Bibliographie Annotée

**Hafen, C. A., Allen, J. P., Mikami, A. Y., Gregory, A., Hamre, B., & Pianta, R. C. (2012,**

**March). The pivotal role of adolescent autonomy in secondary school classrooms. *J Youth Adolescent*, *41*(3), 245-255. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-011-9739-2**

**Mots clefs:**

Autonomy, student engagement, high school classrooms, student perceptions

**Objectif de l’article:**

This study looks at the basic constructs of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) as predictors of changes in classroom engagement in high school students. The three constructs are “competence, relatedness/connection, and autonomy” (Hafen et al., 2012, p. 2). The objective of the study was to determine if the perceived level of each of the three at the beginning of the year had an effect on the level of student engagement throughout and at the end of the year.

**Résumé:**

As the findings of this study with respect to perceived competence and connection to teacher were not conclusive in the study, I have focused only on the construct of perceived autonomy for this annotation.

This study used two measures of engagement: self-reported sense of engagement, and observed engagement behaviours taken by upper level under graduate students and graduate students observers who underwent specific training to ensure inter-observer reliability. Engagement was considered low if students were distracted, medium if they were passively engaged, and high if there was active participation.

The results of the study indicate strongly that the student’s perception of autonomy in the classroom at the beginning of the year is key in predicting increases in engagement throughout the year. When a student began a course feeling that there was a strong element of student autonomy in the class, their engagement increased through the year, as was shown by both the self-reports and the observed reports.  Hafen et al. (2012) point out that the strength of these results is in the triangulation of the two measures, which differs from the usual self-report only studies.

These findings are extremely important; they indicate clearly that the tone and structure set out at the beginning of the course are crucial to the sense of engagement in the students. The most important element in this tone and structure is that of strong student autonomy. In this study autonomy includes “leadership, freedom of choice, and relevancy of the material” (Hafen et al., 2012, p. 8). Autonomy is a key element in engagement. Students who feel in control of their learning will be more engaged, interested, and motivated to learn (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Hafen et al. (2012) point out limitations to their study. They note that teacher chose which class videos to submit, which allows for bias in the samples. Also of note is the fact that the experimental group received small honorariums for participating, which may have had an effect on motivation and thus engagement.

**Méthodologie:**

This was a large study drawing from four high schools in Virginia. 34 teachers and 578 students in grades 9 through 12 participated. Teachers received a small monetary compensation, and participating classes received small incentives such as pizza or class parties. Students completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the course and again at the end of the course. In the annotation I am only reporting the section on autonomy. For the self-reports on autonomy and engagements, questions referred to leadership opportunities in class, choice on assignments and projects, and the relevancy of course materials.

For the observer reports, teachers submitted videos of their classes. A team of trained observers consisting of undergraduate and graduates students reviewed and rated engagement of the students. These observers rated engagement on a scale of 1 to 7, based on observed behaviours such as distractedness, passive observation and active participation.

**Pertinence pour les objectifs d’études que vous avez choisis:**

There are two theories of motivation in which I see connections to my research. Midway through my research I am still unsure of how I will incorporate the two, and it is necessary to gather as much information on related studies. This article looks at the facets of Self Determination Theory which keep surfacing in my research. The results of this particular study show that perceived autonomy in the classroom at the beginning of the year is crucial for student engagement.

In my previous research the importance of autonomy for adolescent boys to be motivated to learn has surfaced several times, and I believe that this information is important to include as I collect information on how to maximize the opportunities for boys in high school French immersion to become engaged and motivated to succeed.

References

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