

Title of Study: *Self-Regulation Strategies and Student Engagement*

Dates of Study: *2017-2018*

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Purpose of the Action Research: *The purpose of this action research project is to determine whether positive behavior support strategies like self-regulation and technology will lead to improvement in student engagement on activities and tasks.*

Research Question/Hypothesis: *When self-regulation strategies such as goal-setting and the use of technology are implemented, will students be more engaged in classroom tasks and learning?*

Existing Need: *Self-regulation can be an essential skill not only in the classroom, but in our working and personal lives. Successful students and adults are able to self-regulate and be in tune with their own actions in order to be their best selves in a given situation. Many teachers struggle to get students to function in their desired terms, thus resulting in behavior problems, less student engagement, and teachers feeling helpless to shape their students learning. The way in which teachers approach classroom management and teaching essential skills like self-regulation, are crucial in order to get the highest achievement from students, especially those students who may already be struggling with learning.*

Research Connection: *When students come to our schools with various difficulties such as poverty, disabilities, or behavior problems, it is suggested that an approach that includes self-regulation techniques can help to curb some of the negative effects of these factors and drive students towards more independent learning and positive behavior. Additionally, several different factors are examined in the array of literature on self-regulation in the classroom. One theme is that self-regulation in students is linked to higher achievement in school. Another theme that emerged was that self-regulation skills can lead to more prosocial and collaborative behavior. Lastly, self-regulation has shown to be a helpful tool in combating some of the issues that come with students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students with behavioral issues. Self-regulation strategies appear to have a wide ranging positive effect on student achievement, student's social ability, and curbing factors that come from outside the classroom.*

Participants: *Special education/long-term English language learner cohort students at Academy of Scientific Exploration*

Sex: *Six female students and 29 male students*

Grade: *Tenth grade*

Demographics: *35-40% special education students; 20% long-term English language learners*

Intervention: *The interventions used for the purpose of this action research study were a goal setting strategy and the use of technology to give students feedback on their progress. The goal setting strategy was a targeted self-regulation strategy that had students create a short-term and long-term goal for a period of time. The students then had multiple check-ins for their goals by adults of their choosing, at intervals throughout the time period. The second intervention was the use of technology to give feedback to students on their classroom engagement behavior. The program that was used is called Classcraft. Students created fictional characters that receive experience points and gold points for positive behavior, and they lost health points for negative behavior. Students chose rewards and privileges for the accumulation of points. The goal of both of these interventions was to increase student engagement in the classroom with build in structures for self-regulation.*

Results: *It appears as though the self-regulation strategies did have a positive effect on student engagement in this instance. In getting students to have an engaging activity that requires them to think about their own progress on a daily basis, it is possible to have more engaged students in the classroom and a more serious atmosphere of learning in the classroom. This is especially true with students that are not intrinsically motivated and may struggle with learning. These strategies could possibly have a positive effect on classroom engagement. At first, students seemed hesitant and reluctant to try the strategies. As the weeks went on, it seems that there was a steady increase in comfortability and thus engagement in classroom activities. Encouraging students, through these strategies, to use a metacognitive approach to track their own progress and work towards incremental goals, started to create a new culture in the classroom. What these strategies also do is make it very clear what the expectations of the class and teacher are. As the teacher is able to give feedback in the form of positive or negative points in the Classcraft game, students see this feedback in real time.*

Conclusions: *Based on the data through interviews and observations in this study, there was a progressive increase in the benefits from using the self-regulation strategies. These benefits include an increase in the level of engagement in this class and thus an increase in achievement, one teacher reporting more motivation and engagement from students, and an outside perspective of increased classroom engagement on tasks.*

Recommendations: *Based on what I learned in this action research, further studies could be done on self-regulation. Only two of a whole host of self-regulation strategies were employed in this study, and even those two strategies could be studied and researched further to see if they impact student engagement and learning. In addition to further studying self-regulation effects on students, it would also be important to see if there is a link to actual student achievement on a standards based exam. If self-regulation strategies can help students engage in class more and not exhibit problem behaviors, then they may retain more information that is taught in the classroom and perform better on standards based tasks.*