Flipped Inclusion Classroom: An Action Research

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Abstract: Motivating students in the classroom can be challenging, especially for Special Education students in an inclusion classroom. Due to the gap between a special education student’s independence level and current grade level, it is difficult for special education students to retain motivation throughout instruction. In efforts to determine how student motivation can be sustained, a website including instructional videos was created to be implemented in a flipped classroom instructional method. The purpose of this action research study is to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation for 6th grade students. Becoming familiar with student’s strengths, needs and interests throughout this process was a big factor to help increase student motivation towards their learning. It was also important to listen to and consider participants feedback based on their experiences after each implementation so that necessary changes could be made to improve instruction in the next round.

Introduction

Teachers and students will agree that there is not enough time in the school day to complete what needs to be done. From personal observation, students are falling between the cracks, getting left behind and lost in their learning due to the lack of opportunities in the classroom to check and review their understanding of the content. Teachers are overloading curriculum into the day, resulting in a lack of appropriate instruction. Students do not receive any benefit from being overwhelmed with information. This also does not benefit the Special Education (SPED) students in inclusion classrooms who are already behind and functioning below grade level.

Many schools in the Hawaii Department of Education are adapting to the SPED Inclusion model. “Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend” (Schultz Stout & Huston, 2001, pg #?). The inclusion model places students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, where they get to learn alongside their general education peers/students who are performing at grade level. Davies, Deans & Ball (2013) stated the results in their study supported a technology enhanced classroom was effective. It better facilitated learning and students were more motivating in that it provided and allowed for differentiation of instruction. I decided to implement a flipped classroom strategy into my own classroom to study how I can address a group of diverse learners (students performing below, at, and above grade level) in a SPED inclusion classroom to help with providing instruction in depth while also keeping each student motivated and engaged.

As a Special Education teacher in an inclusion classroom, I have to differentiate a lot of the work and play “catch up” with my SPED students to help them with both their grade level work and their Individualized Education Program goals and objectives. Since many SPED students are functioning below grade level, they need modifications and accommodations to help them with their grade level assignments. The purpose of this action research study is to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation for 6th grade students.
Literature Review

Before implementing my action research I needed to decide on a framework that would help me implement my plan. Kurt Lewis’ has a framework of plan, observe, act and reflect model. His model was done in psychological studies on social issues (Snyder, 2009). His legacy concerns social science and social issues of the world. His framework of plan, observe, act and reflect well fits the process of how I decided to implement my action research. I first began in planning the flipped classroom strategy that I would use, followed by making observations of my locus of control to determine what needed to be acted upon. I then moved on to putting my plan into action and once implementation was complete I reflected on the whole process and cycle. Kurt Lewis’ framework well fitted my action research in that my implementation concept of a flipped classroom was a social issue in my classroom to determine how using the flipped classroom strategy could increase student motivation.

Classroom teachers in a graduate reading methods course completed eighteen action research projects. As a method to going through the action research project, the candidates who completed the projects went through a self-study protocol. The importance of analyzing the data objectively through qualitative research method was an ongoing process to see how teachers made decisions about specific instructional practices (Eunyoung & Lawrence, 2011). The importance of analyzing data in Eunyoung & Lawrence findings nicely aligns with the reflection process of Kurt Lewis’ framework. Both ideas fit well to support the importance of analyzing and reflecting on a plan that was implemented to determine it’s effectiveness.

A study was conducted (George, Craven, Williams-Myers & Bonick, 2003) in Jamaica to explore how action research could be used for enhancing the quality of the teaching/learning process. The projects in this particular study focused on using a student-centered approach in traditionally teacher-centered courses. As a result of the projects, students became more independent learners and instructors learned more about student-centered classroom strategies. A flipped classroom is much like a student-centered approach in the sense that students are leading the discussions and participating in activities as the teacher being the facilitator. Knowing that student’s in this study became more independent learners and the instructors learned more about student-centered classroom strategies made me want to conduct an action research within my locus of control as a classroom teacher. I too could improve my teaching practices and better myself in the teaching career by going doing studies of my own to learn more about the different student-centered classroom strategies as well as other strategies that could be utilized in the classroom.

Action research is an approach commonly used for improving conditions and practices (Lingard et al., 2008; Whitehead et al., 2003). When doing an action research, researchers go through this process of developing and using skills that help in careful planning, sharpening observations listening, evaluating, and reflecting on the project. Action research is used to improve practice (Koshy, 2010). I personally think it is a best practice to seek ways to improve your practice in any type of career field, especially in the education field because things are constantly changing. As teachers use action research to improve their practice, they could also help their students from benefitting from a enriched learning experience by being exposed to different ways of learning from which their teacher’s have tested and tried.

While action research is a way to improve one’s practices, teacher education is also another way teachers can gain knowledge to also improve. In teacher education a lot of the interest is focused on how and what teachers learn within time and space with technologies in today’s society. Technology use is increasing and it is becoming apparent, as I have noticed while being in a master’s degree program that was done completely through online courses.

A study was conducted in 2013 to explore how technology can be used to teach technological skills and to determine what benefits of flipping the classroom on students taking an introductory-level college course (Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013). From this study, although students demonstrated learning gains, the instruction and assessments frustrated students and decreased their motivation to learn. The results supported a technology enhanced classroom was effective in the sense that students made gains. It better facilitated learning and students were more motivated which provided and allowed for differentiation of instruction. This was similar to the purpose of my action research which is to evaluate the effect of a
flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation for 6th grade students.

Flipping a classroom gives more time in class to be spent on engaging activities (Crouch, & Mazur, 2001). There are also more ways for learners to access knowledge since the lectures/lessons are delivered online (Flipped Classroom Field Guide). Research revealed in June 2014 that there were 24 studies related to the flipped classroom. A number of those studies examined student performance. In conclusion to this study, the results are encouraging, but there is a need to look more into the influence of flipped classroom instruction on learning outcomes (Bishop & Verleger, 2013).

The results of another flipped teaching study (Moroney, 2013) were positive for the flipped teaching approach, although the traditional form of teaching was far from being rejected. From personal experience, there are still quite a hand full of teachers who use the traditional form of teaching and are not aware of the flipped teaching approach. Moroney’s project was in the approach of an action research but from reflection of the teacher/researcher the project turned out to be more of an exploration – “Let’s do this and see what happens.” Although teachers may not be aware of the flipped teaching approach, they may try different things and there to “see what happens” in some form of an action research which could soon then lead to more and more people using the flipped teaching approach.

A few advantages of a flipped classroom include students moving at their own pace, doing homework in class gives teachers better insight to student difficulties and learning styles, teachers can easily customize and update the curriculum and providing it to students 24/7, and the use of technology is flexible and appropriate for 21st century learners. A few disadvantages to a flipped classroom includes students being resistant to the new teaching method and homework (readings, videos) must be created to make students prepared for in-class activities. The future of flipped classrooms offers a new model for case study teaching by combining student-learning with multiple skills that can be applied to solving real-world problems (Freeman Herreid & Schiller, 2013).

My action research was being implemented in an inclusion classroom, which included me to work with student’s who have learning disabilities. Technology plays a key role for students with physical and learning abilities due to its accessibility (McCrea, 2014). With technology, students with special needs are able to stay involved in class and at home. Based on these implementations of technology, it has been reported that assistive technology becomes more accessible to non-traditional learners through the advancement of touch technology and mobile apps that bring functionality as the norm. Assistive technology is something that the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team discusses when developing the student’s IEP.

Project Design & Development

When developing this project, I wanted to do something within my locus of control. That was my grade 6 inclusion classroom. In an inclusion classroom there are students functioning at different levels since the class contains both general and special education students. Retaining student motivation is a big struggle in an inclusion classroom especially for students who are functioning two or more years below their grade level as well as for those higher-level students who are quick and have an easy time completing their work.

I decided on this action research of evaluating a flipped classroom model in an inclusion classroom to increase student motivation. Since kids in the present day are growing in a century where technology is becoming inevitable, I thought a flipped classroom strategy was something I could implement to get students into the habit of using technology while at the same time seeing how this method could further the motivation and learning in my classroom.

A flipped classroom was never implemented with my class before so in order for me to make the switch from a traditional classroom to a flipped classroom I needed to make sure I had a plan on what I would do. One of the first things that needed to be done was to design & develop my website to use as a tool for my flipped classroom.
In the process of designing and developing my website I needed to decided on a specific content area and skill. I decided to focus the content of my flipped classroom on our Math curriculum, which is GO Math. The good thing about this GO Math curriculum is that it comes with instructional videos that go along with each lesson. Each lesson had about two to three instructional videos online that I could access and use for my flipped classroom. Once I had my content focus selected, I moved on to creating a website that compiled the lesson videos for my students to view. Although GO Math had their instructional videos accessible online, in order for students to access the videos they would need to go through a number of links to search for and find the videos itself. Considering all that hassle, I decided it was much easier for students to access the instructional videos through a simple website which I then created.

I used Weebly as my website builder because I was familiar with it’s tools on creating a website. The layouts were simple and its drag and drop feature made it easy for me to organize the web format into a simple layout with links and videos. In order for me to determine which lesson videos to post on the site, I took a look at my pacing guide to help me determine what lessons were going to be taught during the time my Master’s project was required to be implemented.

Since my project was on a flipped classroom method, eight online instructional videos were created ready to be used during this time considering that the pacing could possibly be shifted due to other events that may unexpectedly occur. Therefore, extra lessons were planned just in case the schedule in the classroom needed to be switched around at the last minute. The instructional videos are closely aligned with our instructional content as both were created and developed by GO Math’s curriculum developers Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Once I had my instructional module developed and completed, my materials were ready to be implemented. Flipping a classroom is not as easy as flipping a switch. I then needed to prepare my students and introduce them to the instructional module, and get my student’s used to navigating their way through the website. This took a few days considering the fact that I’ve never done a flipped classroom before. I had to pilot my website to determine if there were any changes or additional factors that needed to be considered to make sure implementation would be a smooth process. This pilot time allowed me to prep my students for what was going to come when I moved forward with implementation. Not all of my students had access to the Internet at home from the beginning of my pilot session so modifications needed to be made by setting time at the beginning of each class session to be dedicated to viewing the instructional videos. Students completed this task independently just as they would complete the task independently if they were to do it at home.

The url of the instructional module used in my flipped classroom is <http://gomathgrade6.weebly.com> (Appendix A). The homepage includes an image of the cover of their GO Math student textbook. The color scheme of the website was selected to match the color scheme of the student’s textbook to give the website and the student textbook a cohesive look. I embedded screenshots of the digital textbook to create a familiar look that would help students recognize parts of the site so that the content was recognizable to them. There is a button at the bottom of the lesson page for the students to click on that will take them to the instructional video. The instructional videos deliver the content through various types of media to support student learning. Audio was available to help struggling readers who have difficulty reading grade level text. Captions were provided as another form of media for students to follow along through written format. Graphs and pictures were also provided to help students visualize the concept as it’s being taught versus only having to read or hear about it. This was especially great for students in my inclusion classroom who struggled with reading or needed visual aids to help them picture the math concepts.

Piloting the website included a lot of student preparation in accessing the web page and navigating through it independently. At the end of my pilot very minimal changes were made to the website. Changes were mostly formatting issues since I felt the videos provided sufficient information to help with student learning. Once my pilot was complete, I began my implementation round.
After implementation I had to analyze my findings, reflect on what happened, and make any necessary changes that I thought needed to be made based off my analysis & reflection. That took a few days to complete. I then proceeded with a second round of implementation and repeated the whole process.

Throughout this whole implementation process the project instruments included a consent form (See Appendix B) that participants took home for their parents to complete. Since the participants are minors they needed to be given parent consent for them to participate in my action research project. This project includes a website module <http://gomathgrade6.weebly.com> (See Appendix A) where students can access the instructional videos outside of class. A pre- and post- survey (See Appendix C) was conducted to survey participants on their thoughts and feelings of their motivation towards using the flipped classroom and in class assignments. Arrangements were made with a colleague to conduct and complete an observation protocol form (See Appendix D) to note observable behaviors that participants demonstrated while this instructional method was being implemented. An observation protocol was used to gather thoughts from an outside perspective of how the students interacted and worked through the implementation of the lesson.

Conclusion

Teaching a group of students with disabilities has challenges in itself. Teaching that same group of students’ grade level content takes those challenges to another level. Students begin to get agitated and lose focus. The purpose of this action research study was to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation for 6th grade students. Since part of my focus in this action research was evaluating student motivation, I learned that it is really important to know my students’ strengths, needs, and interest and take that information and take that into consideration when creating my instruction. Preparation and development to get the ball rolling on a flipped classroom definitely takes time and effort into making sure you are doing what is best to fit the needs of students in the class. Identifying student’s strengths, needs and interests throughout this process was a big factor in contributing to increasing their motivation through their learning. Using bits and pieces of their strengths and interests can help motivate students even more! I also learned that when motivating students, it is important to gather student feedback. Their feedback is very important, especially when you want to know if they are motivated or not. The only ones who will truly know if a student is motivated are the students themselves. If they felt it worked out for them and they communicated that to me then great! I could continue what I was doing, if not then I know I have to evaluate, revise and try something different. That’s what I liked about this action research, trying different things and seeing how they work as you go. It’s all a big learning experience.

This was my first time implementing a flipped classroom so there were definitely some things that didn’t go as I originally planned. Many of us know the flipped classroom concept as students viewing short lecture video at home before the class session, while class time is focused on doing activities, projects or participating in discussions based on the lecture video. As much as I wanted it to work that way, I couldn’t make that happen in my class this time around. Not all participants had access to the Internet at home therefore the lecture videos could not be viewed outside of class so modifications needed to be made. Instead of requiring students to view the instructional videos outside of class I set time at the beginning of our Math block to have each student independently view the lesson video. This served as our “at home” time which took about 10-15 minutes depending on the lesson video. After each student viewed the video we carried on with the lesson activities/discussions I had planned for that lesson. In a sense it worked out because I was able to implement the video, activities and discussions that I had planned for this flipped classroom, but at the same time I wished it could’ve been done in the real form of a flipped classroom.

In this process I had to think like a 6th grader while creating my website and previewing the lesson videos. I needed to make sure my students were able to access and navigate their way around the website as well as making sure they were able to understand the content/language provided in the video. Since my inclusion classroom included students below grade level I needed to make sure the video contents was something they were able to comprehend.
I also needed to be flexible through this whole implementation process. As a teacher, sometimes you never know what could possibly occur in the school day that could throw off your whole schedule. There were days when I planned to implement my project, but wasn’t able to do so due to an unexpected event or simply due to not having access to the technology because they were already checked out by another teacher.

Throughout my implementation there were a few students who showed physical behaviors of interest towards the instructional module and working with the laptop to access the video, but once the laptop was taken out of the picture their behaviors reverted back to their normal in-class behaviors of being distracted and disengaged from the task. On the other hand, there were a few students who found ways to connect the knowledge and learning from the videos to their in-class assignment, but that wasn’t the case for all students. If the flipped classroom became a regular thing, students might then be able to make more connections between the videos and their in-class assignments through more exposure of the type of instruction as well as through discussions about the method of learning. This could then possibly lead to and work from gaining excitement from the use of laptops to gaining excitement and motivation for learning.

Flipping my classroom really promoted learning in my inclusion class. It allowed for me to work one on one with individual students or in small groups while other students were viewing the videos and engaging in the different tasks. I felt like I was able to differentiate because I was able to do different things to address the needs of individual students while other students were engaging in the flipped inclusion classroom approach.

Initially I had planned to create my own instructional videos to be used in my flipped classroom, but then I found out that our GO Math curriculum already had videos made. So I did not have to reinvent the wheel, which was great because that saved me a lot of time! A big lesson learned from this whole experience is to make use of the resources that are already available. I also felt that while I was developing the website, I was becoming more and more familiar with the content and lessons that I needed to teach. This was a big plus because it allowed for prep-time, and to come to think of it, I spent a lot more time preparing my lessons in this flipped classroom versus the bare minimum time I spend preparing my lessons if I were teaching it the traditional way.
**References**


Flipped Classroom Field Guide. (n.d.). Retrieved October 28, 2015, from [http://www.cvm.umn.edu/facstaff/prod/groups/cvm/@pub/@cvm/@facstaff/documents/content/cvm_content_454476.pdf](http://www.cvm.umn.edu/facstaff/prod/groups/cvm/@pub/@cvm/@facstaff/documents/content/cvm_content_454476.pdf)


APPENDIX A

Flipped Classroom Module
http://gomathgrade6.weebly.com

MISS VILLANUEVA'S MATH CLASS

Welcome to our Math class website!
Here you can watch videos to help you learn more about what we are learning in math. (: 

UNIT 5
Equations and Inequalities
6.EE.5, 6.EE.6, 6.EE.7
Relationships in Two Variables

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can you use relationships in two variables to solve real-world problems?

LESSON 12.1
Graphing on the Coordinate Plane

6.NS.6c
Find ordered pairs of integers and other rational numbers on a coordinate plane.

6.NS.8
Graph rational numbers on the number line and coordinate plane (first quadrant).

LESSON 12.2
Independent and Dependent Variables in Tables and Graphs

6.EE.9
Write equations from tables.

LESSON 12.3
Writing Equations from Tables

6.EE.9
Write and solve simple equations in one variable.

LESSON 12.4
Representing Algebraic Relationships in Tables and Graphs

6.EE.9
Write expressions and equations to represent real-world situations.

LESSON 12.1
Graphing on the Coordinate Plane

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do you locate and name points in the coordinate plane?

What It Means To You

You will graph an ordered pair of rational numbers on a coordinate plane.

UNPACKING EXAMPLE 6.NS.6c
Graph and label each point on a coordinate plane.

(4.5, 6) (3, 4)
located right there. I want to write the coordinates of E, so I need to find the x value and then the y value. That means starting at

Key Objectives

- Learn to plot and identify ordered pairs on a coordinate plane.
APPENDIX B

Flipped Classroom: Consent Form

Please read and sign this form if you agree to the terms. You may also refuse to participate.

My name is Miss Villanueva, your child’s math teacher, and I am conducting a personal research to improve my teaching practices. The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation. Your child is being asked to participate in this research study because he/she is a student in my class.

**Participant Activities**
During this action research you may agree to have your child participate in an online instructional approach via a math class website. This research will include your child watching instructional videos to learn the math content found on our math website. Your child will then be asked to demonstrate in class what they learned from the videos. During the session your child will be interviewed about the site, asked to demonstrate gained knowledge, complete tasks, and complete a questionnaire about his/her experience. Questionnaires will be done in either written or verbal form. Neither your child’s responses nor grades will be made public. We will go through 2 class sessions with this action research.

**Confidentiality and Privacy**
By agreeing you understand and consent to have your child participate in a personal research to improve my teaching practice. You understand that your child’s progress and feedback are for improving my teaching practices and that your child’s name and comments will not be used for any other purpose. After this personal research is conducted and information is collected all personally identifiable information will not be used in any presentations.

**Benefits and Risks**
I believe there are no direct benefits and or risks to your child participating in my research study. At any point your child may take a break, ask questions, or withdraw without consequence.

**Voluntary Participation**
Participation is voluntary and you agree to immediately raise any concerns you might have. You or your child can discontinue your child’s participation at any time without penalty.

If you have any questions after today, please contact me, Miss Villanueva, Jeanette_Villanueva@notes.k12.hi.us. Should it be necessary you may also receive a copy of this consent form.
Please fill and sign below to indicate that you have read and understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the session have been answered.

Instructional Module site: https://gomathgrade6.weebly.com/

[ ] I Agree to have my child participate
[ ] I Do Not Agree to have my child

[ ] My child has internet access at home
[ ] My child does not have internet access at home

Date: ______________________

Please print your child’s name: ________________________________

Please print your name: _______________________________________

Please sign your name: _________________________________________
Comments or concerns: _______________________________________________________________________

**Thank you!**
I appreciate your participation. Please return the signed document to school by **Tuesday January 26, 2015**.
APPENDIX C

Electronic Pre-Survey
via Google Forms

Flipped Inclusion Math Classroom (Pre Survey)

*Required

On a scale from 1-5 rate your level of interest in math class. *

1 2 3 4 5
not interested ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ really interested

On a scale from 1-5 rate your level of motivation in math class. *

1 2 3 4 5
super boring ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ really fun

What’s one thing you like about math class right now? *

Your answer

What’s one thing you would like to change in math class? *

Your answer

Do you have internet access at home? *

○ Yes
○ No

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Electronic Post-Survey
via Google Forms

Flipped Inclusion Math Classroom (Post Survey)

Think about when you watched the videos to learn about Math...

* Required

On a scale from 1-5 rate your level of interest in math class when you were given the chance to watch the math videos.*

1 2 3 4 5
not interested ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
really interested

On a scale from 1-5 your level of motivation while completing the math assignments we do in class after watching the videos. *

1 2 3 4 5
super boring ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
really fun

What's one thing you like about watching the math videos? *

Your answer

If you were to watch the math videos in the future, what is one thing you would like to change? *

Your answer

Would you like to continue watching the math videos? *

Yes or No. Explain.

Your answer

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
APPENDIX D

Student Active Engagement Observation Protocol

Name: Jeanette Villanueva

Purpose statement:
The purpose of this action research study is to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in an elementary inclusion math class to increase student motivation for 6th grade students at Ewa Elementary School.

Research Question:
1) How active and engaged are 6th grade math inclusion students at Ewa Elementary School as they complete watching a flipped classroom instructional video?
2) What is the impact of a flipped classroom instructional video in creating a motivating classroom environment for 6th grade students at Ewa Elementary School?

Observation Protocol:

Teacher Observed: ______________________________________________________
Observer: ________________
Date: _________________
Time of Observation: _______ to _______
Total Number of Students: _______________

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<th>Time Segments in Minutes</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Motivated Behaviors:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiative to ask/answer questions</td>
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<td>Focused/working on assignment</td>
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<td>Active body postures</td>
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<td>Relevant conversations</td>
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<td>Actively Involved: Are students motivated to learning a flipped classroom setting?</td>
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Write a brief narrative response reflecting upon your observations.

Definition of Terms:
Motivated Behaviors:
• Initiative to ask/answer questions: Students raise hand to ask or answer a question in the group.
• Focused/working on assignment: Students are all focused or working on their assignment.
• Active body postures: Students have active body postures (vertically aligned or leaning toward their desk/assignment/teacher). Students show that they are enjoying themselves in the classroom in relation to their learning environment.
• Relevant conversations: Students are participating in relevant conversations related to the classroom content

Procedures:
You will be observing students in a math content engaging in their classroom assignment/activity for a 10 minute duration. Fill in the blanks at the top of the Student Active Engagement Observation Protocol sheet. All students will have their own assignment to complete. In the table, actions you will be observing are found on the left, and time intervals are found along the top. Definitions below the table clarify the actions to be observed. As each time segment listed approaches, note and record the number of students displaying the actions described in the space provided. Use the notes column on the far right of the table for additional observations. Finally, write a brief narrative response to the final “Actively Involved” question, reflecting on your observations.
Sample tally marks:

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