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Redefining Participation: Towards the Understanding and Creation of an Inclusive Definition

Amy K. Atwood

Illinois Wesleyan University

David Hibbard, Faculty Advisor

Illinois Wesleyan University

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Poster Presentation P4

**REDEFINING PARTICIPATION: TOWARDS THE UNDERSTANDING AND
CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE DEFINITION**

Amy K. Atwood and David Hibbard*

Department of Psychology, Illinois Wesleyan University

Although a great deal of research has been conducted regarding class participation (e.g., Wade, 1994; Howard & Henney, 1998; Fritschner, 2000; Bean & Peterson, 1998), researchers have systematically disregarded those students who participate best through means other than vocal contribution to class discussion. This study examined student and professor definitions of participation and the impact of those definitions on student behavior in class. It was hoped that, by investigating alternate definitions of "participation" and its ability to be objectively graded in a classroom setting, a better understanding of the culture of participation would emerge. Professors were surveyed regarding if, why, and how they require participation in their classes. Students were surveyed regarding whether or not they believe making participation mandatory helps or hinders students. A primary focus was on student motivation to participate or not to participate. Both professors and students were asked to rate how likely they thought students would be to participate in hypothetical classroom situations. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected. It is hypothesized that (a) students will be shown to have different participation styles, (b) students will have broader definitions of participation than professors, and (c) students and professors will have different perceptions of student participation in selected situations.