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Title

Student Engagement in the U.S. Classroom and Beyond

Abstract

This talk will present the development of the Classroom Engagement Inventory (CEI), age trends in classroom engagement in 4th to 12th grade in the United States, and how the CEI has been used in other contexts and countries. Research on factors that may promote engagement was hampered by the absence of a measure of classroom-level engagement. The CEI had been developed to fill this gap. We conducted two studies to develop the CEI. In Study 1, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on data from 3,481 students from the 4th to 12th grade in the U.S. The results suggested a 4-factor model of the CEI. Using these results, in Study 2 several items were revised and data were collected 1 year later from 4th to 12th grade students in the same school district as Study 1. Analyses were conducted on data from 3,560 students after data cleaning. A series of potential models was tested. The final results suggested a 5-factor 24-item CEI: (1) Affective Engagement, (2) Behavioral Engagement–Compliance, (3) Behavioral Engagement–Effortful Class Participation, (4) Cognitive Engagement, and (5) Disengagement. We found that measurement invariance existed between grade level (elementary, middle, and high school), free/reduced lunch status (as a proxy for SES), gender, and core subject area (math, science, language arts, and social studies). Girls were more affectively and behaviorally, but not cognitively, engaged than boys. Higher-SES students were more cognitively and behaviorally, but not affectively, engaged than low-SES. Using data from Study 2, we further investigated age trends in classroom engagement. Overall engagement was high in elementary school, dropped precipitously into middle school, and then increased slightly in high school. However, the trend varies by school subject and type of engagement. Since its development, the CEI has been used by researchers from other countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, Malaysia, Spain, Turkey, and United Kingdom. This talk will discuss such use and potential cross-country collaborations.

Keywords: Student Engagement, Classroom Engagement Inventory, Factor analyses, cross-country research
