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Belief

1. My motivation

Inspiration for this case study came as a desire to learn more about my mid-performing students. What I have found often occurring in my classroom is a concentration, especially in a high needs class, to focus heavily upon the outliers in a room. While this practice is logical, it is not my desired mode of teaching. I am continually attempting to differentiate my lessons to include all styles of learners and needs in a class. Thus my realization of missing some of my mid-performing students was highly disconcerting.

Both of the students selected for this case study are students that fall in the middle range of the class. They are both often overlooked as they are not the troubled students or the lowest performing, however, their academic performance does not equal their possibilities. By following this case through I hope to develop my repertoire for improving academic achievement among students who are receiving special educational services, yet still not reaching their full potential.

2. Description of the situation at the point I undertook the project together with interpretation of the initial situation

Description of the class:

Two students, Nick and Sarah, from my 5th hour World History and Geography class are not attaining to the extent I believe possible. Both students received Ds in the first semester of my class. I believe both students have motivation (sports and friends) and the ability to receive higher grades. These two students are on the special education case load and in a class with

many other high needs students. Nick and Sarah both use resources that are available without hesitation and they are also quick to explain, “I can’t do this, I’m special ed”. This type of behavior and response from both students worries me and in my opinion is an example of injustice for our special needs students. In L.C. Clark’s writing on “at-risk” students, I find her descriptions applicable to many of my special education students. Students need an education, and they need to believe there is a value in that education process. For this to really happen both teachers and principals in a building “have a responsibility to expect them to go about acquiring” that education (Clark, 126). Clark highlights how “lower expectations negatively influence the children’s ability to grow intellectually and socially” (Clark, 126). I believe that Clark’s references to the “at-risk” population in her school are also helpful for teachers to consider when hearing comments from their special education students, such as “I can’t do this, I’m special ed.”

This class period, where both Nick and Sarah are enrolled, is composed of a high needs group. There are a total of 31 students in this class period. World History and Geography is a required course for graduation so although it is supposed to be a freshmen course there are currently 4 seniors enrolled, 3 of who are new for this semester. Eight of these 31 students are on a special education case load currently, another 5 that are being considered for special needs. There are also 6 of the freshmen (this number does not include the 4 seniors who have are currently re-taking classes although they are also considered with the same label) have been labeled “at-risk” of failing high school based upon their first semester.

“At-risk” students at Mayberry High School are selected by support and teacher staff by grade level. These students demonstrate a high risk of failing high school due to grades and academic achievements. These students also typically represent students that are in a lot of trouble with the school personnel, and have a high reference of disciplinary referrals. Of these 6

“at-risk” freshmen, 4 become discouraged with class work and often claim inability in response to work. There are another 6 students out of this class that are highly motivated and academically oriented freshmen, who move quickly through activities and often become bored as they wait for their peers to finish the assigned work or skills are continually practiced to develop better understanding by their peers.

A numerical break-down to help understand the information in a quantitative format (these numbers do overlap):

Total Students:	Students with Special Education Accommodations	Students with extremely above average instances of disciplinary referrals (this year)	“At-risk” (all grade levels)	Students failing one or more classes 3 rd Quarter	High achieving students
31	9	6	10	12	6

(Schools)

During this class, because it is an extremely diverse group with many students that require differing types and amounts of attention I, the teacher, am often busy circulating between the outliers. The outliers for this class reflect those students who are causing trouble and being disruptive to the learning environment and those high achieving students who complete tasks quickly and become bored with class work.

When given in-class time for activities and assignments I wander the room circulating amongst students. Once I began analyzing my rotation pattern I noticed the extent to which I move between specific student groups. I am often moving to work with students on behavior correction for some “trouble making” students, giving extra explanatory descriptions for high needs students, and developing additional activities for students that move through the material quickly. Students in the middle bracket see less of my focused attention and thus receive less

personal student-teacher help. Because of this pattern in the classroom behavior I have decided to select two students who fall in the middle, yet have demonstrated a high need for personal interaction and attention when it comes to academics.

A typical lesson plan involves three shifts, large class work, small group work, and individual work. The order and tasks involved with these groups changes each day. However, students are involved with these groups in some form or another during a typical lesson. I have selected these particular students because I feel they are often less receiving of my attention in the classroom environment. Observations regarding these two students and the type of group work are very similar, which also played a role in my decision. I thought if they behaved in a similar pattern they may also relate similarly to changes I make in designed a unit. During large class work they are often attentive (eyes focused, body language and reactions, etc), however very quiet and not participatory orally, however they do complete written requirements. Small group work they both have specific friends whom they choose to work with. Both take cues from these friends, they are not group leaders. They both work hard in this format and stay on task. Finally, individual work, which demonstrates the greatest difficulty for both. When working independently on a task students elect to leave the classroom for an alternate location (in accordance with their IEPs). They also become very frustrated and irritable.

Nick:

Nick often becomes discouraged in classroom environments. In my class he sits in the front row, and has continued to sit in the front of the room the entire year. Especially on days when I have to lecture, although I keep myself to a strict time limit of 20 minutes, I often find Nick with his head down or eyes glazed over. He gets a look of dread and sadness in his eyes when lecture is written under the day's agenda. I have made several attempts to stimulate

lecture, and often the majority of students are engaged. In an attempt to make lecture and note-taking easy to follow I provide power-point with highlighted words and phrases the students need to write down. I have also offered Nick a note trade option, where I provide him with the day's lecture notes if he can show me his attempt at note-taking and it seems reasonable.

However, Nick has failed to take advantage of this opportunity.

Nick is highly involved with the sports programs at Mayberry High School. He was a member of the football team in the fall and is currently a member of the freshmen basketball team. Mayberry High School has a 100 minutes policy for their student athletes who receive a D or below in more than one class, this policy states that the student must serve 100 minutes of school work with a person related to the school in order to remain eligible for the upcoming week. Nick has often been required to complete these 100 minute sheets. Since the beginning of the year Nick has continually sought me out before and after school to "serve" his time, although he may serve the time with any school related adult.

At the end of last semester, Nick was on the brink of failing my class. He came to me on several occasions asking for extra credit assignments; however he would fail to complete them after asking. I brought this to his attention, and the attention of his father whom has been in constant contact with the school and Nick's teachers. While students were out on winter break I gave Nick an opportunity, which he was warned it would be his last for the semester, to read a fictional book which relates to a historic subject and write a summary, it was due on the first day back of school. Nick complained vehemently that this was beyond his capabilities, "I have not ever read a whole book, even for English classes." I gave him positive encouragement and arranged a meeting for his Special Education English teacher, Nick, and I to meet and discuss this option. His English teacher strongly supported the idea and together we helped Nick select

The Red Badge of Courage. Nick and his English teacher set-up a plan of action for how to complete the assignment and we emailed his father as a group letting him know of our plan. Nick was highly successful with this assignment and due to the extra credit passed the class for the first semester.

Sarah

Sarah also often becomes highly disengaged within the classroom setting. She has told me before that “History just isn’t my thing. No offense to you, you’re my favorite. But I just can’t do history.” This is reflected in her behavior within the class and her grade. During class work time she will often ask to work in a resource room and thus I have limited amount of time to work with her on an individual level. While she does not make her disengagement as pointed as Nick does, she keeps her head up and appears engaged, she does not become an active member for individual work, her engagement appears contingent upon working with peers. Of the 7 assignments Sarah has failed to complete over the past 20 weeks, 6 were individual work assignments (Schools, 2009).

Although we have talked on several occasions and we have a nice student-teacher relationship, she is extremely shy when the conversation’s topic is academics and it is solely between the two of us. When she is talking in a group, often during lunch girls will stop by my room to talk, she is extremely outgoing and talkative. In this situation her body language reflects her confidence, she stands tall, her head is up, she makes eye contact and smiles often. However, in a more formal classroom setting and when academic topics come up she is very quiet and reserved. Her body language in this sense is entirely different, she has her head down, her shoulders slouched, and she will not make eye contact. Even when she has a question during class she will often revert to her friends for answers rather than asking me. This specifically

relates to Sarah's academic confidence level. Analyzing these differences help to illustrate Sarah's confidence level differences between social skills and academic skills.

Sarah was absent for 3 class periods due to an unexpected family trip, upon her return she asked me for her make-up work. While I was describing her tasks Sarah kept her head down and eyes averted. She would nod her head when I asked if it made sense. I then observed Sarah walk to one of her friends, whom is a very high achieving young lady and ask for help. In the same class period, students were given time to work in small groups on an assignment, Sarah chose to work in class with her two closest friends (both academically high achieving). The group was sitting near my desk and the four of us began to make jokes and carry on a light humorous conversation about height (a decisively non-academically related conversation). Sarah was highly engaged, speaking loudly, making jokes, laughing, and was making eye contact.

Both Students' Sense of Failure:

As mentioned briefly above, both students have IEPs and accommodations. A major accommodation both students take advantage of frequently in using alternate locations to complete work. They both choose this alternate location when individual work is assigned. They work in a resource room with Sarah's case manager, who also serves as Nick's English teacher. I asked the teacher to describe their behaviors individually when using the resource room in general. She described Sarah as "often frustrated and with a bad attitude toward her core classes." A common phrase used by Sarah in the room is "this is a dumb assignment." Sarah is often offered help by the resource teacher and other support staff available during that time which she refuses. Upon Nick's entry to the room "he looks defeated before he ever starts" he also often states in a manner of words that "no matter what he does it won't be enough to pass." Nick will ask for help and clarification, he often returns to the classroom to ask me if the other

staff cannot help. However when this help fails to fully clarify or make the task more understood he does not ask further questions (Payeur). Even with the extra accommodation of working in a more individualized and personal room these students feel as though they cannot possibly pass.

These feeling by both students of failure as inevitable regardless of their attempts and work led to a strong anti-motivating force. According to Weinstein, “success is a better motivator than anything else” and if we are to accept this as truth than the inverse must also be true, that failure would be the greatest anti-motivator (Weinstein, 190). The students expect to fail any social studies class; Sarah has received C and Ds since 6th grade and Nick has had D- or F since 6th grade in Social Studies classes (Schools, 2009). With these previous failures both students have entered the class believing they will not be able to pass, which has severely hindered their motivation. Before they even begin independent work the students expect failure.

Hypotheses:

Based upon statements they have each made regarding their dislike for the subject I need to question if these students simply do not see the connection of history with their lives. The combination of Weinstein’s “Expectancy x Value Framework,” would play into the combination of these two theories (Weinstein, 188). Understanding approximately where each of these students fall in the expectancy scale helps but to also understand their value is important. Weinstein points out the need for students to have relevancy in their academic endeavors for motivation to really exist. If these two are not finding the material and/or activities “meaningful and worthwhile” then their already low motivation will be decreased even farther, inhibiting their learning (Weinstein, 188). By making the subject matter relevant to each student as a means for helping them to develop motivation and drive for success. When students are interested in their work they are more likely to complete it successfully (Engardio). If neither student feels this

connection or interest in subject matters associated with World History then their motivation for learning the material will remain low. This coupled with their expectancy will continue to drive down their motivation and thus their success.

Another hypothesis for why these students are behind what I believe to be their abilities is their need for direct attention and direction. When consulting with other professionals about these two students one told me, “sometimes the best thing you can do for a student is sit next to them and ‘hold their hand’” (Engardio, 2009). As one of the descriptor cases with Nick revealed, his achievement was much improved when more people were “in on the action.” After speaking with one of the special education teachers regarding both students we were able to come to the conclusion that, “they work when you are on them, but once you leave their side they check out” (Payeur, 2009). These ideas of self-regulation are again applicable and relatable to Clark’s issues with “at-risk” students. Clark shares a similar experience with a student who had only completed two assignments during a week period due to her presence and assistance (i.e. sitting next to him)). Clark called home and shared her concerns with the young man’s grandmother, whom restricted his access to television and games when he was not self-regulating his behavior at school (Clark, 127). This presents one alternative and option for more self-regulation, however, it is also one that has been attempted with Nick before and did not work continuously.

Based upon the description I believe it is a combination of the first and third hypothesis. While relevance probably does play a role in student motivation I do not believe the evidence is pointing as strongly in this direction. The first and third hypotheses complement each other nicely and are demonstrated in the description pieces. Both students have told me on separate occasions that the work they are asked to complete is beyond their abilities, however, when

given individual attention they have both proven contrary results. I also know based upon my description of the class that these students are “slipping through the cracks” of the classroom environment. Because of my attention to many other issues and students I have not provided these students with the type of encouragement under which they excel.

The tentative conclusion I will make base upon my research to this point is the students’ self-images are causing them to lack motivation in their academic careers. Thus my intervention plan will be to highlight for students their individual abilities and academic achievements. I plan on devoting more time to these two students while they complete tasks in my room. I have also designed lesson plans for an upcoming unit, my hope being to draw upon these abilities. We will be creating more hands-on and application materials rather than lengthy writings, which should help according to their accommodation needs. I have also tailored the final assessment for the unit around this differentiated learning technique. Rather than prescribing a unit assessment, I will be allowing student choice in how they wish to present their knowledge and material. This way each student, including those higher achieving, middle range, and higher needs, will be able to work at their own level and demonstrate in their own way.

3. The stakes in that situation (who could gain or lose what?); alternatives and plan

Multiple people stand to lose from this situation in a variety of manners. Each of these students, their families, school staff, and me, are all highly involved with these students and feel connected to their academic success. Most important is how connected, or lack thereof, these two students feel to their learning. While they have the highest risks, it does not count out others involved with their learning.

My Stakes:

I am intertwined with the success of these students in several ways. I desire for all of my students to succeed academically and to leave my classroom with confidence in their abilities. At stake for me is the feeling of failure. I often pride myself on reaching multiple learners and learning styles, however if I am unable to help these students achieve their abilities, I may come away from this year feeling as though I did not reach my personal expectations.

Nick's Stakes

Nick's stakes in his own learning revolve around his involvement with athletics at Mayberry High School. The school district has a very strict policy on athletes and their academic performance. Students with more than one failure are ineligible for the next week and all others with "warnings" (a D or below in more than one class) must complete 100 minutes of study time. While Nick typically has to complete the 100 minutes each week, he works extremely hard to remain eligible (passing classes). Nick knows when grades are sent (every Tuesday) to the athletic office and will often turn in make-up or late work on Mondays and request in his nicest voice for them to be graded as quickly as possible so he can remain eligible (this is atypical of a majority of Nick's classes not a representation of only my class). Sports have become Nick's motivating factor for academic achievement.

Other factors that have affected Nick's creating stakes in academics aside from athletics have been his role-models. Nick's paternal family has lived in Mayberry for generations. His grandfather runs an extremely successful business; however he never graduated from high school. His father and uncle have worked in the family business, and while they both attended Mayberry High, neither graduated. His maternal family is not involved with Nick, including his mother whom he has not seen for approximately 3 years. To the best of school personnel's knowledge, based upon information from Nick and his family, she lives and works in the adult

industry in downtown Detroit, she also did not graduate from high school (again to the best of staff knowledge).

The support staff at Mayberry has called special meetings between Nick's teachers and his father to discuss Nick's performance in school. During the meeting his father seems extremely concerned with the descriptions teachers relate regarding Nick's lack of academic enthusiasm. He appears responsive to suggestions made by support staff members and eager to help Nick succeed. While these meetings show a marked improvement in Nick for a week or two, it falls off and Nick returns to his old pattern of behavior. It seems as though the reinforcement at home lasts for short periods and then tapers off. Which ultimately indicates the stakes at home for Nick and achieving to his academic capabilities is low. He is not held highly accountable in his home atmosphere and so his stakes, in this aspect are extremely low.

Sarah's Stakes:

Nick's case, in this instance, is extremely different from Sarah's. Sarah is involved with volleyball at Mayberry High School, however her grades do not typically put her in jeopardy of ineligibility, although she does have to complete minutes occasionally. However, athletics is not what seems to be a major stake for Sarah. She stakes revolve around her home and friends.

After discussing Sarah with her Case Manager, I discovered that when Sarah visits her case manager she "checks her grades frequently, and often looks concerned when they are not at an acceptable level" (C's and above) (Payeur). Sarah is often concerned about her mother's reaction to her grades. Sarah is the youngest in her family, she has two older brothers. One graduated last year with lots of support from his case manager (the same manager as Sarah). Her other brother is in 11th grade, elects not to receive services, and is currently not on track to graduate with his class. Based off these visions of Sarah's home life, and her above descriptions,

I am going to suggest that she has low stakes and expectations of success in her academic abilities, relating to her brothers and their struggles for academic success.

The other stake for Sarah, are her friends and their academic achievements. Sarah is extremely confident in her social skills and seems extremely involved in social activities at school. Majority of Sarah's friends are high academic achievers. Based upon her behavior in my class and discussions with her other teachers, Sarah appears very embarrassed when tests, quizzes, and projects are returned. She does not like to discuss grades or academics with her peers, although her friends like to exchange papers and discuss grades. When these conversations occur Sarah tends to move to another circle of friends who are discussing non-academic topics. Sarah's stakes then can be viewed as social acceptance and avoidance of social ostracism for achieving higher academic marks, similar to her closest friends.

Stakes for Both:

The subject matter is implicated in the stakes as something to pass for social purposes, for Nick to remain athletically eligible and for Sarah to remain on par with her friends. Knowledge of World History or world affairs is not the driver or in any way related to their stakes. This lack of interest or stake in the subject matter creates another stake for me as their Social Studies teacher, to demonstrate to these students how important world relations are to their future.

This stake is not only for their future in relation to Social Studies, but all academics. Having confidence in their academic abilities and intelligence seems to be continually pushed downward during the school year. If this pattern continues, both students will leave Mayberry High School feeling inadequate. Students garnering notions of inability in their own intelligences will negatively affect their future. Both students will be less likely to continue education following high school (if they choose to finish this level) if they have such low

confidence. Not only will this hinder their future options for work fields it may also leave them lacking in future resources.

The Unit:

Designing a unit to help these students achieve academic success and through this success confidence is the prominent goal. However if possible to throw in a splash of interest and intrigue regarding Social Studies would be an extra incentive. To help these students achieve the desired goal, I will be devoting extra time to creating a unit for them. This unit will involve high amounts of group work, but also personal accountability within the groups. Students will be creating their own lesson plans and throughout the unit they will be sharing, exploring, and working together toward a goal of understanding their own learning. Each group will be responsible for a section of their text. These groups will then have to learn about their topic, write a lesson plan, present the lesson, and write quiz questions. In essence, each group will be responsible for teaching their peers their assigned topic.

Both students are much more comfortable completing group work, where they feel not so responsible. In an attempt to encourage both Nick and Sarah to realize their academic potential they need to first be comfortable in the learning environment. Because they are both highly discouraged and feel like failures before beginning independent work, I do not believe it would be at all beneficial to require an independent assignment. I hope this confidence will come from the students realizing the importance of their input and contribution to the group.

Another major benefit of this lesson is students will have an opportunity to explore their personal learning styles. By making students responsible for creating a lesson, they will be required to consider a variety of learning types and practices. They will also need to decide how to present their content to increase their peers' learning. Many teachers have a habit of teaching

in the manner they learn. My hope is this is also the case for students pretending to be teachers. Giving students an opportunity to explore their ideal for presenting content may help them to realize their favorite methods. Not only will this help them to reflect on what is the best way for them to learn independently but it will also provide the teacher with ideas on how to reach these students effectively.

Working in these groups will help students demonstrate their skills. Each student will not be forced to accomplish each task, but rather it can be split in an appropriate manner amongst the group members. Instead each member, including Nick and Sarah, may select how they will contribute to their group. For instance, Sarah does not like talking in front of the class but is creative, rather than being a presenter or “teacher” she may select to develop the activity during the lesson, such as a worksheet or reading. On the other hand, Nick who does not mind presenting but does not like research can elect to be one of the “teachers” and not contribute as much to the research portion. In this manner each group member will be able to benefit the group through their individual skills. I am also hoping that this will increase student confidence by demonstrating to their peers the value of each personality in a group.

The very end assignment will also be helpful for students to consider their contribution to the group. Each student will be provided with a responsibility chart, which they will need to complete regarding their group members. They will each be filling out a chart at the end of the unit regarding their group members and the percentage of the grade each member deserves. For instance, if a group member completes equal work they would receive 100% of the total grade. However, if a member only completed half of their assigned task they will receive 50% of their groups’ grade. The average percent given by their group members will equal each individual grade. An example would be, if a group receives 100% but one member has been shown through

the average of their members' reports to have only completed 75% of their work, they will receive 75% not the complete 100%. I hope that this will help to deter individuals from free-riding off their group members. It will provide personal responsibility amongst the groups and hopefully a confidence boost for those contributing members. When students hear what an important member their group members felt they were to completing the project, I hope students will receive a confidence boost in the academic capabilities.

Unit Risks:

A major risk of these alternatives is that Nick, Sarah, and some of the other at-risk students will "take advantage" of their peers or worse still their peers will "take advantage" of them. While these two scenarios will appear very different neither is desirable. In the first instance where Nick and Sarah (possibly others) are taking advantage of their peers, the peers will be forced into a situation where they must work harder to pick up the slack of other group members. This might be the case if Nick and Sarah feel they are unable and unwilling to attempt the necessary work involved with the project. If Nick and Sarah enter the project feeling incapable they might be a dredge upon their group.

Another risk, although opposite would be extremely harmful from an educators point-of-view. If the groups Nick and Sarah are placed in feel they are incompetent. Some students are preoccupied with acing their classes and care less about their peers' success. The groups will be assigned at random, so neither I nor the students will be in control of their group members. If Nick or Sarah are placed in a group with this type of peer, they may be written-off as unable to help and given minimal tasks and contribution to the group work. In this scenario Nick and Sarah will have their lack of confidence reconfirmed by their peers.

Overall I believe this assignment will be highly beneficial for both Nick, Sarah, and hopefully many of the other “at-risk” and high needs students. By providing for each of them an opportunity to increase their motivation and academic success I hope it will be reflected in their future endeavors. One of the major problems for Nick and Sarah appear to be their lack of confidence and thus motivation. If this unit accomplishes its goal, of developing more academic confidence, it may transfer to future work, including individual assignments.

4. Description of the implementation and assessment of the effort

Unit Implementation:

My strategy for implementing the unit was highly successful. At the start of the unit students were split into groups at random. Based with these groups each group was assigned a section of the textbook for which they were responsible. I monitored all the students, with special attention to my two in this case study. All of the students were excited and seemingly highly involved in the unit. At the end of every day student groups were responsible for making sure information was handed in so that I could monitor their progress. I was prepared to adjust the assignment due if I noticed students and group not involved or working during the class periods. However, the students were very enthused to be preparing a lesson for their peers. I believe they were also highly motivated by fear of failure. They did not want to risk looking ill-prepared for their assigned presentation date. When the time came for students to “teach” their lessons they were highly successful. All of the student groups were well-prepared and demonstrated high knowledge of their section’s subject matter. Although the students did not differentiate their lesson plans as much as I anticipated, they were very atypical (lecture and worksheets), they did demonstrate their attempts to “teach.” I believe this pattern was more

conveying of Mayberry's pattern of Social Studies teaching rather than the students' lacking creativity.

Nick's Unit:

Nick was placed in a group less desirable from my stand-point. Nick had one particular group member whom I described above as more concerned with her grade than her peers. This particular group member forced herself upon her group members as the leader. Because of this forceful young lady Nick did not receive as much responsibility as I would have liked, however it was not based upon how he was viewed by his peers, but rather upon this particular student's desire to run the entire project. I spoke often with the young lady regarding her need to allow others to contribute equally. Eventually she did assign tasks to her group members. Nick and another student were given the task of creating the power-point.

While creating this power-point Nick was highly involved with this student and they worked well together throughout the week. Working with the other student was highly beneficial for Nick. The two worked together very much as a joint-effort. As mentioned earlier, Nick performs to higher levels when he is continually monitored and aided. Although the partner was not "monitoring" Nick in a disciplinary manner, I believe working jointly kept Nick on the right path and working hard during the entire class period. Nick's success and determination at this task was motivating. Although he was given permission to leave Nick remained with his group members and worked diligently during the class period.

Sarah's Unit:

Sarah's responsibility was the most notable. Sarah took on the leadership role in her group. She assigned tasks, made sure work was handed in every day, and really took control of the group. I was highly impressed with Sarah's attitude and outlook throughout this unit. I

believe Sarah's social confidence was able to carry over into her academia by being looked to by the rest of her group members. Throughout the unit Sarah was continually initiating conversation regarding her ideas for the teaching lesson and what she was preparing in the group. Her body language was similar to when she would talk with me about social aspects of her life, she was standing tall, making eye contact, and smiling. I believe this is a strong demonstration of the unit's success regarding my goals for Sarah.

Overall Success of the Unit:

I believe this unit was a success, illustrated by both examples. My intention was for these students to increase their personal responsibility and academic confidence. Both students worked diligently in their groups and the results were reflected in their grades. At the end of the unit students were asked to complete a responsibility chart regarding their group members. Based upon these responsibility charts Nick and Sarah both received 100% of their groups' total grade, Nick's total grade was 87% and Sarah's group received 80%. As test scores these are much higher than both student's averages.

However, I believe student success was farther reaching than simply improving their test average. Both students were highly involved with their group work and responsibilities, which I believe is reflective of their confidence. I noticed marked improvement in student attitude and involvement with the project. My main concern for the stakes involved would be both students feeling as though they cannot "do" school. By helping to increase these students' confidence level in their academic abilities will help to foster student esteem. Although it will take more than one unit, it is a step forward for both students to achieve success in such a real way.

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