

EDUC 200 Action Research Project Report

Your name: John Sebastian

Date completed CITI training: Feb 14th, 2013

Name of mentor/classroom/school: Anita Workhard; 5th Grade/Chester School of Inquiry

Date(s) you implemented the project, including measurements: Feb 20th, Feb 27th, March 6

Brief description of the problem or need:

Mrs. Workhard's students are given 45 minutes of self-directed learning opportunities each Wednesday and Friday. During these times, Mrs. Workhard provides 5-6 stations where students can explore stimulating literacy, numeracy, and science resources and topics. During the 45 minutes, students choose 3 different 15-minute activities at stations of their choice. The problem is that many of the girls avoid the science stations, which are almost always full of small groups of boys. Mrs. Workhard and I want to get more girls to self-select the science projects when they are offered.

List the project outcome(s):

Girls will choose to spend as much time as boys at the science activities.

Describe what you learned by measuring the problem at the beginning. Be specific. Including a chart of any data you collected.

The chart below shows how many girls and boys self-selected to spend time at science activities during each rotation. Note: The teacher has a limit of 6 students per activity at a time. I repeated the measurement once I implemented the project and include that information as well.

Underneath the chart I include the main ideas I got from observing the activities and also the ideas I got from talking to the girls about the activities. There are 15 boys and 15 girls in the classroom.

Table 1: *Number of Students at Science Activities.*

	Pre-Rotation 1	Pre-Rotation 2	Pre-Rotation 3	Pre Total	Post - Rotation 1	Post-Rotation 1	Post-Rotation 1	Post Total
Boys	6	5	4	15	4	3	2	9
Girls	0	1	2	3	2	3	4	9

My observations (pre):

- The boys and girls do not mix much at stations—its mostly all male or all female at each station
- Girls go most often to stations that involve arts like drawing or music
- Student engagement appears high during the entire activity

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- When boys are not at science stations, they most often choose stations where they can use technology

Information from interviewing girls:

- They really like the activity sessions, but wish they were longer
- They feel “stupid” sometimes at science stations
- They like science, but think the boys don’t want to work with them

List the sources you studied and used to design your project. Use APA in-text citation format for each source, but include the full reference at the end of the report. After each source, summarize the ideas you took from each source.

Source	What I used from this source
Erwin (2003)	I used the idea of connecting the content of the activity to specific interests and hobbies of students. The article provided a useful simple student interest blank I had all students in the class fill out.
Sadberg, D. 2010	This article provided specific but simple ways to design activities and word directions so both boys and girls would get involved. The idea I used was to create a poster showing students exciting information they could learn at each table, and then having them make a plan in advance for which tables they would visit that day.

Make a bulleted list of the steps you took when you implemented the project. Include the dates for each step.

- On Feb 20th, I observed students at stations, took observation notes, and interviewed girls. I also asked the teacher what activity stations she had planned for the next week.
- On Feb 27th, I had each student fill out the interest blank I got from the Erwin article
- Before I went back March 6th, I took the teacher’s plans for activities and the list of things students liked. I made a chart for each activity, showing pictures about how the activity linked with common student interests.
- On March 6th, just before the activities started, I put up posters at each station and encouraged students to match the stations with the pictures that matched their interests. The posters did not use words like “Science,” “Math,” etc. Instead they used keywords like: music, dance, friends, and football. Then I had them make a written plan for which 3 activities they would attend.
- I repeated the observation checklist I used in the beginning to see what stations boys and girls attended (see Table I above).
- I also collected their activity plans so I would have a record of their choices.

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Analyze the project.

Present a chart showing pre- and post data that illustrates what changes occurred as a result of your project implementation. (see above)

Provide a one paragraph answer to each of the following three prompts:

1. Use information in your pre- and post-measurements to explain whether your project outcomes were met.

Table I shows that my project did increase the number of girls selecting science activities. For example, before my project, only 3 girls chose science activities. After my project started, 7 girls selected science activities. The table does show that girls tend not to attend the science activities alone—usually they attend with at least one other girl. My outcome was that as many girls as boys would choose science activities—which was met at the end when both 9 boys and 9 girls selected science activities. Because initially 15 boys chose science activities, one unintended outcome of my project may have been to reduce the number of boys choosing science activities.

2. Use measurement, observation, and interview information to explain what problems you encountered and what specific aspects worked well.

When I reviewed the plans students made for which stations they would go to, I noticed that even though stations were not labeled with traditional academic content titles, more boys than girls chose the science station as their first choice. I also noticed that since there are 30 students in the class—a large class—it might be that some students would want to a particular station, but couldn't because there just were not enough stations. When students used the posters to match their interests, I heard many make positive comments like "This one looks interesting because I like rock music. Cool!" When I asked the teacher what she thought at the end, she said she thought my idea of labeling stations with objects of interest to students rather than academic labels was good because she thinks some students automatically reject a station if they think they are not good at a particular subject in school.

3. In a final paragraph, explain what you would do next were you to continue working with the project. In this section, include a reference to a new idea or idea(s) you might draw on to improve the problem.

If I were continuing on with this project, I would have more stations so students could have more choices. One idea I would like to try is from the Sadberg (2010) idea where students are assigned to teams of 3, sorted so boys and girls are all on separate teams. Then the teams would go to stations together—one team of boys and one team of girls at each station. Sadberg says allowing students to work in sex-organized groups helps both boys and girls feel comfortable when working in counter-stereotypic academic areas.

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References (In this section, list all references you used to plan and for future ideas. Use APA style).

Erwin, J. C. (2003). Giving students what they need. *Educational Leadership*, 61 (1),19-23.

Johnson, G.; Poliner, R.; Bonaiuto, S.. (2005). Learning throughout the day. *Educational Leadership*, Sep2005, Vol. 63 Issue 1, p59-63, 5p; (AN 18154049)

Sadberg, D. (2010). Teaching with gender in mind. *Global Education Quarterly*, 290, 33-39.