all times.
- Restroom and locker passes will be issued in emergency cases only.

Detention

- Detention runs every school day from 3:05 PM to 4:00 PM everyday.
- A late bus run at 4:00 PM will take the students home.
- The sole activity permitted during detention is silent, individual study.

Saturday School

- Saturday school is held from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM every Saturday.
- The sole activity allowed at Saturday school is silent, individual study.

In-School Suspension

- The length of in-school suspension varies from one period to a full school day.
- The sole activity allowed during in-school suspension is silent, individual study.
- Students are allowed to leave in-school suspension only during specified restroom breaks.
- Students will be escorted to the cafeteria and must bring their lunch back to the in-class suspension room.
- Students must complete all assigned course work by the end of the school day or face more consequences.
- Students are not allowed to participate in any athletic practice session, contest, co-curricular practice, rehearsal, or performance on the day of an in-school suspension.

Out-of-School Suspension

- Students suspended from school are not allowed on campus for any reason. That includes any school function before, during, or after school.

Expulsion

- In the case of repeated or extreme behavior, administration may recommend to the Board of Education that expulsion proceedings be initiated against a student.

Loss of Privileges

- A student who loses their privileges as a consequence for breaking a rule or a regulation are returned to level 0 privileges.
- After one month, administration will review the student's record and determine if the student can return to their previous privilege level, a reduced level of privilege, or back to level 0 privileges.
WHAT RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY ARE PRESENTLY IN-PLACE AT MOUNT MORRIS TO IMPLEMENT TRANSITION TO SUCCESS

- Computer and network access in every classroom.
- Each teacher is given a palm pilot the first day of school.
- Room with self-contained lavatory that can be used for in-school suspension and Saturday school.
- Present capability of Classroom XP Software for the network.
  - Ability to take attendance at the beginning of each period online.
  - Ability to see a picture of the students on the screen, arranged in a seating chart, so that teachers are able to take period attendance.
  - Ability to find a student’s schedule, grades, home address or phone number, information concerning a student’s 504 plan and their IEPs if they have any.
  - The ability to keep track of the number of absences and tardies for all students.

WHAT RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY ARE NEEDED FOR MOUNT MORRIS TO IMPLEMENT TRANSITION TO SUCCESS

- One lounge equipped with vending machines, a television, music, chess, etc.
- Upgrade Classroom XP so that a teacher is able to write an electronic referral.
- Upgrade Classroom XP so that it lists students’ privilege levels under his or her pictures on the seating chart.
- Upgrade Classroom XP so that it keeps track of student’s referrals, detentions, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspensions, or any other consequences.
- Upgrade Classroom XP so that when data concerning students’ consequences or privileges are updated, Classroom XP immediately updates the classroom rosters.
WHAT ARE THE STAFF IMPLICATIONS AT MOUNT MORRIS TO IMPLEMENT TRANSITION TO SUCCESS

Commitment

The new educational philosophies and polices at Mount Morris need the full backing and support of the superintendent, the administration, the board of education, the Mount Morris community, the faculty, the staff, the parents, and the students to be successful. It will take five years to fully integrate the new philosophy and policies at Mount Morris. The seventh grade students this year will be seniors in five years.

Implications for Administration

➢ Administration must retrieve all electronic referrals, speak with the students and all parties involved, contact the parents, determine the consequences, and electronically submit the students' consequences to the Classroom XP database.

Implications for Faculty and Staff

➢ Teachers must take attendance every period on Classroom XP within five minutes of the beginning of class.
➢ Students skipping a class must have an electronic referral written on them immediately.
➢ Teachers must have course work ready for those students who will miss their class due to in-school suspension by 8:30 AM.
➢ All teachers witnessing a student breaking a rule must write an electronic referral on that student as soon as possible. NO EXCEPTIONS
➢ Teachers must download Classroom XP to their palm pilot daily to receive the latest student information.
➢ Additional staff may be necessary to monitor study halls, in-school detention, and Saturday school.

Implications for System Specialist

➢ The system specialist must monitor and update classroom XP, so that all student's schedules, students' current privilege levels, and classroom attendance lists are current and on line.
➢ The system specialist will work closely with administration so that any consequences or loss of privileges are entered into the system immediately.

BENEFITS OF TRANSITION TO SUCCESS FOR MOUNT MORRIS

➢ Consistent and pre-determined consequences with less administrative paperwork.
➢ Teachers do not have to dialogue with students concerning consequences. If a student breaks a rule he or she should already be aware of the consequences because they are posted around the school and in his or her student handbook.
➢ Increased student achievement, motivation, and behavior.
➢ Structured days with consistency and student choice.
➢ Students who make good choices benefit from rewards; student who make bad choices suffer the consequences.
REFERENCES


http://www.esc.org/html


*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, p. 1A, 7A.


