REL Appalachia Ask-A-REL Response

Research Tools
September 2017

Question:

What instruments exist to measure teachers' capacity to support student-led instructional environments and foster students' confidence in those environments?

Response:

Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about teachers' capacity to support student-led instructional environments and foster students' confidence in those environments. Ask-A-REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. Ask-A-REL provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations in response to questions about available education research.

Following an established REL Appalachia research protocol, we searched for research reports and descriptive study articles on teacher beliefs and practices that promote or foster student empowerment, confidence, and motivation. The sources included ERIC and other federally funded databases and organizations, research institutions, academic research databases, and general Internet search engines. For more details, please see the methods section at the end of this document.

The research team did not evaluate the quality of the resources provided in this response; we offer them only for your reference. Also, the search included the most commonly used research databases and search engines to produce the references presented here, but the references are not necessarily comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist.

References

Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, A. (2013). *The missing piece: A national teacher survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. A report for CASEL*. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558068

From the executive summary: "The central message of this report is that teachers across America understand that social and emotional learning (SEL) is critical to student success in school, work, and life. Social and emotional learning involves the processes of developing competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship

skills, and responsible decision-making. Educators know these skills are teachable; want schools to give far more priority to integrating such development into the curriculum, instruction, and school culture; and believe state student learning standards should reflect this priority. Teachers also want such development to be available for all students. These and other findings are the result of a nationally representative survey of prekindergarten through twelfth grade teachers to assess the role and value of social and emotional learning in America's schools. The voices of teachers on SEL are more important than ever, when expectations for classroom effectiveness are higher, the U.S. educational advantage worldwide is slipping, and a skills gap is threatening American economic growth. The survey's findings have three major themes: (1) Teachers understand, value, and endorse social and emotional learning for all students; (2) Teachers believe social and emotional learning helps students achieve in school and life; and (3) Teachers identify key accelerators for social and emotional learning. These findings are also supported by discussions with students, case studies of successful schools, and conversations with thought leaders. Recommendations on how to advance the strategic and systemic use of SEL in schools to promote student success as learners, workers, and citizens are provided."

Carter, E. W., Lane, K. L., Pierson, M. R., & Stang, K. K. (2008). Promoting self-determination for transition-age youth: Views of high school general and special educators. *Exceptional Children, 75*(1), 55–70. Retrieved from https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/10974/Lane_Promoting%20Self%20Determination.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

From the abstract: "Recent developments in policy and practice have emphasized the importance of promoting self-determination and supporting access to the general curriculum for youth with disabilities. To understand how these trends align, we examined the efforts of 340 general and special educators to promote student self-determination in high school classrooms. Educators attached considerable importance to providing instruction in skills related to self-determination and reported addressing these skills with moderate to high frequency in their classrooms. Although opportunities for students with disabilities to learn skills that promote self-determination were reported to be available across the curriculum, there were some differences across teachers and curricular area. We discuss avenues for promoting student self-determination within the general curriculum, as well as offer recommendations for future research."

English, M. C., & Kitsantas, A. (2013). Supporting student self-regulated learning in problem- and project-based learning. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning, 7*(2), 128–150. Retrieved from http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1339&context=ijpbl

From the abstract: "In order to be successful in problem- or project-based learning (PBL), students must take responsibility for the learning process by setting goals, monitoring, reflecting, and sustaining their motivation from the beginning of the project until the end. However, for many students, these processes do not occur naturally or easily. Therefore, the learning environment and teaching practices in PBL must be designed with intention to

support students' self-regulated learning (SRL). This paper describes specific learning environment features and teaching practices that have been shown to foster student responsibility for learning in each phase of PBL, with the purpose of providing educators with guidance for developing SRL in PBL, and ultimately, student motivation and ability to learn. To accomplish this, a theoretical model of the relationship between PBL and SRL is presented, along with research-driven guidelines on how to promote student responsibility for learning in PBL."

Koh, J. H. L., & Frick, T. W. (2010). Implementing autonomy support: Insights from a Montessori classroom. *International Journal of Education, 2*(2), 1–15. Retrieved from http://www.mch2learn.org/articles/koh.pdf

From the abstract: "Extant research studies have found that autonomy support has a positive impact on the perceived competence and intrinsic motivation of students. However, few studies have investigated how autonomy supportive classrooms can be implemented. Montessori education is established upon the philosophy of helping each child attain self-mastery and independence. It emphasizes that students be given autonomy to engage freely with their learning environment. This case study of an upper-elementary Montessori classroom found that the Montessori philosophy of education guided how teachers used autonomy supportive strategies. Teachers supported student organizational autonomy by allowing them choice in terms of school work and work partners. They fostered cognitive autonomy by encouraging student independent thinking, encouraging self-initiation, and honoring students' voice. When implementing control, they acknowledged and respected student feelings, provided rationales for expected behavior, and suppressed criticism. Students surveyed rated themselves highly in terms of intrinsic motivation for schoolwork. Five guidelines are derived from this study to help teachers implement autonomy support in K–12 classrooms."

Niska, J. M. (2013). A study of the impact of professional development on middle level advisors. *RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education, 37*(5), 1–14. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1032362

From the abstract: "Middle level advisors are faculty members whose role is to develop meaningful relationships and to facilitate conversations with a group of 10 to 12 students on a regular basis regarding the students' academic, personal, and social concerns. This study examines the impact of professional development on middle level advisors' knowledge, skills, and practices in five New England middle level schools. Thirty-four advisors representing these five diverse schools were randomly assigned to three groups. Group One received professional development after the study was completed. Group Two participated in a three-credit course in advisor knowledge and skills. Group Three participated in the course, and each advisor was coached individually for one hour a week for 24 weeks. Results showed improvements in (1) advisor knowledge and skills for both groups who received the course and (2) in practice for advisors who received both the course and the coaching. Mean score differences in the *Advisor Knowledge Assessment* pre- and post-test, used as a supportive measure, were revealed between the two groups

receiving the training and the one which did not. The primary conclusion is that coursework plus coaching may represent a promising quality investment in the preparation of middle level advisors."

Reeve, J. (2009). Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist, 44*(3), 159–175. Abstract retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ865122; full text available at http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=925AA73EE8828C0A107151D129BADF72?doi=10.1.1.670.1587&rep=rep1&type=pdf

From the abstract: "A recurring paradox in the contemporary K–12 classroom is that, although students educationally and developmentally benefit when teachers support their autonomy, teachers are often controlling during instruction. To understand and remedy this paradox, the article pursues three goals. First, the article characterizes the controlling style by defining it, articulating the conditions under which it is most likely to occur, linking it to poor student outcomes, explaining why it undermines these outcomes, identifying its manifest instructional behaviors, and differentiating it from an autonomy-supportive style. Second, the article identifies seven reasons to explain why the controlling style is so prevalent. These reasons show how pressures on teachers from above, from below, and from within can create classroom conditions that make the controlling style both understandable and commonplace. Third, the article offers a remedy to the paradox by articulating how teachers can become more autonomy supportive. Three essential tasks are discussed. Special attention is paid to practical examples of what teachers can do to support students' autonomy."

Stefanou, C., Stolk, J. D., Prince, M., Chen, J. C., & Lord, S. M. (2013). Self-regulation and autonomy in problem- and project-based learning environments. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 14*(2), 109–122. Abstract retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1014899; full text available at http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.828.4553&rep=rep1&type=pdf

From the abstract: "Investigations of the relationships between contexts in which learning occurs and students' behaviors, cognitions and motivations may further our understanding of how instruction is related to students' development as self-regulated learners. In this study, student self-regulated learning strategies in problem-based learning and project-based learning environments were examined to determine whether student self-regulation outcomes differed depending on the instructional design. Quantitative results showed that student motivations and behaviors were not statistically different in the two settings. Differences in cognitions associated with self-regulated learning were, however, observed in the two settings, with students in the project-based environments reporting higher levels of elaboration, critical thinking and metacognition. In addition, students in the project-based courses reported higher perceived autonomy support, or the degree to which they perceived their instructors provided them with supportive opportunities to act and think independently compared to students in the problem-based courses. These findings indicate

that different non-traditional student-centered learning environments may support different outcomes related to self-regulated learning."

Whiteside, A. L., Dikkers, A. G., & Lewis, S. (2016). "More confident going into college": Lessons learned from multiple stakeholders in a new blended learning initiative. *Online Learning, 20*(4), 136–156. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1124646

From the abstract: "This article examined a blended learning initiative in a large suburban high school in the Midwestern region of the United States. It employed a single-case exploratory design approach to learn about the experience of administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Using Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Theory as a guiding framework, this study explored surveys, face-to-face observation data, interview transcriptions, and focus group transcriptions to learn about different stakeholders' experiences and their observations about student readiness for blended learning. As a result, the data suggested three major themes, namely how blended learning initiatives can promote autonomy and self-regulation, encourage inquiry and build relationships, and ultimately help students feel ready for college."

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- teach* AND (promot* OR foster*) AND ("student empower*" OR confiden* OR motivat* OR autonom*)
- student-directed AND (learning OR instruction)
- "teaching strategies" AND "student autonomy"

Databases and Resources

We searched ERIC, a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), for relevant resources. Additionally, we

searched the academic database ProQuest, Google Scholar, and the commercial search engine Google.

Reference Search and Selection Criteria

In reviewing resources, Reference Desk researchers consider—among other things—these four factors:

- Date of the publication: Searches cover the most current information (i.e., within the last ten years), except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- Search priorities of reference sources: Search priorities include IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols. Applicable resources must be publicly available online and in English.
- Methodology: The following methodological priorities/considerations guide the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized controlled trials, quasi experiments, surveys, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, policy briefs, etc., generally in this order; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected), study duration, etc.; (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, etc.
- Existing knowledge base: Vetted resources (e.g., peer-reviewed research journals) are the primary focus, but the research base is occasionally slim or nonexistent. In those cases, the best resources available may include, for example, reports, white papers, guides, reviews in non-peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, and organization websites.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on August 24, 2017. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by education stakeholders in the Appalachia region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL AP) at SRI International. This Ask-A-REL response was developed by REL AP under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0004 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, administered by SRI International. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.