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SUPPORTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Survey Proposal: Use of Learning Goals & Success Criteria
To Support Student Engagement and Achievement

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Dr. Ruth Childs

This study proposes to measure the level to which teachers are using Learning Goals and Success Criteria (LG & SC) in an Ontario secondary school, and to examine any relationship this might have to a student's self-reported level of engagement and resultant achievement in the course.

Engagement has an impact on students' mental and physical health and well-being (Allen, 2016). Current literature on engagement focuses on the content or the tools, rather than the metacognitive processes in which the learner engages. "It's not about *making* students learn; it's about *getting them to want* to learn. Without motivation, there will be no learning". (Jukes, Schaaf, & Mohan, 2015)

Rather than focus on content or tools, this study proposes to examine the theory that engagement may increase if students have a clear understanding of the expectations and/or competencies that are demanded by the curriculum and by their teacher.

Clear understanding by a student may be achieved by targeting learning intentions (Graham, Berman, & Bellert, 2015). In Ontario, this targeting has been achieved through the mandated use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria. Their use is prescribed in the 2010 Ministry of Education publication: *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting*.

DEVELOPING LEARNING GOALS

Assessment *for* learning and *as* learning requires that students and teachers share a common understanding of what is being learned. Learning goals clearly identify what students are expected to know and be able to do, in language that students can readily understand. Teachers develop learning goals based on the curriculum expectations and share them with students at or near the beginning of a cycle of learning. Teachers and students come to a common understanding of the learning goals through discussion and clarification during instruction.

IDENTIFYING SUCCESS CRITERIA

Assessment *for* learning and assessment *as* learning also require that students and teachers share a common understanding of what constitutes success in learning. Success criteria describe in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like. When planning assessment and instruction, teachers, guided by the achievement chart for the particular subject or discipline (see Chapter 3), identify the criteria they will use to assess students' learning, as well as what evidence of learning students will provide to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The success criteria are used to develop an assessment tool, such as a checklist, a rubric, or an exit card (i.e., a student's self-assessment of learning).

Teachers can ensure that students understand the success criteria by using clear language that is meaningful to the students and by directly involving them in identifying, clarifying, and applying those criteria in their learning. Examining samples of student work with their teachers helps students understand what constitutes success and provides a basis for informed co-construction of the success criteria. The success criteria should be open to review and revision, guided by the teacher's professional judgement, as students progress towards achievement of the learning goals. Teachers can enhance their understanding of success criteria and build common knowledge about levels of achievement through teacher moderation – that is, through assessment of student work done collaboratively with fellow teachers. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 33)

Drake, Reid and Kolohon state that the learning goals and success criteria should address the question “Why are we learning this?” The learning goals are phrased in student-friendly language, and from the learner's perspective. The success criteria explicitly articulate the “look fors”, and are often co-constructed with the learners to promote student ownership of the learning. (Drake, Reid & Kolohon, 2014, p. 76)

In the video series to support the implementation of Growing Success, teachers are advised that “Students are more successful and more engaged when they are clear on what success look like on a given task.” (Ontario, 2010)

When students are included in the creation of the success criteria, the strategy becomes even more powerful. “The intentional design of assessment-for-learning that invites students to co-create assessment criteria with teachers is a powerful strategy that enables students to think deeply about, understand the next steps, and become increasingly self-directed in their learning.” (Friesen, 2009)

Summary of Survey:	Relationship to constructs	Feedback and Changes
<p>1. Survey will begin with questions regarding the student’s current timetable, and have them indicate the first letter of the course they take in each of the four periods of the day. Those beginning with “H” are those that have been the focus of teachers’ theories of action relating to Learning Goals and Success Criteria.</p>	<p>Establishes the data set to which other sets will be compared. Use of first letter of course code will identify the department or discipline, but not the specific course or teacher.</p>	<p>Initial thought was to have the actual course code provided. However, there is a concern that individual teachers, and the teachers’ union, would not be comfortable with the degree to which individual teachers might be identified.</p> <p>As the goal is not to examine teacher practice beyond its impact on student engagement and achievement, this question could possibly be removed without affecting the survey results.</p>
<p>2. For each course (up to 4 cycles), the student will be asked a set of questions that will be used to form a scale of Engagement:</p>		
<p>i. I enjoy the time I spend in this class.</p>	<p>Table 2 provides detailed explanation of the construction of these eight questions.</p> <p>Respondents will provide one of 5 possible responses, forming a scale:</p> <p>1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly</p>	
<p>ii. I pay attention in class</p>		
<p>iii. This class gets my mind bubbling with thoughts and ideas</p>		
<p>iv. I like telling my friends or family about what I’ve learned in this class</p>		
<p>v. I enjoy this class, so I’m always on time.</p>		
<p>vi. In this class, I do more than just the minimum amount of work.</p>		
<p>vii. I rarely check my phone when I am in this class.</p>		
<p>viii. I am confident and relaxed in this class.</p>		

Summary of Survey:	Relationship to constructs	Feedback and Changes
3. For each course (up to 4 cycles), the student will be asked a set of questions relating to their perceived achievement and marks in the course, to form a scale of Achievement:		
Which statement best describes your teachers' use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in your course:	Establishes whether Learning Goals and Success Criteria are present within class instruction.	Concern that students who have NOT encountered use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria will be confused, and will not proceed with the survey.
i. MOST lessons begin with the Learning Goal(s) and Success Criteria clearly stated in writing.		
ii. SOME lessons begin with the Learning Goal(s) and Success Criteria clearly stated in writing.		These three options are segregated in the survey, but will be combined to form ONE variable that will be classified as little or no use of LG & SC.
iii. In ONE CLASS the Learning Goal(s) and Success Criteria were clearly stated in writing.		
iv. I have never seen Learning Goal(s) and Success Criteria clearly stated in writing in this class.		
4. For each course (up to 4 cycles), where the student reports consistent use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria by the teacher (response i), they will then be asked three questions relating to their perceived impact on Engagement and Achievement.	Provides opportunity to correlate use of LG & SC to student Engagement and Achievement.	NOTE: Since the teachers of the classes being surveyed have been consistently utilizing LG & SC in their classes, there should be a reasonable expectation that at least ONE course will meet this criteria for each of the respondents.
Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about your teacher's use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in your course?	Examines Engagement, as demonstrated by hard work.	
i. The use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria inspires me to work harder, and engage with the course work.		
ii. The use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria sometimes makes me feel able to work harder and engage with the course work.		
iii. The use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria rarely makes me		

Summary of Survey:	Relationship to constructs	Feedback and Changes
feel able to work harder and engage with the course work.		
iv. The use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria has no impact on how hard I work nor how engaged I am with the course work.		
Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about your teacher’s use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in your course?	Examines Engagement as measured by understanding what needs to be done.	
i. I am able to understand exactly what I need to do in the course due to the use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria.		
ii. The use of Learning and Goals and Success Criteria sometimes helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course.		
iii. The use of Learning and Goals and Success Criteria occasionally helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course.		
iv. The use of Learning and Goals and Success Criteria never helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course.		
Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about your teacher’s use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in your course?	Examines Achievement as indicated by Marks.	
i. The Learning Goals and Success Criteria are responsible for my excellent marks in this course.		
ii. The Learning Goals and Success Criteria help me to succeed in this course.		
iii. The Learning Goals and Success Criteria sometimes help me to succeed in this course.		
iv. The Learning Goals and Success Criteria have no impact on my success in this course.		
5. For each course where the teacher has not used Learning Goals and Success Criteria consistently (responses ii to iv), the student will be asked what they predict the impact of increased use would have on their Engagement and Achievement.	Allows students to predict the impact that the use of LG & SC might have on their Achievement and Engagement.	
Please complete the following statement: If my teacher were to increase the use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in our course,	Measures Achievement as description of Success.	Use of the term “increase” to allow for a broad range of starting points, and possible levels of implementation.
i. I would be much more successful.		

Summary of Survey:	Relationship to constructs	Feedback and Changes
ii. I would be more successful.		
iii. I would be slightly more successful.		
iv. It would have no impact on my success.		
Please complete the following statement: If my teacher were to increase the use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in our course:	Measures Engagement using Interest.	Use of the term “increase” to allow for a broad range of starting points, and possible levels of implementation.
v. I would be much more engaged and interested in the course.		
vi. I would be somewhat more engaged and interested in the course.		
vii. I would be slightly more engaged and interested in the course.		
viii. It would have no impact on my engagement and interest in the course.		

Table 1: Survey Questions. This table explains the decision-making process followed to determine survey questions.

One of the key measures that will be utilized in the analysis of this survey will be a scale of Engagement, developed from the responses to the eight Engagement questions regarding each of the four courses. There is much literature on the topic of Engagement, and the U.S. Department of Education has reported on 21 survey tools that may be used to measure Engagement in students. (Fredricks, et al., 2011)

From this list of tools, one was chosen.. The questions in Table 1 are based on the “In-Class” section of Course Engagement and Disaffection- College Students Long form (36 items) and Short-form (12 items*) (Chi & Skinner, 2012)

Original Question from Chi & Skinner	Modifications made by Whitmell	Cognitive Interview #1 – Think Aloud - Daughter	Cognitive Interview #2	Revisions
I enjoy the time I spend in this class. (Emotional Engagement)	None	Um, well I think about who's in the class with me, the types of activities we do in class, not necessarily the material, but how engaged I am in the actual activities and projects put forward by the teacher. Also, when this class is held. Do I have a crush on anyone in the class, cause that will play a part.	I think about the activities we do and are there any people in the class that I like, and if I like the teacher. Meld how you feel about all, and come up with a number, so if all are high, then give it a high score, average.	No change
I pay attention in class (Behavioural Engagement)	None	That's really broad. This would have to be about a very specific class, couldn't be asking this generically. Do I make it to class? How important is this course to my future ambitions? Will this mark affect my ability to get into university? (To translate to 1 to 5?) You are turning a qualitative into a quantitative, so I WOULD gauge how much I pay attention based upon how much I pay attention to things I enjoy, and potentially to other classes, and come up with a middle number.	Am I on my phone, where do I sit in class, am I looking at the teacher when she is talking. Same process as above.	No change

Original Question from Chi & Skinner	Modifications made by Whitmell	Cognitive Interview #1 – Think Aloud - Daughter	Cognitive Interview #2	Revisions
This class gets my mind bubbling with thoughts and ideas (Emotional Engagement)	None	Yeah, um, (long pause) you are asking how would I come to that answer? You have to think through your experience in that class, the material you are working with. And have you enjoyed that? Very much a comparison to ... to get a good answer, you compare it to things you are forced to do, and things you are not forced to do (which would be a 5), so finding it on the scale.	I guess you would think about your most recent lessons in the class, and evaluate how you were feeling about those most recent lessons. Throw in your most favourite one since the beginning of the semester.	No change
I like telling others about what I've learned in this class (Emotional Engagement)	I like telling my friends or family about what I've learned in this class	Interesting, so I ask "do I spend time on my own looking up this information", if I do this, I'm more likely to turn to others. Do I approach the subject without someone telling me to do it?	I keep thinking about my son, and his History class. You would think about how often that class comes up in conversation, if it comes up all the time, and then think about context, are you excited it's a 5, if you hate it, it's a 1.	No change
It's hard to make myself come to this class (Behavioural Disaffection)	I'm rarely late to or absent from this class.	It's true because I didn't want to fail. I showed up to EVERY class. (So not a good measure for anyone who is an overachiever.) Says this question is better in the positive frame, and will probably get a more accurate answer.	How often do you skip, if you do skip ever. If you never skip you're a 5, but you might hate it and never skip because you're a goodie two shoes.	I enjoy this class, so I'm always on time.

Original Question from Chi & Skinner	Modifications made by Whitmell	Cognitive Interview #1 – Think Aloud - Daughter	Cognitive Interview #2	Revisions
In this class, I do just enough to get by (Careless – Behavioural Disaffection)	In this class, I do more than just the minimum amount of work.	To be honest, the times that I spend more time than I need to is when I have a crush on someone, so do I have a crush on the teacher. I need to know what the minimum requirements are for that course and for my own ambitions. Do I do the work willingly without being coerced or being forced into it.	You would do all the homework. Do you augment your understanding by looking at other sources of information? Do you go in for help?	No change.
When I am in this class I can't wait for it to be over (Amotivation – Emotional Disaffection)	I rarely watch the clock when I am in this class.	I'm thinking, what kind of class is it? Am I physically moving?	Think about how often you look at the clock. That's fairly recent, you wouldn't remember even a week ago. Maybe should ask, phone instead.	I rarely check my phone when I am in this class.
I feel overwhelmed in this class (Worry – Emotional Disaffection)	I am confident and relaxed in this class.	It's hard to think about. Am I passing? What is my mark currently?	Do you understand the material? Do you have peers in that class? Are there people who make you feel uncomfortable? Often it's external, not the teacher.	No change

Table 2: Engagement Scale Questions. This table outlines the process of cognitive interviewing that resulted in the eight questions to be used to establish a scale for Engagement.

In order to measure secondary school students' perceived connection between the use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria in their classes, and their levels of engagement and achievement, perceptual data will be gathered from students who will have had experience in courses where Learning Goals and Success Criteria are being used, and will compare their experience to those where the use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria are not part of the teacher's practice.

One set of questions will determine the level of use of the practice, and then a second set of questions will measure the effect that their use has on their motivation.

The population will be students in Family Studies and Social Science classes, where the teachers have been implementing Learning Goals and Success Criteria as part of their Professional Learning Cycle.

The sample will be one class from each grade, within the department, so will include four classes, each of 20 to 30 students. This decision is based upon time and convenience.

This study would be Low Research Risk since the questions are not sensitive and the responses will be anonymous, and Medium Group Vulnerability, due to the age of the subjects and their status as students within a school.

Students will access the survey during class, utilizing classroom Chromebooks or personal internet-enabled devices. They will access a Google Form, which will allow “branching”, and selection of alternate sets of questions for the two possible scenarios: 1. Use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria, 2. Little or no use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria.

The data will populate a Google sheet, which will then be imported into SPSS for analysis.

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
ID	ID	Nominal	0001-9999			4 digits

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
COURSE_1	Course: Course taken in period 1	String	A, B, C, E, F, G, H, L, M, N, P, S, T	A= Arts, B= Business, C = Canadian and World Studies E = English, F = French, G = Guidance, H = Social Science, L = Languages, M = Mathematics, N = Native Studies, P = Physical and Health Education, S = Science, T = Technology		1 digit
NOTE: Duplicate above for COURSE_2, COURSE_3, COURSE_4						1 digit
ENGAGE_ENJOY_1	Engage: Enjoy class	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_ATTEND_1	Engage: Pay attention	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_BUBBL_1	Engage: Gets mind bubbling	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_TELL_1	Engage: Tell friends	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_ONTIME_1	Engage: On time to class	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
ENGAGE_MIN_1	Engage: Do more than minimum	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_PHONE_1	Engage: Rarely check phone	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
ENGAGE_CONF_1	Engage: Confident and relaxed	Ordinal		1 – Not at all 2 – Rarely 3 – Neutral 4 – Sometimes 5 – Mostly		1 digit
NOTE: Duplicate above 8 variables, with 2, 3 and 4 for the four classes.						
LGSC_USE_1	Teacher: Level of use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria (LG & SC)	Ordinal	1-4	4 - MOST lessons begin with the LG & SC clearly stated in writing. 3 - SOME lessons begin with the LG & SC clearly stated in writing. 2 - In ONE CLASS the LG & SC were clearly stated in writing. 4 - I have never seen LG & SC clearly stated in writing in this class.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit
NOTE: Duplicate above for LGSC_USE_2, LGSC_USE_3 and LGSC_USE_4						

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
LGSC_HIGH_ENG_1	High: Engages	Ordinal	1-4	4 - Inspires me to work harder, and engage with the course work. 3 - Sometimes makes me feel able to work harder and engage with the course work. 2 - Rarely makes me feel able to work harder and engage with the course work. 1 - Has no impact on how hard I work nor how engaged I am with the course work.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit
LGSC_HIGH_UND_1	High: Understands	Ordinal	1-4	4 - I am able to understand exactly what I need to do in the course. 3 - Sometimes helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course. 2 - Occasionally helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course. 1 - Never helps me to understand exactly what I need to do in the course.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
LGSC_HIGH_MKS_1	High: Improved Marks	Ordinal	1-4	4 - Responsible for my excellent marks in this course. 3 - Help me to succeed in this course. 2 - Sometimes help me to succeed in this course. 1 - Have no impact on my success in this course.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit
NOTE: Duplicate three above for each of the four courses.						
LGSC_LOW_MKS_1	Low: Improved Marks	Ordinal	1-4	4 - I would be much more successful. 3 - I would be more successful. 2 - I would be slightly more successful. 1 - It would have no impact on my success.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit
LGSC_LOW_ENG_1	Low: Engages	Ordinal	1-4	4 - I would be much more engaged and interested in the course. 3 - I would be somewhat more engaged and interested in the course. 2 - I would be slightly more engaged and interested in the course. 1 - It would have no impact on my engagement and interest in the course.	9=Not Applicable	1 digit

Variable Name	Variable Label	Measurement Type	Permissible Values	Value Labels	Missing Codes	Maximum Width
NOTE: Duplicate two above for each of the four courses.						

Table 3: Code Book for SPSS: List of variables to be used for data analysis.

Analysis of the data will:

1. Establish a scale of Engagement for each of the four courses
2. Compare the scale of Engagement to the reported Use of Learning Goals and Success Criteria
3. For situations where there has been High use of LG & SC, then look for the relationship to the student’s reported level of:
 1. Engagement
 2. Understanding
 3. Achievement
4. For situations where there has been little of no use of LG & SC, then analyze the student’s reported prediction of Engagement and Achievement, had the teacher made high use of LG & SC.

The scale of Engagement will be established using eight questions, and will be examined for reliability.. The mean for each indicator and for the resultant scale, will be calculated.

To complete a t-test, the responses that indicate little or no use of LG & SC will form one group (Low) with the other group consisting only of those who indicate high use of LG & SC.(High).

Reports will be generated, examining the reliability (Cronbach alpha) and correlation of each of the factors and which provides both overall analysis and analysis by discipline (Social Science, Math, English, etc.). Within each of the two groups, Low and High, the correlation between use of LG & SC and the levels of Engagement, Marks (Achievement) and Understanding will be examined utilizing gamma. The data will also be represented graphically with cluster bar graphs, allowing students, parents and teachers to easily interpret the findings.

It is anticipated that this study will provide positive feedback to teachers who are implementing Learning Goals and Success Criteria their classrooms, and inspire their colleagues to adopt this practice to improve both the Engagement and Achievement of their students.

Appendix A

Consent Form

Your class has been selected to participate in an anonymous survey. Your teacher has utilized Learning Goals and Success Criteria with your class this semester, and we are interested to know the impact that this has had on your motivation and achievement. We will be asking you questions about your Family Studies/Social Science class, as well as the other courses in which you are currently enrolled.

The survey will ask you questions regarding how Learning Goals and Success Criteria are used within each of your courses, and how this impacts your motivation and achievement.

The survey can be completed by clicking on LINK, which will take you to a Google form. Your submission will be anonymous, and should take you approximately five to ten minutes to complete.

The results of this survey will be shared with your class, during the month of December. It is hoped that the data will assist the teachers in the Family Studies/Social Science department to improve their classroom instruction, and better meet your needs.

By clicking on the link and completing the survey, you are consenting to participate, and for your data to be used within this study. At any time during the survey, should you wish to rescind this consent, you may exit the survey and your data will not be included.

Thank you,

Mrs. T. Whitmell
Principal
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