

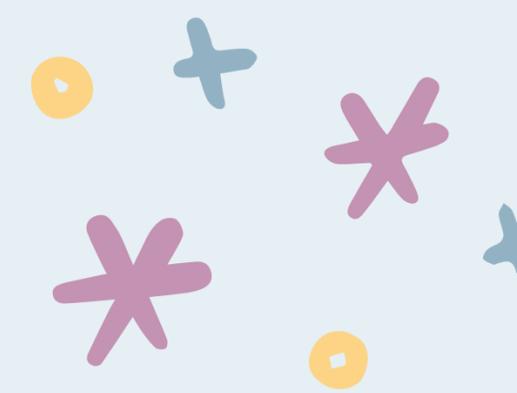
ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH
PERSONALIZED STRATEGIES TO
CONCENTRATE DURING A HIGH
SCHOOL ENGLISH 9 CLASS



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HOMER HIGH SCHOOL

HOMER, MI

Homer High School is a small, rural high school located in downtown Homer. The high school is part of one K-12 building with around 600 total students. 303 of these students attend Homer High School.

INTRO TO PSYCHOLOGY
5th hour
28 students | Grades 10-12
M.T. Paula Eldridge

ENGLISH 10
1st & 2nd hour
37 students | Grade 10
M.T. Kiley Robinson

ENGLISH 9
4th, 6th & 7th hour
65 students | Grade 9
M.T. Kiley Robinson

TEACHER RESEARCH
Observed English 9
4th, 6th & 7th hour
4 students | 3 male, 1 female

SITUATION & RESEARCH QUESTION

- About two or three students per class commonly get off task and do not complete the assignments or tasks that are asked of them.
- They often go on their phones, state they will not do their work, or move to a different area of the classroom to talk to other students.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN I USE TO ASSIST STUDENTS TO CONCENTRATE DURING A HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH 9 CLASS?

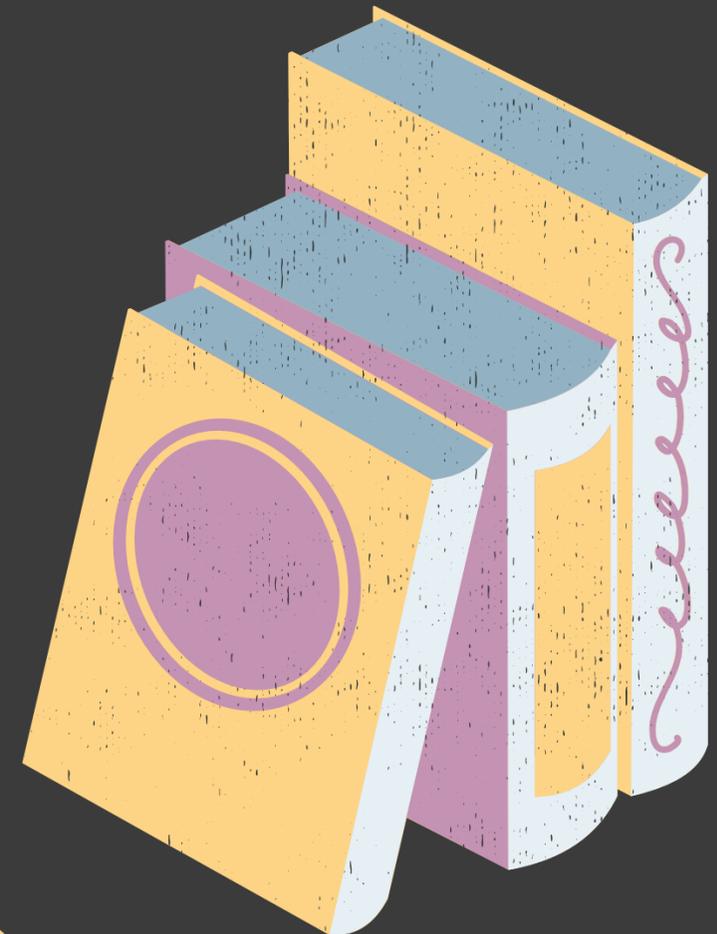




PRIOR TO TRIALS: SELECTING STUDENTS

Selected four students who...

- 1) exhibit similar distraction behaviors
- &
- 2) received less or zero points because they do not complete the assignment



ROUND 1 TRIAL:

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCE WITH STUDENTS

- Called students one-at-a-time to have conversations with me outside of the classroom.
- Walking around the high school quads, I asked each student four questions, listened to their responses, and wrote notes after they returned to the classroom.

Questions Asked

- What's been going on recently?/How are you doing?
- Can you tell me more about how you've been doing in class?
- What is preventing you from completing class assignments?
- What can I do to help you succeed in class?

TRIAL 1 DATA: STUDENT RESPONSES

John

I get distracted easily and tired at end of day. It takes effort to “lock in” or concentrate and it’s hard to get back on track. He requested a check-in from me when he’s off task.

Gabe

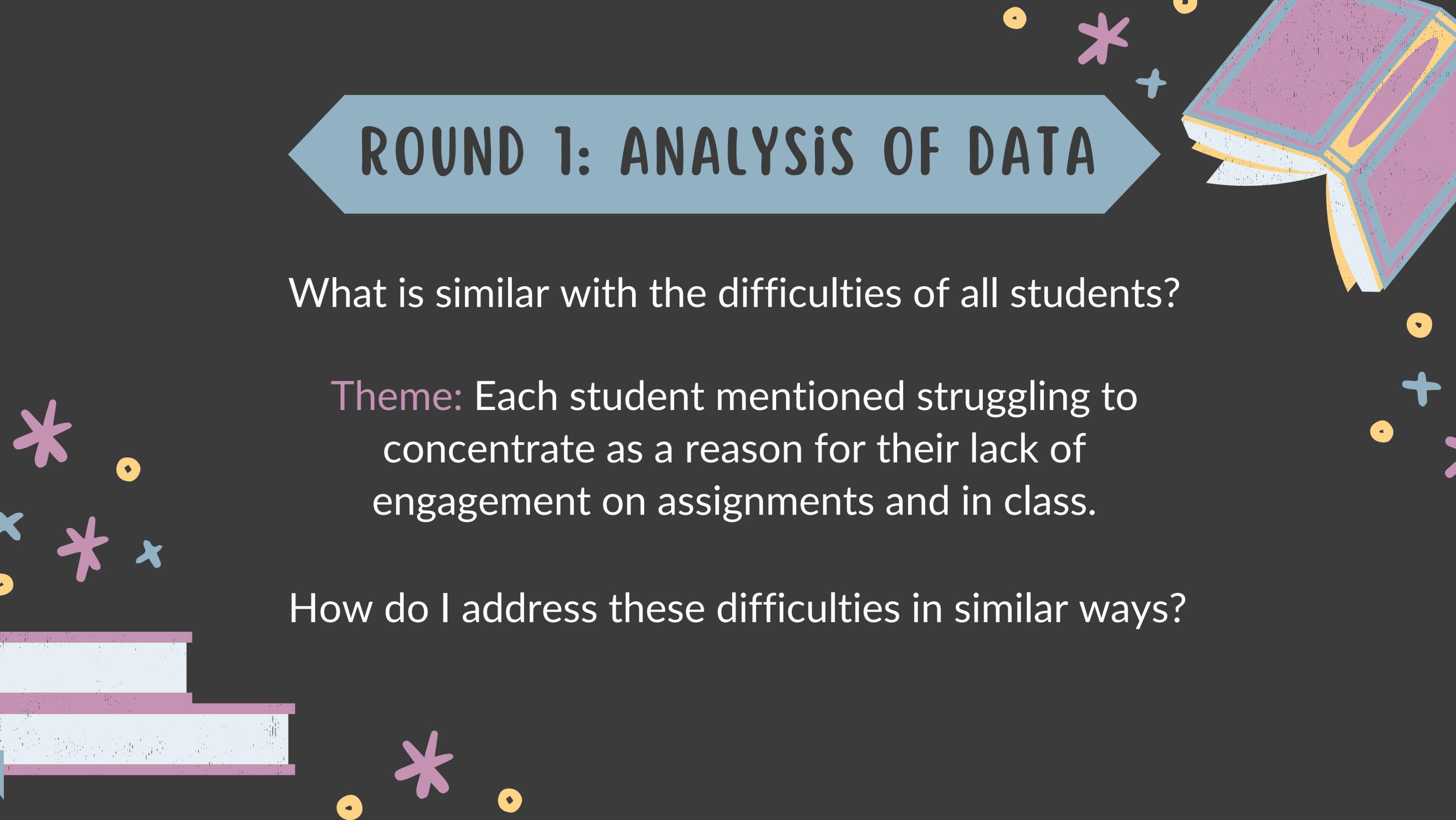
I don’t like English class so it’s hard for me to do our assignments. I need a lot of breaks and I can’t really stay focused for a long time. At the end of the day I have a lot of energy and don’t want to be at school anymore.

Noah

It’s very difficult to concentrate in class; my energy makes it hard to focus. It really depends on if I take my medication. “Verbal instruction” is hard for me to understand, but I don’t know if there’s anything you can do.

Riley

This class is the only class I have with my best friend so it’s hard to concentrate on my work when I want to talk to her. I will get all of my work in I might just need some reminders. (Emphasized private reminders.)

A dark blue background decorated with various elements: a stack of books in shades of purple, pink, and yellow on the right; several pink and blue stars of different sizes scattered throughout; and small yellow circles with black dots in the center. A large, light blue arrow-shaped banner points to the left, containing the text 'ROUND 1: ANALYSIS OF DATA'.

ROUND 1: ANALYSIS OF DATA

What is similar with the difficulties of all students?

Theme: Each student mentioned struggling to concentrate as a reason for their lack of engagement on assignments and in class.

How do I address these difficulties in similar ways?

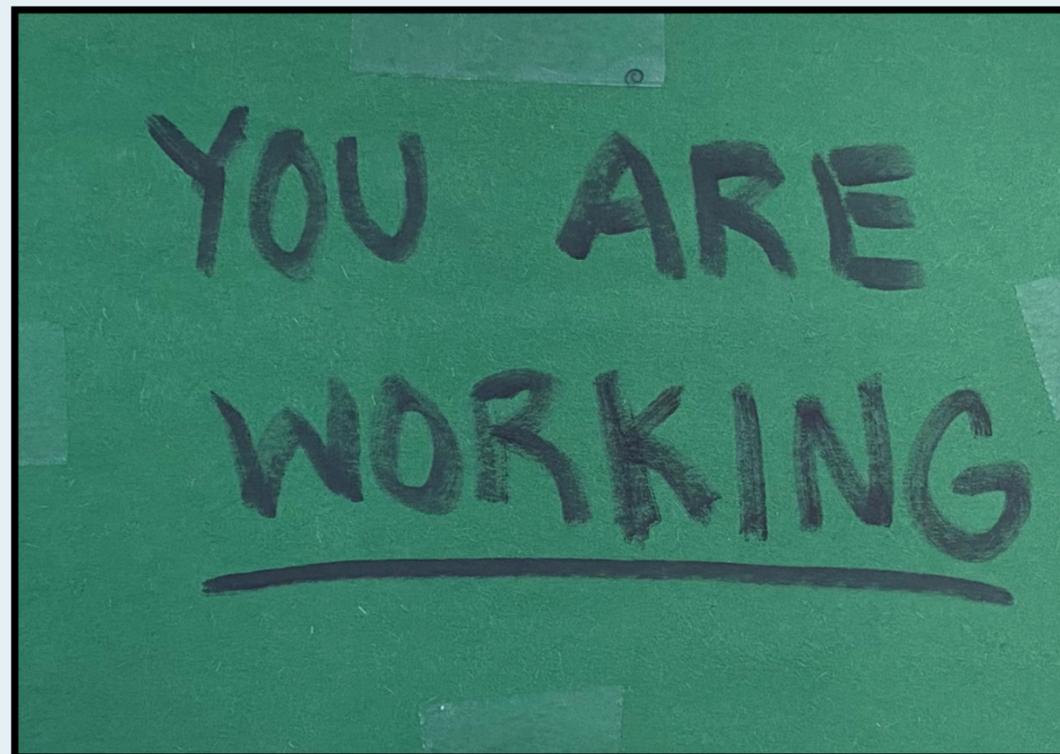
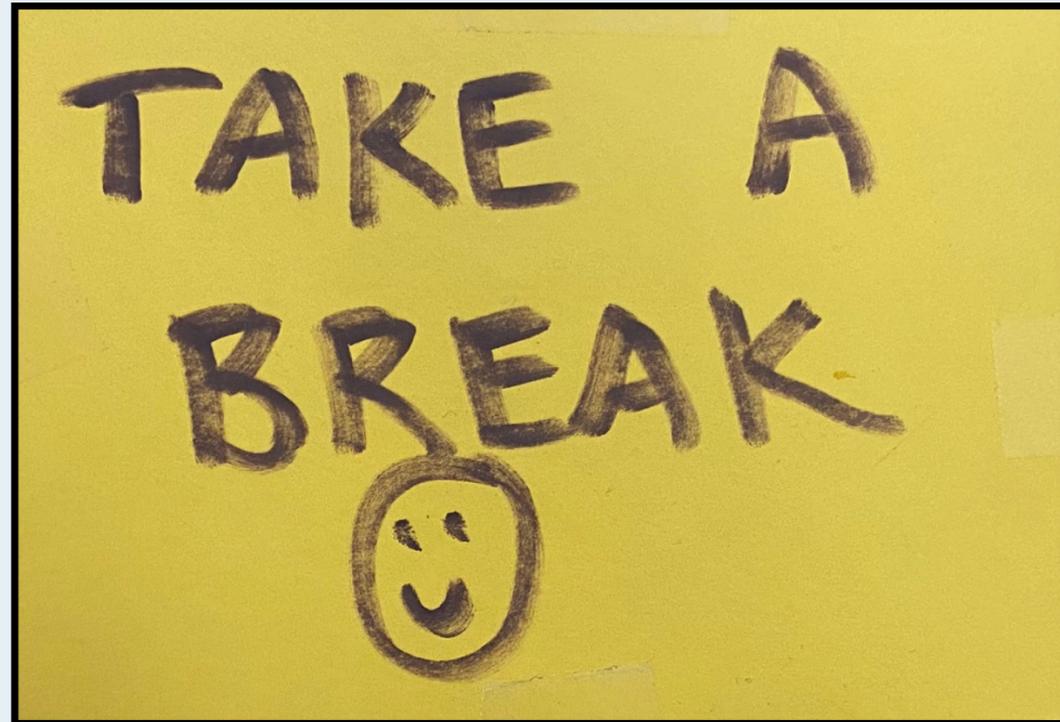
NEXT STEPS

Visual Aids

Research has shown that using visual cues can support classroom routine for students who struggle to focus for extended periods of time, as do timing prompts.

The Trial

Visual aids in the form of cards will be used to set specific times for students to be on task and taking breaks, based on the color of the card. Aids will be individual to each student and sit on their desk throughout class as a reminder.

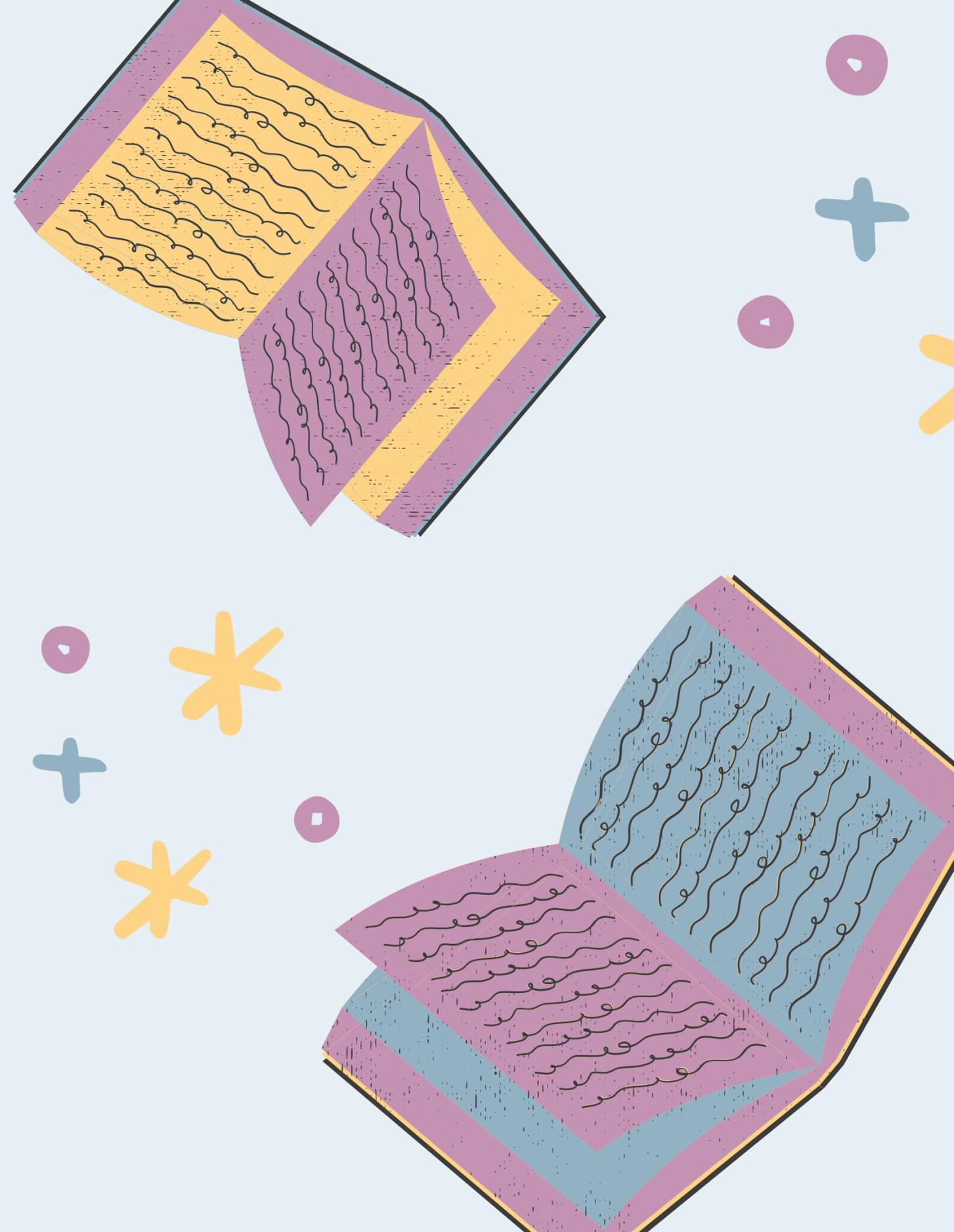


ROUND 2: REVISED ENACTMENT

Observed four students in three different 50 minute period classes over three days; noted off-task behavior when the green side was showing and noted if they continued or returned to working when the yellow side was showing.

ROUND 2: REVISED ENACTMENT

- Used a two-sided card: green on one side & yellow on the opposite
- “You are working and on task” written on green side; “Take a break” written on yellow side.
- Green side was used for a maximum of eight minutes then yellow side was turned up to signal a four minute break; breaks were allotted in between eight-minute work periods



VISUAL OBSERVATIONS: DAY 1

John

He worked when his card was green with some distractions due to other students walking over and talking to him. He was working more intently than he had the day prior and finished his bell ringer for the first time two weeks.

Noah

He worked well without losing focus while on the green card but once it switched to yellow he took over a 15 minute bathroom break. He finished most of his assignment but still left some answers blank.

Gabe

He found it difficult to decipher between yellow and green, occasionally going on his phone and talking to others during work time. He also worked during his break time in what appeared to be a catch-up.

Riley

She worked while on the green card but could not go from a short break back to work. Other students served as a distraction for her despite the fact that she was mostly on task with the green card. She was very excited to have the card for breaks but didn't like that the card brought attention to her.

DAY 2 DATA

Student	Noah (M)	Gabe (M)	John (M)	Riley (F)
Off Task During Work Time	4	3	1	3
On Task During Break	1	1	2	2



DAY 3 DATA

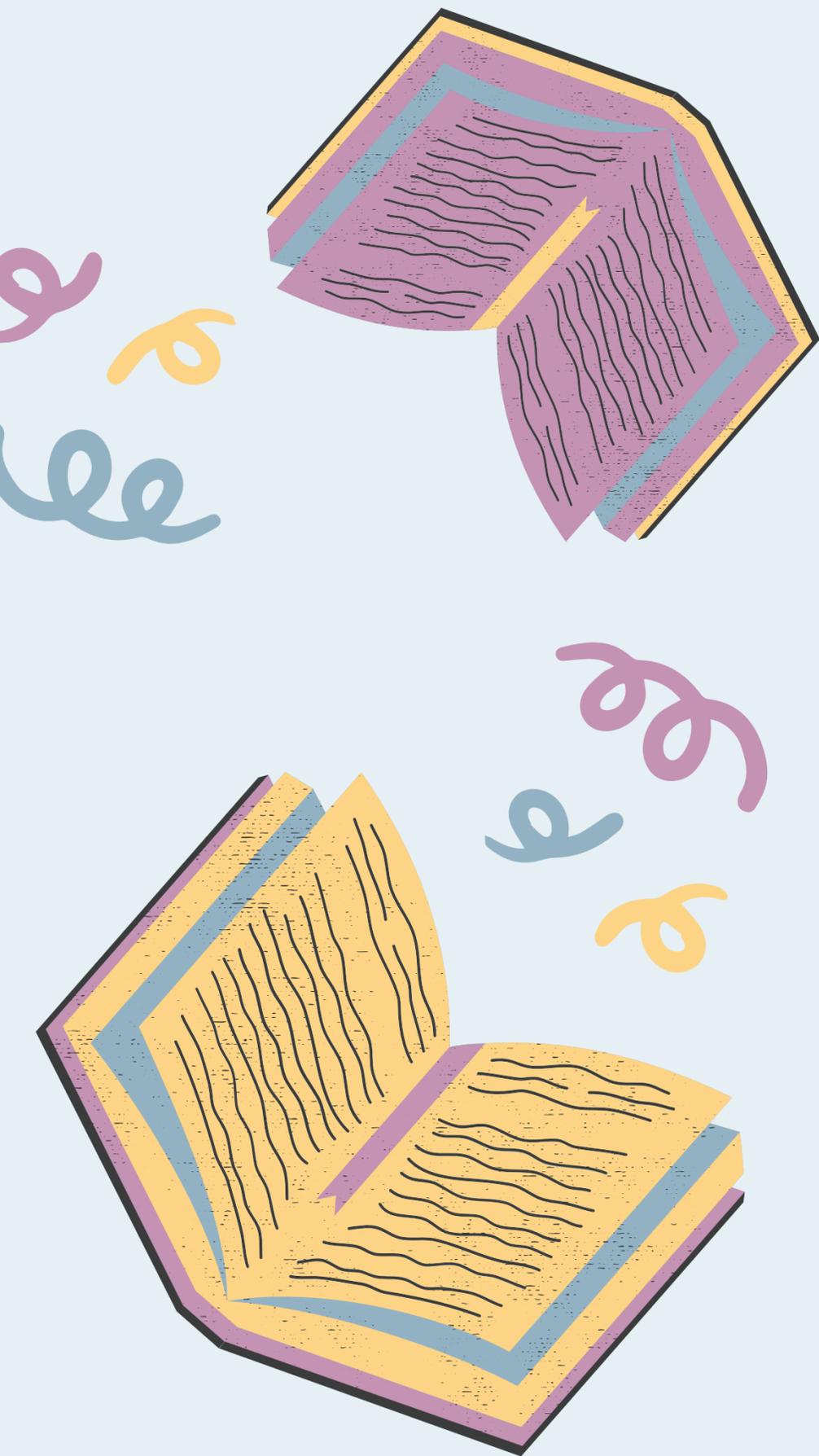
Student	Noah (M)	Gabe (M)	John (M)	Riley (F)
Off Task During Work Time	1	2	1	2
On Task During Break	1	1	3	1



ROUND 2: ANALYSIS OF DATA

PATTERNS

- Students' concentration lasted much longer on days spent entirely completing assignments and not receiving instruction
- # of times off task during work time decreased as students continued to use their visual aids
- # of times on task during break time increases as students continued to use their visual aids



STUDENT FEEDBACK

- 5-star-reviews used with a section to explain reasoning for their rating.
- Multiple choice questions ranging from “It did not work well” to “It worked extremely well” with section for explanation.

2 FIVE STARS
1 FOUR STARS
1 THREE STARS



Rating: 4/5 Riley

How did this strategy work for you? Was it helpful, harmful, or neither?

It worked well because I ~~can~~ like being able to ~~be~~ chill after I get work done.

Gabe

How well did this technique work for you?

a. It did not work well; it made it even harder to concentrate and stay on task.
b. It worked okay but didn't make much of a difference.
c. It worked well. It helped me concentrate and get more done than usual.
d. It worked extremely well; I need to be using this technique all the time.

Explain your answer.

It works and i work for a broke time

John D.

How well did this technique work for you?

a. It did not work well; it made it even harder to concentrate and stay on task.
b. It worked okay but didn't make much of a difference.
c. It worked well. It helped me concentrate and get more done than usual.
d. It worked extremely well; I need to be using this technique all the time.

Explain your answer.

more focused less energetic and more active

Noah



Rating: 10/10

How did this strategy work for you? Was it helpful, harmful, or neither?

I like the visual

ROUND 3: REVISED ENACTMENT

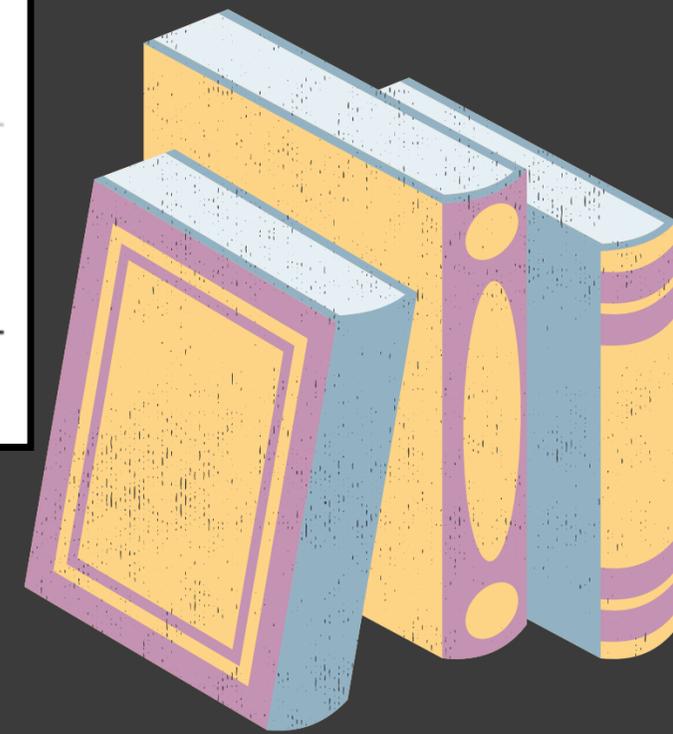
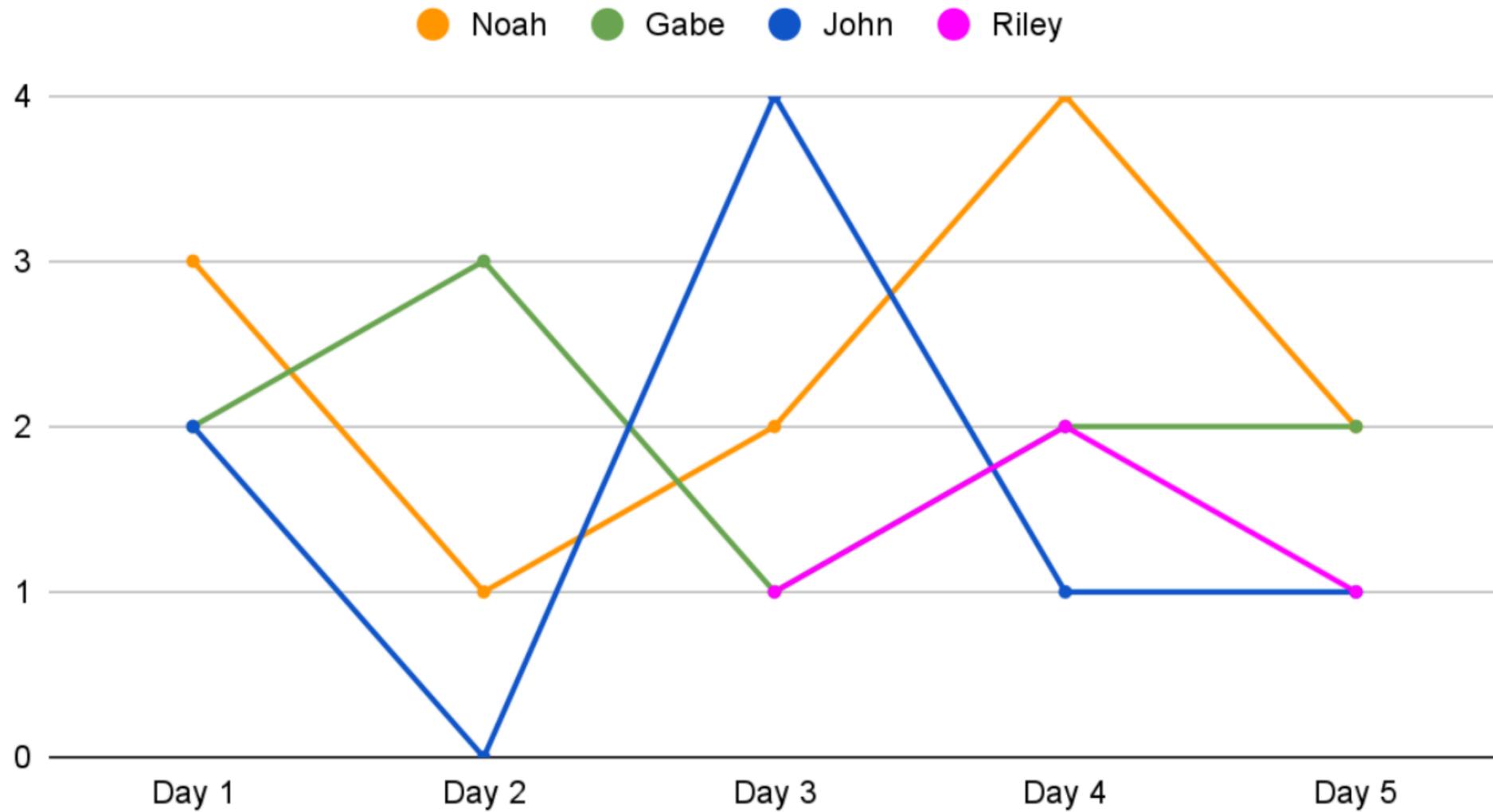
- Green side was used for a maximum of 12 minutes then yellow side was turned up to signal a four minute break; breaks were allotted in between twelve-minute work periods.
- Task sheet was given for behaviors/expectations of students during break time.

Expectations during break time

- If you would like to leave the classroom, please ask the teacher beforehand.
- If you would like to use your phone, please check with the teacher beforehand.
- If you would like to talk to a friend, please stay close to your desk and make sure you are not distracting them from their work.

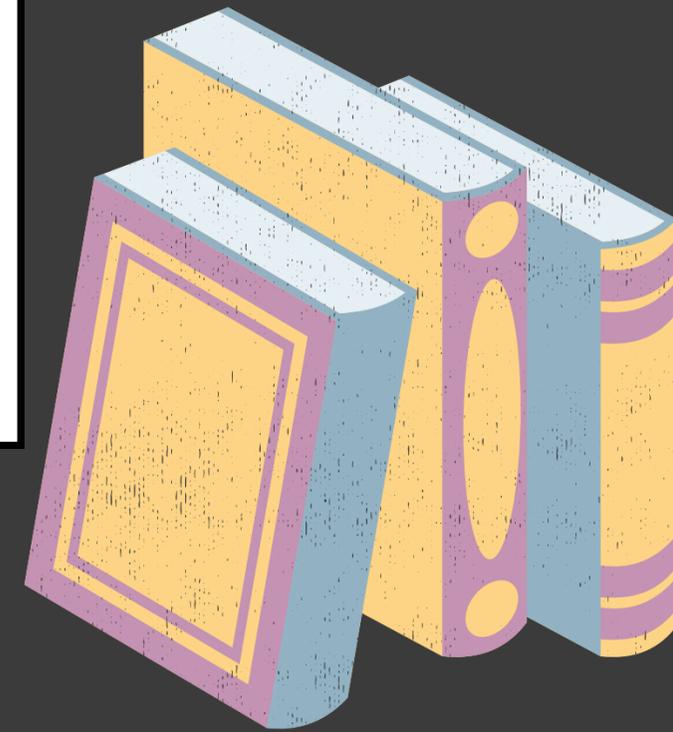
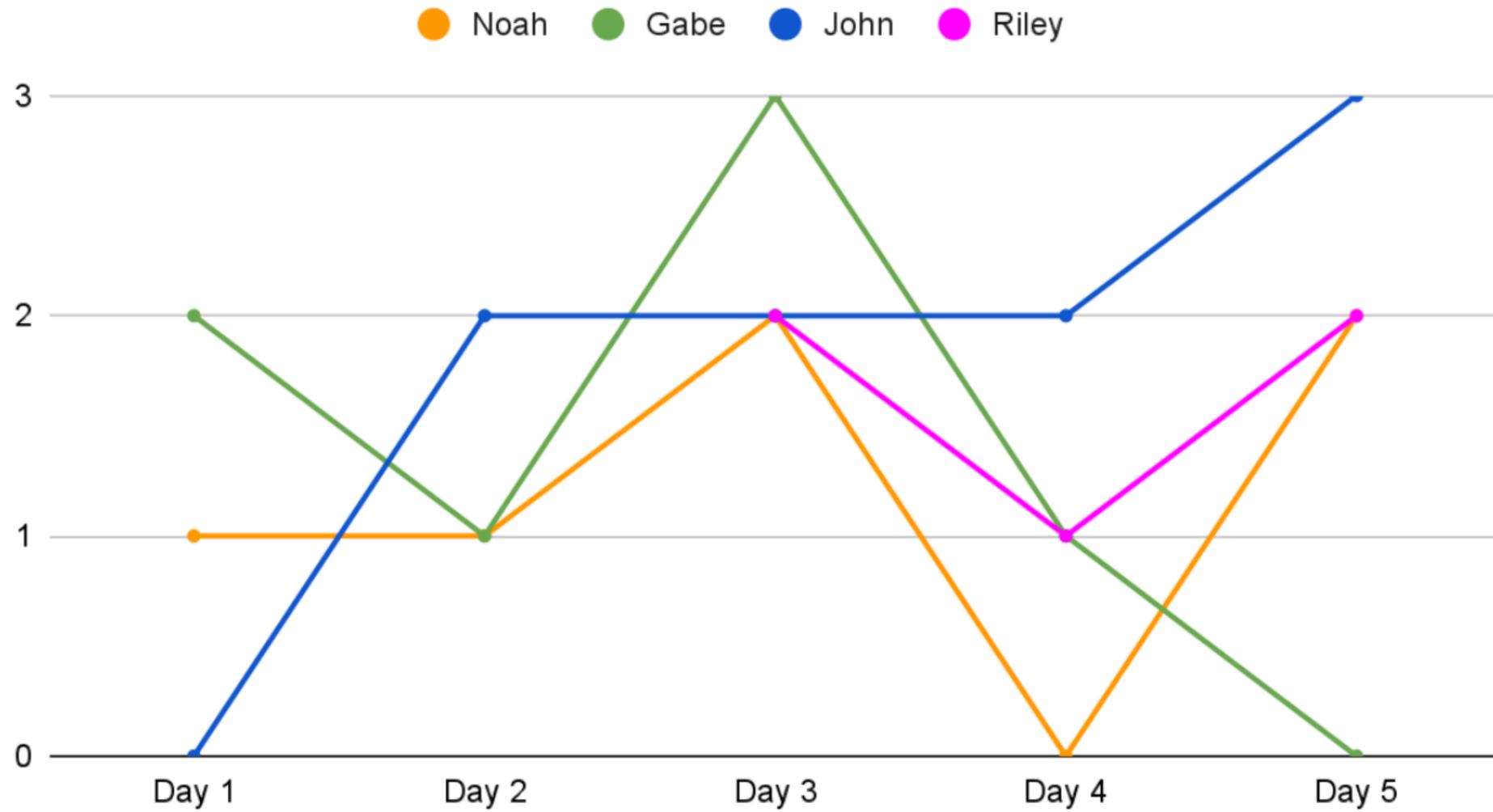
TRIAL 3 DATA: WT

Off task during work time



TRIAL 3 DATA: BT

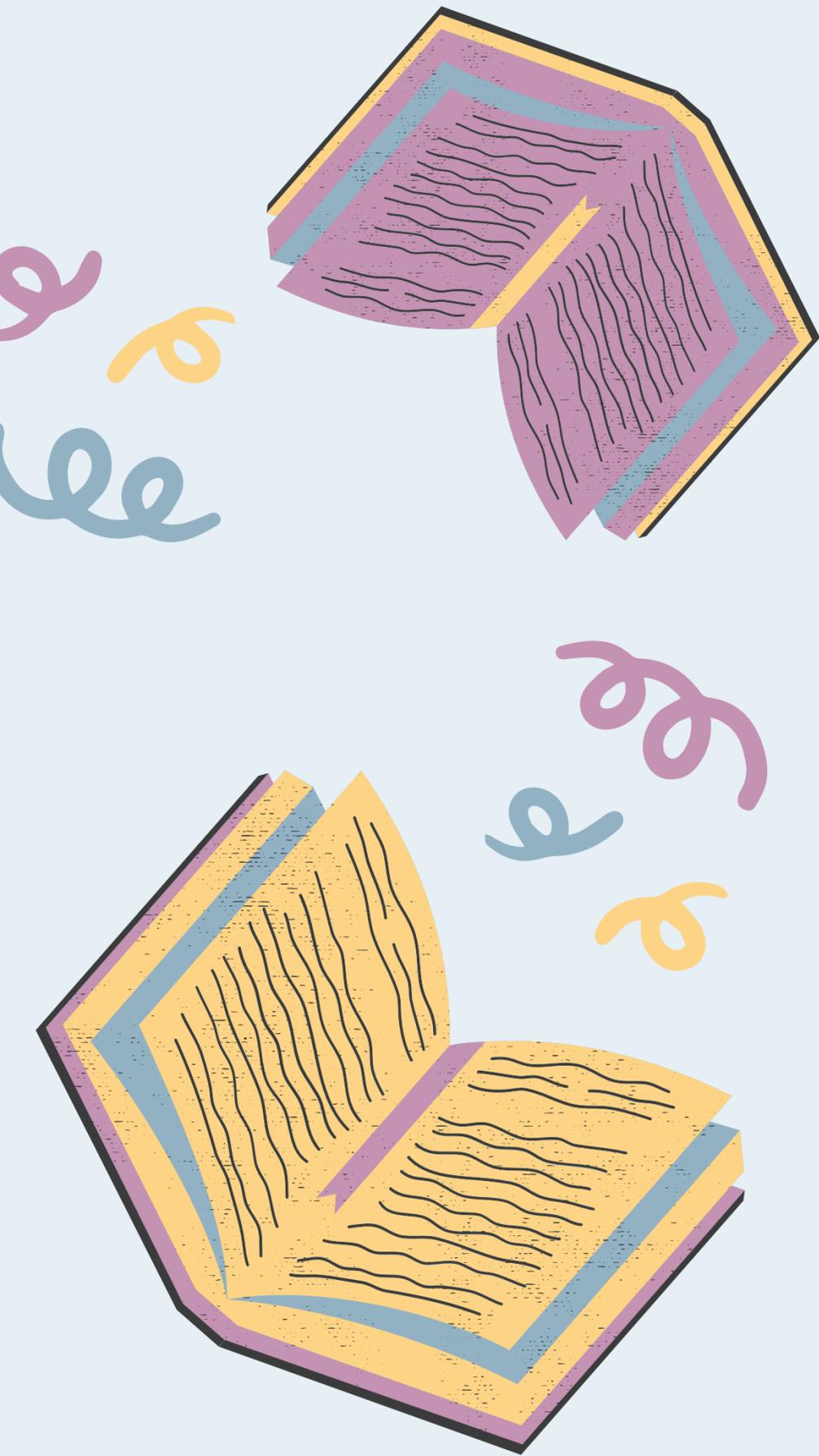
On task during break time



ROUND 3: ANALYSIS OF DATA

PATTERNS

- Students' concentration reflected more consistent behavior over four days, with the exception of one case and one outlier for three of the days.
- On average and at least 80% of the time, students' demonstrated two or fewer off-task behaviors during class periods.
- On average and at least 85% of the time, students' demonstrated on-task behaviors during class periods.



FINDINGS

Finding 1

Using concentration cards to help 9th graders confirm when it's time to be on-task and concentrate increased the time they worked to more than thirty minutes and reduced redirections to three or fewer.

Finding 2

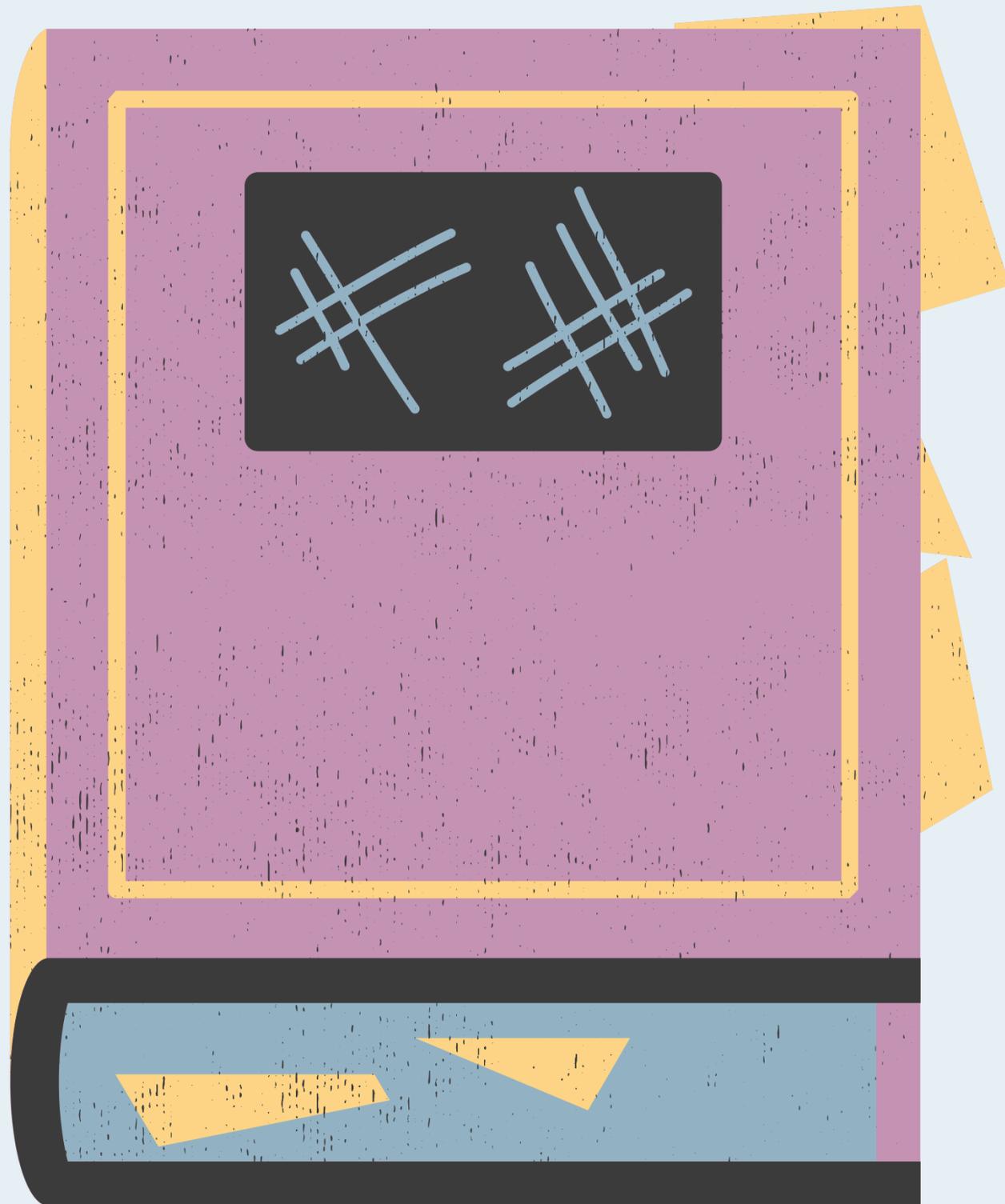
Having students practice concentration in a time frame that lengthens over a period of time served as a helpful strategy for students to continue working and complete their work.

Finding 3

Working with students one-on-one to personalize concentration strategies was an important recognition of students' individuality and means to build confidence in individual autonomy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- MT's Kiley Robinson & Paula Eldridge
- Homer High School students
- Homer Principle Cohen Sangster
- Albion College TEP faculty and staff
- Fellow student teachers
- Albion College English & Psychology Departments
- Liam McLaughlin and Rachel Goike



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

