

Contents

1 Introduction: Towards Optimal Learning Environments in Schools	1
Introduction.....	1
Disengagement: How Pervasive Is It?	3
The Status Quo of Schooling	5
The Historical Axiom for Understanding Engagement	7
Why Are Students So Disengaged Today?	9
The Primacy of Engagement.....	10
Definition of Engagement.....	12
Optimal Learning Environments from the Perspective of Overlapping Fields	12
Positive Psychology and School Engagement	14
Positive Youth Development and School Engagement.....	16
Towards Optimal Learning Environments: Is Meaningful Change for Schools Possible (This Time)?	17
The Organization of This Book	18
References.....	20
2 Aims of Education Revisited (Einstein’s $E = MC^2$ of Education)	25
Introduction.....	25
Einstein’s Proposed Aim of Education (or His “ $E = MC^2$ of Education”).....	27
The Inversion and Restoration of Einstein’s Aim	30
Einstein’s “Theory of Motivation”	32
Equipping the Will	33
Constructivist Principles of Learning (and the Lack of Implementation).....	37
Coming to Grips with the Research–Practice Divide	38
Axioms from the Perspective of Social Psychology,	

Sociology, and Evolution 40

Conclusion 42

References 43

3 The Nature of Engagement in Schools 47

Introduction..... 47

Engagement as a Complex Meta-construct..... 49

Engagement as a Primary Framework
for Understanding Motivational Outcomes 50

Theories of Motivation and How They Pertain to Youth Engagement..... 53

Attribution Theory 53

Intrinsic Motivation 54

Self-Determination Theory 55

The Overjustification Hypothesis 57

Expectancy-Value Theory 57

Self-Regulated Learning 58

Goals Theory..... 59

Personal “Theories of Intelligence” 60

The Theory of Flow as Foundational to a Sturdy
Conception of Engagement..... 61

Controlling Consciousness..... 62

The Conditions and Experience of Flow 63

Concentration..... 64

Interest..... 65

Enjoyment..... 67

Meaningful Engagement: The Combination
of Play-Like and Work-Like Engagement 68

Conclusion 68

References..... 69

**4 Measuring Student Engagement in High School Classrooms
and What We Have Learned 77**

Introduction..... 77

Types of Engagement Measures 77

Behavioral Measures..... 78

Emotional or Affective Measures 78

Cognitive Measures 79

Measuring the Malleability, Complexity,
Multidimensionality, and Sources of Engagement 80

Researching Engagement with the Experience
Sampling Method (ESM)..... 81

Engagement in US Public Schools 82

Phenomenological and Instructional Factors
Improving Student Engagement 84

Phenomenological and Perceptual Factors 85

Classroom Activity and Instructional Method	89
School Subject	91
Conclusion: Towards a Conceptual Model of Student Engagement.....	92
References.....	92
5 Engagement as an Individual Trait and Its Relationship	
to Achievement	97
Introduction.....	97
Race, Socioeconomic Status, and the	
“Engagement–Achievement Paradox”.....	98
Building a 3-Level Model of Multiple Influences on Engagement	102
The Relationship Between Engagement and Achievement	105
The Influence of Ability and Achievement Orientations	
on Engagement.....	108
Individualistic Values and Well-Being.....	109
Schooling in a Culture of Competition	111
Is All Competition Bad for Engagement?.....	115
The Social Reproduction of Class Advantage as the Context	
for Schooling.....	116
Hope or Despair: Reaching Versus Failing to Reach	
Individual Students	118
Conclusion	120
References.....	120
6 Connecting to “The How” of Classroom Engagement:	
Instruction and Optimal Learning Environments	127
Introduction.....	127
Teaching, Learning, and the Learning Environment.....	127
The Instructor’s Role in Promoting Engagement: Supporting	
and Challenging	129
Approaching Students as Individuals Comprising	
a Learning Community	133
Instructional Practices Promoting Engagement	
in Public School Classrooms	134
Positive Influences on Classroom Engagement:	
Towards Creating Optimal Learning Environments.....	135
Illustrative Scenarios.....	139
The Mediating Role of Other Perceptual Factors	140
The Interrelationship Among ESM and Observed	
Measures of Engagement.....	141
Negative Influences on Classroom Engagement.....	143
Overall Impressions	145
Conclusion	146
References.....	146

7 Connecting to “The Who”: The Primacy of Supportive Relationships 151

Introduction..... 151

The Primacy of Interpersonal Relationships
in Adolescent Development 152

Teacher Support 152

Mentoring Relationships 154

Parental Relationships..... 156

Relationships with Peers 156

The Problem: Human Relationships Not Yet at the Center 157

The Importance of Classroom Climate 157

Linking the Learning Environment with Students’
Subjective Experiences While in Class..... 158

Observing and Studying the Learning Environment 159

The Results..... 161

Environmental Complexity and Optimal Learning Environments 163

Conclusion 165

Appendix 165

References..... 168

8 Connecting to “The What”: Engaging Approaches to Traditional Subject Matter 175

Introduction..... 175

Engaging in What?..... 176

A Five-Stage Developmental Philosophy of Engagement
with Learning 178

Engaging Approaches in Core Academic Subjects..... 182

History..... 182

Social Studies..... 186

English 189

Science 195

Math 200

Conclusion 203

References..... 204

9 Engagement Beyond the Core Academic Subjects..... 207

Introduction..... 207

Art 207

Vocational Education 208

Curricula in Social and Emotional Well-Being..... 211

Conclusion 216

References..... 216

10 Models of Engaging Private Schools and the Case of Montessori Schools 219

Introduction..... 219

Compelling Insights and Philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori 220

Montessori in Practice..... 224

Montessori in Adolescence: The Emergence of Montessori Middle and High Schools 228

Studies of Engagement in Montessori Middle Schools 231

Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado 234

American Sports Institute’s PASS Program and Planned Arete School 239

Conclusion 242

References..... 244

11 Alternative Public School Models..... 247

Introduction..... 247

Murray High School in Charlottesville, Virginia..... 248

 Visiting Murray High School..... 249

 Evidence of Engagement 254

Nova High School in Seattle, Washington..... 258

Mango High School (a Pseudonym) in Australia 260

Conclusion 262

References..... 263

12 Learning from Research on Youth Engagement During Out-of-School Time..... 267

Introduction..... 267

Research on Out-of-School Time..... 268

Investigating Engagement During Out-of-School Time 271

 The Studies..... 271

 Engagement in After-School Programs Versus Elsewhere After School..... 272

Does Engagement Mediate Improved Social Competence and Academic Performance?..... 275

Emphasizing Engagement in After-School Programs..... 276

Engaging Youth in Community Service..... 277

Fostering Civic Engagement..... 280

Focusing on Quality in After-School Programs: What Is It? 281

Conclusion 283

References..... 284

13 Model After-School Programs 291

Introduction..... 291

PeaceJam..... 291

 Visiting PeaceJam 293

 Research on PeaceJam 294

The Young Women Leaders Program (YWLP)
at the University of Virginia..... 294

 Visiting YWLP..... 295

 Research on YWLP..... 297

The Center for Family Life’s Lifelines Community Art Project
in Sunset Park, Brooklyn 298

 Visiting Lifelines..... 299

 Research on the Lifelines Program 300

Project Exploration 300

 Visiting Project Exploration..... 301

 Research on Project Exploration..... 306

Lessons from After-School Programs 307

Implications: Towards a Model of Expanded Learning Time
and Opportunities 308

Finding Flow in Integrated After-School Programs..... 309

High Quality After-School Programs as Models
of Developmental Intentionality 310

Conclusion 311

References..... 313

14 Technological Innovations on the Horizon 315

Introduction..... 315

Online Learning 316

Audience Response Systems (ARSs)..... 318

 Research Findings on ARSs and Their Effect on Engagement
 and Learning 320

Educational Video Games..... 323

 Engaging Students in Engineering Education
 with an Educational Video Game..... 324

Other Examples of Learning Through
Technology-Supported Instruction..... 327

 The AquaRoom 327

 Globaloria: “Program or Be Programmed”..... 329

Conclusion 330

References..... 332

**15 Re-engineering the Schools of Tomorrow:
Towards Community Sponsorship** 335

Introduction..... 335

Our Present Educational Culture of Individual Achievement..... 336

The Future of Traditional Schooling: Change or Become Obsolete..... 337

Towards Optimal Learning Environments:
 Individualization and Environmental Complexity 338
Fostering Youth Engagement: From Relationships
 to Community 341
Schools of Tomorrow 343
Reconfiguring the Time and Space of Schooling 345
Engagement in School as a Function of Community Partnerships 348
Implications for School Reform and Future Educational Research 351
Towards Engagement, Flow, and Well-Being in Education 353
References 354

About the Author 357

Index 359



<http://www.springer.com/978-1-4614-7088-5>

Optimal Learning Environments to Promote Student
Engagement

Shernoff, D.J.

2013, XVII, 368 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4614-7088-5