ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Ronnie A. Dotson

The Graduate School

Morehead State University

February 1, 2016

DOES GOAL SETTING WITH ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IMPACT READING
GROWTH

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Abstract of capstone

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

Ronnie A. Dotson

Grayson, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Steven Hooker, Assistant Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

February 1, 2016

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DOES GOAL SETTING WITH ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IMPACT READING
GROWTH

More than ever before, public schools are under immense pressure to raise the

academic achievement of students. Administrators, teachers, and parents alike are

searching for ways to equip students with the necessary knowledge to be successful in

the 21st Century. Research proves that goal setting provides students with a tool to

plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning while increasing motivation and

achievement. The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of goal setting

on reading growth of elementary students.

The study analyzed the reading performance of elementary students over a

two year period. McNemar's Change Test analysis was used to determine if a

significant difference existed between the reading growth achieved in fourth grade

compared to reading growth achieved in fifth grade. Of the 328 students participating

in the study, 69% made adequate growth after goal setting implementation as

compared to only 60% prior to the implementation of goal setting. Data are provided

collectively on all schools participating in the study as well as individually by school.

KEYWORDS: goal setting, reading growth, student motivation

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Candidate Signature

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DOES GOAL SETTING WITH ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IMPACT READING GROWTH

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RULES FOR THE USE OF CAPSTONES

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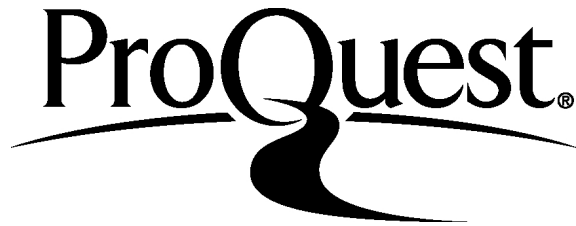
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Judy. Always putting my dreams and ambitions before her own, she has been a true example of a loving companion. I also dedicate this work to my son, Jacob, and daughter-in-law, Megan, who have been a tremendous source of encouragement throughout the journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One

Introduction

Kentucky's testing and accountability system is based on a complex

assessment process that measures student and school academic progress. Results are

publicly reported with schools being classified into one of the following four

categories: needs improvement, progressing, proficient, or distinguished. The

assessment system is anchored in the belief that schools must be held accountable for

the education of students. At the elementary level, achievement tests are

administered in the areas of reading, math, social studies, language arts, and writing.

Results are provided to schools for individual students, classroom teachers, grade

level bands, and school-wide. Collectively, the results from the tested areas provide

the achievement score that a school receives. Other factors, in addition to

achievement, influencing a school's overall accountability score include growth,

program review performance, and gap. Of the four measures, growth is weighted

heavier accounting for 40% of the overall accountability score. Student growth

scores, at the elementary level, are calculated based on the progress individual

students make in reading and math when compared to other students of like

performance on the last state assessment. Students receive a classification of

receiving adequate growth or inadequate growth. Important to note is the fact that

only 60% of assessed students in each grade level will receive a classification of

adequate growth. The Kentucky Department of Education outlines the process for the

assignment of growth scores as follows:

The Growth category uses a Student Growth Percentile, comparing an

individual student's score to the student's academic peers across the state. It

recognizes schools and districts for the percentage of students showing typical

or higher levels of growth. The scale for growth is determined at equal

intervals, with typical growth beginning at the 40th percentile. For

elementary and middle schools, growth is based on annual reading and

mathematics tests in grades 3-8. At high school, the same model of

recognizing student performance along a scale uses the PLAN (grade 10) and

ACT (grade 11) composite scores in reading and mathematics for comparison.

Points are awarded for percentage of students showing typical or higher

growth (FAQs on Kentucky's new assessment and accountability system for

public schools, 2012, paragraph 23).

The emphasis on student achievement is not isolated to Kentucky alone, but

remains a focal point among educators across the United States. Schools are under

immense pressure to achieve at high levels from a variety of stakeholders including

parents, local and state politicians, and federal officials. The expectation for

improvement has never been greater and has educators across the country looking for

proven strategies to increase student performance.

Daniels and Bizar (2005) advocated for an educational system that promotes

student thinking. These researchers contended that for too long the educational

system has concentrated on telling students what to think as opposed to teaching how

to think for themselves. However, the need for such a paradigm shift in the way

schools operate comes at a time when multi-media television programming, smart

phone technology, and advancements in technological gaming systems are competing

for the attention of students. Hwang (1995) reported that motivating students to take

responsibility for learning was becoming increasingly difficult. Daniels and Bizar

(2005) credited the implementation of goal setting as a possible tool to bring about

the necessary needed changes by allowing students to plan, monitor, and evaluate

their own learning.

   This study will add data to the existing research on the impact of goal setting

on student reading achievement. Specifically, the results of the study will provide

guidance to Carter County Schools and other school systems in the area of the effects

of this promising practice on students from rural Appalachia.

Definition of Terms

   The following is a list of defined terms provided to enhance the reader's

understanding of the study.

   Adequate growth- Adequate growth refers to a student's growth percentile

when compared to other students in Kentucky. A student that scores at or above the

40th percentile in his/her scoring cluster is considered to have made adequate growth.

   Goal setting- The term goal setting refers to the level of achievement that

students establish for themselves to reach. This process is often a collaborative effort

between the teacher and the student.

   Goal specificity- The term goal specificity refers to being very specific about

the desired outcome. For example, improving a reading Lexile score by 10% states

precisely what is to be accomplished as opposed to a general goal which might

include doing your best.

Goal proximity- The term goal proximity refers to the established time frame

for the goal to be accomplished.

Kentucky Growth Calculation Formula- A formula designed to designate

growth points to students scoring at or above the 40th percentile in a respective

scoring cluster. The formula allows for only 60% of Kentucky's students to receive

adequate growth.

Motivation- Student motivation is generally described as the desire to achieve

a goal that has value for the individual.

Performance Level- Kentucky assigns performance levels to each school and

district in the state. The levels are needs improvement (assigned to all schools and

districts scoring below the 70th percentile), proficient (assigned to all schools and

districts scoring between the 70th and 89th percentile), and distinguished (assigned to

schools and districts scoring at or above the 90th percentile).

Scoring Cluster- A scoring cluster refer to a group of other similarly scoring

students that a student is assigned to for growth comparison purposes.

Self-efficacy- The concept of self-efficacy refers to personal beliefs about

one's capabilities to learn or perform actions at selected levels.

Context of Study

Carter County is a rural county situated in northeast Kentucky that is

comprised of two main cities. Grayson is located in eastern Carter County and Olive

Hill is located in western Carter County. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the

population of Carter County is approximately 27,348. The racial makeup is 98 %

white, 0.6 % black or African American, 0.3 % Native American, 0.2 % Asian, 0.8 %

from combined races, and 1.3 % Hispanic or Latino. The median household income

in Carter County is $35,637. The per capita income for the county is $19,559. The

county has not experienced any significant growth in the last three years. According

to the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), 20.7 % of the population

of Carter County lives below the poverty level and 30.3 % of students (ages 5-17) live

below the poverty level. Currently 62% of students qualify for free or reduced price

meals (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

The Carter County School District (CCSD) is comprised of eleven schools

including two high schools, two middle schools, one career and technical center, and

six elementary schools. The district serves approximately 4,800 students and has just

over 800 employees. Among the student population, 16%, or approximately 750

students, have been identified as having Individual Education Plans that classifies

them as having special needs or an individual 504 Plan. Thirty-six of the students in

the district are English as second language learners, with parents who speak foreign

languages.

With a vision of becoming "The Standard of Excellence," the leadership of

the superintendent and school board members has committed to ensuring that the

highest quality education be available to all Carter County students. Their effort

includes an intentional focus on instruction and major construction projects involving

two new elementary schools that opened at the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

Educational initiatives and programs in the school district include: dual credit partnerships, advance placement courses, teacher academies, Math Achievement Grant, CAAT (math) and MUSE (science) partnerships with Pimser and the University of Kentucky, Response to Intervention with Tier II and Tier III Interventions, Read to Achieve, gifted and talented programs, Extended School Services that provide tutoring interventions, career and technical education, Title I, Title IV – Safe and Drug Free Schools, School Messenger System, pre-school, curriculum specialists, First Book-Carter County, and "Read to Me-It Matters" community initiative.

To overcome the culture of undervaluing education, district and school leadership have an intentional focus to protect instructional time and challenge all students. Over the past four years, college and/or career readiness increased from 27% to over 100% (including bonus) of students being ready for college or a career. The Director of Pupil Personnel evaluates and revises attendance policies annually and works with students and families to keep students in school. The graduation rate for Carter County is 96.9% which is above the state average of 87.7% (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015). All schools promote and encourage parents/guardians to stay active in their child's education through program offerings and volunteer opportunities.

Without growth and job availability, poverty remains steady in Carter County. The district has programs in place to ensure that all students have access to

educational materials and opportunities. Using the federal definition of homeless,

785 students have been identified under the McKinney-Vento Act. This includes

students who live in substandard housing, are foster children, or are living with

friends or relatives. The number of homeless students living with relatives has grown

significantly as unemployment rises and the community drug problem increases. A

challenge with this issue includes children that are frequently moved from school to

school or even district to district throughout the school year (Kouns, 2015).

The Carter County School District maintains a strong academic focus while

devoting equal time and effort to ensure the needs of the *whole child* are addressed.

In order to meet or exceed state and federal academic accountability standards, the

district provides effective leadership, an aligned curriculum, equitable resources, and

a firm commitment to all students.

Prior to 2012, the Carter County School System was labeled a Persistently

Low Achieving district by the Kentucky Department of Education. Furthermore, for

the first twelve years after the inception of No Child Left Behind in 1990, the district

had never met annual yearly progress. Of the two high schools in the district, one

was identified as a Persistently Low Achieving school and the other ranked only one

school above the benchmark for this classification. Additionally, one middle school

and two elementary schools were awarded School Improvement Funds because of

low achievement (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011).

A district leadership assessment conducted in the fall of 2011 by the Kentucky

Department of Education revealed the district leadership had not modeled a culture of

high expectations for staff or students. Moreover, the report noted that the

superintendent had not established a systematic process for holding all staff members

accountable for student success. Additionally, the district and school leadership was

deficient in the area of collecting and analyzing data to inform decisions that meet

student learning needs (Kentucky Department of Education, 2011).

The 2011-2012 school term was the beginning of a new era for Carter County

Schools. A new superintendent was commissioned with the task of improving the

quality of education for children in the district. Change came quickly in the district

and progress was close behind. By the end of the 2011-2012 school term, the district

had increased its rating to an impressive 62nd percentile when compared to other

districts in the state (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015).

The following three years saw continued progress in the school district.

College and Career Readiness continued to rise and the district ended the year with a

score of over 100% including bonus. Achievement in elementary and middle schools

also continued to climb. The district ended the 2014-15 school term ranking at the

93rd percentile among other Kentucky schools (Kentucky Department of Education,

2015).

Purpose of the Study

Each year all schools in Kentucky are expected to improve. In Kentucky,

schools are provided a yearly goal that is established by the state indicating the

improvement needed to meet the annual measureable objective (AMO).   The amount

of improvement needed to meet the objective can vary from year to year depending

on the previous year's performance.   In order for schools to meet this moving target,

improving instructional practices must be an ongoing endeavor. Reading

achievement is crucial to a school's performance because student performance in this

area is used in the growth calculation, gap calculation, and achievement calculation.

Essentially, improving reading achievement has the potential to impact every

component of the assessment blueprint. This study will provide educators data on the

effectiveness of the goal setting strategy as related to the reading performance of fifth

grade students.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine if setting goals for growth has an

impact on reading growth of fifth grade students. Specifically, this study will attempt

to answer the following research question: Does setting goals for growth with fifth

grade students in reading impact reading growth performance?

Research Method

This study will be based on quantitative comparison of student growth on the

reading section of the Kentucky Performance Rating and Evaluation Progress (K-

PREP) between grades four and five of all fifth grade students in Carter County.

Assessment scores are provided and will identify students as making either adequate

or inadequate growth as compared to their peers beginning in grade four. An analysis

of the growth classification that the subjects received on the state reading assessment

in grade four will serve as a benchmark and be compared to the growth classification

they receive in grade five. An analysis will be conducted to determine if a significant

difference exists between the number of students making adequate growth in reading as a fourth grader compared to their growth classification as a fifth grader.

Hypothesis

After implementation of student growth goals, the number of fifth grade students classified as achieving adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP assessment will increase significantly when compared to the classification of the same group of students on the reading section of the KPREP test as fourth graders.

Null-Hypothesis

After implementation of student growth goals, the number of fifth grade students classified as achieving adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP assessment will show no significant difference when compared to the classification of the same group of students on the reading section of the KPREP test as fourth graders.

Capstone Overview

The capstone project is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of an introduction to the study. This initial section provides insights into the relevance of the topic and the need for proven strategies that lead to increased student achievement. In addition, key terms that are used throughout the project are defined. Another component of Chapter 1, context of the study, provides detailed information about the participating organization and setting of the study. The chapter concludes with the purpose of the study being discussed. This section also contains the statement of the problem, research method, and hypothesis for the study. Chapter 2

consists of a review of literature related to the problem of the study. The literature

review contains both past and current research related to goal setting. Chapter 3

outlines the methodology used in the study including the design of the study, a

description of the participants, data analysis and limitations of the study. Chapter 4

will include the findings from the study. Chapter 5 will include a summary of the

study, implications for practice, conclusions and recommendations for future

research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

High-stakes accountability has teachers and administrators across the

Commonwealth searching for proven strategies to ensure continual improvement.

Additionally, establishing processes that promote shared leadership and responsibility

for student achievement is of great interest to educators. Likewise, motivating

students to perform at high levels has become increasingly challenging. Jenkins

(1994) advocated that many students' greatest problems in school are related to

irresponsibility not inability. Hwang (1995) reported that the apathetic attitude of

American students is profound. The effects of this complacent outlook and lack of

motivation is far stretching and necessitates a new direction in order for schools to

reach their goals.

Defining Goal Setting

The history of goal setting links back to the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. His

theory of final causality which suggests that purpose can cause action, sparked the

interest of pioneer Psychologist Edwin Locke. Locke spent many years studying the

impact of goals and how they impact individuals (Locke, 1968).

Goal setting, as defined in *Classroom Instruction that Works,* is the process of

establishing a direction for learning (Marzano, Pickering & Polluck, 2001, p. 93).

Moeller, Theiler, and Wu (2012) added that goal setting helps create clear and usable

targets for learning. Schunk (2009) clarified that while goal setting can lead to

student motivation and higher academic achievement, simply stating a goal does not

automatically benefit students. However, if implemented correctly, goal setting has

the potential to positively impact learning. Moreover, setting goals keeps everyone

focused on the desired outcomes and provides a clear direction for success. Goal

setting is not only effective at the individual level, but produces positive results when

established at the school, grade, and classroom levels as well. The key to establishing

goals that produce results is making them relevant and understandable to students

(Newman, 2012). Likewise, Ames (1989) found that students who do not fully

understand the goals set for them are not only unable to achieve them, but are also

unwilling to even attempt to try. Ames reiterated that goals must be achievable, and

perhaps more importantly, well understood. Without having students on board to

achieve desired successes, they will not be motivated by any goals, no matter how

large or small.

Schunk (1984) acknowledged three critical elements when considering goal

setting: goal specificity, goal difficulty, and goal proximity. He further clarified that

if these three components are not intentionally addressed, the integrity of the goal

setting process would be compromised.

Goal Specificity

In most cases, teachers implement two types of goals. The first and most

commonly used among classroom teachers is a very general goal such as "do your

best" (Schunk, 1990). The use of this type of goal does not convey specific desired

outcomes or behaviors to students. The second type of goal involves setting specific

and measureable desired outcomes. This type of goal has the potential to increase

academic performance by establishing a baseline for the amount of effort needed to

be successful (Schunk, 1990). Locke and Latham (1990) noted that providing

students with specific performance criteria leads to higher academic performance as

opposed to general goals such as "do your best" that require no documentation and

are often dismissed by the student.

When student goals are specific and content driven, academic achievement

increases. Specific goals such as "I want to increase my grade in science class by two

letter grades" are specific and measurable and give a sense of accountability to the

student. It is this accountability that in turn causes the student to become more

motivated to work toward achieving the established goals (Schunk, 1984).

Goal Difficulty

Locke and Latham (1990) suggested that goals should have a certain degree of

difficulty to attain. If goals become too easy to accomplish, students will have no real

feeling that they have achieved something once the goal is met. Moreover, the

researchers suggested that the more difficult the goals are the harder students will

work toward achieving them. Students are more likely to put an effort into

accomplishing goals if they in fact require an actual effort to be made. At the same

time, researchers cautioned against making goals so difficult that they are

unattainable. Locke and Lathem (1990) and Schunk (1983) noted that in the absence

of positive reinforcement, performance may decrease over time.

In research conducted by Schunk (1983, b) 40 students ranging from ages nine

to eleven were divided into two groups. The first group of students was given a

difficult, but attainable goal while the second group was given an easy goal. Both

groups were instructed to complete a specific number of long division problems

within a given amount of time. Prior to beginning the assignment, students in the

difficult goal group were provided information showing how peers of a similar age

had been successful at reaching the goal in the past. The results showed that the

combination of a difficult goal along with the attainment of comparative information

led to higher levels of self-efficacy and skill.

Goal Proximity

For goal setting to positively impact student achievement it must have

proximity. Proximal goals are those that can be attained in the near or foreseeable

future. Unlike adults, elementary age students are unable to break long-term goals

into smaller components. Therefore, it is essential that short-term goals are

developed, monitored, and rewarded often (Hallenbeck & Fleming, 2011).

Although minimal research exists on the impact of proximity on goals,

Schunk (1990) found that students respond best to short-term goals because these

goals give students a means to continuously gauge their performance. Without such

self-assessment, the very purpose behind goal setting could essentially be lost.

Similarly, Schunk and Rice (1991) found that goals with proximity result in students

having greater motivation toward attaining established goals.

Stock and Cervone (1990) reported that for the goal setting process to be

successful, students must individually evaluate their performance and be satisfied

with the results in order to continue to make progress. In addition, they found that

students must be provided the flexibility to adjust goals if they doubted their

capability to attain success. Allowing the flexibility to set and adjust proximal goals

increased both motivation and achievement.

Smart Goals

        Goals often follow the SMART framework or similar structure whereby they

are developed to be specific, measurable, achievable/agreed-upon, realistic, and time

sensitive (Doran, 1981; Fielding, 1999; Wade, 2009). While the first SMART goals

can be traced back to the business sector, educators have found their format to be

beneficial in helping students increase both achievement and performance levels

(Locke & Latham, 2002).

Performance Goals

        Performance goals focus on a desire to demonstrate proficiency in a particular

area to an outside observer (Self-Brown & Mathews, 2003).   These goals typically

focus on an established benchmark where success depends exclusively on obtaining

the minimum requirement. Students often set performance goals when reaching a

particular score is associated with some type of reward or when individual or group

comparisons are made (Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006). Achieving a

particular score on the ACT and making the highest grade on a unit exam are a couple

of examples where performance goals may be used. According to Kaplan and Maehr

(2007) "Performance-oriented students focus on managing the impression that others

have of their ability: attempting to create an impression of high ability," (p.143).

Conversely, students that are motivated by their desire to avoid creating an

impression of low ability or less capable than their peers are said to be driven by

performance-avoidance (Pintrich, 2000).

        There is some speculation of a negative effect surrounding performance goals.

Meece et al. (2006) found that when students set goals simply to increase

performance in a particular situation that learning is shallow and often forgotten.

Additionally, these researchers further suggested that memorization strategies are

often applied in these instances which lead to a lower level of understanding.

Mastery Goals

        Ames (1992); Kaplan and Maehr (2007); Meece, Anderman, and Anderman

(2006); and Self-Brown and Mathews (2003) agreed that the second type of goals,

mastery goals, take much more into consideration than a single performance.

Mastery goals "… focus on learning, understanding, developing skills, and mastering

information," (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007, p.142). Mastery goals are focused on growth

over time and steps that students take to get to the end result. For most students,

mastery requires trying and failing and trying again. This process is often

accompanied by a mix of emotions ranging from joy to frustration. Kaplan and

Maehr attributed the following as results of mastery goals: self-efficacy, persistence,

preference for challenge, self-regulated learning, and positive affect and well-being.

Unlike performance goals, success of mastery goals does not rely on a single

performance. Students can be engaged in mastery goals when they write and edit a

paper or participate in a failed lab experiment and explain what went wrong. Mastery

isn't always reflected in a score on a report; it is, more often than not, seen in the

growth of a student in a particular area over time.

When considering a student's academic peak performance level one must

consider the previous academic experiences and skill set of the student. Whitecotton

(2007) proposed that goal setting, if applied correctly, is a pathway to success. He

stated that academic mastery goals should be challenging, but yet attainable.

Furthermore, specific improvement strategies must be identified for each individual

student in order to ensure academic expectations are met. Comparing mastery goals

to athletic goals, Whitecotton (2007) commented that in order to reach peak

performance individuals must be completely focused on a particular task or skill.

Teacher's Role in Goal Setting

To reach the maximum benefit of goal setting, teachers must give personal

attention to students as they set and monitor goals. While studies support that

students who set effective goals perform at higher levels than students who do not

participate in goal setting, teacher participation in the process is crucial (Garavalia &

Gredler, 2002; White, Hohn, Tollefson, 1997). Providing feedback on the progress

toward mastering goals is the teacher's greatest role in the goal setting process. This

feedback provides students with valuable information about progress toward goals

and can promote self-efficacy and motivation for students. This is especially

important to young elementary students who may not be able to discern progress

information independently. For example, some goals may be somewhat subjective

such as knowing if written expression or reading comprehension has improved

(Szente, 2007).

Steps to Successful Goal Setting

There are many different motives for setting goals ranging from financial planning to academic success. Rader (2005) advocated that while the purposes for the goals may vary; certain steps should be followed when teaching students the goal setting process. The first step in the progression is to document the goal. Rader suggested that beginning the process by listing several areas that are of interest to students will help provide a focus for what is most important. She further recommended that students revisit the list after a short period of time to determine if the interest in the identified area(s) remains significant to them.

The second step in the process involves making the goal time sensitive. Rader (2005) wrote, "Setting a date for the attainment of a goal is the ignition for the goal-setting missile in students' minds" (P.124). She further noted that once the time frame has been established that students should adhere to it. Additionally, addressing the difference between short term goals and long term goals will help students set goal dates that are realistic. It is important for teachers to guide this process to ensure that dates are set at a rate to be challenging, but not impossible, and not so far in the future as to allow the student to lose interest.

After goals are documented and time sensitive, Rader (2005) advised that obstacles to success should be identified. She indicated that this step of the process, which analyzes each part of the goal, is especially helpful to students with special needs. She further asserts that overcoming identified stumbling blocks will increase both student ownership and motivation. After obstacles are identified and resolved,

the action plan phase of the process begins to take form. Students should begin to pinpoint the specific resources and activities that will be needed in order to achieve success.

Visualizing yourself accomplishing your goal is the fourth step in the goal setting process. She underscored the importance of this technique and its role in making success a reality. She stated that visualizing sends a message to the subconscious minds and increases the likelihood of success (Rader, 2005).

Rader (2005) identified working hard and never giving up as the fifth step in the goal setting process. At the core of this step is positive praise. Recognizing that all students have a need to feel successful, Rader believed that positive praise will encourage students on the journey and keep them focused on accomplishing their goals. She further explained that because students know when they receive false praise that the encouragement that students receive must be warranted and genuine and not solely for the purpose of boosting motivation.

The final step in the process according to Rader (2005) is self-evaluation. It is during this stage of the plan where progress monitoring occurs. Both the teacher and students are instrumental in gauging the success of the planned activities and progress toward meeting established goals. Revisions are encouraged as necessary based on the preliminary results found during the monitoring practice. Rader noted the importance of celebrating any positive movement toward success, but again cautions about providing false praise.

Figure 1

Steps to Goal Setting Process
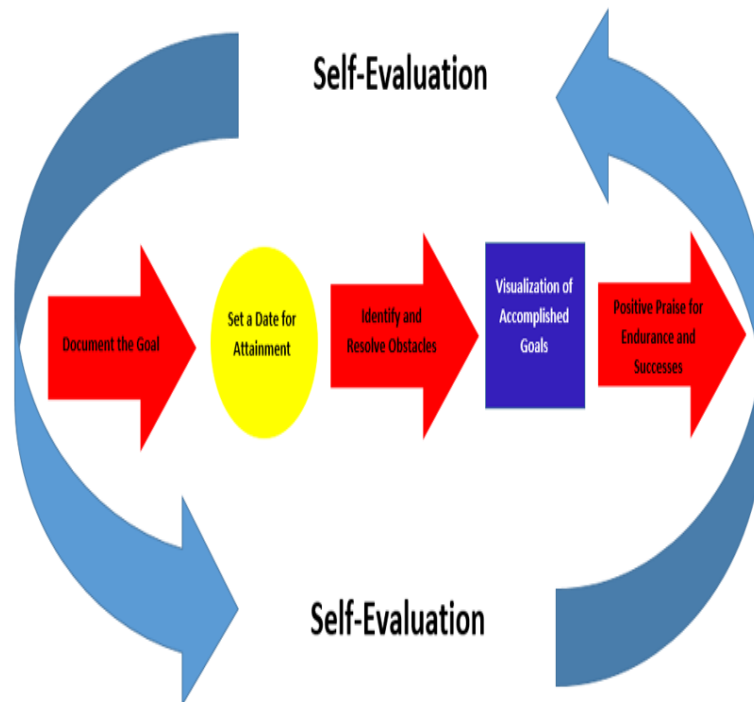
Goal Setting With Elementary Students

The learning potential of students can often be increased when appropriate

goals are established by students and supported by teachers (Ames, 1989). In a study

conducted by Palmer and Wehmeyer (2003) it was concluded that even young

elementary students at an age of five were capable of setting achievement goals and

using them as a model for achievement. Beginning the goal setting process in early

grades provides students more time and opportunity to refine the process before

adolescence. Students that have positive goal setting experiences are better able to

evaluate their individual progress toward mastery of tasks. Teaching goal setting

skills to students provides them with opportunities that enhance motivation and self-

determination (Bogolin, Harris, & Norris, 2003).

In a separate study, White, Hohn, and Tollefson (1997) conducted research

with elementary students to determine their ability to set challenging and realistic

goals. They used a basketball and baseball game with beanbags to aide students in

the understanding of setting challenging, but realistic goals. In addition to the game,

the students were trained using achievement contracts in spelling. After the initial

training, students were classified as realistic or unrealistic goal setters. The study

revealed that by the end of the second semester of grade two, students were proficient

at setting realistic goals.

Chen and McNamee (2011) conducted research to determine the impact that

different approaches of learning had on young children. In a study involving ninety-

two pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, four approaches to learning were

rated while children participated in different activities. The four areas were identified

as positive approaches to learning and consisted of initial engagement (how the child

initially approached the activity), goal orientation (how consistently the child worked

toward the activity goal), focus (the extent the child remained on task throughout the

activity), and planfulness (how organized the child was toward task completion). The

results of the study revealed goal orientation as having the largest effect size in four

of the seven completed activities. "For an activity that has a clearly defined goal such

as running through an obstacle course or solving a math problem, goal-orientation

approach is effective to task completion" (Chen & McNamee, 2011, p.77)

Serravallo (2014) described her experience with providing elementary students time for self-selected reading. Aware of the findings from Allington and Gabriel (2012) she knew that research supported providing students with independent reading time. She combined this knowledge with the findings of Guthrie (2004) which stated that children needed clear goals during self-selected reading to form her own program. Serravallo (2014) advocated for a program that starts with assessing students' current academic performance. Establishing relevant goals is the next step of her successful practice. She noted that some students need goals that help establish proper behavioral practices such as blocking out distractions; while others need goals centered on choosing appropriate books. Whatever the goals, she proposed that they should be developed through the collaborative effort of the student and teacher.

Goal Setting With Gifted Students

The academic needs of gifted students have long been overlooked in education. As a result, as many as half of the students identified as gifted are underachievers. Perhaps because of their potential and intrinsic drive, educators often find themselves ignoring the needs of these students and catering to the low achievers. Morisano and Shore (2010) reported that setting goals with high achieving students impacts both cognitive and behavioral performance, energizes the students, increases persistence, and affects action. Clearly, encouraging high-ability students to set specific challenging goals could significantly benefit them in school and life.

According to Richert (1991),

Children must be given choices and required to make

decisions while setting their own goals. Discipline and

motivation must be shifted from dependence on teachers or

parents to internal feelings and values as the prime basis for

action. . . . It is particularly important for exceptional children,

who must eventually function independently while

developing their unique abilities, to be involved in goal

setting, as well as in changing plans and goals as needed

(p. 157).

Providing gifted students with opportunities to participate in goal setting enhances

academic achievement and responsibility. Morisano and Shore (2010) asserted,

"When children learn how to break down difficult goals into intermediate and

manageable tasks, a sense of control and proficiency is triggered" (p. 255).

Goal Setting With Low Achieving Students

Goal setting strategies have proven beneficial to students identified as low

achieving. Hellenbeck and Fleming (2011) found that students participating in an

after school intervention study were more focused and in many cases met their targets

as a result of specific goals. In addition, this same study reported teachers developed

stronger relationships with students because of the time spent developing and

monitoring specific goals with students.

Schunk and Rice (1991) found that when provided meaningful feedback, children who demonstrated difficulties in reading improved their reading comprehension, self-efficacy, and achievement. In a later study, Schunk and Swartz (1993) recorded similar results in writing achievement among students with disabilities. They found that self-efficacy and achievement gains were common among participants after the implementation of goal setting.

Liu and Wang (2008) further discussed the important role that teachers play in the achievement of low achieving students. They wrote:

> Teachers also need to be aware that lower-ability stream students' academic confidence is highly dependent on their perception of teacher's expectations, perhaps more so than their higher-ability stream counterparts. Therefore, if teachers are keen in improving lower-ability stream students' level of confidence, they need to have high but realistic expectations of academic performance from them. The expectations should be in line with the students' abilities and not their stream membership. In essence, students, regardless of stream, should never be left with a sense of inadequacy and failure with too high an expectation. But, at the same time, they should not be left with the feeling that they are beyond help, and there is no cause for any hard work with too low an expectation (p. 253).

Individual and Group Goals

Linskie (1977) asserted that students who have established goals are much more likely to be motivated to work harder toward achieving their goals than those

who are not goal-driven. O'Connell (1991) advised that teachers should encourage

students in the development and monitoring of goals. Like most strategies, there is

more than one way to consider for implementation. Goal setting may be structured to

impact a group of students or to impact an individual student.

Punnett (1986) asserted that students are more motivated to work toward

individual goals as opposed to one size fits all goals that are commonly assigned to

groups of students. Such group goals inadvertently remove the aspect of personal

accountability from the goal and place it on the group as a whole. While Punnett

stated the use of group goals can serve as motivation to students, a goal for one

student might be unattainable for another; therefore, creating an unrealistic

expectation.

Madden (1997) defined goal setting as "the level of achievement that students

establish themselves to accomplish" (p. 411). For maximum benefits, teachers should

focus on individual goals as opposed to group goals, provide rewards and rapid

feedback, and provide encouragement toward reaching expectations (Punnet, 1986).

Purposes for Goal Setting

Self-regulated theorists advocate that not only should students set goals for

learning, but also be given authority to select, organize, and create their learning

environment. Because self-regulated learners are able to discern when they have

mastered a skill, allowing them to have involvement in establishing individual

learning goals helps build confidence, diligence and resourcefulness (Zimmerman,

1990).

Motivation

In today's world of advanced technology and environmental stimuli, educators are often faced with the challenge of motivating students on academic tasks. Stipek (1988) identified the following behaviors that represent characteristics of motivated learners as lacking in many students: working well independently, beginning and completing tasks on time, volunteering to respond, and paying attention. Schunk (1985) concluded that goal setting is a useful tool for improving not only student motivation, but student performance as well. Goal setting also increases independence and on-task behavior which are indicative of highly motivated students (Graham, Harris, & Reid, 1992). Zimmerman (2002) stated, "self-regulation increases student motivation and engagement by enabling students to customize and take control of their own learning through conscious knowledge of effective strategies and choices" (Campbell, 2009, p. 98).

Madden (1997) also identified goal setting as a process that has the potential to motivate students. He stated that goal setting keeps students' interest by enabling them to focus on a specific task while providing immediate feedback on achievement. Self-Brown and Matthews (2003) concluded that when teachers incorporate goal setting strategies into classroom activities, positive outcomes in student motivation and self-conceptions are evident.

Motivation is a fundamental factor in maximizing student academic performance. Each of us enjoys a certain amount of satisfaction when we recognize success. Internal standards (a person's desire for success) dictate the amount of effort

we are willing to exert toward a given task. Setting goals allows us to compare our

individual performance with our desired outcomes. Because reaching our goals

instills a sense of pride and accomplishment, they can often motivate us to perform at

higher levels (Punnett, 1986). Meece and Miller (1997) found that when third grade

students were provided with motivational goals they were less concerned about

teacher approval and normative standards of evaluation. Thus allowing more

creativity and increasing motivation to read and write.

Students who are given the opportunity to develop their own goals have a

greater sense of ownership thus increasing motivation and the desire to work harder

to achieve their commitment (Schunk, 1990). In addition to being involved in the

goal development process, students also need regular feedback and support from the

teacher throughout the process to ensure motivational endurance (Cheung, 2004).

A qualitative study including one hundred twenty-six elementary teachers was

conducted to determine the method most frequently used by teachers to motivate

students to achieve at high levels. Seventy-eight of those surveyed indicated that goal

setting was the most effective tool at motivating students. Madden (1997) noted the

following benefits of the goal setting strategy:

- By using goal setting, students feel better about who they are and are willing
   to take risks to learn.

- Goal-setting increases motivation in students, as well as self-pride.

- Students have greater power in the learning process. Having a say in what
   they choose to learn is a motivational factor.

- Goal-setting improves the students' achievement. The students feel more in control and therefore try harder to complete it.

- If students don't reach their goals the first time, they can try again. Consequently this procedure keeps them from developing uptight feelings if first time failure occurs.

- Goal-setting provides the students with ownership in their motivational programs. Ownership acts as an impetus to achievement.

- Since goal-setting is more individualized, pupils experience more personal success, rather than stress from competition (p. 413).

Increased Academic Achievement

Moeller, et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal study investigating the relationship between goal setting and student achievement. The research occurred over a five year period and the participants included 1,273 students from 23 high schools. Their findings were consistent with Rader (2005) indicating that certain steps must be taken in order for students to successfully implement goal setting. Specifically, Moeller, et al. (2012) noted the need for goals to include a written explanation, action plan and reflection. The findings of the extensive research revealed a statistically significant relationship between goal setting and student achievement.

Szente (2007) believed in the vitality of self-assessment in relation to student achievement. Students must be able to monitor their progress as they continue on their personalized learning path. She noted that once a student sets and achieves an

initial goal they are more likely to set and achieve future goals.

Goal Setting Obstacles

While goal setting has the potential to positively impact student achievement there are possible negative consequences to consider. "When children set inappropriate goals, it can put their developing self-esteem at risk. Goals that are set too high, or too low, or in terms that are too vague might lead the child to think of himself or herself as a failure" (Morisano and Shore, 2010, p. 253). Bogolin, et. al. (2003) concluded that students struggle when attempting to write long-term goals for academic achievement; they often set goals that are not feasible to accomplish.

In order for goal implementation to be successful, there must be a shift in the customary role that teachers assume in the classroom. In fact, students need to be encouraged to take responsibility for setting their curricular goals and monitoring progress toward meeting them (Lee and Gavine, 2003). Of equal importance is the expectation that teachers have for students. Madden (1997) concluded that when a teacher fails to express high expectations for student achievement, it is unlikely that the student will show academic growth.

It is not uncommon for students of a young age to have misconceptions of their academic ability that can become an obstacle during the goal setting process (Garavailia and Gredler, 2002). Szente (2007) emphasized the negative impact that can occur when students set goals that are outside of their academic potential; underscoring that believing you can do something does not necessarily mean you can accomplish it. Teacher monitoring of student goals is imperative to ensure students

do not become frustrated by setting goals that are not within their academic competency.

Tom, Cooper, and McGraw (1984) proposed that many children are unsuccessful at reaching their goals simply because of the gender, social class, and racial biases that the teacher may have. Their study revealed the strong influence that teacher preconceptions have on the overall ability of students to perform at high levels. The researchers further concluded that the influence of significant people in our lives, such as teachers, often determine the extent to which we believe we can be successful.

Providing students with every opportunity to be successful in the competitive world that we live is essential. One size no longer fits all. It is imperative that educators begin to look at students as individuals instead of collectively. Providing every student with their own individual education plan won't be easy, but they deserve no less.

Summary

Chapter 2 identified the current research available on student goal setting. Specifically, studies were examined to determine the impact of student goal setting with diverse populations demonstrating varying intelligence levels. Furthermore, important to this study was the information obtained about the process for establishing and implementing goals with students. In addition, the research revealed different purposes for goal setting, different types of goals, and provided information about the effectiveness of each.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology used to determine the effects of goal setting on student growth in reading. Additionally, a detailed explanation of the process for implementation used by the schools participating in the study is explained. Furthermore, the limitations that may alter the outcome of the study are identified.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter describes the research design, subjects, instrument, procedures, Carter County goal strategy implementation process, data analysis, and limitations in this study.

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to determine if goal setting has an impact on elementary student achievement in reading. Quantitative data will be collected for the study. Data will be analyzed for the reading section of the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) test. Data will consist of a comparison of growth scores in reading for 328 fourth grade students from 2013-2014 and growth scores in reading for this same group of students as fifth graders on the reading section of the 2014-2015 K-PREP. The following research question will guide the study: Does setting goals with fifth grade students for growth in reading impact the students' reading achievement?

Participants

The sampling method will be a convenience sample. The participants will consist of all 328 fourth grade students enrolled in a Carter County Schools who were administered the reading section of the K-PREP assessment during the 2013-2014 school term and these same students as fifth grade students who were administered the reading section of the K-PREP during the 2014-2015 school term. These students were selected because fourth grade is the first grade level to be assigned growth

points for reading in Kentucky. Therefore, comparing students' growth classification

in fourth grade to their growth classification in fifth grade where student growth goals

were implemented will provide data about the effectiveness of the goal setting

strategy.

Instrument

The instrument used for the study will be the Kentucky Performance Rating

for Educational Progress test. The assessment for grades 3-8 is a blended model built

with norm-referenced test (NRT) and criterion-referenced test (CRT) items which

consist of multiple-choice (MC), extended-response (ER), and short answer (SA)

items. The NRT is a purchased test with national norms and the CRT portion is

customized for Kentucky.

The testing blueprint for the fourth grade reading indicates items covering the

following reading strands: key ideas, craft and structure, integration of ideas, and

vocabulary and acquisition. The reading test for fourth grade contains three separate

parts: Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A of the fourth grade reading test is the norm

reference portion. It contains 30 multiple choice items and students have 40 minutes

to complete this section. Part B of the fourth grade reading assessment contains three

passages with 12 multiple choice questions, one short answer question and one

extended response question. Students have a total of 80 minutes to complete Part B

of the test. Part C contains two passages with 12 multiple choice questions and one

short answer question. Students have 60 minutes to complete Part C of the test.

Table 1

Testing Blueprint for Grade Four Reading

Reading Grade 4	#Passages	#MC	#SA	#ER	Time
Part A- NRT		30			40
Part B	3	12	1	1	80
Part C	2	12	1		60

The testing blueprint for the fifth grade reading test confirms items covering the following reading strands: key ideas, craft and structure, integration of ideas, and vocabulary and acquisition. The reading test for fifth grade contains three separate parts: Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A of the fifth grade reading test is the norm reference portion. It contains 30 multiple choice items and students have 40 minutes to complete this section. Part B of the fifth grade reading assessment contains four passages with 16 multiple choice questions, two short answer questions, and one extended response question. Students have a total of 90 minutes to complete Part B of the test. Part C contains two passages with 17 multiple choice questions and two short answer questions. Students have 65 minutes to complete Part C of the test.

Table 2

Testing Blueprint for Grade Five Reading

Reading Grade 4	#Passages	#MC	#SA	#ER	Time
Part A- NRT		30			40
Part B	4	16	4	1	90
Part C	2	17	2		65

The K-PREP assessment comes with an administrator's manual that provides a script that is to be used by the testing proctor. The script gives step-by-step instructions of what is to be said before, during, and after each section of the assessment.

Describing the Process:

The Implementation of Goal Setting Strategy in Carter County

The Carter County School System had a long history of academic challenges. Beginning with the 2012-2013 school term, the District Leadership Team (DLT) began researching promising practices that could potentially motivate teachers, who were tired of disappointments, and students, who had grown accustomed to academic failure. The work of Hattie (2012) provided the focus for our work. In his book, *Visible Learning for Teachers Maximizing Impact on Learning,* he shares the effect size of different activities that take place in schools. Some of the activities have a

positive effect on student achievement while others have proven to have a negative effect. Goal setting, according to Hattie (2012) has the greatest effect size of any other strategy for motivation. On a scale where .4 is considered to have a significant effect, goal setting has an effect size of 1.4.

To begin the process, the DLT met with all school administrators and explained the process for setting goals. We shared the research from Schunk (1984) stating that goals needed to have proximity, a degree of difficulty, and specificity. Together, DLT members and school administrators created a form for school-wide goals to be recorded. School administrators were charged to return to their respective schools and work with teachers to establish what would become their school's 2012-2013 assessment goals. In addition, each school was to create a poster depicting the school goals that was displayed in the boardroom at the central office and throughout the school.

During monthly administrator meetings, school administrators were called upon to reflect on the strategies and activities that had been implemented during the month in an effort to meet their established goals. This exchange of ideas proved very beneficial to every school since they were all looking for improvement tactics. Furthermore, each school was assigned a specific month to present their school wide goals to the members of the board of education during a monthly board meeting.

When assessment scores arrived the next fall, the entire school community was exuberant at the progress that had been made in such a short period of time. Moving from the bottom 10% of school districts in the state to the 84th percentile and

being classified as a Proficient district was certainly reason to celebrate.

Second Year of Implementation

During the 2013-14 school term (the second year of implementation), the district took the goal setting strategy to another level. Teachers were asked to set goals for every child in their classroom. Using formative data from benchmark assessments, classroom assignments, Discovery Education Assessment, and other available resources, teachers were asked to set goals for the number of students projected to score at the novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished levels on the K-PREP exam.   They were asked to keep the documented list at hand so that it could be shared with school and district administrators as they visited each classroom. The lists served as talking points throughout the year as teachers and administrators revisited the list many times to gauge the progress toward meeting the established goals.

Using the projected student outcomes provided by individual teachers, schools again created school wide goals. The school wide goals were widely communicated through parent newsletters, parent and teacher conferences, sporting events, and posters that were hung throughout schools. In addition, the posters were again displayed in the boardroom where anyone attending the monthly board meetings was reminded of the established goals. Important to note, however, is that during this second year of implementation, students were not made aware of the individual goals that had been set for them by their teacher.

The district followed the same process for monitoring and sharing goal implementation during the 2013-2014 school year as during the previous year. During this second year of implementation, the DLT shared goal setting research at each monthly administrator's meeting. Specifically, the district and school administrators began looking at what the research said about the student's involvement in the goal setting process. To date, teachers had set goals for students, but students were not aware of their goal. While school wide goals were communicated with students, they were unaware that these goals were a compilation of the projections that teachers had made for students.

Researchers Ames (1992); Kaplan & Maehr (2007); Meece, Anderman, & Anderman (2006); and Self-Brown & Mathews (2003) concurred that students should be involved in the goal setting process. The DLT and school administrators agreed that students would be included in setting and monitoring their own goals during the next school year; the 2014-2015 school term would be the third year of implementation.

Scores from the 2013-2014 state assessments again showed marked improvements for the school system. For the first time since its inception in 1990, the district met the Annual Measureable Objective (AMO) as determined by the state. Additionally, the district was classified as a Distinguished School System ranking at the 91st percentile among other school districts in the state.

To add to teacher accountability, the district implemented a Goal Review Form (Appendix A) to be completed by all teachers. The form provided a means for

teachers to compare the classroom goals that had been set with the actual data from

student performance. In addition, the form provided a reflection component whereby

teachers could determine what went well during the year and what areas might need

improvement.

At this point, goals had been implemented in every school in the district with

great success. Teachers had bought into the process and firmly believed that

establishing goals was a strategy worthy of their time.

Third Year of Implementation

During the 2014-2015 school term (year three of goal setting implementation)

teachers were trained on the process for student involvement in setting goals. The

DLT met with each elementary teacher monthly during grade level academies and all

middle and high school teachers monthly during content specific meeting. During the

meetings, the DLT shared best practices for student involvement in the goal setting

process. The steps outlined by Rader (2005) provided the framework that teachers

would use when teaching students the process.

By early fall, all students in the district had established goals. While the

documentation format varied from school to school, essential components were

common among all schools. All students had clearly defined goals that challenged

them to higher levels of achievement in at least one content area, all students had time

frames attached to each goal, and all students conferenced with the teacher bi-weekly

for progress monitoring.

In addition to the above mentioned components, students in fifth grade were given added criteria. Each fifth grade student was asked to include at least one goal for reading achievement. Goals were to be set in one of the domains of reading including comprehension, fluency, or vocabulary. Teachers conferenced with students on appropriate activities for their chosen domain. In addition, progress monitoring took place weekly with all fifth grade students.

Data Analysis

I submitted an application to Morehead State University to request exemption status for my study from federal regulations through the IRB process. Since permission was granted from Morehead State, I began collecting my data once my proposal was approved. Student performance results on the reading section of the KPREP assessment from 2013-2014, when the students were in fourth grade, and student performance results on the reading section of the KPREP assessment from 2014-2015, when the students were fifth graders were analyzed. After I collected the data, I determined the statistical procedure that best represented the information and reported my results.

Statistical Procedure

The statistical test chosen to determine if a significant difference existed after implementation of the goal setting process was the McNemar's Change Test. This test is commonly used to determine if differences exist with the dependent variable that can be divided into two connected groups. This test was appropriate for the current study as the dependent variable (a student's growth determination) resulted in

a student making the score above or below the benchmark required to receive a growth point. In this research, the test was used to measure the effectiveness of a treatment (implementing the goal setting strategy).

Three specific criteria must be met when using the McNemar's Change Test:

- You must have one categorical dependent variable with two categories. In the current study, the student growth score in reading was the dependent variable and results were reported as either met or not met the score necessary to receive a growth point.

- The two groups in the dependent variable may not overlap. The current study meets this criterion as every student received only one growth score classification.

- The participants are a random sample from the population of interest. While the current study utilized a convenience sample of all students enrolled in fifth grade in the Carter County School System in the spring of 2015, the participants represent only a small percentage of students when considering the magnitude of the impact of the findings.

Limitations

All studies are subject to certain limitations. The following is a list of identified limitations to this study.

1. While there are 328 participants in the study they are homogeneous in that they are all from the same state and school system.

2. All teachers and administrators associated with the study were Caucasian. Different results might exist in a more diverse setting.

3. The sample size was limited to fifth grade students all attending school in the same rural area. Carter County has reciprocal attendance agreements with 12 neighboring school districts whereby students may attend school in the district of their choice. During the study period, the subjects consisted of students from Carter County and four other Kentucky counties. Each of the represented counties was similar in socioeconomic status and resources available to citizens.

4. Instruction was delivered by different teachers over the course of the two year study. It is likely that students received instruction at differing degrees of quality between fourth and fifth grades.

5. Teachers were taught the goal setting process by district superintendent and district instructional staff. Different results would perhaps be present if the process had been taught by a less authoritative people.

6. District Academies were in place and served as a source of disseminating best practices to all teachers. Different results might exist if districts do not have a means for collaborating with teachers.

7. The goal setting process had been implemented at the school-wide and teacher level the two years prior to the study.

8. More than 98% if the student participants were classified as Caucasian.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided specifics information about the design of the research study including the instrument and participants used to collect quantitative data. In addition, Chapter 3 also provided a detailed explanation of the goal setting process that was implemented over the past three years in the school district. Furthermore, data analysis procedures were explained in detail. Finally, limitations associated with the study were discussed.

Chapter 4 provides the findings for the study. Additionally, quantitative data are calculated and explained as related to the problem of the study. Furthermore, school and district overall performance classifications for the past two years are identified.

Chapter 4

Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and the results of the data analysis. Quantitative data are explained and used to answer the researcher's question identified in the study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between goal setting and student growth in reading. Fifth grade students enrolled at the six elementary schools in Carter County during the 2015 school year served as the focus of the study. The results reflect the outcome of one year of student growth goal implementation and three additional years of setting school-wide growth goals and two years of setting teacher growth goals.

The question guiding the work of this capstone has been, "Does setting goals for growth with fifth grade students in reading impact reading growth performance?"

Quantitative results presented below depict the percentage of students scoring in the 40th percentile and above in their respective scoring cluster of the reading section of the KPREP exam. The percentage of students making adequate growth as fifth graders on the 2015 KPREP exam was compared to the percentage of students making adequate growth as fourth graders on the 2014 KPREP exam to determine if a significant difference exists.

Table 3

Subject Data

School	Total Students
Carter Elementary	14
Heritage Elementary	54
Olive Hill Elementary	88
Prichard Elementary	103
Tygart Creek Elementary	48
Star Elementary	21
Carter County District Total	328

Table 3 lists the number of subjects from each of the six elementary schools in Carter County that participated in the study. The study consisted of 328 students who attended elementary school in Carter County for both fourth and fifth grades during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. These students attended a minimum of 100 days each of the two years and took the reading portion of the KPREP during both their fourth and fifth grade years of school. Eight students attended one of the two grades, but not both, and therefore were not included in the study. Furthermore, three students attended an elementary school in Carter County for part of both years, but less than 100 days and consequently were excluded from the study. Fourteen of the participants attended Carter Elementary, 54 attended Heritage Elementary, 88

attended Olive Hill Elementary, 103 attended Prichard Elementary, 48 attended

Tygart Creek Elementary, and 21 attended Star Elementary.

Figure 2

Percentage of Students Making Adequate Growth in Grade 4 and Grade 5
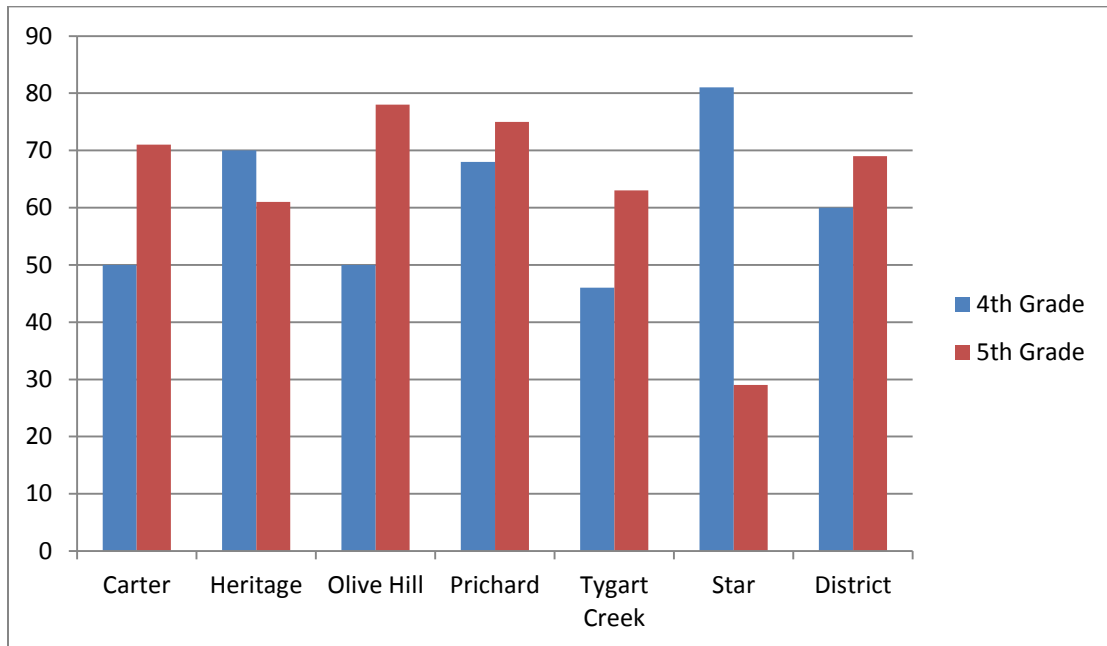
Figure 2 lists the percentage of students at each school making adequate

growth on the KPREP reading exam at the end of their fourth grade year of school in

the spring of 2014 and at the end of their fifth grade year of school in the spring of

2015. Fifty percent of the students from Carter Elementary made adequate growth as

fourth graders in 2014 compared to 71% of these same students making adequate

growth as fifth graders in 2015. Heritage Elementary was one of only two schools

showing a decrease in the percentage of students showing adequate growth during the

two year study dropping from 70% in 2014 to 61% in 2015. Students at Olive Hill

Elementary led the district in growth increasing from 50% students showing adequate

growth in 2014 to 78% in 2015. Prichard Elementary had 68% of their fourth grade

students receive a rating of adequate growth on the 2014 reading exam whereas 75%

of the group made adequate growth as fifth graders in 2015. Forty-six percent of

Tygart Creek's fourth grade students made adequate growth in 2014 while 63% of the

group made adequate growth on the 2015 exam.   Star Elementary saw a decline of

52% over the course of the study with 81% of their fourth grade students making

adequate growth in 2014, but only 29% on the 2015 exam. Collectively, the district

saw an increase in reading growth with 60% of the fourth grade students in Carter

County made adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP exam in 2014

and 69% of the group made adequate growth on the fifth grade reading exam in 2015.

Data Analysis

The McNemar's Test for Change was used to investigate whether a statistical

difference existed between the student growth achieved on the 2014 reading

assessment and the growth achieved on the 2015 reading assessment. Furthermore,

for purposes of this study a significant difference was determined to exist when $p <$

0.05. This statistical test was used individually on all six of the elementary schools in

the Carter County School System and then collectively as a district comprised of

students from all six elementary schools.

Carter City Elementary

The performance of 14 students was examined over the 2014 and 2015 school

year from the K-Prep report for Carter City Elementary. Table 6 contains a summary

of the students' growth performance over the study period.

Table 4

Carter City Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	4	3	7
		% within Year14	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	30.0%	50.0%
	Growth	Count	0	7	7
		% within Year14	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Year15	0.0%	70.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	4	10	14
		% within Year14	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the 2014 school year, seven students (50%) met growth and seven (50%)
did not. In the 2015 school year, the number of students that met growth increased to
10 (71.4%) and there were four students (28.6%) that did not met growth. Further
examination of Table 4 revealed that of the seven that did not meet growth in 2014,
three of those students moved to the growth status in 2015. No student regressed to
the non-growth status in 2015 after meeting growth in 2014.

The McNemar Test was conducted to determine if there was a significant
change in academic growth from 2014 to 2015. An uncorrected Chi-square of 3.000

(df = 1, p = .0833) was obtained. The result indicated that there was not a significant

change in the number of students meeting growth status although there was a 21.4%

increase (50.0% in 2014 to 71.4% in 2015) in the number of students identified as

meeting Kentucky's growth level.

Heritage Elementary

A total of 54 students attending Heritage Elementary participated in the study.

Table 5 contains a summary of their growth performance in reading during the 2014

and 2015 school years.

Table 5

Heritage Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	16	0	16
		% within Year14	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Year15	76.2%	0.0%	29.6%
	Growth	Count	5	33	38
		% within Year14	13.2%	86.8%	100.0%
		% within Year15	23.8%	100.0%	70.4%
Total		Count	21	33	54
		% within Year14	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

During the 2014 school term, 70.4% of the students participating in the study

from Heritage Elementary scored at or above the benchmark for adequate growth in

reading on the KPREP reading assessment. However, this number decreased to

61.1% making adequate growth on the 2015 KPREP reading assessment. Data

further revealed that none of the 16 students failing to make adequate growth in 2014

progressed enough to receive the growth point in 2015. In fact, 5 of the 38 students

that received a growth point in 2014 regressed to no growth point in 2015.

An analysis of student performance using the McNemar's Test indicated that

there was a significance in the change that occurred in the number of students

receiving adequate growth in 2014 when compared to those receiving adequate

growth in 2015 ($\chi^2 = 5.000$, df = 1, p = .0253), however the change was in the

opposite direction of the stated hypothesis.

Olive Hill Elementary

Eighty-eight students were enrolled in the 4th grade during the 2014 school

term and their growth performance was tracked through the 2015 school year. Table

6 provides a summary of the growth performance for the two school years.

Table 6

Olive Hill Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	17	27	44
		% within Year14	38.6%	61.4%	100.0%
		% within Year15	89.5%	39.1%	50.0%
	Growth	Count	2	42	44
		% within Year14	4.5%	95.5%	100.0%
		% within Year15	10.5%	60.9%	50.0%
Total		Count	19	69	88
		% within Year14	21.6%	78.4%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In the 2014 school year, there was an even distribution of students meeting growth and not meeting growth (44, or 50%) in each category. However, there was an increase of 25 students meeting the benchmark for growth in the 2015 school year with 69 making adequate growth and only 19 not making adequate growth. An examination of the individual cells of Table 6 show that of the 44 students not meeting growth in 2014, 27 of those students moved to the growth category in 2015, for an increase of 28%. However, two students moved from the growth category in 2014 to the not meeting growth in 2015.

Examination of the frequency of students in each category using McNemar's

Test indicated a significant change occurred in the number of students in growth

category from 2014 to 2015 ($\chi^2 = 21.552$, df = 1, p = 0.000). In 2014, 50% of the

students were identified as making growth compared to the 78.4% of the student in

2015.

Prichard Elementary

Prichard Elementary contained the largest number of participants (103) in the

study. Data outlining the growth performance in reading on the KPREP exam for

2014 and 2015 is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7

Prichard Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	23	10	33
		% within Year14	69.7%	30.3%	100.0%
		% within Year15	88.5%	13.0%	32.0%
	Growth	Count	3	67	70
		% within Year14	4.3%	95.7%	100.0%
		% within Year15	11.5%	87.0%	68.0%
Total		Count	26	77	103
		% within Year14	25.2%	74.8%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Data for Prichard Elementary students revealed that the percentage of students meeting the growth benchmark on the reading assessment increased from 68% in 2014 to 74.8% in 2015. Of the 33 (32%) not making adequate growth in 2014, 10 exceeded the required performance level in 2015 and made adequate growth. However, 3 of the 70 (68%) that made adequate growth in 2014 failed to meet the growth benchmark on the 2015 exam.

While the percentage of students making adequate growth increased over the two year study period, the McNemar's Test revealed that it was not enough to be deemed statistically significant (χ^2 = 3.769, df = 1, p = .0522).

Tygart Creek Elementary

Tygart Creek Elementary saw an increase in the number of students making adequate growth in reading from fourth grade to fifth grade. Table 8 provides detailed information about student growth performance in reading for 2014 and 2015.

Table 8

Tygart Creek Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	16	10	26
		% within Year14	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%
		% within Year15	88.9%	33.3%	54.2%
	Growth	Count	2	20	22
		% within Year14	9.1%	90.9%	100.0%
		% within Year15	11.1%	66.7%	45.8%
Total		Count	18	30	48
		% within Year14	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The number of students at Tygart Creek Elementary making adequate growth increased over the study period (45.8% in 2014, 62.5% 2015). Data show that of the 26 students not making adequate growth in 2014, 10 increased their growth performance to meet the benchmark for adequate growth on the 2015 exam. Data further revealed that 2 of the 22 making adequate growth in 2014 failed to maintain the score for adequate growth in 2015.

The McNemar's Test was used to determine the significance of the change in scores over the study period. Analysis revealed that the school improved nearly

16.7% over the two school years. This improvement was classified as statistically

significant according to McNemar's Test (χ^2 = 5.333, df = 1, p = .0209).

Star Elementary

A total of 21 students from Star Elementary participated in the study. Table 9

contains a summary of reading growth performance of students from Star Elementary.

Table 9

Star Elementary Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	4	0	4
		% within Year14	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Year15	26.7%	0.0%	19.0%
	Growth	Count	11	6	17
		% within Year14	64.7%	35.3%	100.0%
		% within Year15	73.3%	100.0%	81.0%
Total		Count	15	6	21
		% within Year14	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Star Elementary had the greatest percentage of fourth grade students in Carter

County making adequate growth in reading on the 2014 exam (81%). However, Star

also had the lowest percentage of students making adequate growth in reading in

grade five on the 2015 exam (28.6%). Results indicated that none of the 4 students

failing to meet the benchmark in 2014 scored high enough to receive the label of

adequate growth in 2015. Furthermore, only 6 of the 17 making adequate growth in

2014 maintained the designation of making adequate growth on the 2015 exam.

According to the McNemar's Test calculations, a difference did exist between reading

growth achieved by students in fourth grade as compared to reading growth achieved

in fifth grade at Star Elementary. Specifically according to the results, ($\chi^2 = 11.000$,

df = 1, p = .0009) the difference is significant. However, the difference was in the

opposite direction of the stated hypothesis.

All Carter County Elementary Schools

An analysis of the reading growth performance of all 328 participants over the

study period indicated an increase in the number of students making adequate growth

in fifth grade as opposed to those making adequate growth in fourth grade as

indicated in Table 10.

Table 10

All Elementary Schools Growth Performance for 2014 and 2015 School Years

			Year15		Total
			No Growth	Growth	
Year14	No Growth	Count	80	50	130
		% within Year14	61.5%	38.5%	100.0%
		% within Year15	77.7%	22.2%	39.6%
	Growth	Count	23	175	198
		% within Year14	11.6%	88.4%	100.0%
		% within Year15	22.3%	77.8%	60.4%
Total		Count	103	225	328
		% within Year14	31.4%	68.6%	100.0%
		% within Year15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

On the 2014 exam, 130 of the 328 participants failed to meet the benchmark score required to make adequate growth. However, 50 of those students improved their growth performance and received adequate growth on the 2015 exam. Of the 198 students receiving adequate growth in 2014, 88.3% (175 students) were able to maintain the classification on the 2015 exam.

Specifically, McNemar Test results indicated that a significant difference existed in the reading growth performance when comparing the reading growth for the two year period ($\chi^2 = 9.986$, df = 1, p = .0016). In 2014, 60.4% of the students

were classified as making adequate growth, whereas 68.6% received the designation

in 2015.

Table 11

Actual Growth Compared to Expected Growth

School	Total 5th Grade Enrollment	Number Making Adequate Growth	Number Expected to Make Adequate Growth	Difference
Carter City	14	10	8.4	1.6
Heritage	54	33	32.4	.6
Olive Hill	88	69	52.8	16.2
Prichard	103	77	61.8	15.2
Tygart Creek	48	30	28.8	1.2
Star	21	6	12.6	-5.4

Table 11 above represents the actual number of students that made adequate

growth and the number that should be expected to make adequate growth based on

Kentucky's growth formula. The data revealed that five of the six elementary schools

in Carter County exceeded the expected growth; whereas one school had fewer

students than expected make adequate growth.

Table 12

Performance Level of Each Elementary School in 2014 and 2015

School	2014 Performance Classification	2015 Performance Classification
Carter City	Needs Improvement	Proficient
Heritage	Proficient	Proficient
Olive hill	Needs Improvement	Proficient
Prichard	Proficient	Proficient
Star	Distinguished	Distinguished
Tygart Creek	Needs Improvement	Distinguished

Table 12 represents the classification for each of the six elementary schools in Carter County for the 2014 and 2015 school years. The classification is a compilation of all accountability measures for elementary schools. Trend data revel that all elementary schools scored at or above Kentucky's established goal of proficiency. Three of the schools maintained the same classification, two schools increased by one classification level, and one school increased two classification levels.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided data to answer the research question through the analysis of quantitative data. Data revealed that when analyzed individually, a significant positive difference existed in the growth performance of students in two (Olive Hill and Tygart Creek) of the six elementary schools in the district. Furthermore, data

revealed that a positive difference was observed in two of the schools (Prichard and

Carter) not showing a significant difference in growth performance. By contrast, two

school's data (Star and Heritage) showed a difference that was in the direction that

does not support the hypothesis of this study. Most importantly, when considering

the entire sample population collectively, data show a significant difference was

found in the growth performance of students in fifth grade as compared to fourth

grade.

Chapter 5 summarizes the entire study and draws conclusions from the results

of the data analysis to answer the research question of the study. In addition, the

significance of the data and implications for how they affect the schools, district, and

the field of education as a whole are addressed.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Chapter 5 is divided into four sections. Section one provides a summary of
the study and concentrates on the results of the study. Section two takes an in-depth
look at the data analysis and reveals conclusions that can be drawn from the data.
The third section will present data from the six elementary schools in the study to
determine the impact of the goal setting strategy in improving student growth in
reading. The final section proposes recommendations for practice and offers
suggestions for future research.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the potential impact of
goal setting on elementary students' growth in reading. Specifically, the study
focused on students in fifth grade and compared their reading growth classification in
fifth grade to their reading growth classification in fourth grade on the KPREP exam.

Subjects

The subjects in the study consisted of a convenience sample of 328 Carter
County fifth grade students who also attended a Carter County school the previous
year as a fourth grade student. All six of the elementary schools in Carter County had
participants in the study.

Methodology

Teachers were provided intensified training on the steps for goal setting
(Appendix B) as outlined by Rader (2005). In turn, students were introduced to the

goal setting concept during the first month of their fifth grade school year. Fifth

grade students (the subjects in the study) were required to have one goal that focused

on reading achievement and could select other areas for goal setting as desired.

Teachers worked with students in the development of goals that were specific,

challenging, and time sensitive.   Goals were reviewed weekly by the student and

teacher to monitor progress and revise as needed. This Process Monitoring

Documentation Form (Appendix C) was completed on a one-to-one basis during

supplemental reading time. Students' successes were celebrated and new goals were

developed when goals were achieved.

The instrument used for the purpose of data collection was the K-PREP Test.

Students' growth scores on the reading section of the KPREP assessment in fifth

grade were compared to the growth score they received on the reading section of the

KPREP assessment in fourth grade. The percentage of students making appropriate

growth was collected and analyzed individually for each of the six elementary schools

in Carter County. Additionally, a compilation of the quantitative data was used to

determine the impact of goal setting on the entire population of fifth grade students.

McNemar's Change Test was used as the statistical test for the study. The

data from this test were used to determine if a significant difference existed between

the observed results and the expected results.

Results

The findings of the study included quantitative analysis that measured student

growth in reading on the KPREP exam. The findings of the data revealed that four of

the six elementary schools in Carter County showed an increase in the percentage of

students making adequate growth after the goal setting strategy was implemented.

Data further revealed that a significant difference existed in four of the six elementary

schools in Carter County when comparing student growth over the two year period.

However, two of the school's data revealed that the significance was in the direction

opposite of the stated hypothesis. Nonetheless, when including the entire population

of 328 participants in a single calculation, data revealed that a significant difference

existed between the number making adequate growth as fourth graders and the

number making adequate growth as fifth graders (χ^2 = 9.986, df = 1, p = .0016).

McNemar's Change Test was also used to determine if a difference existed

between the numbers of students in each school that made adequate growth as

compared to the number that should be expected to make adequate growth based on

the state's calculation formula. It was determined that five of the six schools

exceeded the number of students that should be expected to make adequate growth.

An analysis of the overall performance level of the six elementary schools in

Carter County revealed that all six performed at or above the state goal of

proficiency. More specifically, according to the Kentucky Department of Education,

four of the elementary schools earned a classification of Proficient and two received a

classification of Distinguished. Furthermore, two of the six schools increased their

classification by one category moving from Needs Improvement to Proficient; while

one raised two categories going from Needs Improvement to Distinguished.

Conclusions

This study revealed three insightful conclusions. Each conclusion, directly or indirectly assists in answering the research question posed in this study.

1. A majority of the schools participating in the goal setting process will see an increase in the percentage of students making adequate growth after goal setting implementation.

2. Schools that participate in the goal setting process will observe a higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding the percentile required to receive adequate growth on the KPREP exam than should be expected according to the Kentucky Department of Education's growth calculation formula.

3. Schools that participate in the goal setting process will meet or exceed Kentucky's goal of proficiency on the KPREP exam.

Discussion

This section will discuss each of the conclusions and examine the relevance of each as related to the research question posed by the researcher. Both the findings within the literature review and the results of the study will be included throughout the discussion.

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of goal setting on student growth in reading. The researcher followed the "Six Steps for Goal Setting" as outlined by Rader (2005). In order to ensure effective results, certain elements must be included in the formation of goals. Goals must be time sensitive, challenging but attainable, and specific. In addition, the goal setting process yields greater results

when students are involved in the development of goals, teachers model the process, and progress monitoring occurs regularly (Daniels & Bizar, 2005).

This study showed that after the implementation of the goal setting process, four of the six elementary schools in Carter County observed an increase in the number of students showing adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP exam. The state of Kentucky considers students that score at or above the 40th percentile on the KPREP exam to have made adequate growth in reading. This means that 60% of the students in the state can be expected to receive the designation of making adequate growth whereas 40% will not make adequate growth.

The following section will discuss each of the participating schools in the study. The conclusions that were revealed through the study will be addressed considering each individual school.

Olive Hill Elementary

Olive Hill Elementary saw the largest increase in the number of students making adequate growth after the goal setting process was implemented. The school saw an increase of 28.4% when comparing the percentage of students making adequate growth in reading in 2014 (50%) to the percentage making adequate growth in reading in 2015 (78.4%). Olive Hill Elementary had a total of 88 students that participated in the study which constituted the second largest subject population in the study. McNemar Test calculations indicated that a significant difference existed in student growth performance over the two year period. Additionally, when considering the state's formula for assigning growth classifications (60% received a

growth point and 40% did not receive a growth point), Olive Hill Elementary

received a growth point for 15.2 more students than expected. Furthermore, for the

first time in the school's history, the school met their Annual Measureable Objective

(AMO), an improvement target set by the state of Kentucky, and was classified as a

Proficient school. When compared to other elementary schools in the state of

Kentucky, Olive Hill Elementary ranked at the 87th percentile up from the 56th

percentile just a year ago.

Prichard Elementary

Prichard Elementary contained the largest student population (103 students) in

the study. The school saw an increase in the percentage of students making adequate

growth on the KPREP reading assessment over the two year study period. Sixty-eight

percent of the students made adequate growth in fourth grade whereas 74.8% made

adequate growth in fifth grade. Although there was an increase of 6.8%, statistical

calculations revealed that the increase was not significant. According to the state's

growth calculation formula, it was expected that 61.8 of the 103 students at the school

should make adequate growth in reading. Prichard exceeded this quantity by 15.2

students. Furthermore, while Prichard did not meet all AMO targets set by the state,

the school maintained its status as a Proficient school and ranked at the 86th percentile

when compared to other elementary schools in the state for the past two years.

Tygart Creek Elementary

For the first time in the school's history, Tygart Creek Elementary moved

beyond the Needs Improvement classification and joined the top performing

elementary schools in the state of Kentucky as a School of Distinction. More

specifically, Tygart Creek Elementary ranked at the 98th percentile when compared

to other elementary schools in the state, up from the 56th percentile the previous year.

In addition, the school met all AMO targets set by the state for the year. The

percentage of students making adequate growth on the KPREP reading assessment at

the school increased by 16.7% over the course of the study; a difference that was

found to be significant by McNemar's Change Test. In 2014, 45.8% of the fourth

grade students made adequate growth on the exam while 62.5% made the mark as

fifth graders in 2015 on the exam. Collectively, the percentage of students at Tygart

Creek making adequate growth was close to what should be expected according to the

state's growth calculation model. The school exceeded the number by 1.2 students

with 30 of the 48 students making adequate growth.

Carter City Elementary

Carter City Elementary had the fewest number of students (14) participating

in the study. During the course of the study, the school increased the percentage of

students making adequate growth from 50% to 71.4%. While the school saw an

increase of 21.4% in the number of students making adequate growth in reading,

McNemar Test calculations revealed the increase was not statistically significant.

However, with 10 of the 14 students enrolled in fifth grade making adequate growth,

the school exceeded the percentage of students that should be expected to make

adequate growth according to the KDE growth formula by 1.6 students. Carter City

achieved an overall accountability classification of Proficient; this was the first time

in the school's history of surpassing the Needs Improvement classification. In

addition, the school improved their ranking from the 64th percentile in 2014 to the 81st

percentile in 2015 when compared to other elementary schools in the state.

Furthermore, the school met all AMO goals set by the state for the year.

Heritage Elementary

The percentage of students making adequate growth in reading on the KPREP

exam at Heritage Elementary declined from 70.4% in 2014 to 61.1% in 2015. While

the school saw a slight reduction in the number of students making adequate growth

over the two year period, it was a minimal decrease. Furthermore, according to the

KDE growth formula, the overall student performance was greater than should be

expected with 61.1% (33 of 54) of the students participating in the study making

adequate growth. Prior to the 2014 school year, Heritage Elementary had a history of

being a low achieving school. However, the school met the criteria for being named a

Proficient school in 2014 and was able to sustain the classification in 2015. More

explicitly, the school increased their percentile ranking when compared to other state

schools of like configuration from the 82nd percentile in 2014 to the 88th percentile in

2015 and met all AMO goals set by the state.

Star Elementary

Star Elementary has enjoyed a long history of academic success. The school reached Proficiency during the 2011 school year and has steadily improved to the level of Distinguished. The school ranks at the 99th percentile when compared to other schools in the state of Kentucky. Star had a total population of 21 students who participated in the study. Of the 21, only 6 (28.6%) made adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP exam in 2015; a sharp decline from the 81% that made adequate growth on the reading KPREP exam in 2014. As a result, Star was the only school in the district to have fewer than expected students make adequate growth on the reading section of the KPREP exam. In fact, according to the KDE growth formula, 12.6 students were expected to make adequate growth; the school missed this prediction by 5.4 students. This decline in reading growth is part of the reason that Star, in spite of their overall high performance, did not meet the state's AMO target for achievement of all populations.

The results of this study found that five of the six elementary schools in Carter County exceeded the number of students that should make adequate growth based on the 60/40 model. Bogolin, Harris, and Norris (2003) found similar results in a comparable study. They concluded that students that have positive goal setting experiences are better able to evaluate their individual progress toward the mastery of tasks; therefore, they experience higher academic gains.

Prior to the current study, three of the six elementary schools in Carter County had never achieved the state's goal of proficiency on the KPREP exam. However,

after the implementation of the goal setting process, all six elementary schools were classified as Proficient or Distinguished. Most astonishing was the fact that one school improved from being classified as Needs Improvement to the state's highest classification of a School of Distinction, an award given to the top 5% of schools in the state. The results observed in this study were consistent with a similar study conducted by Gaa (1979). He too found that when students were encouraged to set individualized goals that higher academic achievement could be expected.

The Carter County School System was labeled a Persistently Low Achieving School System for many years by the Kentucky Department of Education. After the first year of implementing goal setting in all schools, the district was classified as a Proficient School System by KDE for the first time. As the district increased the fidelity with which the strategy was implemented, student achievement continued to rise. In 2014 the district was classified as a Distinguished School System scoring at the 91st percentile when compared to the other school systems in the state. Most recently, 2015 assessment results rank the Carter County School System at the 93rd percentile when compared to the other 173 Kentucky School Systems.

It is difficult, if not impossible to determine other factors that could have contributed to the reading growth scores received by students in this study. For example, other district initiatives such as improved Response to Intervention processes, professional development in reading, building teacher efficacy, and refining professional learning communities were also being strategically implemented

in all schools participating in the study. Therefore, these contributing factors cannot be isolated from the results of the study.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

As cited in the literature review, goal setting has proven effective at motivating students and increasing achievement for students of all ages, ability levels, and in differing content areas. While the goal setting practice has been around for many years, educators must be taught the critical elements essential to the process in order to achieve the desired results. In many cases, a paradigm shift must occur as teachers learn to release some of the decision making to students. Additionally, teachers must learn to model the goal setting process and provide support to students as they work toward goal attainment. Administrators must support teachers by securing time for progress monitoring which is essential to the process. The following process is recommended for any school system that plans to implement the goal setting process:

1. Provide all stakeholders with a summary of the current literature that is available on the goal setting strategy. Realizing the successes and shortcomings of the strategy will establish realistic expectations and increase commitment to the process.

2. Develop a procedural platform for the rollout of information to teachers and staff.

3. Begin by developing short-term grade level or department level goals that are collaborative designed by respective faculty and staff members.

4. Collaboratively, design activities that will be implemented in an effort to accomplish the goal in the established timeframe.

5. Develop a monitoring tool to report intermittent progress toward goal mastery. As goals are accomplished new goals should be developed. If progress toward the achievement of the goal is unsatisfactory, new activities should be designed and implemented.

6. After faculty and staff members are proficient at developing goals, designing activities, and monitoring progress, repeat the process with students.

Recommendations for Future Study

The following are recommendations for future research studies to build upon the current body of knowledge of the goal setting strategy.

1. It is recommended that the study be replicated with students from different school systems throughout the country. Such a study could determine if a greater impact on student outcomes exists in different regions of the country.

2. It is recommended that the study be replicated with students from different grade levels. The results of such a study would provide additional data and information about the effectiveness of the goal setting strategy with students in varying grade levels.

3. It is recommended that the study be replicated utilizing a process that allows the same teacher to provide the instruction to all students over the course of

the study. This process would eliminate the possibility of the quality of instruction

provided by teachers to interrupt student outcomes.

   4. It is recommended that the study be replicated in the absence of other

improvement techniques. The current study was conducted in an environment where

several improvement strategies were being implemented along with goal setting at the

same time.

   5. It is recommended that the study be replicated utilizing students from

different ethnic orientations. This data would increase the study by providing

valuable insight on the effectiveness of the strategy within specific subgroups.

   6. It is further recommended that the study be replicated utilizing an

assessment whereby formative data could be gathered throughout the study. As in the

case of this study, the KPREP exam was administered only one time at the end of the

student's fourth grade year and then again at the end of the student's fifth grade year.

Providing multiple sources of data would strengthen the validity of the results.

   7. It is recommended that the study be replicated using various content areas

in the implementation of goal setting. The current study only measured reading

growth after the goal setting strategy was implemented. This data would add depth to

future studies and offer comparative data to indicate the impact of the goal setting

strategy within different subject areas.

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Appendix A

Carter County Schools				
Goal Review				
School:	Teacher Name:			Assessed Area:
	Proficient/Distinguished	Apprentice		Novice
Predicted Number of Students:				
Actual Number of Students:				
Reflection of Student Data:				

Appendix B

Six Steps for Goal Setting (Radar, 2005)

1. Students need to be taught what a goal is, choose a goal, and write it down. A list of goals is formulated by the student with support from the teacher. Students revisit the list in a week to choose the goals they feel most strongly about and record them on a goal setting form.

2. Students decide upon a timeline to achieve the goals. The students need to keep in mind that goals should be realistic and not too far in the future so as to maintain enthusiasm about goal attainment.

3. A plan should be developed by students in collaboration with the teacher outlining any obstacles that may hinder success. Consequently, the student must list the objectives that need to be achieved in order to master the established goal (s).

4. Students need to visualize themselves accomplishing the goal. Visualization creates a picture of the plan and desire for success into the subconscious mind.

5. Teachers need to provide time for students to self-monitor and record their progress toward goal attainment.

6. Students self-evaluate themselves by assessing their behaviors, actions, and progress. If necessary, students should propose alternate plans if satisfactory progress is not being made.

Appendix C

Progress Monitoring Documentation Form

Name: Teacher: Grade:

Reading Goal:

_____
_____
_____

My strategies for reaching my goal are:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Progress monitoring:

Date
Score

Progress monitoring notes:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix D

Individual Student Growth Classification
Reading Section KPREP Exam 2014-2015

Y = Growth Point Achieved
N= No Growth Point

Carter City Elementary	2014	2015
Student 1	y	y
Student2	y	y
Student 3	n	y
Student 4	n	n
Student 5	n	n
Student 6	y	y
Student 7	y	y
Student 8	n	y
Student 9	y	y
Student 10	n	n
Student 11	n	y
Student 12	y	y
Student 13	y	y
Student 14	n	n

Heritage Elementary	2014	2015
Student 1	y	y
Student2	y	y
Student 3	n	n
Student 4	y	y
Student 5	y	y
Student 6	n	n
Student 7	y	y
Student 8	n	n
Student 9	y	y
Student 10	n	n
Student 11	y	y
Student 12	y	y
Student 13	n	n
Student 14	y	y

Student 15	n	n
Student 16	n	n
Student 17	y	y
Student 18	n	n
Student 19	y	y
Student 20	n	n
Student 21	y	y
Student 22	n	n
Student 23	y	y
Student 24	n	n
Student 25	n	n
Student 26	y	y
Student 27	y	y
Student 28	y	n
Student 29	y	y
Student 30	y	y
Student 31	y	y
Student 32	y	y
Student 33	y	y
Student 34	n	n
Student 35	y	y
Student 36	n	n
Student 37	y	y
Student 38	n	n
Student 39	y	y
Student 40	y	y
Student 41	n	n
Student 42	y	y
Student 43	y	n
Student 44	y	y
Student 45	y	y
Student 46	y	n
Student 47	y	n
Student 48	y	y
Student 49	y	y
Student 50	y	y
Student 51	y	y
Student 52	y	y
Student 53	y	n

Student 54	y	y
Olive Hill Elementary	**2014**	**2015**
Student 1	n	y
Student2	n	y
Student 3	n	n
Student 4	n	y
Student 5	y	n
Student 6	n	y
Student 7	n	n
Student 8	y	y
Student 9	n	n
Student 10	y	y
Student 11	y	y
Student 12	n	y
Student 13	n	n
Student 14	n	y
Student 15	y	y
Student 16	y	y
Student 17	n	n
Student 18	y	y
Student 19	y	n
Student 20	n	y
Student 21	y	y
Student 22	n	y
Student 23	y	y
Student 24	n	n
Student 25	y	y
Student 26	y	y
Student 27	n	y
Student 28	n	n
Student 29	y	y
Student 30	y	y
Student 31	n	y
Student 32	y	y
Student 33	n	n
Student 34	y	y
Student 35	n	y
Student 36	y	y

Student 37	y	y
Student 38	n	y
Student 39	y	y
Student 40	n	n
Student 41	y	y
Student 42	n	y
Student 43	y	y
Student 44	n	y
Student 45	n	y
Student 46	n	n
Student 47	y	y
Student 48	y	y
Student 49	y	y
Student 50	n	n
Student 51	n	y
Student 52	y	y
Student 53	n	y
Student 54	y	y
Student 55	n	n
Student 56	n	y
Student 57	y	y
Student 58	y	y
Student 59	n	y
Student 60	y	y
Student 61	n	y
Student 62	y	y
Student 63	n	y
Student 64	y	y
Student 65	n	y
Student 66	n	n
Student 67	y	y
Student 68	y	y
Student 69	n	y
Student 70	y	y
Student 71	n	n
Student 72	y	y
Student 73	n	y
Student 74	n	y
Student 75	y	y

Student 76	n	n
Student 77	y	y
Student 78	n	n
Student 79	y	y
Student 80	y	y
Student 81	n	n
Student 82	y	y
Student 83	y	y
Student 84	y	y
Student 85	n	y
Student 86	n	y
Student 87	y	y
Student 88	y	y
Prichard Elementary	**2014**	**2015**
Student 1	y	n
Student2	y	y
Student 3	y	y
Student 4	y	y
Student 5	n	n
Student 6	y	y
Student 7	y	y
Student 8	n	n
Student 9	y	y
Student 10	y	y
Student 11	y	y
Student 12	n	n
Student 13	y	y
Student 14	y	y
Student 15	n	n
Student 16	y	y
Student 17	n	n
Student 18	n	y
Student 19	y	y
Student 20	y	n
Student 21	y	y
Student 22	y	y
Student 23	y	y
Student 24	y	y

Student 25	y	y
Student 26	y	y
Student 27	n	y
Student 28	y	y
Student 29	y	y
Student 30	y	y
Student 31	y	y
Student 32	y	y
Student 33	n	y
Student 34	n	n
Student 35	y	y
Student 36	y	y
Student 37	y	y
Student 38	y	y
Student 39	n	n
Student 40	y	y
Student 41	n	n
Student 42	n	n
Student 43	y	y
Student 44	y	y
Student 45	y	y
Student 46	n	y
Student 47	y	y
Student 48	y	y
Student 49	n	y
Student 50	y	y
Student 51	y	y
Student 52	n	n
Student 53	n	n
Student 54	y	y
Student 55	y	y
Student 56	y	y
Student 57	n	y
Student 58	y	y
Student 59	y	y
Student 60	y	y
Student 61	n	n
Student 62	y	y
Student 63	y	y

Student 64	n	y
Student 65	n	y
Student 66	y	y
Student 67	y	y
Student 68	y	y
Student 69	y	y
Student 70	y	y
Student 71	n	n
Student 72	y	y
Student 73	y	y
Student 74	y	y
Student 75	y	y
Student 76	n	n
Student 77	y	y
Student 78	n	n
Student 79	n	n
Student 80	y	y
Student 81	y	y
Student 82	y	y
Student 83	y	y
Student 84	y	y
Student 85	n	n
Student 86	y	y
Student 87	n	y
Student 88	y	y
Student 89	n	n
Student 90	y	y
Student 91	y	y
Student 92	y	y
Student 93	y	y
Student 94	n	y
Student 95	n	n
Student 96	y	y
Student 97	n	n
Student 98	y	n
Student 99	y	y
Student 100	n	n
Student 101	n	n
Student 102	y	y

Student 103	n	n
Tygart Creek Elementary	**2014**	**2015**
Student 1	n	n
Student2	n	y
Student 3	y	y
Student 4	y	y
Student 5	y	n
Student 6	y	n
Student 7	n	y
Student 8	y	y
Student 9	y	y
Student 10	n	y
Student 11	y	y
Student 12	n	n
Student 13	y	y
Student 14	n	y
Student 15	y	y
Student 16	n	n
Student 17	y	y
Student 18	n	n
Student 19	n	n
Student 20	n	y
Student 21	y	y
Student 22	y	y
Student 23	n	n
Student 24	n	n
Student 25	y	y
Student 26	n	n
Student 27	y	y
Student 28	n	n
Student 29	y	y
Student 30	y	y
Student 31	n	n
Student 32	n	n
Student 33	y	y
Student 34	y	y
Student 35	n	n
Student 36	y	y

Student 37	n	n
Student 38	y	y
Student 39	n	n
Student 40	y	y
Student 41	n	y
Student 42	n	y
Student 43	y	y
Student 44	n	n
Student 45	n	y
Student 46	n	n
Student 47	n	y
Student 48	n	y
Star Elementary	**2014**	**2015**
Student 1	n	n
Student2	y	y
Student 3	y	y
Student 4	y	n
Student 5	y	n
Student 6	y	n
Student 7	y	y
Student 8	n	n
Student 9	y	y
Student 10	y	n
Student 11	y	n
Student 12	n	n
Student 13	n	n
Student 14	y	y
Student 15	y	y
Student 16	y	n
Student 17	y	n
Student 18	y	n
Student 19	y	n
Student 20	y	n
Student 21	y	n

VITA

Ronnie A. Dotson

<u>EDUCATION</u>

December, 1988   Bachelor of Arts
                        Lee University
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May, 1990   Master of Education
                        Morehead State University
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<u>PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES</u>

2011-Present   Superintendent
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2013-Present   Adjunct Faculty
                        Morehead State University
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                        University of Pikeville
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1997-2011   Principal
                        Southside Elementary
                        Belfry, Kentucky

1988-1997   Teacher
                        Pike County Schools
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HONORS

2002	Principal with Principles
	Forward in the Fifth
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