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ABSTRACT

This action research project implemented and evaluated a program for increasing time spent on homework. The project was intended to improve academic achievement among five employed high school students taking geometry and physical science who were also employed more than 15 hours per week. The problem of lower academic achievement due to inconsistent completion of homework assignments, caused by time management conflicts related to student employment, was documented by means of student surveys, student interviews, self-monitoring worksheets, and teacher records of assignment completion. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that employed students who work more than 15 hours per week spend less time on homework and exhibit lower academic achievement. Additionally, students have a commitment to work at the expense of school. Students make work, not school, their highest priority, as reflected in their time management. A review of solution strategies resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: incorporation of a self-awareness worksheet for incomplete assignments; implementation of a time management program; and a series of interviews with targeted students and their parents. Post-intervention data indicated that the intervention increased the frequency of homework completion by increasing self-awareness, increasing student responsibility, and increasing teacher and parent involvement. (Eight appendixes contain program materials. Contains 23 references.) (EV)

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## IMPROVING TIME MANAGEMENT FOR THE WORKING STUDENT

Tim Anderson  
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An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
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Field-Based Masters Program

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## ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for increasing time spent on homework in order to improve academic achievement. The targeted sample consisted of five employed high school students in Geometry and Physical Science who work more than fifteen hours per week. These students attended a high school located in a large metropolitan area. The problem of lower academic achievement due to inconsistent completion of homework assignments caused by time management conflicts related to student employment has been documented through student surveys, student interviews, self-monitoring worksheets, and teacher records of assignment completion.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that employed students who work more than fifteen hours per week spend less time on homework and exhibit lower academic achievement. Additionally, students have a commitment to work at the expense of school. Students make work, not school, their highest priority, as reflected in their time management.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three major categories of intervention: incorporation of a self-awareness worksheet for incomplete assignments; implementation of a time management program; and conduction of a series of interviews with targeted students and their parents.

Post intervention data indicated that the utilization of the intervention increased the frequency of homework completion through increased self awareness, an increase in student responsibility, and increased teacher and parent involvement.

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## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

#### General Statement of the Problem

The targeted high school students exhibit inconsistent completion of homework assignments due to time management conflicts related to student employment. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes a student survey, teacher records of assignment completion, a teacher survey, and teacher observations of students reporting that employment conflicts with their study schedules.

#### Immediate Problem Context

The targeted students all attend the same high school, which is a single school district with an enrollment of 1,392 students in grades 9-12. The racial/ethnic background is 61.1% White, 1.1% Black, 30.1% Hispanic, 7.0% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1% Native American. Teachers are noticing an influx of "Central European" immigrants as well as Black students. This high school has reported 11.0% of its students as being from low-income families, 6.5% are limited-English proficient students, and the dropout rate is 4.0%. The attendance rate is 93.4%; the student mobility rate is 8.9%. Chronic truants

comprise 1.9% of the total population, with 26 students being chronically truant (School Report Card, High School X, 1995).

The district had an operating expenditure of \$10,698 per pupil. The total expenditures for the district was \$15,325,486 (School Report Card, High School X, 1995).

The targeted high school has an 83.9% graduation rate. The report card comments that the rate now includes students who took more than four years to graduate. Only 45.7% of the students have taken the ACT. The average score is 21.0 compared to the state average of 21.2 (School Report Card, High School X, 1995).

The district's teaching staff average 16.0 years of teaching experience, with 37.3% having a bachelor's degree and 62.7% having a master's degree or above. The racial/ethnic background of the staff is as follows: 98.9% White and 1.1% Hispanic with 47.6% of the staff male and 52.4% female. The average teacher salary was \$60,624 (School Report, High School X, 1995).

This high school is the only building in a metropolitan high school district. The school currently has several computer labs with internet access and is currently working to update the technology used by the students and staff. The building is air-conditioned, has soundproofed windows, and is kept in good condition.

The students in the high school are in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. The curriculum is structured with standard, accelerated, basic, and special education



courses, including ESL classes. Additional programs include cooperative and vocational education at off campus locations.

For graduation, students must successfully complete Classroom Driver's Education, one semester of Consumer Education, seven semesters of English, two semesters of Fine and Applied Arts, one semester of Health, one semester of keyboarding/Computer Literacy, four semesters of Mathematics, seven semesters of Physical Education, four semesters of Science, six semesters of Social Studies, and Community Service hours whose number has not yet been determined. The high school has a wide range of extracurricular activities including varsity and intramural athletics, music groups, journalism, student government, art and drama opportunities and academic groups such as Math Team, Speech Team, and Academic Team (Curriculum Handbook, High School X, 1996-97).

The students participating in this research are enrolled in Physical Science and Geometry. Physical Science fulfills the physical science requirement. The students in Physical Science are mostly sophomores with some juniors and seniors. Generally, these students achieve at average to below average levels. Geometry students are typically sophomores and juniors who achieve at average to below average levels. Geometry completes the two-year mathematics requirement for the sophomores. Juniors enrolled in the class are often taking a third year of math. Several students in both of these classes are employed, and the problem behavior associated with this research becomes evident with students in Physical Science and Geometry.

## Community Setting

The targeted high school serves communities A and B. These communities show an ethnic and socio-economic diversity that is quite unique to DuPage County. The communities are classified as blue-collar and have a median family income of \$45,160 (Profile: County statistical data, 1992). The communities are supported by an industrial tax base from the largest industrial park in the nation. Even though most of the residential community is middle to lower middle class, there are areas of upscale homes as well as areas designated as low-income housing.

Community A has a population of 17,767 as of the 1990 Census. Community B has a population of 12,425. Almost exactly 50% are male and 50% are female. The ethnic/racial background of the community is 90.2% White, 1% Black, 4.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, less than 1% American Indian, and 3.2% of other races (Profile: County statistical data, 1992). The median household income from the 1990 census for the high school district is \$39,867 (Profile: County statistical data, 1992). In this community, 76.0% of the adults are high school graduates and 17.0% are college graduates (Profile: County statistical data, 1992).

This high school is in the process of implementing the School Improvement Plan which was developed by school, parent, and community representatives. The district's goal is that students become lifelong learners. The district is also attempting to improve the success rate of students. In the

1997-98 school year, the district will pilot a "School Within a School" program for at-risk freshmen and sophomores.

#### National Context of the Problem

During the past two or three decades, there has been a massive entry of high school youth into the labor force. Recent statistics concerning the employment status of 16 and 17-year-olds enrolled in school reveal that 36.3% of the males and 39.1% of the females were employed (US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1995). Other estimates put the number even higher. The High School and Beyond Survey, which was based on a national sample of 60,000 high school students, found that 59% of sophomores and 76% of seniors were likely to be in the labor force at any given time (Lewin-Epstein, 1991). Many of these teenagers, according to Bedenbaugh and Garvey (1993), spend nearly as much or more time on their jobs as they spend at school.

According to Lillydahl (1990), students today do not work because of financial need. Lillydahl found that students of middle income backgrounds are more likely to work than low or high-income students. Working adolescents appear to be more motivated by socialization and consumerist needs than by economic necessity (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993).

The question then is: What are the benefits and costs to high school students of part-time employment during the school year? At least one study (Green, 1990) has argued that employment may serve one or more of three major roles for high school students: (1) it facilitates the transition from school to work; (2) it provides structure for involvement in family-and-school-related

activities; (3) it provides an arena outside of home and school in which to gain social experience, and/or the material rewards needed in order to have an independent life with peers. According to Barone (1993), there also appears to be a positive relationship between the number of hours per week worked and academic performance when the hours worked are slight (fewer than 13 hours per week).

The biggest costs of employment seem to be to those students who work in excess of 15 or 20 hours per week. Lillydahl (1990) reported that students working more than 15-20 hours per week are absent from school more frequently, devote less time to homework, and have lower GPAs. Another study (Owen & Steiz, 1992), found that students who worked over 20 hours per week had a higher rate of drug and alcohol use, less involvement in school activities, lower academic achievement, an orientation toward luxury consumerism, diminished parental supervision, more frequent delinquency, and increased cynicism about the work ethic. According to Saks (1993), too many teenagers are making part-time employment, not school, their highest priority.

Results from 311 teachers indicated their concern for working students, but few make classroom adjustments to accommodate them (Bills et al., 1995). Barone (1993) suggests that boards of education should be made aware of the negative relationship between the number of hours worked by students and their academic achievement so that local studies can be initiated and decisions can be made about limiting the number of hours a student can work. Bedenbaugh and Garvey (1993) suggest more careful monitoring of youngsters' employment.

Williams (1995) found that working students who were better accommodated by their teachers were able to improve their performance remarkably. Williams (1995) further suggests that schools should look into the matter and help students to achieve their real potential.

## CHAPTER 2

### PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

#### Problem Evidence

The researchers initially documented the number of students who were employed part-time by asking students to participate in a survey (Appendix A). In order to document the students' homework efforts, the researchers tallied the assignments completed for the students who worked more than fifteen hours per week (Appendix B). At the quarter, researchers determined the target sample by selecting five of these students who continued their employment and had problems completing assignments. The researchers administered a survey to the target sample's other teachers to verify that homework completion was a problem in all classes (Appendix C). This documentation presented evidence of the problem by indicating the evidence that the students' homework completion was inconsistent due to poor time management.

#### Student Survey

Students in the targeted classes completed a researcher-developed survey. The survey asked questions regarding student employment and also asked students to prioritize parts of their lives, including work and homework. Of

the 142 students surveyed, 44% indicated that they worked, and 19% indicated they worked more than 15 hours per week. The results of the student responses combined from the six sample classes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Results of Student Information Survey

---

Question 5: Number of hours worked:

Students who work:	44%	
Average number of hours per week:		7.3
Students who do not:	56%	

Question 6: Amount of time spent on school work:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
none	3.5%	2.9%
less than 1 hour	27.6%	5.7%
1-2 hours	51.7%	82.9%
more than 2 hours	17.2%	8.5%

Question 7: When school work is completed:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
before school	4.0%	1.7%
right after school	26.0%	37.3%
at night	34.0%	39.0%
study hall	20.0%	13.5%
between classes	0.0%	8.5%
at lunch	2.0%	0.0%
at work	14.0%	0.0%

Question 8: Where school work is completed:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
home	86.2%	97.1%
school	0.0%	2.9%
friends house	3.4%	0.0%
at work	10.4%	0.0%

---

Table 1 (continued)

Question 9: Percentage of assignments completed:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
0 - 50	3.9%	0.0%
50 - 75	11.5%	17.6%
75 - 100	84.6%	82.4%

Question 10: Most common reasons for not finishing homework:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
not enough time	19.7%	27.3%
too difficult	28.9%	27.3%
had to work	7.9%	0.0%
not important	0.0%	0.0%
did not have materials	11.8%	13.6%
forgot	25.0%	25.0%
chose something else	0.0%	6.8%
too tired	6.7%	0.0%

Question 11: Rank in terms of importance:

	<u>Students who work</u>	<u>Students who do not</u>
family	1.7	1.6
school	3.8	2.8
friends	3.8	3.6
self	2.8	3.8
work	5.2	5.8
church	5.3	5.1
sports	5.4	5.4

Twenty-one students from the sample classes indicated that they work more than fifteen hours per week. The other results from the survey indicate that work is a priority for these students, and that these students spend only one or two hours on homework each day. The researchers found that the results from the homework tally support the results from the student survey.



### Homework Tally

During the first quarter of the school year, researchers tracked the homework completion records of these 21 sample students in Physical Science and Geometry. Results from the researchers showed that a few students had trouble completing homework assignments on a consistent basis, from August 28-October 10. After researchers selected five targeted students based on their tendency to miss assignments, the teacher tally continued. The results of the researchers' homework tally in Geometry and in Physical Science are summarized in Table 2. These figures show that the five targeted students appear to have problems with homework completion due to conflicts with work.

Table 2

#### Percentage of Targeted Students Missing Homework

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Targeted Student	Percent of assignments missed in Geometry or in Physical Science
Student A	45%
Student B	42%
Student C	62%
Student D	40%
Student E	83%

---

The results of the students' other teachers from the teacher survey support the results from the homework tally.

### Teacher Survey

Researchers also asked the teachers of the targeted students at High School X to complete a researcher-developed survey. These teachers indicated

that homework completion was a problem 30% of the time for student A, 45% for Student B, 42% of the time for Student C, 15% of the time for Student D, and 24% of the time for Student E. Researchers determined that these targeted students were not only employed, but they also exhibited inconsistent completion of homework assignments.

Through the use of a student survey, a homework tally, and a teacher survey, researchers selected a target sample of five students. These students were employed, indicated that work, not homework, was a priority to some extent, and displayed inconsistent completion of assignments. Causes for the problem of inconsistent completion of assignments were found at the site and in the literature.

#### Probable Causes – Site Analysis

In order to document the probable causes of inconsistent completion of homework assignments as a result of part-time employment, researchers collected four types of data during the first nine weeks of school. First, all students in the researchers' Geometry and Physical Science classes completed a survey to determine which students were employed part-time for at least fifteen hours per week. Second, researchers kept a tally sheet of missing assignments for the targeted students. Third, researchers asked all teachers of the targeted students to complete a survey to assess the rates of homework completion. Finally, researchers recorded their observations in an anecdotal journal.

The similar responses in the four data collection types showed that the time management conflicts between part-time employment and homework

completion are a significant problem for the targeted sample. Researchers indicated that several causes affected the students' completion of assignments. First, these students had poor time management skills. These students generally did not have a specific time set for homework completion. Second, researchers found that the students had the inability to balance work, school, and time, which led to stress. These students did not have enough time to complete homework assignments, often because of work. Third, work was the priority for these students which caused their assignment completion to be inconsistent. Many of these causes were also found in the literature.

#### Probable Cause - Literature Review

An investigation of current literature suggests that students' inconsistent completion of homework assignments and consequently lower academic performance as due to student employment have several causes. First among these causes is the effect of poor time management skills. In a 1984 study, McNeil reported that students would cut back on their schoolwork due to the demands of their jobs. This study inferred that poor time management was the cause of the students' inability to balance schoolwork with the demands of the students' job. This led to lower GPAs. In another study, D'Amico (1984) found a close association between work involvement and decreased study time. The inability to balance work, school and the component of time proved to be a problem that was identified in the findings.

Literature further suggests that there may be other probable causes that can effect a student's inconsistent completion of homework assignments and

consequently lower academic performance due to student employment. These causes are a shift in academic priorities, stress of work, the student's actual year in school and teachers' attitudes towards an emerging student working population.

### Priorities

Saks (1993) found that too many teenagers seem to be making school less of a priority and their part-time jobs a higher priority. Work taken on by these teens indicated little connection with long term vocational goals or future career paths.

Steinberg, Laurence, et al. (1993) linked student employment to the lowering of individual academic expectations and thus the lessening of homework and schoolwork as a higher priority. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) conclude that part-time employment changes the students' priorities to the extent that students showed an increased frequency of changing their educational path and opting for an easier, less stringent curriculum. Literature also attributes stress as another probable cause.

### Stress

Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) list stress as a possible contributing factor to the overall negative impact of students' part-time employment on academic achievement. Kasl (1974) found that for adults, there appears to be a correlation between stress and the low demands of jobs which entail large amounts of time spent on meaningless tasks. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) observed that students accept this stress and work for the lure of money

in spite of it. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) attribute this acceptance of stress as a cause of increased poor performance in school as well as a seemingly unrelated increase in alcohol and marijuana consumption.

Bedenbaugh and Garvey (1993) stated that the stress of a full schedule, which involved part-time employment, could lead to damage and distortion of the teen's view of the total work experience for the future. To a minor extent, the literature shows that another contributing factor may well be a student's age as related to their respective year in high school.

#### Year in High School

Barone (1993) found that twelfth graders tended to adapt the best to part-time work and academic achievement. Eleventh graders were adversely affected at a slightly higher rate. Tenth graders were adversely affected at the highest rate. No reason was given for this pattern, but the findings were conclusive. Finally, literature shows that teacher attitudes may also impact the situation of part-time work and poor student achievement.

#### Teacher Attitudes

McNeil (1984) concluded that teachers over the years have lowered their standards to accommodate the emerging working student population. They have done this by assigning less work and putting lesser demands on their students. This behavior was done out of frustration over students continually not meeting academic expectations. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) also stated that students would even go so far as to take easier courses from teachers that were perceived as easier, just to protect their GPA.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests probable causes for students' inconsistent completion of homework assignments and lowering of overall academic performance due to part-time employment include: poor time management skills, shifting of academic priorities, stress related to work and time constraints, year of student in high school, and changes in teacher attitudes towards working students. In Chapter 3 solutions to these probable causes will be explored.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

#### Literature Review

A review of current literature suggests several possible solutions aimed at alleviating the problems associated with student employment. The underlying theme seems to be that all involved (students, parents, school staff and employers) need to work together because the problems associated with student employment are too far-reaching for the schools to handle alone. The suggestions from the literature are organized around the following areas: educating students and parents about the possible consequences of part-time work, regulating and monitoring extensive work hours, strengthening the partnership between parents and educators, and increased emphasis on staff development in the area of youth employment.

#### Educating Students and Parents

Literature suggests parents and students need to be made aware of the potential short-term and long-term problems associated with part-time employment (Goldstein, 1991). Both parents and students should be able to make informed decisions with regard to how much time to commit to part-time

employment. Both should be made aware of the research findings, that working more than 15 hours per has been shown to significantly interfere with performance in school (Hamilton, 1988). Students who work in excess of 15 hours per week tend to be absent from school more often, spend less time on homework, and have lower GPAs, which in the long run may limit their future options and close the doors to many institutions of higher education.

Both need to be made aware of how part-time employment can adversely affect attendance and achievement in the classroom. Students, especially, should be made aware of the consequences of part-time employment on their school work and their future life chances, so they can make informed decisions about their commitment to a job in terms of work hours (Cheng, 1995).

Parents can discuss the issues of part-time work as an initial step to communicating concern and support in the school and work environments (Thompson et al., 1991). It has been suggested in the literature that increasing the involvement of parents in the employment activities of their students may minimize some of the "costs" of working (Greenberger, 1986).

The literature also suggests that parents can actively guide their children in planning their work schedules (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993). The experts suggest that schools can help parents by offering counseling to students and parents of students working part-time (Greenberger, 1986). The context of the session can include information about the potential risks of extensive work commitment, strategies on how to manage time efficiently, and how to make decisions about work schedules and limiting work hours during the school year.



Schools and parents may then work together to monitor and regulate a student's work hours.

### Regulating and Monitoring Work Hours

Literature suggests that schools can monitor the absenteeism rate and academic performance of working students, especially those who are academically at risk (Cheng, 1995) and communicate concerns about absenteeism and performance to parents through regular progress reports. Parents are often unaware of problems their children are having until the problems are severe and difficult to remedy. Early identification and communication of students at risk allows for earlier intervention by parents.

Parents can also monitor more closely and regulate their youngsters' working hours during the school year (Bedenbaugh & Garvey, 1993). Experts also suggest parents should periodically reassess their child's employment situation in terms of impact on the youngster's behavior and academic performance (Greenberger, 1986). This would allow the opportunity to make adjustments to a work schedule which is having adverse effects. Guidelines could then be developed which would provide direction for the number of hours and the appropriateness of the hours students work during the school year (McNelly et al., 1990). This type of monitoring and regulation may also help to offset some of the diminished contact with parents that working students often suffer (Greenberger, 1986). In order to be successful, a program of monitoring and regulation such as this requires a good working relationship between

parents and educators.

### Strengthening the Partnership

Experts suggest that parents and educators can cooperate in helping students not to fall into the pitfalls associated with part-time employment and its impact on academic performance (Bills, et. al., 1995). Students can be spared the consequences of an over commitment to a part- time job at the expense of their education. By jointly monitoring students' behavior, absenteeism and academic performance, and advising students in time management skills and limiting work hours, parents and educators may be able to significantly reduce the negative impact of teenage employment in terms of academic success (Williams, 1995).

The literature also suggests that adults such as parents, school staff and advisors can become mentors for the employed students (Saks, 1993). They can guide the youth workers to more successfully integrate work and school (McNelly et al, 1990). This type of monitoring program will require additional training and staff development in the area of youth employment.

### Staff Development

Teachers should be trained in integrating the work experiences of students into classroom activities and lesson content to make the learning more relevant to working students (Bills, et. al., 1995). In so doing, educators can help guide and stimulate adolescents' thinking about the world of work and add an intellectual component to their employment experience (Greenberger, 1986). The literature also states that teachers should be trained in assisting students in

seeking part-time employment which is more likely to enhance their future career aspirations and less likely to interfere with their academic success (Williams, 1995).

In conclusion, it seems the problems associated with student employment are best dealt with on a number of fronts at the same time. Students, parents and school staff must work together to effectively manage work and school time to avoid a decline in academic performance. The solutions suggested by the literature center around the areas of: education of students and parents about the possible consequences of part-time employment, regulation and monitoring of extensive work hours, strengthening the partnership between parents and educators, and an increase in staff development in the area of student employment. Research suggests that attention to these areas can make a difference.

### **Project Objectives and Processes**

**As a result of increased self-awareness, development of time management skills and increased parental involvement, during the period of August, 1997 to December, 1997, the targeted students from Physical Science and Geometry will increase their academic achievement through higher frequency of homework completion, as measured by teacher records.**

**In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:**

- 1. The teachers will foster a sense of student responsibility for success in school.**
- 2. The teachers will continue to incorporate the self-awareness worksheet for incomplete assignments.**
- 3. The teachers will implement time management program for targeted students.**

4. The teachers will conduct a series of interviews with targeted students and their parents.

### Project Action Plan

#### August 27 and 28:

- Who:** All students enrolled in researchers' Physical Science and Geometry classes.
- What:** Students will fill out "Student Information Survey."
- Where:** In the designated classroom.
- When:** During the designated class times.
- Why:** To gather data to determine which students are employed and how many hours per week they work. This data will determine the Initial Target Sample.

#### August 28 - October 10:

- Who:** Initial Target Sample: All students who are employed and work more than 15 hours per week.
- What:** Teachers will collect data on Initial Target Sample's assignment completion using "Assignment Tally Sheet." Initial Target Sample students will complete "Self-Help" worksheet for each incomplete assignment.
- Where:** In designated classroom.
- When:** During the designated class times

**Why:** To collect baseline data on Initial Target Sample in order to identify five candidates for the Final Target Group. This Final Target Group will receive intervention.

October 14 - 17:

**Who:** Candidates for Final Target Group.

**What:** Researchers interview candidates. Researchers collect baseline data from candidates other classroom teachers using "Quarterly Assignment Tally Sheet.

**Where:** Science Department Office

**When:** 7th period.

**Why:** To determine the candidates' willingness and to obtain candidates permission to participate in the study. Five students will become the Final target group.

October 14 - 17:

**Who:** Parents of Final Target Group.

**What:** Parent interview

**Where:** High School X conference room.

**When:** 7th hour or at parents convenience.

**Why:** To explain the project, to gain more insight and background information and to obtain permission and support - with a stipulation that parents and students are required to meet together with researchers on October 30 (Parent Conference date) and prior to the holiday recess.

October 21 - December 12:

- Who:** Final Target Group.
- What:** Intervention using "Self-Help" self-awareness worksheet, time management tool and ongoing student/teacher contact.
- Where:** In designated classroom.
- When:** During designated class period.
- Why:** To increase students' academic achievement by increasing the frequency of homework completion.

December 15 - 18:

- Who:** Final Target Group and their parents.
- What:** To gather post-intervention data from teachers using "Quarterly Assignment tally Sheet." Researchers will interview Final Target Sample students and their parents.
- Where:** High School X conference room.
- When:** 7th hour or at parents convenience
- Why:** To determine the effectiveness and significance of the interventions.

**Methods of Assessment**

In order to assess the effect of the intervention, researchers will use three methods. The ongoing assessments will include the researcher/teacher tally worksheet and a quarterly assignment tally sheet for all teachers of targeted students. Researchers will conduct a post-intervention interview with the students of the target sample and their parents.

These assessments will be used to evaluate the effect of the time management program of the targeted students' academic achievement through responsibility toward assignment completion.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT RESULTS

#### Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this action research project was to increase students' academic achievement by increasing self-awareness, developing students' time management skills, and increasing parental involvement. The targeted students were enrolled in either Physical Science or Geometry from August, 1997 to December, 1997.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes were utilized:

1. The researchers fostered a sense of student responsibility for success in school.
2. The researchers incorporated the self-awareness worksheet (Appendix D) for incomplete assignments.
3. The researchers implemented a time management program for targeted students.
4. The researchers conducted a series of interviews with targeted students and their parents.



During the first week of school, the researchers administered the Student Information Survey to identify the initial target sample based on a minimum of 15 hours of work per week. For the next six weeks, the researchers used the Assignment Tally Sheet to collect data on the initial target sample students. Students completed Self-Help worksheets for each incomplete assignment in order to identify five candidates for the Final Target Group.

After identifying the Final Target Group, researchers interviewed candidates during class time. Researchers used the Quarterly Assignment Tally Sheet (Appendix E) to gather baseline data. Researchers obtained parental permission for the students to participate in the study. The parents of the Final Target Group were either interviewed or completed a written questionnaire.

During the seven weeks of intervention, the students in the Final Target Group continued to use the Self-Help self-awareness worksheet. Researchers initiated the use of the time management tool (Appendix F) while maintaining ongoing contact with the Final Target Group. Researchers continued to reinforce the use of time management skills.

During the one week following intervention, researchers used the Quarterly Assignment Tally Sheet to gather post-intervention data. During this week, researchers conducted post-intervention interviews with students. Parents of the Final Target Group responded to a written post-intervention survey.

Researchers deviated from the Action Plan by allowing parents to respond to the pre- and post-intervention interview questions in written form rather than through a verbal interview. Researchers found time constraints of the parents to

be a limiting factor for scheduling an appointment to come to school for the verbal interview.

Researchers also changed the Action Plan timeline by extending it for two weeks in order to receive the post-intervention data from the Final Target Group and their parents. Other than adjusting the format for interviews and the timeline of the research, the research of the Action Plan occurred as scheduled in that the researchers helped students become more aware of their assignment completion and of their time management.

### Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the intervention, four measures were used. The targeted students completed Time Utilization Logs, Quarterly Assignment sheets, and a post-intervention interview. The parents of the targeted students participated in a post-intervention interview.

#### Time Utilization Logs

The targeted students used the Time Utilization Logs to schedule their homework time within their weekly schedule. Researchers collected the logs from each student. Students A, B, C, and D had a 100% completion rate throughout the intervention. Student E had a 0% completion rate, as this student failed to turn in any Time Utilization Logs during the intervention. In addition to the Time Utilization Logs, the Quarterly Assignment Tally sheet also indicated the students' progress.

### Quarterly Assignment Tally Sheet

In order to determine the effects of the intervention to increase students' academic achievement, researchers used the post-intervention Quarterly Assignment Tally sheet (summarized in Table 3).

Table 3

### Assignment Completion Percentages

#### Assignment Completion Percentages in Target Class

<u>Student</u>	<u>Pre-Intervention</u>	<u>Post-Intervention</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
A	55%	64%	+9%
B	59%	90%	+31%
C	38%	90%	+52%
D	60%	70%	+10%
E	17%	27%	+10%

#### Assignment Completion Percentages in All Classes

<u>Student</u>	<u>Pre-Intervention</u>	<u>Post-Intervention</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
A	70%	63%	-7%
B	77%	87%	+10%
C	58%	76%	+18%
D	85%	87%	+2%
E	76%	41%	-35%

Researchers compared the assignment completion percentages in the target class before and following the intervention. All targeted students showed an increase in their assignment completion rates in the targeted class.

The targeted students obtained data from their other teachers on the Quarterly Assignment Tally sheet. Researchers compared the overall assignment completion percentages in all classes for each of the targeted

students. Three of the five targeted students demonstrated an increase in assignment completion. The students also had an opportunity to give their opinions regarding the intervention through a post intervention interview.

#### Post Intervention Student Interview

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, students completed a post intervention interview. (A copy of the interview questions is located in Appendix G.) All of the students involved in the intervention completed the set of interview questions. Researchers used student answers to these interview questions as one assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention.

One of the post-intervention interview questions asked the students to make their own assessment of the intervention. All of the students indicated that the intervention was helpful in their time management. In addition, four of the five students credited the intervention, at least in part, with increasing their academic achievement. The student who indicated the intervention did not help to increase academic achievement also cited other contributing factors such as illness, several absences from school due to illness, and family problems, which may have been responsible for interfering with the effectiveness of the intervention.

Students were also asked if they would like to see the intervention continue. All of the students indicated that they had found the intervention valuable and would like to continue with it. In addition, at least one of the students indicated that he/she had continued to use the intervention strategies on his/her own. In addition to the student interviews, the parents also had the

opportunity to assess the effects of the intervention through a post-intervention interview (Appendix H).

#### Post Intervention Parent Interview

It needs to be noted here that Student E's parents, after much effort on the researchers' part, failed to turn in or allow for a Post-Intervention Interview. The researchers, therefore, had only 4 interviews to base the evaluation of data.

Of the interviews conducted, two of the four sets of parents seemed to reflect a positive overall impression of the intervention. The parents of Student B stated that: "my daughter was found to be working harder after school and after work." The parent of Student C stated that the intervention helped her son to "divide his time more effectively."

One of the four parents interviewed did not feel favorable about the results of the intervention. The parents of Student A felt rather strongly that the intervention "did not help academic achievement." There was no reason given for this.

The remaining parents, those of Student D, expressed what the researchers would categorize as neither a favorable or unfavorable response towards the effects of the intervention. Their main focus in their response centered on their apparent lack of support for their child working as many hours as they do.

When asked if they would desire the intervention to continue, three of the four were in favor of the intervention continuing. Two of these three sets of parents could be categorized as being very supportive of the continuation.

These are the parents of Students B and C. The parents of Student D were supportive, but not as enthusiastic. Researchers determined this by the strength of wording used in the interviews, in that the intervention helped "to an extent". The parents of Student D did not use wording that would lead the researchers to believe that they are enthusiastic. One of the four parents interviewed was not enthusiastic about the continued intervention. Student A's parents felt that their child was "not a good subject. A different student might do better."

Analysis of the information taken from the Post-Intervention Interviews with the parents seems to indicate a general support for and endorsement of the intervention. The researchers feel that each individual student must be looked at independently, however.

The fact that Student A did not show overall improvement during the intervention might lead researchers to understand the responses that were generated by the student's parents. During the intervention, Student A decreased the percent of homework completed by 10%. This student's history of not turning in work, combined with the potential futility that the parents feel makes the responses seem appropriate. Researchers interpret the comment pertaining to "a different student might do better" as a possible endorsement, even though the intervention was not successful with their child.

The response from the parents of Student B seems to also be predictable. Student B also has a history of struggling not only with getting work in on time, but consequently with grades as well. Student B's overall assignment completion increased by 10% following the intervention. The researchers feel that the

students improvement in the area of getting her work in due to the intervention not only had positive academic effects, but a positive effect on the issue of stress that was caused by the work and school time-management situation. The parents seemed to genuinely feel that this had a positive effect and a benefit to all concerned. It came as no surprise to the researchers that the parents endorsed the continuation of the intervention.

Student C does not have a long history of missing assignments. This student seems to have developed this problem as a direct result of the impact of work on time management. Following the intervention, Student C's percent of homework completion increased by 18%. From the responses from the parents of Student C, the researchers feel that the intervention was viewed by them as a way that the school could help be of assistance to their child, and seemed genuinely appreciative. The fact that they felt it would be beneficial to continue the intervention leads the researchers to further view the intervention as a success.

The researchers had a difficult time assessing the interview of the parents of Student D. Although Student D's percentage of homework completion increased by 2%, from the responses of the parent interview, the researchers feel that there appear to be many work, school and stress related issues that are not yet resolved in this situation. The overall tone of the responses lead the researchers to believe that the parents are supportive of the intervention, but very supportive of their child working. Student "D" was most difficult student to obtain information from in a timely fashion. There are some chronic responsibility

issues at school that have gone on for a long time. The fact that the student's parents encouraged us to drop the Time Utilization Log at their home rather than give it to their child is viewed as a lack of trust on the part of the parents in their child's ability to follow through on commitments and responsibilities.

The researchers can only speculate on the reasons why the parents of Student E did not follow through on the Post-Intervention Interview. Student E had a decrease of 35% in homework completion. Due to a lack of academic success in a researcher's class that Student E had, the researchers assume that the parents may have chosen to abandon this program, or that the student failed to follow through in obtaining or returning a completed interview.

Overall, data indicate that the intervention was beneficial in helping students who work become more responsible for their time management.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the data support the claim that the intervention was a success. One objective was to increase the targeted students' sense of self-awareness and responsibility in regards to the situation of balancing and managing time conflicts that were associated with work and homework completion. A definite increase in the students' awareness of the conflict was observed through the student interviews. A consistent dialog between researchers and the targeted students reinforced the student's awareness of the conflict. The targeted student's high incidence of turning in completed Time Utilization Logs are viewed as a manifestation of increased student responsibility. The process of completion of the logs in the manner observed by the researchers



consistently demonstrated an awareness of the concept of time and how to divide the time outside of school so that the needs of work and academics could be met. This leads the researchers to conclude that this component of the study has merit.

The second objective was to increase parental involvement in the situation. Parents were eager to have some assistance with the intervention. Data obtained through the interviewing process also indicated that the parents were positive about the prospects of the intervention in the initial stages. Researchers however, are hesitant to conclude whether the parents were involved on a daily or weekly basis during the intervention. The data that was gathered gives no indication of parental involvement on the Time Utilization Logs. The parents reflected overall positive view of the intervention after the intervention was terminated, as well as a general consensus that the intervention should be continued. Researchers conclude that the involvement of parents was increased just by the nature of the parents following through on the portion of the process that the researchers had designated for them.

Data shows that the utilization of the action plan did increase the frequency of homework completion for a majority of the students. The components of an increased self awareness, an increase in responsibility, increased teacher involvement as well as a limited yet increased involvement by the parents did appear to have a positive impact on a majority of the students targeted for the action plan. Overall, the action plan was a success.

The researchers plan to continue to follow the action plan and recognize many of its strengths. They feel the most effective strategies for intervention were the Time Management Tool and the ongoing student/teacher contact. The simplistic nature of the tool allowed students to organize their schedule to accommodate their assignments, work, and social lives. The weekly reinforcement of student/teacher interaction fostered the students' awareness of balancing work and school. This personal contact was instrumental and essential to this action plan.

The researchers also identified weaknesses and would make modifications to the action plan. After recognizing the difficulty in scheduling and conducting interviews with the parents of the Final Target Group due to the parents' time conflicts, the researchers modified the action plan by allowing parents to complete the interviews in written form. The researchers also had to extend the timeline by two weeks due to the students' inability to return the Quarterly Tally Sheet and the post-intervention written responses completed by their parents by the original deadline. The researchers recommend that teachers assume the responsibility of having the Quarterly Tally Sheet completed by other teachers, and can only suggest continued phone contact with the parents to encourage their completion and return of the written responses.

One additional modification would be to insure parental involvement by asking students to obtain a parent signature each week on the Time Management Tool. The researchers feel that requiring a parent signature would improve parental involvement through awareness.

It should be noted that the methodology involved (a cross-sectional survey with no control group) and the sample size, much smaller than other studies of work impacts, leaves the researchers with a key question: to what degree are the students who participated representative of the entire student body? It is the opinion of the researchers that there is a need for continued research to document the impacts of student employment and the effectiveness of time management interventions.

The general public needs to become more aware of the issue. Student employment is obviously an issue which is unlikely to disappear, and in all probability is one which will become more widespread. Once community concern is aroused, there needs to be open discussion of concerns about student employment with everyone involved, i.e., students, parents, employers, teachers, and school administrators. No meaningful change will occur without the development of a consensus regarding what limits, if any, should be placed on student's outside employment during the school year, and how the student's employment should be monitored.

Finally, parents need to be more careful monitoring youngsters' employment. Parents need to take an active role in helping their students to effectively manage their time and to closely monitor any effects part-time employment may be having on the students' academic achievement.

At this time, the researchers feel they have made a difference in four of the five students in the Final Target Group. These students have assumed a greater responsibility in managing their weekly schedules to accommodate both

school and work. The researchers are sharing this action plan with their colleagues who have indicated a strong interest in the action plan results and are exploring the possibility of incorporating some of the action plan strategies into staff development inservice for interested teachers.

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APPENDIX A  
STUDENT INFORMATION SURVEY

## Student Information Survey

1) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Are you currently employed? Yes No

3) Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

4) Type of work you do: \_\_\_\_\_

5) Work hours:

Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat. & Sun.
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

6) Time spent on school schoolwork outside of class. (check 1 only)

_____ none	_____ less than 1 hour/day
_____ 1-2 hours/day	_____ more than 2 hours/day

7) School work outside of class is most often done: (check the 2 most frequent)

_____ before school	_____ study hall
_____ lunch	_____ after school
_____ between classes	_____ at work
_____ at night	_____ other: _____

8) Location of school work done outside of class: (check 1 only)

_____ home	_____ friends house
_____ school	_____ at work

9) Percent of assignments you complete: (check 1 only)

_____ 0 - 50%	_____ 50 - 75%	_____ 75 - 100%
---------------	----------------	-----------------

10) Most common reasons for missing or not completing an assignment: (check 3 only)

_____ not enough time	_____ not important	_____ forgot
_____ too difficult	_____ no materials	_____ chose otherwise
_____ had to work	_____ other: _____	



11) Rank the items below from 1 -7 with number 1 being the most important:

family - school - friends - self - work - church/religion - sports

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
ASSIGNMENT TALLY SHEET

**Assignment Tally Sheet**

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignments**

Names							

APPENDIX C  
TEACHER SURVEY

## Quarterly Assignment Sheet/Teacher Survey

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Assignments Given: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Assignments Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments?

In your opinion, is assignment completion a problem for this student?

If so, what is the cause of this problem?

APPENDIX D  
SELF AWARENESS WORKSHEET

## Self Awareness Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Status of Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: (only one please)

\_\_\_\_\_ not enough time because: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ did not understand \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ forgot \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

What I intend to do about it ( a plan ) :

APPENDIX E  
QUARTERLY ASSIGNMENT TALLY SHEET



## Quarterly Assignment Tally Sheet

<b>Student:</b>					
<b>Period</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Assignments Given</b>	<b>Assignments Completed</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>1</b>					
<b>2</b>					
<b>3</b>					
<b>4</b>					
<b>5</b>					
<b>6</b>					
<b>7</b>					

APPENDIX F  
TIME UTILIZATION LOG

## Time Utilization Log

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

MONDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated time needed to do homework: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: 3 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_

4 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_

6 - 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated time needed to do homework: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: 3 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_

4 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_

6 - 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_

WEDNESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated time needed to do homework: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: 3 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_

4 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_

6 - 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_

THURSDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated time needed to do homework: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: 3 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_

4 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_

6 - 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_

FRIDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated time needed to do homework: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule: 3 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_

4 - 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 8 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_

5 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 9 - 10 \_\_\_\_\_

6 - 7 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 - 11 \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G  
POST-INTERVENTION STUDENT INTERVIEW

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Post-Intervention Student Interview

1.) Do you think that the intervention helped you with increasing your academic achievement, by helping you become more responsible at finishing work and managing your time?

2.) How could we improve this intervention?

3.) Would you like to have the intervention continue?

APPENDIX H  
POST-INTERVENTION PARENT INTERVIEW

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Post-Intervention Parent Interview

4.) Do you think that the intervention helped your son with increasing his academic achievement, by helping him become more responsible at finishing work and managing his time?

5.) How could we improve this intervention?

6.) Would you like to have the intervention continue?



# **END**

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