Fostering Engagement in a Middle School Classroom

Lauren McAnally
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Leah Nillas, Faculty Advisor
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc](https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc)

Part of the Education Commons

McAnally, Lauren and Nillas, Faculty Advisor, Leah, "Fostering Engagement in a Middle School Classroom" (2016). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 3.
[https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2016/ESposters2/3](https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/2016/ESposters2/3)

This Event is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.
Fostering Engagement in a Middle School Classroom

Lauren McAnally and Leah Nillas*

Educational Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University

Research Question

How to create a classroom environment that fosters engagement?

Literature Review

- Student engagement has been a central topic in discussions of classroom reform (Trowler, 2010).

- In a three year study, the role of the teacher was found to be significant in creating opportunities for engagement (Turner 2014).

- The student’s role is outlined into three categories: intellectual, social, and physically active learning (Edwards, 2010).

- By encouraging and challenging students with interest-based lessons and activities, the teacher and the students create a bond that will allow for mutual respect and overall engagement in the classroom (Kiefer, 2014).

Methodology

- Student teaching experience was conducted in five (47 minute) classes in a rural middle school with 94 sixth grade students. The subject areas included Science and Literature and Composition.

- Data collection included lessons, daily field notes, and student work.

- Data analysis was conducted by analyzing lesson activities and recording accounts with field notes. Student work served as evidence assessing engagement in the classroom. See Figure 1.

Results and Data Analysis

- The reading lessons tended to foster less engagement due to less hands on activities while the opposite was found for science lessons.

- Student work in the science class showed increased engagement due to active learning style.

- Overall, student engagement was higher in classroom settings that fostered hand on activities, student interest, discourse, and group work.

Conclusion

- An effective way to foster engagement in the classroom is to connect active learning to all subject areas.

- This research has helped me to better understand the needs of the classroom and I plan to further my research by applying what I have learned in my future classroom.

Figure 1: Science lessons included more hands on activities that invited more classroom engagement.