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Student Engagement

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What is Student Engagement?

Engagement has more recently become not only an indicator of student's involvement in school but also a marker of school success. Many schools also use engagement as a program or intervention outcome (Fredricks et al., 2011).

Definitions of student engagement have taken many forms since its inception. Earlier definitions were focused on **behavioral components such as classroom participation and time on task** (Fredricks et al., 2011). Emotional aspects have also been included in more modern definitions, such as: **feelings of belonging, enjoyment, and attachment** (Connell, 1990; Finn, 1989). One influential theory concerning student engagement suggested that two primary components of engagement existed: a behavioral component, termed participation, and an emotional component, termed identification (Finn & Voelkl, 1993). A more recent review of literature on engagement by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) indicated that there may be three primary dimensions: **behavioral, emotional, and cognitive**.

Key Dimensions

Behavioral: Based on the concept that **participation in academic and/or extracurricular activities** is a key indicator in a student's level of engagement.

Emotional: Primarily based around a student's **feelings of positive and/or negative reactions** towards different aspects of education (i.e., teachers, classmates, academics, the school as a whole, etc.).

Cognitive: Concerned with the level of **active interest** and **investment in their education process**. Examples of cognitive engagement include: being thoughtful and purposeful in their approach to education, and willingness to exert necessary effort (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).



Measurements

One of the more common methods of measuring student engagement in higher education is through the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#). Developed in 2000 and updated in 2013, it is comprised of five categories:

1. Participation in educational activities,
2. Institutional requirements and coursework,
3. College environment perceptions,
4. Personal and educational growth while in college, and
5. Demographic information.

The NSSE has been utilized in numerous studies and exhibits satisfactory psychometric properties (Kuh, 2002). Many custom measures of student engagement are designed by choosing questions from the NSSE and combining them to form a shorter, novel measure.

An additional method to measure student engagement is through the [Student Course Engagement Questionnaire \(SCEQ\)](#). Created by Handelsman et al. (2005), reliability and validity analysis has shown it to be a well-constructed measure consisting of 27 items with 4 subscales:

1. Skills,
2. Emotional,
3. Participation/involvement, and
4. Performance.



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