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# An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning in One Third Grade Classroom

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An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson  
Planning in One Third Grade Classroom

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Shaw Elementary

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate creativity, engagement, and student success using student-led lesson planning within a third-grade classroom. It was designed to see the impact of creativity on engagement and understanding through the use of daily student self-assessments and feedback, and daily input from students, concerning the upcoming lessons. The daily student self-assessments included three rating scales for engagement, creativity, and confidence in content. Each day, students were expected to rate themselves on a scale of one to five for each of the categories, regarding their views for that day's lesson. This measured the effectiveness of each student-led lesson regarding the students' reflections of their own engagement, feelings of creativity, and the degree of understanding. In addition to the daily ratings, students also gave input for the next lesson, based on their ratings for the current lesson. This allowed students to be creative in using their problem-solving skills to suggest a more effective lesson style. There were twenty-four students who participated in the week-long study. At the conclusion of the study, the results of the daily surveys were analyzed for every question using a paired-samples *t*-test with an alpha level set at .05. The *t*-test revealed a significant increase in ratings in all three categories of engagement, creativity, and confidence in understanding between the beginning and end of the study. Therefore, student-led lesson planning was found to positively impact the engagement, creativity, and student success of one group of third-grade students.

## Table of Contents

### Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction.....	1
Background of the Problem.....	2
Purpose and Significance of the Study.....	4
Summary.....	4

### Chapter II: Review of Literature

Introduction.....	5
What Defines Creativity.....	5
Importance of Creativity.....	6
Motives to Incorporate Creativity and Student-led Lesson Planning.....	8
Application of Student-led Lesson Planning.....	9
Summary.....	13

### Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction.....	14
District Setting.....	14
School Setting.....	15
Participants.....	16
Confidentiality.....	16
Data Collection.....	17
Evaluation Instruments.....	17
Baseline Data.....	18

Post Data Analysis.....	19
Other Data Collection Methods.....	19
Day One.....	19
Day Two.....	20
Day Three.....	20
Day Four.....	21
Summary.....	21
Chapter IV: Results	
Introduction.....	22
Baseline Data.....	22
During the Study.....	27
Student Data Taken Throughout the Study.....	28
Post Assessment.....	32
Data Analysis.....	41
Sub-tests.....	43
Summary.....	46
Chapter V: Discussion	
Introduction.....	47
Conclusion.....	49
Limitations.....	47
Implications.....	51
Recommendations.....	52

Summary.....	53
References.....	54
Appendixes	
Appendix A:.....	55
Appendix B1:.....	64
Appendix B2:.....	65
Appendix C:.....	66
Appendix D:.....	68
Appendix E:.....	70
Appendix F:.....	71
Appendix G1:.....	72
Appendix G2:.....	73
Appendix H:.....	74
Appendix I:.....	76
Appendix J:.....	77
Appendix K:.....	78
Appendix L:.....	80
Appendix M:.....	81
Appendix N:.....	82
Appendix O:.....	84
Appendix P:.....	85
Appendix Q1:.....	86

Appendix Q2:.....87

Appendix Q3:.....88

## List of Figures

### Figures:

Figure 1: Racial Demographics for the school district in Northwest Arkansas.....	15
Figure 2: Racial demographics of the school in which the study was conducted.....	16
Figure 3: Percentage of students able to answer the first two questions on the <i>main idea</i> assessment correctly.....	24
Figure 4: Student rating responses as a whole, for the <i>main idea</i> assessment.....	25
Figure 5: Student rating responses for first question.....	26
Figure 6: Student rating responses for second question.....	26
Figure 7: Student rating responses for third question.....	27
Figure 8: Student rating responses for question four.....	27
Figure 9: Student rating responses for question five.....	28
Figure 10: Daily activity assessment data for number of students able to articulate central message and key details.....	29
Figure 11: Average student-rating responses for each question, each day.....	31
Figure 12: All student-rating responses for question one, each day.....	31
Figure 13: All student-rating responses for question two, each day.....	32
Figure 14: All student-rating responses for question three, each day.....	32
Figure 15: Student rating responses as a whole, for the <i>central message</i> assessment.....	35
Figure 16: Student rating responses for question one.....	35
Figure 17: Student rating responses for question two.....	36
Figure 18: Student rating responses for question three.....	36



Figure 19: Student rating responses for question four.....	37
Figure 20: Student rating responses for question five.....	37
Figure 21: Overall scores for the two open response on both final assessments.....	38
Figure 22: Student rating responses for question one, compared between main idea and central message assessments.....	39
Figure 23: Student rating responses for question two, compared between main idea and central message assessments.....	39
Figure 24: Student rating responses for question three, compared between main idea and central message assessments.....	40
Figure 25: Student rating responses for question four, compared between main idea and central message assessments.....	40
Figure 26: Student rating responses for question five, compared between main idea and central message assessments.....	41
Figure 27: The average rating response for each question, compared between the main idea assessment and central message assessment.....	42

## Chapter I

### Introduction

Creativity is often thought of as a character trait rather than a characteristic or an intelligence. It can be associated with activities that represent the arts, like music and painting. Sternberg considered creativity an intelligence. In surveys that calculate dominant intelligences for the way people learn, the creative intelligence is associated with questions involving the creation of something new, or finding new ways to do things (Wilson, 2013). Google defines creativity as “*the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work*”. Synonyms include *inventiveness, imagination, innovation, and originality*. Webster’s dictionary defines creativity as “*the ability to make new things or think of new ideas*” (Webster, 2003).

Abrell (1983) states, “Given the nature of today’s complex and rapidly changing society, it is scintillatingly clear that we simply will have to be enormously creative if we are to triumph over present circumstances and meet the formidable challenges of the future” (p. 103). The goal of education is to prepare students for success, and teach them how to manage failures. Ultimately, educators want to see students grow up to become productive members of society. In his *Handbook of Research-Based Practice in Early Education* (Reutzler, 2013), he writes “creativity is identified as one central skill to preparing for life in the 21st century” (p. 311). In order to succeed in preparing students for the future, it is imperative that students get experience with creativity.

What does creativity look like in the classroom? Fleith (2000) attempts to answer this question by examining teacher and students’ perceptions of creativity in the classroom

environment. According to her article, teachers' contributions to the development of creativity involve "not imposing too many assignments and rules on students, giving students choices, providing students opportunities to become aware of their creativity, accepting students as they are, and boosting students' self-confidence" (p. 150). When asking teachers what they actually implement in the classroom to foster creativity, teachers mentioned things like, "creative writing, open-ended activities, drawing... allowing students to choose what they want to do, developing arts centers, giving students flexible directions, brainstorming ideas, and giving options to students" (Fleith, 2000, p. 150). While choices and artistic activities are great ways to give students different learning opportunities, are these modes of "creativity" actually preparing them for the competitive world they are growing up in?

### **Background of the Problem**

While creativity is seen as something necessary in preparing future generations, it is rarely implemented in the classroom in its true form. Abrell (1983) explains, "While effective educational leaders know the importance of creativity, most of them would agree that there is, in actuality, too little imagination and creativity in educational institutions. Many educators sing the praises of creativity and talk much about its importance, but for all the talk, creativity in educational organizations remains pretty much pie in the sky rather than dessert on the table" (Abrell, 1983, p. 103). When asking teachers why creativity hadn't been implemented into their classrooms, the response involved issues with structure and scheduling, the large curriculum needing to be covered, and a lack of time (Fleith, 2000, p. 150). So the conclusion can be made that teachers think creativity in the classroom is important, but educational duties make them feel that they don't have time for it. The basic standards for student understanding that prepares them

for the next academic year are also very important. However, they are not so important that other components of educating children should be forgotten. It is important that they know how to read and write effectively and efficiently, and those things can't be optional. In one of the first grade practicum classes visited by the researcher, the teacher allowed students to be creative by showing a picture, allowing students to interpret it, and write a paragraph about their interpretation. In the fourth grade classroom visited by the researcher, the teacher allowed students to represent their understanding of dialogue and punctuation by creating a comic strip. Both of these activities are brilliant in adding a new element to skills that students need to learn-creativity and originality. However, both involve students expressing themselves in writing. While encouraging students to write is important in improving writing skills, why not allow students to display their understanding using a medium of their choice, and then writing a reflection of their work? Creative activities are great, but what are the choices that teachers are offering, as mentioned in Fleith's article?

Talking with close acquaintances who disliked school, the researcher saw frustration in the education system. One of these acquaintance is a pastry chef, and the other is a cosmetologist. Both people stated they disliked school because they weren't good at it, and sitting at desks all day was torturous. Both commented that they weren't good at certain subjects, like math, and they weren't sure how school was preparing them for their futures. If schools are supposed to help prepare children for their futures, and this is what they are failing to do, schools are failing to deliver the product they are selling. Both the pastry chef and the cosmetologist stated that they wished they would've been given more freedom to be creative in school. In school they felt confined to perform a certain way and deliver a specific product.

## **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of student-led lesson planning as a way to increase creativity, engagement, and student success. It is designed to determine if a unit standard, taught using student creativity and engagement as a basis, is better comprehended than a unit taught using lesson styles the instructor uses according to what he or she thinks will be most successful. If student-led lesson planning appears to result in the same, if not better, measurement of student success, teachers may choose this method of lesson planning in order to promote needed creativity and engagement in the classroom. This study examines student creativity, engagement, and academic success regarding one reading standard in a third-grade classroom. The action-research data will help address the question of “Does student-led lesson planning support students in a way that promotes creativity, engagement, and most of all, understanding?”

## **Summary**

This action research is organized into five chapters. Chapter I has offered a statement of introduction for this study, which determined the effects of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success in a third-grade classroom. Chapter II provides a review of literature concerning creativity and the implementation of it in the classroom. Chapter III serves to explain the methodology for the study. The setting, participants, data collection, procedures, instruments, and analysis are shared in this section. Chapter IV shares the results of the study with the reader. Finally, based on the results of this study conducted, conclusions will be given in Chapter V.

## **Chapter II**

### **Review of Literature**

This chapter provides a comprehensive, yet not exhaustive, review of literature on creativity, engagement, and student success. The intent of this chapter is review relevant research and other literature that supports the argument that the implementation of student-led lesson planning will promote creativity and engagement, as well as support student success. Literature (Abrell, 1983; Fedena, 2014; Hicks, 2015; Reutzler, 2013; Starko, 1995) indicates that creativity is a necessity in education, and is crucial in future success. Furthermore, research (Abrell, 1983; Fleith, 2000; Reutzler, 2013; Starko, 1995) suggests that by promoting creativity in the classroom, students become engaged in their learning, and therefore benefit academically. Other literature (Fedena, 2014; Hicks, 2015; Wilson, 2013) discusses how freedom, opportunity, and choices of interest bolster creativity, and therefore supports that student-led lesson planning gives students that creative component that will enhance engagement and increase student success.

This chapter is organized so that literature that defines creativity is presented first, and then the importance of one's creative skills is conferred. Then, literature giving detailed motives to incorporate creativity, and student-led lesson planning, is reviewed. Studies which infer how to apply creativity are given next, followed by ratification for using student-led lesson planning to positively impact student creativity, engagement, and success.

#### **What Defines Creativity**

No matter where a definition for creativity is searched, a complex array of definitions exists for the word that encompasses so many meanings. As mentioned earlier, Webster's (2003)

Dictionary defines creativity as creating new things, however several other definitions exist (Webster, 2003). Starko (1995) expresses that creativity involves solving problems and exploring multiple options. The same authors of this book relate creativity to transferability- to take knowledge and apply it to a multitude of settings, other than the setting for which it was first learned. This is further explained in the chapter as “flexibility”, or using content in diverse ways (p. 6-7). In order to demonstrate this, Roney (2001) writes: “To change the wiring in one skill, you must engage in some activity that is unfamiliar, novel to you but related to that skill, because simply repeating the same activity only maintains already established connections” (Starko, 1995, p. 7). This quote mentions the connections of neurons within the brain being pivotal in supporting “creative circuitry”, and therefore creativity. In other words, creativity involves using skills in a variety of contexts, usually in contexts new to the one being creative. Starko (1995) goes on to state that “creativity is purposeful, and involves effort to make something work, to make something better, [or] more meaningful” (p. 13). Fleith (2000) attempts to explain creativity by defining it as the modification of previous ideas, and different approaches to problems and assignments (p. 4). Although there is a wealth of definitions for creativity, the common theme involves the idea of problem-solving- of modifying ideas and failures through the application of knowledge, learned in a variety of contexts. For this study, this particular meaning of creativity was adapted.

### **Importance of Creativity**

Although it is difficult to give creativity a universal definition, its importance as a skill is not debated. Research deems creativity as a pivotal skill in the ever-changing world we live in, and although standardized testing and rigorous curriculums consume the majority of time in

schools, creativity is still seen as an important component. Many teachers debate about the time constraints when questioned about creativity in their classrooms. However, Starko (1995) states that teaching creativity isn't an additional curriculum because within creativity, content and creative thinking are enhanced (p. 21). Starko (1995) goes on to say that our world needs innovative thinkers that can learn independently, solve problems, and respond to situations in innovative ways (p. 6). These skills are all drawn from creativity. This is supported when the book *Creativity in the Classroom* (1995) reiterates that in order to prepare students for creative futures, teachers and mentors need to "help them become independent learners and creative thinkers" (Starko, p. 6). Starko (1995) suggests "we need creativity for our economy- and more" (p. 5). It is apparent that creativity is a helpful attribute that encompasses a variety of skills that are needed for success in our world. Reutzler (2013) identifies creativity as "one central skill to preparing for life in the 21st century" (p. 311). As experts project, the world is changing, and these changes need to be met with creative minds that can use knowledge flexibly, over a variety of contexts, in order to produce innovative solutions. Hicks (2015), believes creativity is more than arts and music- it is a crucial skill for *everybody* to master. She further explains that creativity results in adaptability, which prepares students for life outside the classroom, where they will have an array of new experiences to adapt to. "Creative skills make kids better learners, better thinkers, and give them more incentive to care about their work" (Hicks, 2015). Clearly, creativity is desperately needed, and creative skills are in high demand. The big question involves how to implement it.



## **Motives to Incorporate Creativity and Student-led Lesson Planning**

Clearly, creativity is important, but is it truly beneficial in the classroom? Reutzel (2013) answers this by linking engagement with creativity. This author claims that allowing students to be creative can lead to student engagement (Reutzel, p. 195). Creativity, by nature, involves certain degrees of freedom and choice based on interests, depending on the context. This freedom supports student autonomy, which is measured by individuals' perceived locus of control (Reutzel, 2013, p. 195). This control over the direction of learning inevitably increases the likelihood of students choosing to engage in learning tasks and activities. This is also known as motivation to learn (Reutzel, 2013, p. 195). As creativity gives rise to motivation to learn, motivation gives rise to engagement. Reutzel (2013) defines motivation as the "internal, unobservable drive to learn" (p. 195). Reutzel (2013) describes motivation as having a cyclical relationship with competence, which is explained by "understanding how to identify outcomes and having the capability to achieve them" (p. 195). While creativity assists in fueling motivation, and therefore competence, the entire process is fueling engagement. Reutzel (2013) defines engagement as the behaviors that represent *motivation* (p. 195). Thus, engagement and creativity are relatives. Hicks concurs with this by stating that the incorporation of creativity in the classroom results in increased engagement of students. She also conjectures that creativity, which allows students freedom and opportunities to engage with the work they do, results in student investment (Hicks, 2015). This investment results in deeper student understanding and motivation, as students are driven to improve and take care of their investments to the classroom. Starko (1995) concurs by explaining that creative teaching strategies help build student

understanding (p. 8). Creative teaching involves creative applications of core content, and this can be implemented through challenging students with flexible and creative thinking (Starko, 1995, p. 7). Starko (1995) explains that creative thinking and discussions help develop student understanding, and give the instructor a view of the students' understanding (Starko, 1995, p. 7). Starko agrees with Reutzel, stating that activities that engage creative thinking (problem solving), enhance learning and motivation (Starko, 1995, p. 22). As thoroughly explained, creativity is linked to engagement, and student understanding. Clearly, creativity is direly needed in classrooms, but how can it be easily incorporated in the correct way?

### **Application of Student-led Lesson Planning**

Starko (1995) demonstrates the relationship between creativity, success, and engagement through an illustration of a triangle. The three vertices of the triangle are *creativity*, *learning for understanding*, and *intrinsic motivation*. This triangle demonstrates the relationship between the three concepts by placing them in a diagram that asserts that each one gives rise to the other, and one cannot be achieved without achieving the other two (Starko, 1995, p. 10). Keeping this in mind, it was a goal for this action-research project to involve this trifecta, although it was difficult inventing a way to do so without encroaching on the flow of standards-based learning that was occurring at breakneck speed within a third-grade classroom. It was important to heed the warnings within Starko's book, *Creativity in the Classroom* (1995). One piece of information that was particularly humbling to read was that an activity that keeps students engaged, and may even have a creative outcome, doesn't enhance creativity until students have actually had the opportunity for creative thinking (p. 19). It is too easy to think that giving students an opportunity to paint a picture that coincides with learning goals is creative. It might have a

creative outcome, it might support understanding in some way, and it might keep students engaged, but it is of no service to their creative skills if they took no part in the actual creative process of problem solving, flexible thinking, and evaluation. Starko (1995) goes on to say that creative teaching doesn't always result in developing creativity in students because those that create the creative lessons had the creative opportunity. Thus, teachers are going through the creative process when inventing the activity, but students who complete the activity, missed the creative opportunity and process altogether (p. 20). This is where student-led lesson planning could benefit students. If students *are* the ones with the creative opportunity to create a creative lesson or activity, they are able to take part in both the creative thinking, and the creative doing (completion of the activity). Starko (1995) states that in order to foster creativity, the students need to be the problem solvers and communicators, and teachers need to be the coaches. This relieves teachers of being the "founts of all wisdom", and allows them to simply facilitate the learning process (Starko, p. 20). This notion would also support student-led planning, because it would allow the instructor to be a coach, and the students to be the problem-solvers when being faced with learning goals and the obstacles of misconceptions. This is further supported when Starko (1995) explains, "learning takes place best when learners are involved in setting and meeting goals" (p. 8). Therefore, if students are the ones undergoing the creative process, setting and determining how to meet the goals, students should be able to be creative, be engaged, and be successful. By taking a step back as the instructor and giving students the steering wheel (within reason), the focus becomes less of the creative product, and more on the creative process, which is what actually builds creative thinking skills. Reutzel (2013) suggests that "We must become more interested in the creative process, the creative attitude, the creative person, rather

than the creative product alone” (p. 311). Fleith (2000) asserts that the first step in creative learning involves teaching strategies that reflect student-centered views (p. 4). Reflecting student-centered views also involves giving student the freedom of choice (Fleith, 2000, p. 3). If students are given a standard-based learning objective, and they are able to determine what activities will allow them to achieve that goal, that is making instruction student-centered, and giving freedom of choice. In order to achieve an orderly conduction of student-led lesson planning, certain anchors must be set in place. Of course, students do not completely understand all content, otherwise they would not need to be in school. Therefore, some instruction by the teacher is necessary in order to facilitate understanding of the standard. However, the learning activities that support the mini-lessons and necessary bits of instruction, can be manipulated to meet the learning goals, and tailored to student needs and motivational desires. To begin student-led lesson planning that allows for complete freedom of choice (with the limit set on activities that can be done within the classroom), students must be given the opportunity to create choices, rather than simply choosing from predetermined choices. To begin, Fleith (2000) recommended brainstorming as a pivotal part of creativity (p. 3). Students were able to brainstorm what keeps them engaged, and what makes them feel creative, in order to narrow down some options for what kind of activities might fit their academic and engagement needs. Hicks (2015) suggests encouraging collaboration and allowing students to follow interests in order to promote creativity in the classroom. Therefore, students were able to collaborate during the brainstorming time in order to create a few streamlined options that fit the interests of the different students within the classroom. As Reutzel (2013) states, “Creativity is manifested both in the ability to create and the ability to improve and embellish” (p. 312). In order for students to

improve and embellish, they needed to have opportunities to look at activity success, and base the next activity options on the successes and failure of the previous. Fedena (2014) explains that one characteristic of the creative classroom is assessment of performance and feedback. In order for students to truly comprehend and think creatively about how to improve the learning activity based on previous experience, they needed to be able to assess themselves. This was manifested through a daily survey, so that students could consider each component of the lesson, and reflect on what to do differently in order to improve the results. This would be a major incorporation of the creative process, as described by Reutzel's (2013) assertions about how creativity is implemented. One last inclusion that Fleith (2000) states is that students need to be given the opportunity to become aware of creativity. In order for students to become aware of creativity, they were also able to assess themselves on how creative they felt during the lesson, in order for them to explore how they might feel more creative, more engaged, and how they might gain greater understanding during the next lesson. Therefore, although student-led lesson planning is an uncommon practice within the general education classroom, it is a method of incorporating several aspects of creativity, while still focusing and improving understanding upon core standards.

## **Summary**

This review of literature summarized relevant literature on creativity and the implementation of it through student-led lesson planning. Current research was summarized, including studies that demonstrated the need for increased creativity in classrooms.

For the purpose of this project, student-led lesson planning was utilized for the administration of creativity within content. The next section will describe the methodology that

was used to investigate the impact of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success within a third-grade classroom.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This study investigated creativity, engagement, and student success using student-led lesson planning in a third-grade classroom. The intention of this study was to determine if the implementation of student-led lesson planning could promote creativity and engagement, while also supporting student success with content. The action-research data were collected to address the question of “Does student-led lesson planning promote students’ creativity, engagement, and understanding in one third grade classroom?” This chapter describes the setting, the participants, and the confidentiality procedures of this study. How data were collected and the evaluation instruments are also described. The methods for analyzing the data is also detailed.

#### **District Setting**

The study took place at an elementary school in Northwest Arkansas. Demographic information for the school district provided in this section is based on published information from the 2014-2015 school year (Springdale School District, District Report Card 2014). The school district serves students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The district in which the school is located has a total number of 21,211 students in 28 schools, with an average class size of 19. There are 10,230 females and 10,981 males in the school district. The ethnic breakdown for the school district is as follows: 44.5% Hispanic/Latino; 39.1% White; 10.3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 2.3% Black/African American; 1.7% Asian; 1.6% two or more races; and 0.5% American Indian/Alaskan (see Figure 1). Students classified as Limited-English-Proficient total 45% of enrollment; 67% of total enrollment is classified

low-income, or eligible for free or reduced lunch; and 9% of students are eligible for the district's special education program.

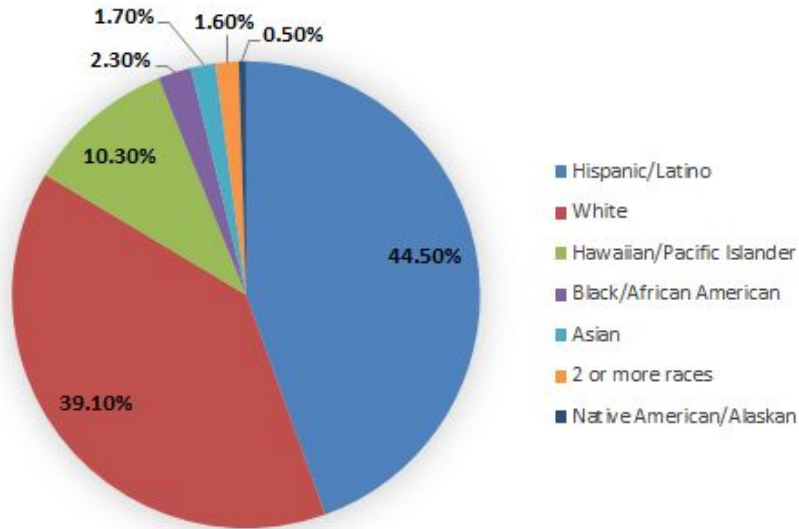


Figure 1. Racial Demographics for the school district in Northwest Arkansas

### School Setting

The elementary school in this study has a total population of 558 students (Willis Shaw Elementary School, District Report Card 2014). The student population consists of: 83.9% White; 11.8% Hispanic/Latino; 1.6% two or more races; 1.3% Black/African American; 0.9% Asian; 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan; 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (see Figure 2). Students classified as Limited-English-Proficient total 9% of total enrollment; 38% of total enrollment is classified low-income, or eligible for free or reduced lunch; and 11% of students are involved in the special education program.



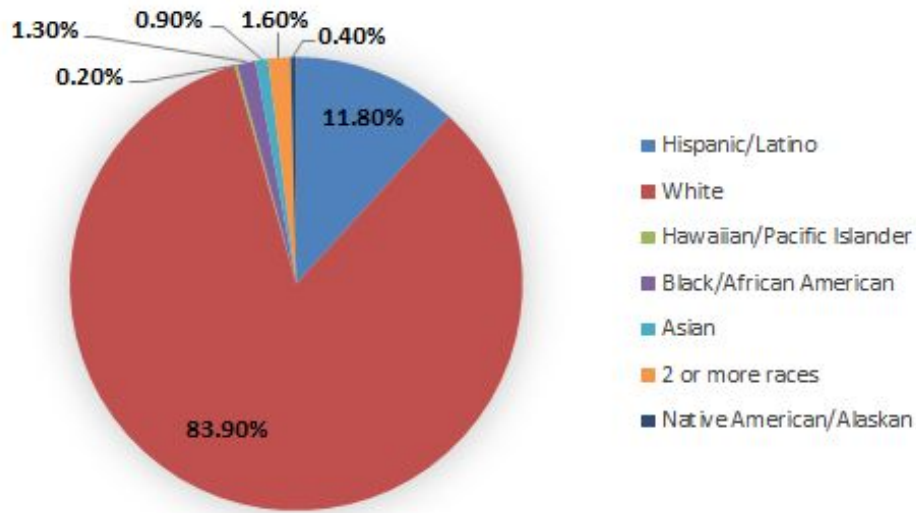


Figure 2: Racial demographics of the school in which the study was conducted

### Participants

This study was conducted in a third-grade general education classroom consisting of 24 students. There are 10 males and 14 females in the classroom. The racial demographics for the students in this classroom are as follows: 23 white students and 1 Hispanic/Latino student. One student is an English Language Learner, two students receive Speech services, one student receives Special Education services, and three students receive Gifted and Talented services on a regular basis.

### Confidentiality

Permission to conduct this study was granted from the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), as well as the administration of the elementary school where the study was conducted (see Appendix B1 and B2). Permission to participate in this study was obtained prior to the commencement of the project. A letter (see Appendix C), along with an Informed Consent (see Appendix D), was sent home with each student in the

appropriate language, and a signature from the parent or guardian was required before data for that child were reported. The Informed Consent explained the purpose and procedures of the study. It explained that participation is completely voluntary and that there was no reward or penalty for participating. It explained that the child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained and assured by the researcher through the establishment of a code. Each student participant was assigned a number at random to establish the code. All data were recorded anonymously using the code. Only the researcher had access to the code, and all data were kept in a locked file cabinet in the project classroom. The code was destroyed at the completion of the study.

### **Data Collection**

This study investigated creativity, engagement, and student success using student-led lesson planning in a third-grade classroom. Data were collected to determine if teaching strategies that implement student-led planning will positively impact student success and engagement while promoting creativity. During the study, students completed surveys and assessments in order to determine creativity, engagement, and student success.

**Evaluation instruments.** Students were given daily surveys (see Appendix E for a sample of the survey) to determine how each student felt following the lesson, regarding creativity, engagement, and understanding. Before the week study, the students were given the opportunity to brainstorm what keeps them engaged and what makes them feel creative (see Appendix F for a picture of the brainstorm written on the board). Using brainstorming techniques, the first lesson was planned. Following the first lesson, students were given a daily survey, for which students rated themselves on a scale of one to five for the categories of how

creative they felt, how engaged they were, and their understanding of the content. At the end of the survey, students used their problem-solving skills to suggest another lesson style, based on their engagement and understanding gained from the lesson. The feedback from each survey was the basis for which the following lessons were planned. These surveys were given each day at the conclusion of each lesson, in order for students to give immediate feedback.

**Baseline Data.** In order to get a clear view for how students felt in general about creativity, engagement, and their academic success, this study focused on a specific third grade standard. For a baseline measurement, an assessment was taken at the conclusion of the previous reading standard, to the standard that was the focus for the study. The previous reading standard was the Common Core State Standard: *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.* This standard was taught using teaching methods and lessons determined by the instructor, based on best practice and student learner profiles. The assessment (see Appendix G1 and G2 for a sample of this assessment) at the conclusion of this standard included two open-response questions: “What is main idea?” and “Why are key details important?” The assessment also included 5 questions for which students rated themselves on a scale of one to five for if they enjoyed learning the content, if they were able to use their creative skills when learning about the content, if the lessons were interesting (engaging) for them, if they enjoy using their creative skills, and if they feel like they are able to use their creative skills often. This assessment created a baseline for the study because students were able to rate themselves on several aspects the study covered.

**Post data analysis.** In order to get a clear visual for how the student-led planning of lessons impacted their understanding, creativity, and engagement, the same assessment was

given again, at the conclusion of the next reading standard. The reading standard used for the study was the Common Core State Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2: *Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.* The study focused on the central message and key details, as it better relates to the previous standard of finding the main idea and key details. The instruction based upon fables, folktales, myths, and retelling was not included in the study. At the conclusion of the study and latter standard, the same assessment was given as with the previous standard, but the first question was altered to “What is central message?” Following the study, these two assessments were examined and analyzed to determine changes and trends. Also following the study, the daily surveys were carefully examined and analyzed in order to determine changes and trends, and then draw conclusions.

**Other data collection methods.** Data were collected for the other activities completed during the study. For each student-led lesson, an activity was used in order to gather formative assessment data. The data related to the activity, and allowed for an assessment of understanding to gather if students were actually benefitting throughout the week from the practice. The first two pieces were general templates, related to the content and student suggestions. The third formative assessment was taken using anecdotal records during student sharing time.

**Day one.** The first day of the study, the lesson plan was based on the students’ brainstorm of what engages them and makes them feel creative (see Appendix H for the lesson plan). Students listened to a song, and read the lyrics. Students listened to the song twice, and were able to reference the lyrics after the song concluded. Afterward, students discussed the song at their

table groups, then independently filled in a small slip that asked for the central message and key details (see Appendix I for a sample of this handout). Afterward, students were promptly given the daily survey. From this survey, students gave tips that they needed more explanation on how to uncover the central message, and the majority of students wrote that they would enjoy, and benefit from, reading a book and drawing (see Appendix J for a sample of this survey).

**Day two.** The second day of the study, the lesson plan included reading a story, and drawing the key details of the story (see Appendix K for the lesson plan, and Appendix L for a sample of this handout). Central message was further explained through instructing students to think about what the author is trying to teach them through the story in the book. Drawing also helped students visualize the main points in the book that conveyed the lesson. Afterward, students were given the survey to give immediate feedback (see Appendix M for a sample of this survey). The overwhelming consensus was that the students wanted to interact with each other more, be able to share something in front of the class, and receive immediate feedback. There were also several requests to draw more because of how it supported their understanding for this lesson.

**Day Three.** The third day of the study, the lesson plan included reading another story, students working in partners, and creating a book preview. The book preview involved the creation of a movie-style poster, with a short skit for which students would give a preview of the book to the audience. The idea was that students would share the central message and three of the key details on their poster and during their skit (see Appendix N for the lesson plan). Students were given an extra day in order to complete their posters and skits (see Appendix O for anecdotal records taken during skits), but they were given the survey at the conclusion of this

lesson, that involved the reading of the book, determination of central message and key details with their partners, and the beginning of creating their necessary pieces for the share-time (see Appendix P for a sample of the survey).

**Day Four.** Students were given time to complete their posters and skits, then they presented to the class. During their skits, anecdotal records were taken to determine students' understanding of central message and key details. Immediately following the conclusion of the lesson, students were given the final assessment, identical to the final assessment used for the previous standard, with the exception of the first question being altered to reflect central message (see Appendix Q1, Q2, and Q3 for a sample of this assessment).

### **Summary**

Based on research (Abrell, 1983; Fleith, 2000; Reutzel, 2013; Starko, 1995) and literature (Fedena, 2014; Hicks, 2015; Wilson, 2013) suggesting that creativity boosts engagement, which supports student understanding, this study was conducted to determine the impact of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success in a third-grade classroom.

This chapter has described the setting, the participants, and the confidentiality procedures utilized during the study. How data were collected and the evaluation instruments were described. The methods for analyzing the data were also explained. Chapter IV will provide an analysis of the results of the study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This chapter provides an analysis of the data collected for the study. The data that was collected is to address the research question, “Does student-led lesson planning promote students’ creativity, engagement, and understanding in one third grade classroom?” Data are explained through narrative text and figures. The purpose of this study was to determine if the implementation of student-led lesson planning could promote creativity and engagement, while also supporting student success with content. There were 24 participants in this study.

During this week-long study, students participated in student-led lesson planning each day, for the last five to ten minutes of each reading lesson. Participants completed activities each day that were assessed, then used the daily surveys to rate their experience during the lesson, and their understanding of the content. In addition, students were given an assessment at the end of the previously taught reading standard, and at the end of this reading standard, taught using their input. These two assessments were used to compare the overall feelings toward creativity, engagement, and student success between the two differently taught standards.

#### **Baseline Data**

For a baseline measurement, an assessment was taken at the conclusion of the previous reading standard, to the standard that was the focus for the study. The previous reading standard was the Common Core State Standard: *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.2: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.* This assessment was given on February 19, 2016, at the conclusion of the previous standard. That particular

standard was taught longer than the unit itself because of student misconceptions with nonfiction text. The intention of this study was to determine if the implementation of student-led lesson planning could promote creativity and engagement, while also supporting student success with content. The first two questions on the assessment were to determine if students understood the main two components of the standard: “What is main idea?” and “Why are key details important?” The last five questions allowed students to rate themselves concerning their creativity and engagement during the teaching of the standard. For the baseline assessment of main idea, 67% of students were able to articulate what main idea is, and 54% of students were able to articulate why key details are important (see Figure 3). For the five rating questions, each question was broken down in order to examine patterns in rating responses (see Figure 4). The first question, “Did you enjoy learning about main idea?”, received an average response rating of 2.67 on a scale of one to five (see Figure 5). The second question, “Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about main idea?”, received an average response rating of 3.04 (see Figure 6). The third question, “Were the lessons for main idea interesting for you?” received an average response rating of 3.21 (see Figure 7). The fourth question, “Do you enjoy using your creative skills?” received an average response rating of 4.42 (see Figure 8). The fifth question, “Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?” received an average response rating of 3.25 (see Figure 9).



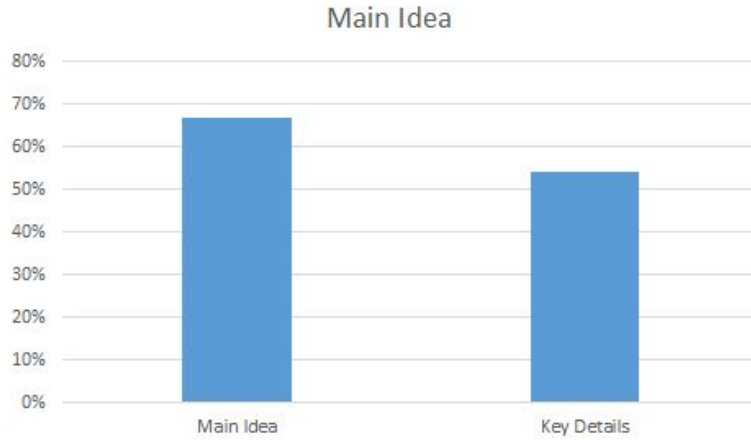


Figure 3: Percentage of students able to answer the first two questions on the *main idea* assessment correctly.

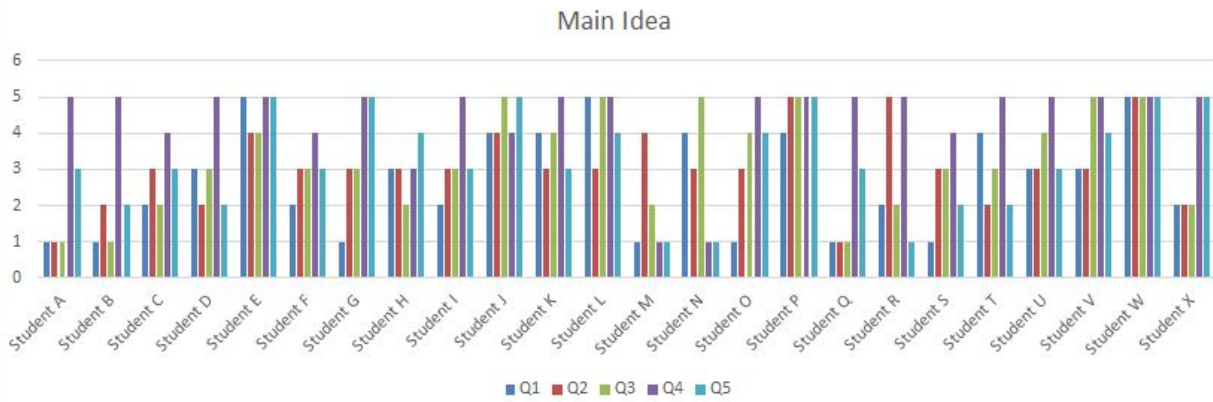


Figure 4: Student rating responses as a whole, for the *main idea* assessment.

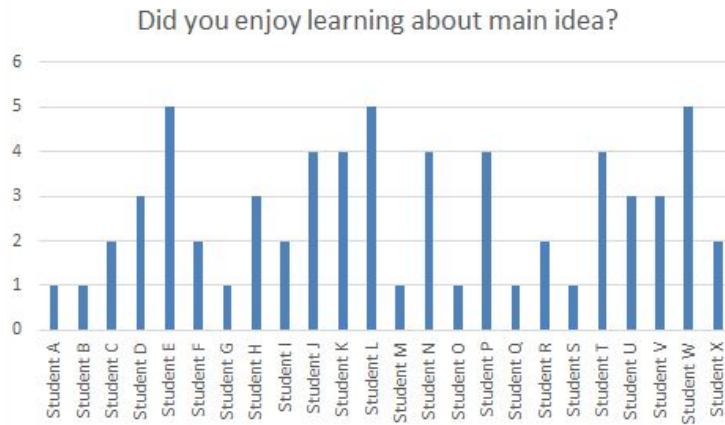


Figure 5: Student rating responses for first question.

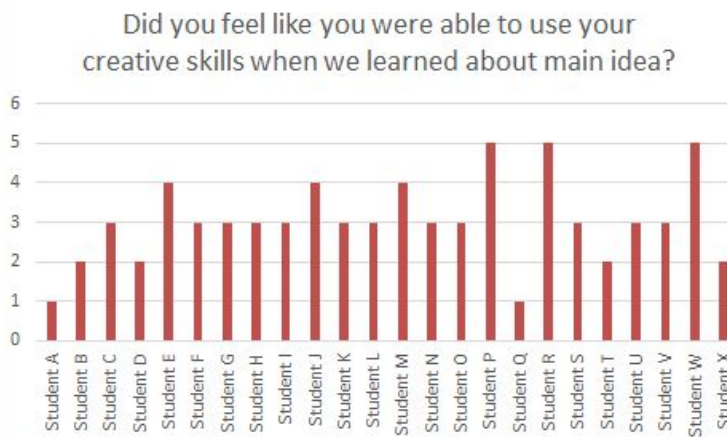


Figure 6: Student rating responses for second question.

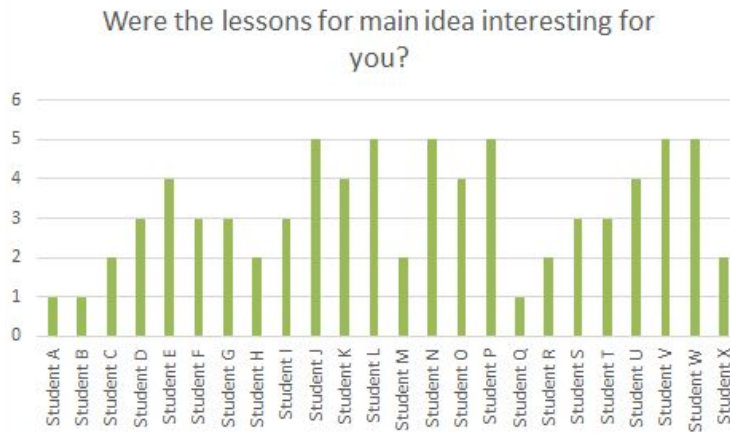


Figure 7: Student rating responses for third question

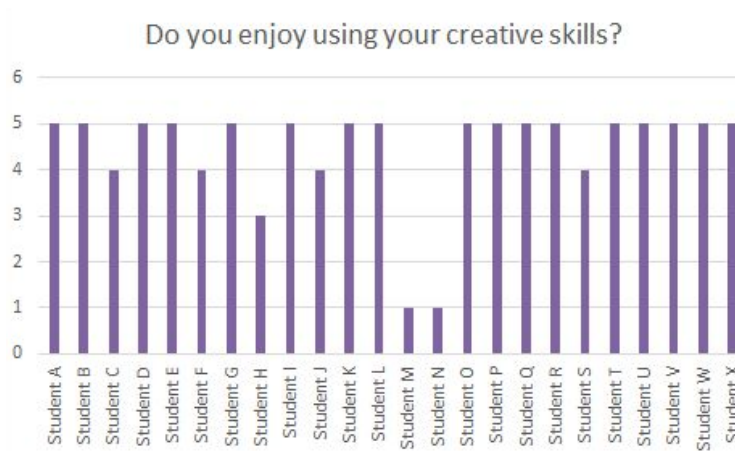
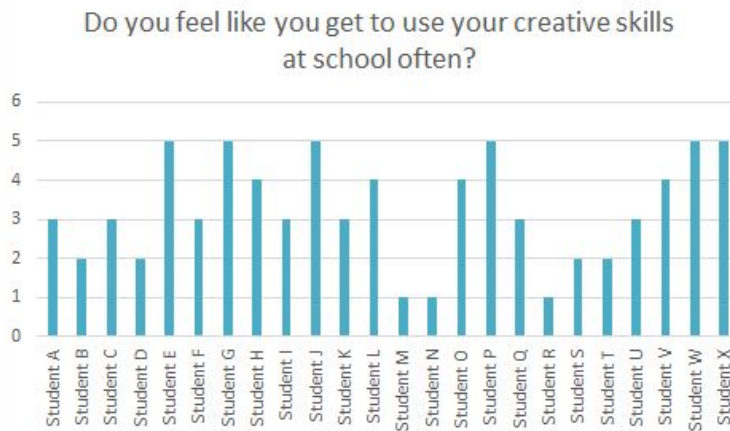


Figure 8: Student rating responses for question four.

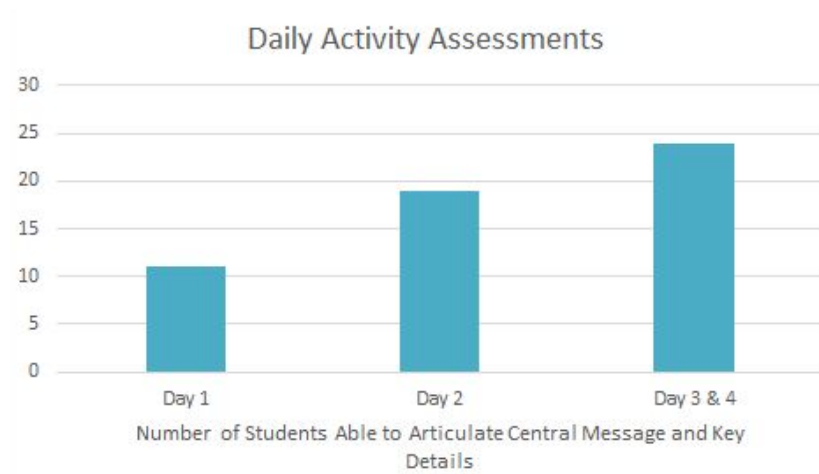


*Figure 9: Student rating responses for question five.*

### **During the Study**

In order to determine student success, the daily activities were graded, and submitted along with student rating surveys. Although student confidence might be high in their understanding, it is essential to make ascertain their actual levels of understanding. This was recorded through two daily assignments, and one presentation grade. The overall understanding was assessed using the end-of-study assessment, used for comparison with the *main idea* assessment. The daily activities assessed student ability to identify the central message and key details, while the final assessment required students to articulate what central message is, and why key details are important. Both aspects of the standard are important for students to understand in order to determine that they have mastered the standard. The first day, students completed a template slip for the song they listened to. Participants articulated the central message and three key details regarding the song (see Appendix I for a sample of this template). The first day, 11 students were able to clearly articulate both the central message, and key details (see Figure 10). The second day, after reading a story, students completed a template for which they determined the central message and drew three key details (see Appendix L for a sample of this template). The second day, 19 students were able to clearly articulate both the central message and key details. The third and fourth days, students read a story, then worked in partners to create a poster and skit that would give a preview of the book. The criteria for the poster and skit were for students to articulate the central message and key details of the story (see Appendix O for the anecdotal records taken during the presentations). The scoring of skits and posters

proved that all 24 students were able to clearly articulate both the central message and key details of the story.



*Figure 10:* Daily activity assessment data for number of students able to articulate central message and key details.

**Student data taken throughout the study.** In order to investigate creativity, engagement, and student success using student-led lesson planning, participants were required to rate their feelings toward creativity, engagement, and their understanding at the conclusion of each lesson. Each question involved a rating scale from one to five, one being the least amount, and five being the greatest. In order to understand students' ratings, responses were separated by question, then examined across each day. These ratings give a daily view of student feelings about their engagement, their creativity, and how well they believe they understand the content (see Figure 11 for the average student rating responses for each day). For question one, administered on the daily survey at the conclusion of each lesson, the ratings are compared among all three days (see Figure 12 for all student rating responses for question one, each day).

On day one, the average rating response was 3.04. On day two, the average rating response was 4.13. On day three, the average rating response was 4.38. For question two, administered on the daily survey at the conclusion of each lesson, the ratings are compared among all three days (see Figure 13 for all student rating responses for question two, each day). On day one, the average rating response was 2.75. On day two, the average rating response was 3.83. On day three, the average rating response was 4.21. For question three, administered on the daily survey at the conclusion of each lesson, the ratings are compared among all three days (see Figure 14). On day one, the average rating response was 2.88. On day two, the average rating response was 3.83. On day three, the average rating response was 4.58.

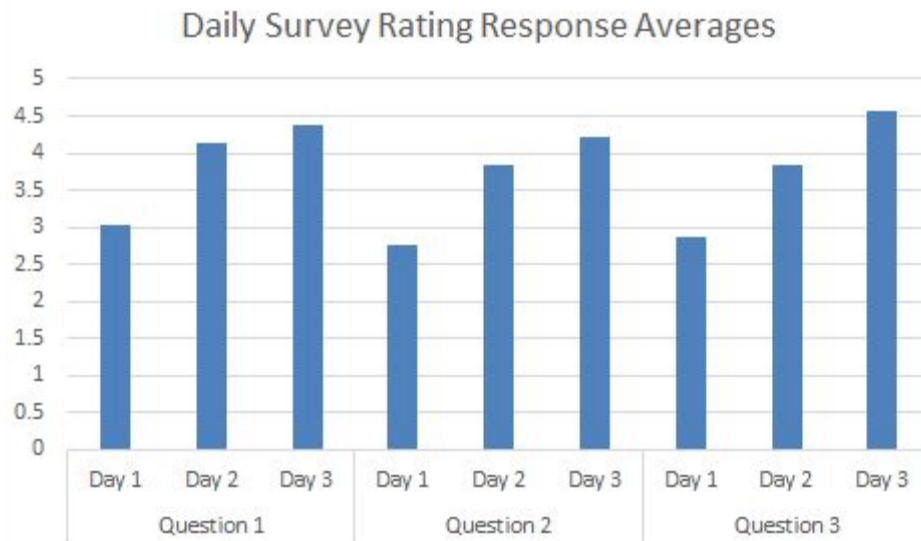


Figure 11: Average student-rating responses for each question, each day.

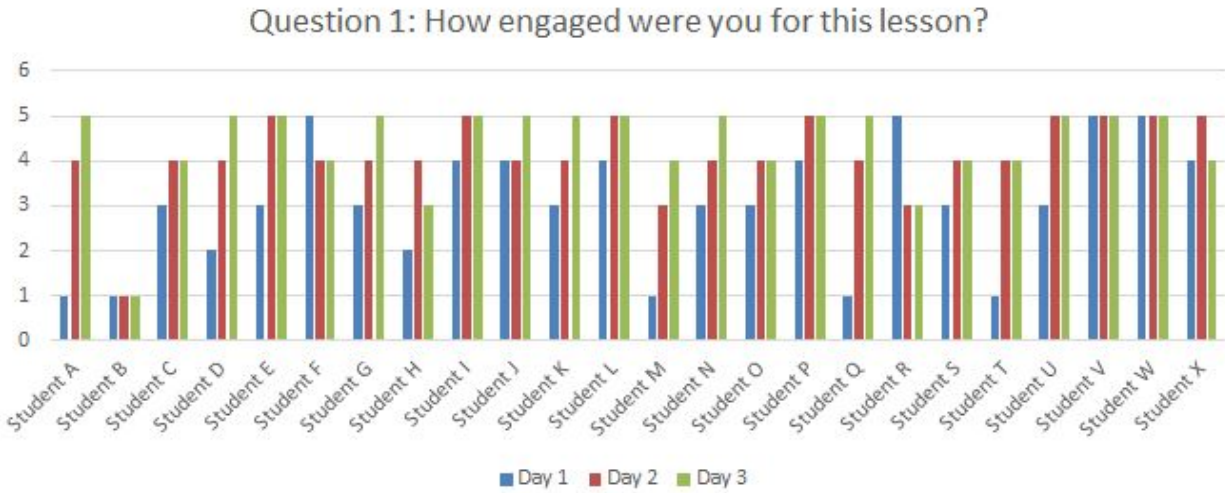


Figure 12: All student-rating responses for question one, each day.

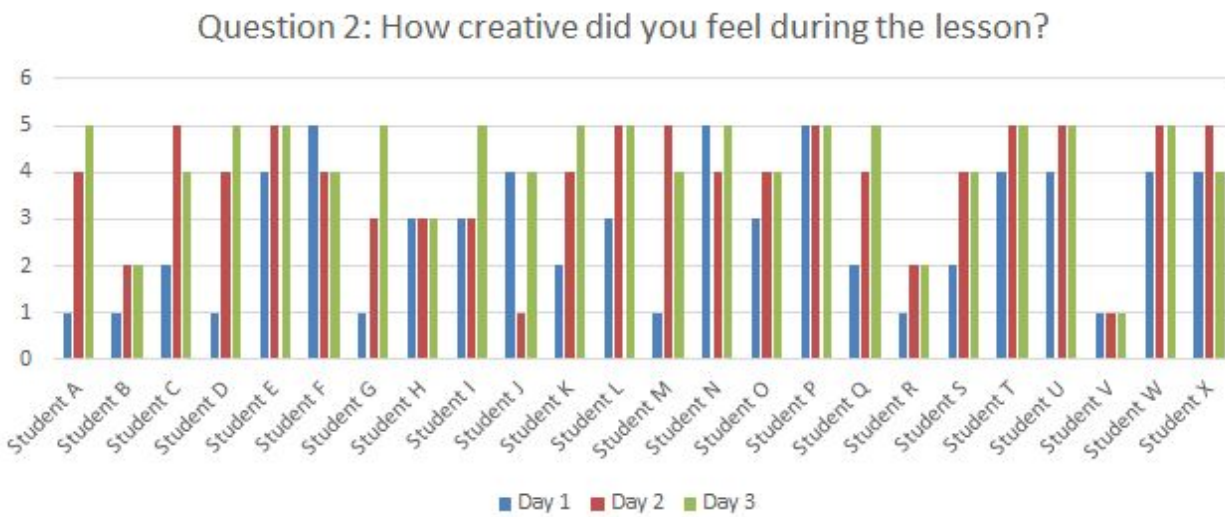


Figure 13: All student-rating responses for question two, each day.

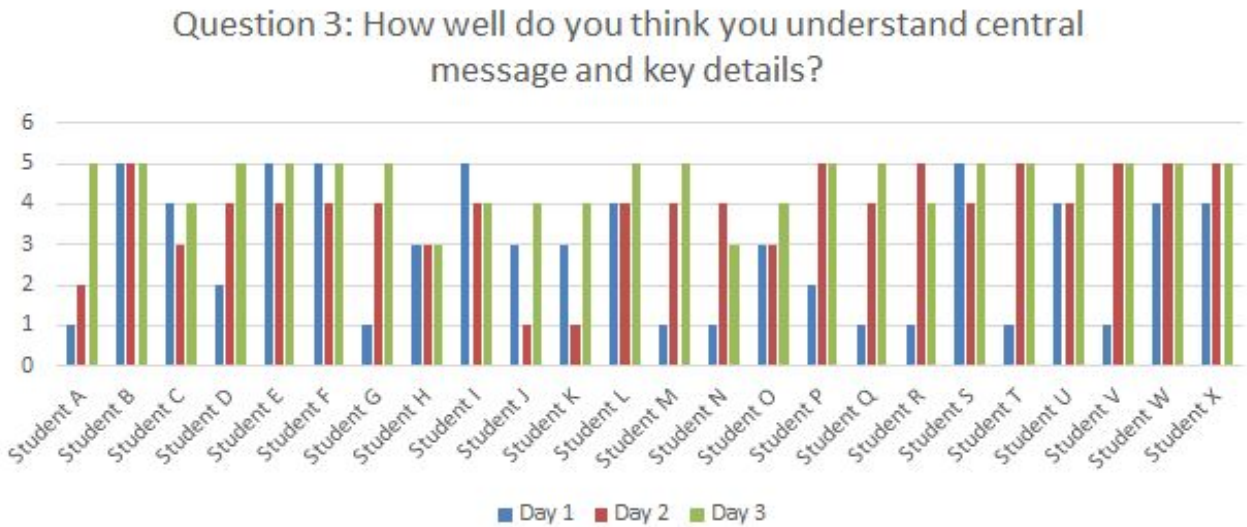


Figure 14: All student-rating responses for question three, each day.

### Post-Assessment

In order to determine the overall impact of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success, an assessment was given at the conclusion of the teaching of the reading standard for central message and key details. This assessment is nearly identical to the assessment taken at the conclusion of the last standard involving main idea and key details, with the exception of the first question, which for this post-assessment reads “What is central message?” This assessment was given on the fifth day of the study, prior to student presentations and daily surveys. Just as with the *main idea* assessment, the first two questions of this assessment are open-response, and the last five questions are student-rating questions involving creativity and engagement, rated on a scale of one to five. The participants’ assessment scores were recorded and analyzed, for both the open response questions and the rating response



questions, to determine the impact of student-led lesson planning on the creativity, engagement, and student success of the 24 third-grade students that partook in the study.

Upon examination of the open response questions, it was gathered that 20 out of the 24 participants could articulate what both central message is, and why key details are important. For both questions, 83% of students answered correctly (see Figure 3). This result differs from the assessment taken on day three that proposed all students could articulate central message and key details, because the day three assessment involved identifying the central message and key details within a story, while this final assessment involved defining central message, and explaining the importance of key details.

Upon examination of the five rating response questions on this post-assessment, each question was further analyzed in order to examine patterns in rating responses (see Figure 15). The first question, “Did you enjoy learning about central message?”, received an average response rating of 3.71 on a scale of one to five (see Figure 16). The second question, “Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about central message?”, received an average response rating of 3.63 (see Figure 17). The third question, “Were the lessons for central message interesting for you?” received an average response rating of 3.58 (see Figure 18). The fourth question, “Do you enjoy using your creative skills?”, received an average response rating of 4.79 (see Figure 19). The fifth question, “Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?”, received an average response rating of 2.92 (see Figure 20).

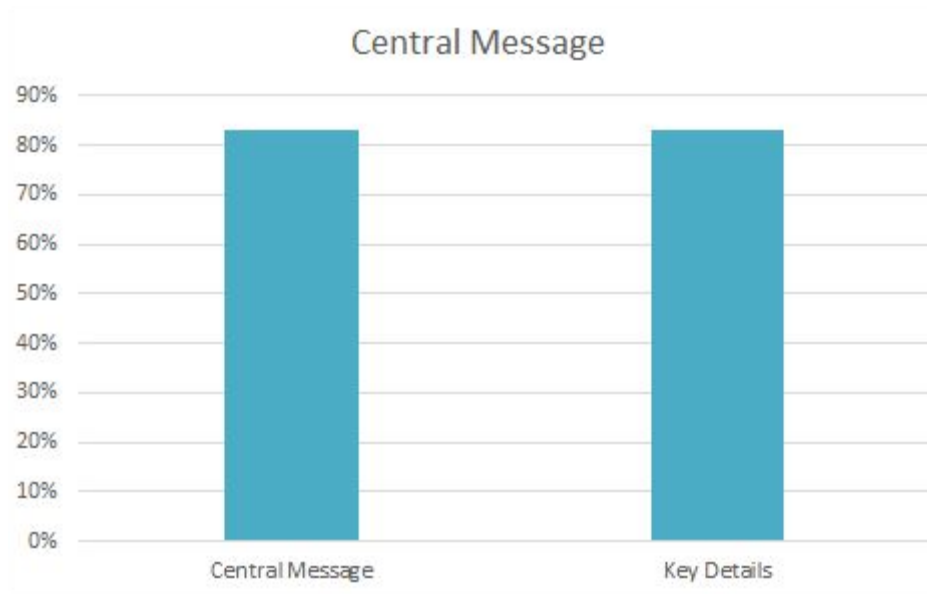


Figure 3: Percentage of students able to answer the first two questions on the *main idea* assessment correctly.

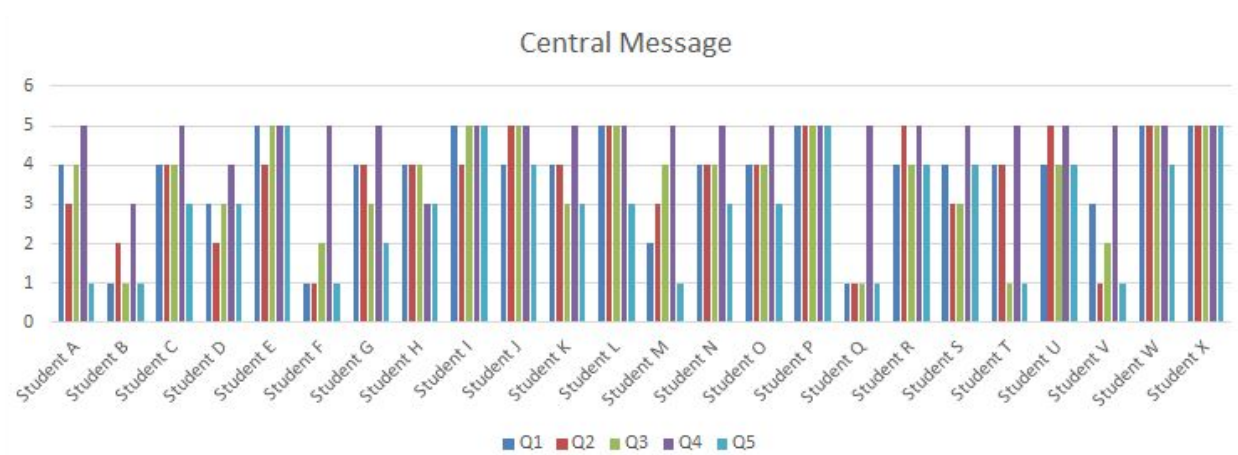


Figure 15: Student rating responses as a whole, for the *central message* assessment.

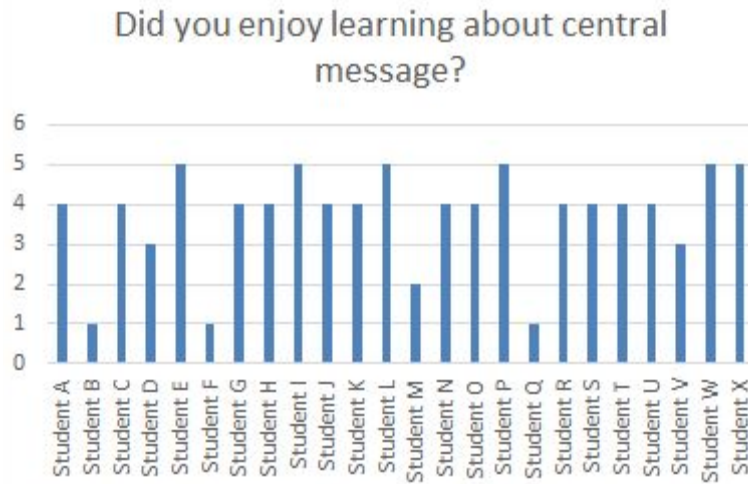


Figure 16: Student rating responses for question one.



Figure 17: Student rating responses for question two.

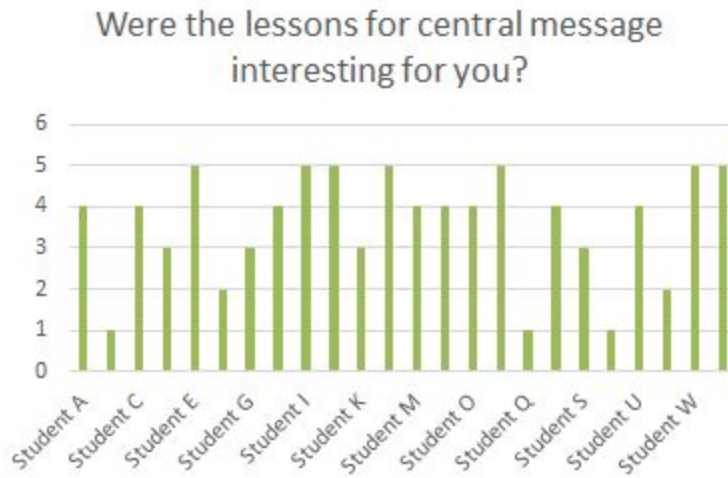


Figure 18: Student rating responses for question three.

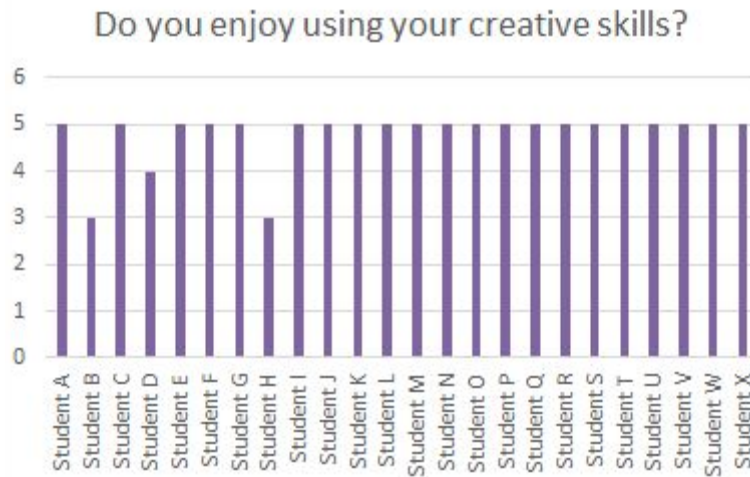
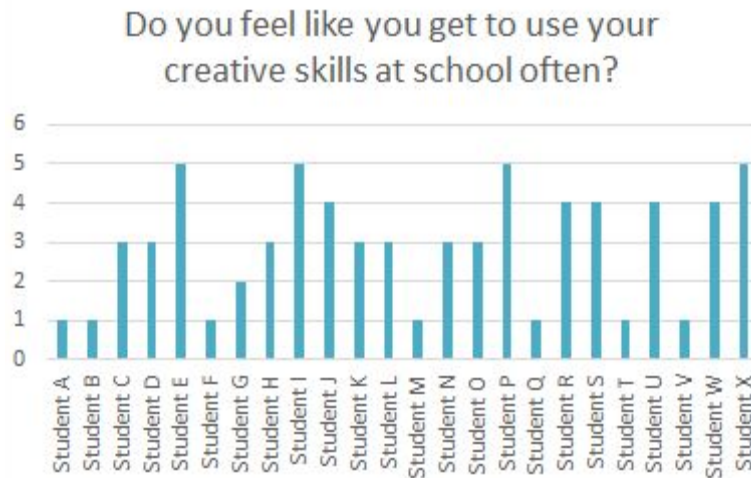


Figure 19: Student rating responses for question four.



*Figure 20:* Student rating responses for question five.

After the post-assessment scores were recorded and analyzed, the beginning assessment scores were compared to determine whether or not student-led lesson planning had an overall impact on creativity, engagement, and student success of the 24 students in the third-grade classroom. The scores for the two open response questions at the beginning of each assessment are compared in Figure 21. Overall, the scores for defining the main idea, or central message, of a text increased, as did explaining the importance of key details. For the last five questions on the assessments, the rating response questions, all ratings increased between the main idea assessment and the central message assessment, with the exception of the last question, “Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?” This discrepancy will be further explored later. The responses for the rating response questions for both assessments were compared and analyzed to examine any trends. The rating responses for each question are compared among students in Figures 21-25. The averages for each rating response for each test are compared in Figure 26.

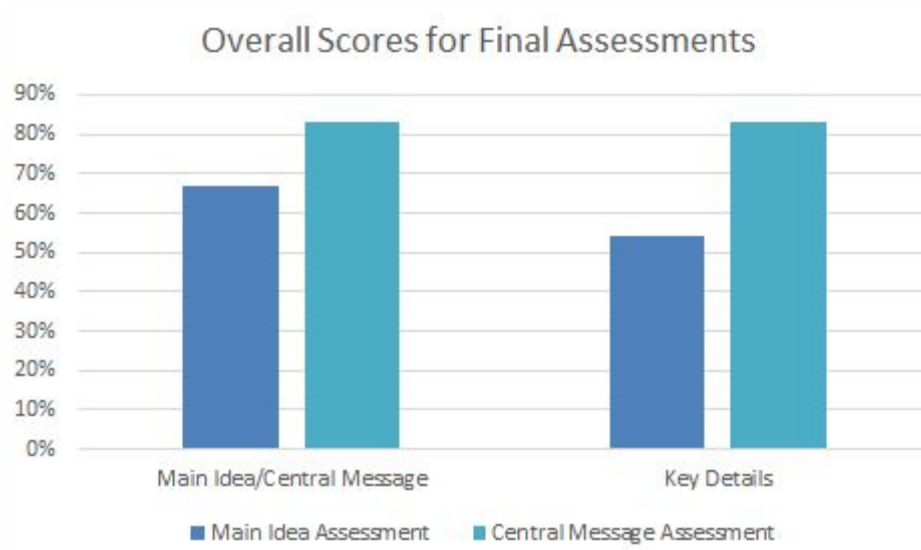


Figure 21: Overall scores for the two open response on both final assessments.

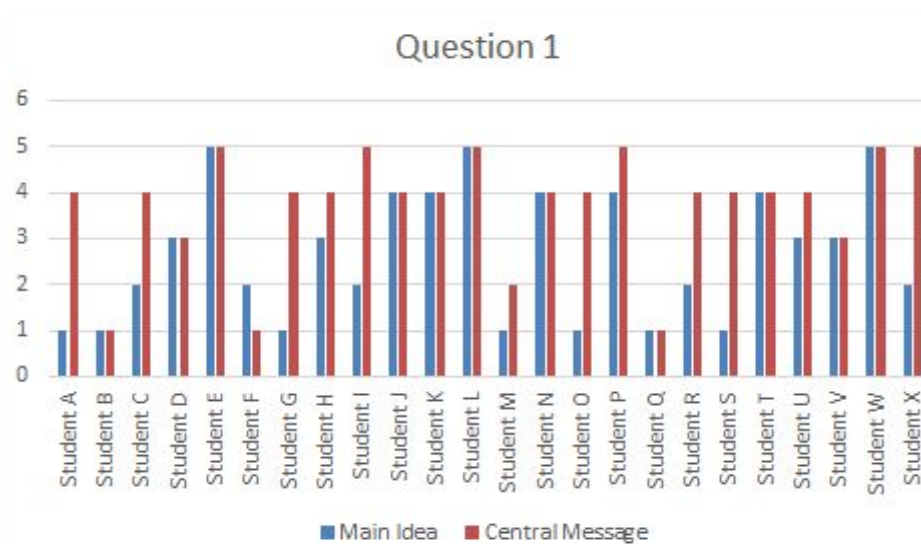


Figure 22: Student rating responses for question one, compared between main idea and central message assessments.

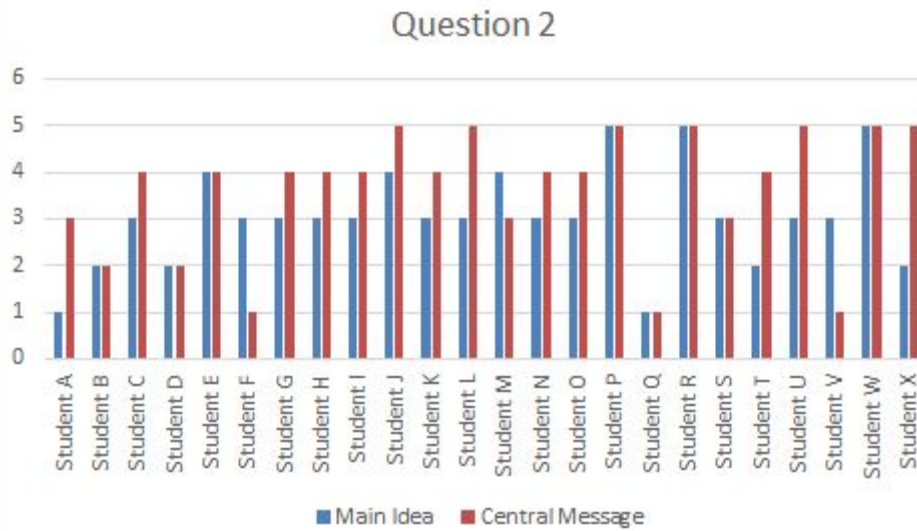


Figure 23: Student rating responses for question two, compared between main idea and central message assessments.

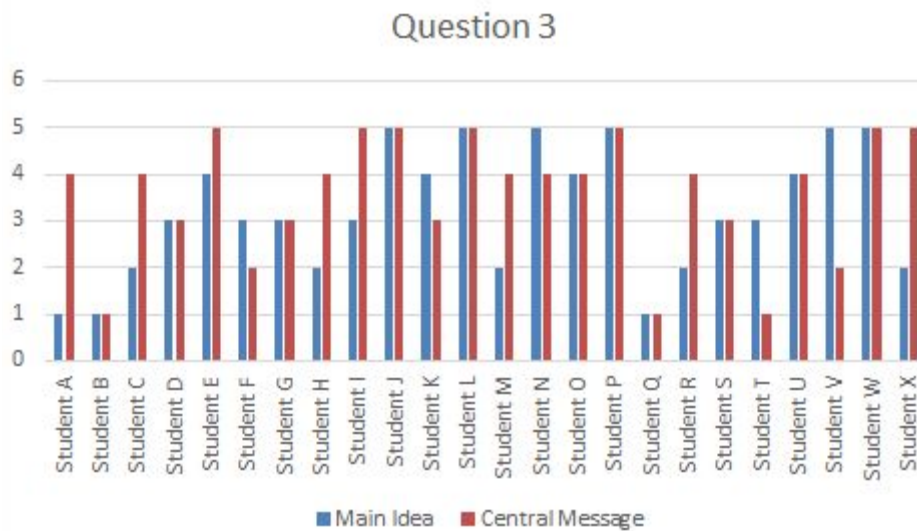


Figure 24: Student rating responses for question three, compared between main idea and central message assessments.

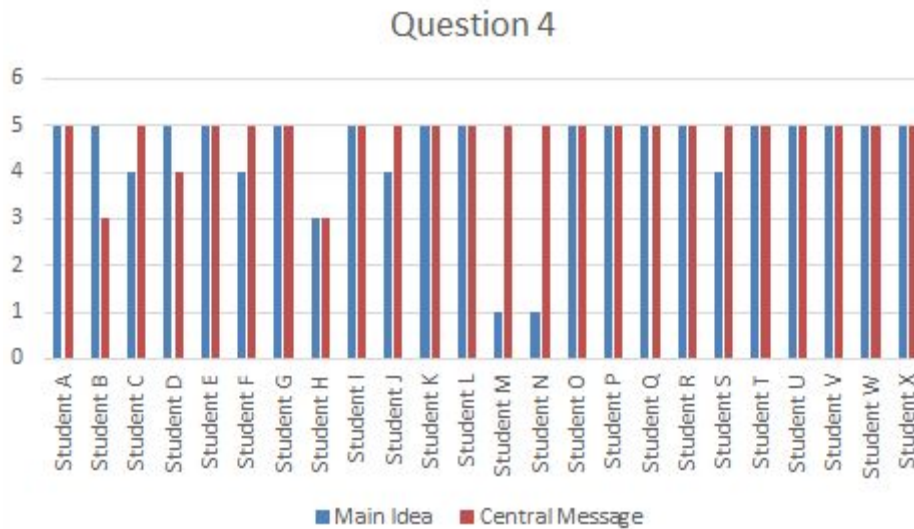


Figure 25: Student rating responses for question four, compared between main idea and central message assessments.

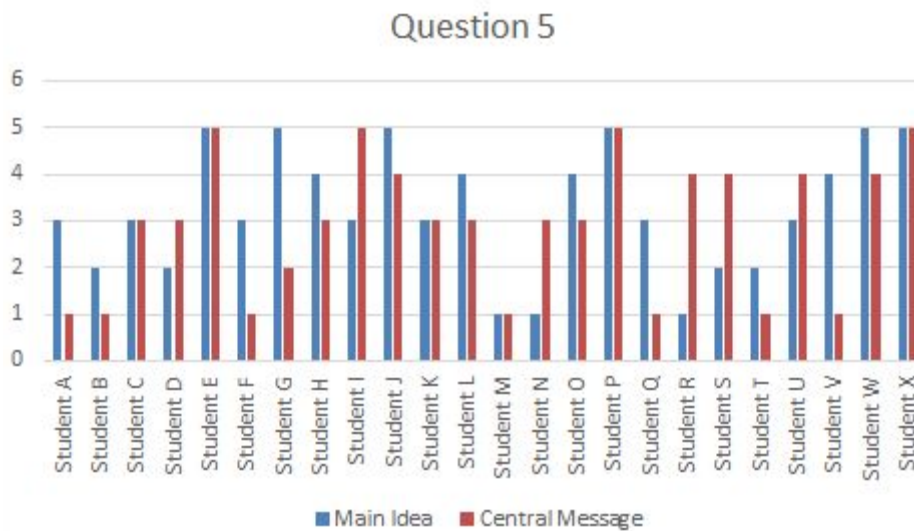
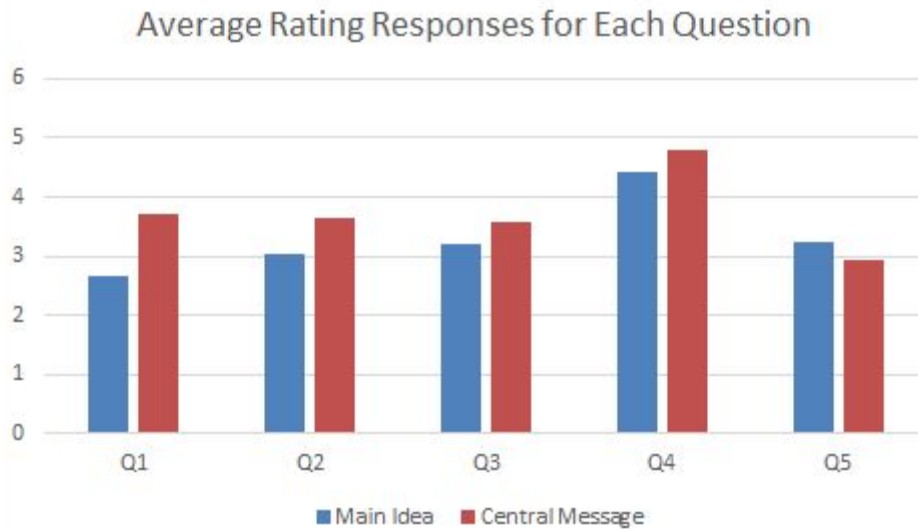


Figure 26: Student rating responses for question five, compared between main idea and central message assessments.





*Figure 27:* The average rating response for each question, compared between the main idea assessment and central message assessment.

### Data Analysis

In order to determine the impact of student-led lesson planning on the creativity, engagement, and student success on a group of third-grade students, the two final assessments for main idea and central message were compared. Although the success or fail of the first two open responses for each test were clearly analyzed, in order to further analyze the range of responses students made using the one to five rating scale for the last five questions, a paired-samples t-test with an alpha level set at .05 was used. Table 1 illustrates the results obtained from the t-test comparison of the rating response portions of the main idea final assessment and the central message final assessment. Although three out of the five questions did not show statistically significant growth between the main idea and the central message standards, the two questions for which there was significant growth answered the questions, “Did

you enjoy learning about main idea?” and “Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about main idea?” The significance for these two questions demonstrates the positive growth in engagement and creativity between the main idea standard and the central message standard.

**Table 1:** Results obtained from the t-test for each rated response question for each of the final assessments taken.

**Question One**

<u>Main Idea</u>		<u>Central Message</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	2.67	24	3.71	2.069	-3.82	0.00087
Maximum Points Possible= 5						p < .05

**Question Two**

<u>Main Idea</u>		<u>Central Message</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	3.04	24	3.63	2.069	-2.356	0.027357
Maximum Points Possible= 5						p < .05

### Question Three

<u>Main Idea</u>		<u>Central Message</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	3.21	24	3.583	2.069	-1.226	0.23252
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

### Question Four

<u>Main Idea</u>		<u>Central Message</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	4.42	24	4.79	2.069	-1.436	0.164364
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

### Question Five

<u>Main Idea</u>		<u>Central Message</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	3.25	24	2.92	2.069	1.034	0.311751
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

### Sub-tests

In order to obtain a closer view of how the students' rating responses of their creativity, engagement, and understanding, the daily survey responses were also analyzed. In order to see exactly how the ratings for each question over time, a paired-samples t-test with an alpha level set at .05 was used. Table 2 illustrates the results obtained from the t-test comparison of each daily response for each question on the daily surveys. The analysis revealed that, aside from the

variance between days two and three with questions one and two, all other variances between the questions and days were statistically significant.

**Table 2:** Results obtained from the t-test for each rated response question for each of the daily surveys taken.

**Question One**

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Two</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	3.04	24	4.13	2.069	-4.376	0.000220647
Maximum Points Possible= 5						p < .05

<u>Day Two</u>		<u>Day Three</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	4.13	24	4.38	2.069	-2.015	0.05577791665
Maximum Points Possible= 5						p < .05

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Three</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	3.04	24	4.38	2.069	-4.460	0.0001788400326
Maximum Points Possible= 5						p < .05

### Question Two

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Two</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	2.75	24	3.83	2.069	-3.469	0.002079184
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

<u>Day Two</u>		<u>Day Three</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	3.83	24	4.21	2.069	-1.895	0.07078338706
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Three</u>				
N	Mean	N	Mean	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
24	2.75	24	4.21	2.069	-4.948	0.0000531174471
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

### Question Three

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Two</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	2.88	24	3.83	2.069	-2.361	0.027085479
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

<u>Day Two</u>		<u>Day Three</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	3.83	24	4.58	2.069	-3.423	0.002325112562
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

<u>Day One</u>		<u>Day Three</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>t</i> Stat	<i>p</i>
N	Mean	N	Mean			
24	2.88	24	4.58	2.069	-4.980	0.0000490211166
Maximum Points Possible= 5						<i>p</i> < .05

### Summary

This Chapter has provided analyses of the data collected for the purposes of measuring the impact of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success of a group of third-grade students. Chapter V provides a discussion of the results and conclusions that can be drawn from the results, limitations of the research, implications and recommendations for further study.

## **Chapter V**

### **Discussion**

It is highly important that students develop their creative skills in a way that allows them to solve problems in innovative ways, using a variety of information, gathered across different contexts. Numerous experts (Abrell, 1983; Fleith, 2000; Hicks, 2015; Reutzel, 2013; Starko, 1995; Wilson, 2013) have thoroughly examined the importance of creativity and remark how it is a key component in the success of students beyond the classroom. With the high demand of creativity, it is important that it is implemented in classrooms, as a way to allow students to develop flexible thinking.

Other research (Abrell, 1983; Fleith, 2000; Reutzel, 2013; Starko, 1995) and literature (Fedena, 2014; Hicks, 2015; Wilson, 2013) tell of how implementation of creativity also boosts engagement and understanding. This causes creativity to be an asset and a beneficial teaching component within classrooms.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of creativity, engagement, and student success, using student-led lesson planning. The study addressed the research question “Does student-led lesson planning promote students’ creativity, engagement, and understanding in one third grade classroom?” During this week-long study, student-led lesson planning was implemented. The final assessment scores of the previous standard and the current standard were analyzed to determine whether or not student-led lesson planning impacted the creativity, engagement, and understanding of 24 students in a third-grade classroom. More understanding was demonstrated through the second assessment (assessing central message, taught through student-led lesson planning) than was the first assessment (assessing main idea,

taught using instructor-determined teaching methods), for the two open response questions regarding author's main purpose (main idea or central message) and key details. Students, as a whole, increased from 67% success to 71% success for understanding author's main purpose. Students, as a whole, increased from 54% to 83% success for understanding key details. For the rating response portion of the final assessments, all five ratings increased, with the exception of one, from the instructor-based teaching to the student-led instruction.

Data from daily surveys and assessments of understanding were also collected and analyzed to determine the impact of student-led lesson planning on creativity, engagement, and student success. Daily surveys that included rating scales for engagement, creativity, and self-evaluation of understanding were examined. All three rating response categories of the daily surveys increased from the beginning of the study, to the end.

The researcher used a paired samples t-test, with an alpha level set at .05, to further compare the results of both the final assessments and daily surveys, and to determine whether or not student-led lesson planning had a significant impact on the creativity, engagement, and student success of the third-grade students. The results demonstrated that there was a significant increase in feelings of creativity, engagement, and understanding of this class of third-grade students.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the present study, it appears that practices with student-led lesson planning do positively impact the creativity, engagement, and academic success of this group of third-grade students. When the results of the final assessments and daily surveys were compared using a paired sample t-test, with an alpha level set at .05, students showed significant growth in



positive feelings toward creativity, engagement, and understanding. This deemed student-led lesson planning as a successful tool for promoting creativity and engagement, while boosting student understanding. The increase in student understanding was supported with the data from both final assessments with the beginning open-response questions. The average scores of students' final assessments increased between the main idea assessment and central message assessment. This supports student-led lesson planning as a successful strategy to increase student understanding. The results of this study are similar to those of Fleith (2015), in that creativity in the classroom bolstered student achievement.

### **Limitations**

As with any study, there were factors over which the researcher had no control, which may have affected the results of this study. The first factor is that the students only received one week of the student-led lesson planning strategy, which put a time limitation on the study. Further research could have been recorded and evaluated as further student-led lesson planning, purposeful lessons, and surveys could have occurred; additional scores would also have been conducted during extended period of time.

Another limitation of this study was with students' daily surveys, and for the student to correctly assess themselves using the rating scales. Students were given explicit instruction on what each question meant, what each rating on the rating scale represented, and how to rate themselves. Some students still, however, did not understand the meaning of creativity. Creativity was explained in depth, the first day of the study, but it seemed that some students still thought of creativity as strictly art. One student made the comment on the second day, "I don't like being creative. I'm not good at drawing", which demonstrated his misconception about

creativity. This was addressed, but this instance could have still affected scores for other students.

The question on the daily survey that involved rating engagement could have also been a limitation. All students have different combinations of modalities in which they prefer to learn. Regardless of the array of modalities incorporated into a lesson, some students will not enjoy it as much because it might not focus on their preferred modality. For example, the first day involved analyzing a song. While this was a perfect match for some modalities, some students complained of not being musically inclined. It is possible that the scores for engagement were swayed by learning modality, rather than actually how engaged the students were.

An additional limitation of the study was the environment for which the students were able to use their creative skills. The week previous to the study, students participated in designing portions of their grade-level musical program, and spent large amounts of time practicing and perfecting it. This was enjoyable for most students, and made many students feel creative because they were making different pieces of the set and props. The week prior to the play, during the study, two MAP tests were administered, and an ACT Aspire practice test was administered. This change in daily activities could have also impacted students perspectives on creative opportunities in class, either positively or negatively.

Another limitation of the study involves the transfer of knowledge. Focusing on the main idea and key details standard with informational text for an extended period of time could have positively affected the understanding of finding the central message and key details within a nonfiction text. Repeated exposure to similar standards could have caused student growth to be inflated, more so than would have without that repeated exposure.

## **Implications**

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, it appears that the use of student-led lesson planning positively impacts student creativity, engagement, and success. Data from this study suggest that student-led lesson planning practices could promote and improve the creativity, engagement, and academic success of students in other classrooms, grades, and schools. Several students enjoyed their input being used for planning daily activities that they began to ask if they could make more suggestions for other subjects. Some students suggested completing a skit for explaining the concept of area in math, and even explained how to begin that. Therefore, while the student-led lesson planning positively impacted creativity, engagement, and success for a reading standard, it could also positively impact other standards across different curriculums.

An aspect of this study that worked well was the suggestion piece of the daily surveys. Students were able to think, and collaborate with other students to decide what would be most beneficial for their understanding to do the following day. This allowed students to build off of each other's ideas to create a general consensus on what the next activity should include. This resulted in a majority of students being pleased with the following day's activity because it was their suggestion, but it resulted, also, in other students "getting on board" and enjoying the activity as well.

An additional aspect of this study that worked well was the daily survey questions, with the suggestion area. Because these were daily and at the conclusion of the lesson, students were able to give immediate feedback, based on what they had just experienced. This resulted in getting accurate feedback, based on their reflection of the lesson.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher would implement student suggestions into lesson planning as part of the regular teaching strategy.

### **Recommendations**

Overall findings from the present study suggest that student-led lesson planning improved the creativity, engagement, and academic success of this group of third-grade students. For the purposes of this study, student-led lesson planning only took place for one standard, for one week. It might have been an even more effective study if student-led lesson planning could have taken place with multiple different standards, across different subjects. The students could get more practice with self-evaluation and reflection, and using their creative skills to develop plans, improved upon based on experience.

The impact of student-led lesson planning could have been further investigated by viewing the study over a whole school year with a group of students, using a group of standards. Teachers that utilize this strategy could provide more support based on student feedback, and support students with deeper thinking about what components could be implemented in order to increase their understanding while keeping them engaged. Students could then establish clear goals for themselves, using their self-assessments, and could make sure they obtain those skills by further allowing them to manipulate the standards throughout the year.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a discussion of the conclusions, limitations, implications, and recommendations of the present study. This study was designed to investigate the research question, “Does student-led lesson planning promote students’ creativity, engagement, and understanding in one third grade classroom?” Overall results and implications

from the study indicated that student-led lesson planning increased students' creativity, engagement, and understanding. Based on the results of this study, it appears that student-led lesson planning had a positive impact on student creativity, engagement, and success in the third-grade students in this classroom.

## References

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**Appendix A**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**PROTOCOL FORM**

The University Institutional Review Board recommends policies and monitors their implementation, on the use of human beings as subjects for physical, mental, and social experimentation, in and out of class. . . . Protocols for the use of human subjects in research and in class experiments, whether funded internally or externally, must be approved by the (IRB) or in accordance with IRB policies and procedures prior to the implementation of the human subject protocol. . . Violation of procedures and approved protocols can result in the loss of funding from the sponsoring agency or the University of Arkansas and may be interpreted as scientific misconduct. (*see Faculty Handbook*)

Supply the information requested in items 1-14 as appropriate. **Type** entries in the spaces provided using additional pages as needed. In accordance with college/departmental policy, submit the original **and** one copy of this completed protocol form and all attached materials to the appropriate Human Subjects Committee. In the absence of an IRB-authorized Human Subjects Committee, submit the original of this completed protocol form and all attached materials to the IRB, Attn: Compliance Officer, ADMN 210, 575-2208. Completed form and additional materials may be emailed to [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu). The fully signed signature page may be scanned and submitted with the protocol, by FAX (575-3846) or via campus mail.

1. Title of Project

**An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning in One Third Grade Classroom**

2. (Students **must** have a faculty member supervise the research. The faculty member must sign this form and all researchers and the faculty advisor should provide a campus phone number.)

Name	Department	Email Address	Campus Phone
------	------------	---------------	--------------

Principal Researcher  
Ericka Brockunier

[edbrocku@uark.edu](mailto:edbrocku@uark.edu)

Faculty Advisor

Dr. Marcia Imbeau

CIED

mimbeau@uark.edu

(479) 575-3570

3. Researcher(s) status:  
Undergraduate Student

4. Project type:  
Honors Project

5. Is the project receiving extramural funding? (Extramural funding is funding from an external research sponsor.)

No

6. Brief description of the purpose of proposed research and all procedures involving people. Be specific. Use additional pages if needed. (**Do not** send thesis or dissertation proposals. Proposals for extramural funding must be submitted in full.)

Purpose of research:

The purpose of this research is to examine the evidence supporting creativity and engagement that bolsters academic achievement. If students are allowed to participate in the lesson planning process (using their creative skills to say how they would prefer to be taught), students will be more engaged, and therefore will succeed in that academic content area more so than if the content were taught using teaching methods created by the teacher.

Procedures involving people:

Students in a third grade classroom at Shaw Elementary in Springdale will be engaged in brainstorming methods to teach “main idea” in the reading subject area. Students will be placed in groups to brainstorm, then brought together to create a class vision of how they would enjoy being taught the content. Students will engage in a 30-minute brainstorm activity per week in order to discuss what they think would best benefit their learning of the content area, and how they think they would be most engaged. This method of teaching will then be used to teach the next reading content area, and the assessment results will be compared to those taken from the previous teacher-planned unit. A 20 minute reflection period at the end of each week will also incur. The reflection period will be used to alter any plans students created for the following week. This will give the students a chance to use their creative skills in using their own



personal evaluation of their engagement for previous lessons, to alter future ones. This will allow students to use creative skills in finding solutions and new teaching methods they think would benefit their learning best and keep them engaged. Pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments will be compared from the student lead lessons and the teacher planned lessons, as well the results of a creativity-based survey administered before and after the project.

#### Overall Idea of the Project:

Creativity is seen as a vital skill to have for future generations. As Abrell describes it in *Educational Leadership: The Key to Encouraging Creativity*, in order to prepare students for the competitive job market ahead, students need to be prepared with skills in creativity. Creativity involves creating something new, or finding a better way to do something using the supplied resources. Another phrase for this is problem solving.

De Souza Fleith describes in *Teacher and Student Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom*, creativity is seen as a wonderful thing to have in the classroom, but with so many demanding tasks, aside from teaching, it is an idea rarely enforced in the classroom. With a time constraint, and creativity being so important, students are missing out on learning important skills for their futures.

With this motivation, the research began. When examining the *Handbook of Research-Based Practice in Early Education*, edited by D. Ray Reutzel, it is evident that as students are given creative tasks that put them in charge of their own learning, they are more deeply engaged. With deeper engagement, academic achievement increases. This gave me a passion for figuring out a way to give students time to be creative.

In order to give students a truly creative task, without minimizing other learning time, it would be an interesting idea to have students help “plan” a set of lessons. By helping plan, they would be in charge of their own learning, and directly influencing the teaching. Students will be given the topic, and told that the topic will be taught soon, and the instructor needs to know how to teach it. After brainstorming in groups, students will come together as a class to create an overall idea of how they would like to be taught the topic. Using their ideas as a base, the unit standard would be taught, and results could be compared in order to deem if the experiment was beneficial.

In the third quarter of the school year, 3rd grade students at Shaw Elementary School were taught the standard involving main idea and key details in informational text, as part of the unit. For the 4th quarter, students will be taught the standard involving central message and supporting details in folktales, and other fiction texts. In order to scaffold the planning process, students will be told that a topic nearly identical to main idea and key details needs to be taught. They can use their knowledge of what main idea and key details are in order to help them decide how they would like the next standard to be taught. Because central message and main idea are

similar, the student main idea plans can be utilized to plan lessons for the new standard of central message and supporting details.

For data collection, the pre-assessment, formative assessments, summative assessment, free narrative, and creative survey will be used for both the main idea unit taught with teacher lessons, and the central message unit taught with student planned lessons. Comparison of improvement from pre-assessment to post-assessment, and competency in explaining the topic in a free narrative between the two units will be beneficial in collecting data. The creative survey will be included in order to see how creative students feel regularly, versus after planning their own lessons, if they enjoy being creative, and how they feel about their understanding of taught content in the unit.

Abrell, R. (1983). Educational Leadership: The Key to Encouraging Creativity. *The Clearing House*, 57(3), 103-106.

De Souza Fleith, D. (2000). Teacher and Student Perceptions of Creativity in the Classroom Environment. *Roeper Review*, 22(3), 148-153.

Reutzell, D. R. (n.d.). *Handbook of Research-Based Practice in Early Education*.

7. Estimated **number of participants**:

23 Children under 14

8. Anticipated dates for contact with participants:

Project will happen within internship placement period. Contact with participants will be four days a week through the third quarter of the school year. Archival data will be taken from the beginning of the 2nd quarter of school (October 19, 2015), and ongoing data will be taken beginning in 3rd quarter (January 4, 2016). Project will be complete by February 26, 2016 at the latest.

9. Informed Consent procedures: The following information must be included in any procedure: identification of researcher, institutional affiliation and contact information; identification of Compliance Officer and contact information; purpose of the research, expected duration of the subject's participation; description of procedures; risks and/or benefits; how confidentiality will be ensured; that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. See *Policies and Procedures Governing Research with Human Subjects*, section 5.0 Requirements for Consent.

Signed informed consent will be obtained. **Attach copy of form.**

Modified informed consent will be obtained. **Attach copy of form.**  
Other method (e.g., implied consent). **Please explain on attached sheet.**  
Not applicable to this project. **Please explain on attached sheet.**

10. Confidentiality of Data: All data collected that can be associated with a subject/respondent must remain confidential. Describe the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained.

- In order to compare student data across several assessments, and compare student data across single assessments, each student will be assigned a number. This number will be used to label any included artifacts and in any report detailing the findings of the experiments. Student data will only be shared with the student who completed the assessment. Any assessment data shared with the class in order to reflect on the success of a lesson will be discussed in broad, class achievement terms, so that no student knows another student's scores. They will not see the data comparing their improvement or scores over time, and no student or parent will see any data other than their own.

11. Risks and/or Benefits:

Risks: Will participants in the research be exposed to more than minimal risk?

No.

Minimal risk is defined as risks of harm not greater, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Describe any such risks or discomforts associated with the study and precautions that will be taken to minimize them.

Benefits: Other than the contribution of new knowledge, describe the benefits of this research.

Students will be given the opportunity to be creative in designing an enjoyable method to be taught new content. In doing this, they will be able to incorporate their own interests and learning styles into the lesson. This will result in students being taught in a way they enjoy and benefit from- truly student-centered teaching. Students will also be given the opportunity to look at the success of their planning, and given the chance to alter future plans based on success. This will allow students to use problem-solving skills related to creativity.

12. Check all of the following that apply to the proposed research. Supply the requested information below or on attached sheets:

**A.** Deception of or withholding information from participants. Justify the use of deception or the withholding of information. Describe the debriefing procedure: how and when will the subject be informed of the deception and/or the information withheld?

Students will not be informed of their scores on the pre-assessments or ongoing assessments until after each week of lessons. This will help prevent any changes of attitude due to scores, which will help create valid results to inform whether or not student planning is academically and creatively beneficial. They will be allowed to see all of their scores following the ending assessment and post-project survey. This practice of not showing scores until the end of each week is current in this classroom, as the teacher wants students to focus on learning and progress, rather than scores. Students are already aware that they will not have access to scores on pre-assessments and on-going assessments until the end of each week. If necessary, they will be reminded of this policy.

**B.** Medical clearance necessary prior to participation. Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions to be taken.

**C.** Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from participants. Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions to be taken.

**D.** Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to participants. Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions to be taken.

**E.** Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects. Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions to be taken.

**F.** Research involving children. How will informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects be obtained?

All students in the class will be given permission slips to participate in the action research project. Students will be asked to take them home, for their parents to sign and give permission for their child to participate in the study, and for their scores to be used for research (using assigned numbers to uphold confidentiality).

**G.** Research involving pregnant women or fetuses. How will informed consent be obtained from both parents of the fetus?

**H.** Research involving participants in institutions (cognitive impairments, prisoners, etc.). Specify agencies or institutions involved. Attach letters of approval. Letters must be on letterhead with original signature; electronic transmission is acceptable.

I. Research approved by an IRB at another institution. Specify agencies or institutions involved. Attach letters of approval. Letters must be on letterhead with original signature; electronic transmission is acceptable.

J. Research that must be approved by another institution or agency. Specify agencies or institutions involved. Attach letters of approval. Letters must be on letterhead with original signature; electronic transmission is acceptable.

The research will take place within the internship school classroom. This will require consent from the principal to allow the school's third grade students in a particular classroom to participate in the action-research project.

### 13. Checklist for Attachments

The following are attached:

Consent form (if applicable) or

Letter to participants, written instructions, and/or script of oral protocols indicating clearly the information in item #9.

Letter(s) of approval from cooperating institution(s) and/or other IRB approvals (if applicable)

Data collection instruments

### 14. Signatures

I/we agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects/respondents are protected. I/we will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I/we agree to request renewal of approval for any project when subject/respondent contact continues more than one year.

Principal Researcher

Ericka Brockunier



Faculty Advisor

Dr. Marcia Imbeau



**PROTOCOL APPROVAL FORM**

(To be returned to IRB Program Manager with copy of completed protocol form and attachments)

**Human Subjects Committee Use Only** (In absence of IRB-authorized Human Subjects Committee, send protocol to IRB.)

**Recommended Review Status**

Human Subjects Committee can approve as exempt because this research fits in the following category of research as described in section 9.02 of the IRB policies and procedures (**Cite reasons for exempt status.**):

Printed Name and Signature of the HSC Chair  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Expedited Review by a designated member of the IRB because this research fits in the following category of research as described in section 9.03 of the IRB policies and procedures (**Cite reasons for expedited status.**):

Printed Name and Signature of the HSC Chair  
Date

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Requires Full Review by the IRB because this research fits in the following category of research as described in section 9.04 of the IRB policies and procedures (**Cite reasons for full status.**):

Printed Name and Signature of the HSC Chair  
Date

***IRB/RSCP Use Only***

Project Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received RSCP

Sent to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

**Final Status**

Approved as **Exempt** under section 9.02 of the IRB Policies and Procedures (**Cite reasons for exemption.**):

Approved as **Expedited** under Section 9.03 of the IRB Policies and Procedures because (**Cite reasons for expedited status.**)

Printed Name and

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

IRB (for the Committee)

Approved by **Full** review under Section 9.04 of the IRB as meeting requirements of the IRB Policies and Procedures.

Printed Name and

Signature:

Date

IRB Chairperson

## Appendix B1

Mrs. Voss,

I am an Honors student at the University of Arkansas, where I am completing my degree in Elementary Education. Being an Honors student requires that I conduct an action research project in order to enhance my learning experience.

For my project, I wanted to involve creativity and engagement, as it relates to academic achievement. The title of my project is *An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning in One Third Grade Classroom*.

Research supports the inclusion of creativity in the classroom as a necessary skill to build for students growing up in the twenty-first century. It is important for students to develop these creative skills in order to build problem-solving, and create new ideas to improve our world!

To do this within the classroom without subtracting vital time for teaching focus standards, I wanted to include students in lesson planning. Even if I were to give options for activities in order to enhance creativity, that wouldn't be giving students the opportunity to create a new idea in order to invest in their learning and enhance their engagement. I am hoping to have a thirty minute brainstorming session per week, during which students work together to come up with ideas on how the new content should be taught, according to their own preferences. I will then adapt their ideas to the lessons I teach. Following each week of instruction, students will be given 20 minutes to reflect on the teaching and their learning, and will be given the opportunity to build the following lesson plans based on their reflections.

I was hoping I could do this for one standard over the third unit. I would like to use the standard RL.3.2: Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text. This standard is similar to the Unit 2 standard for which students identified main idea and supported it with key details. I am hoping to pose this similarity in order to help them form ideas on how to teach the new standard. In the end, I am hoping to compare results from pre-assessments, anecdotal records, and summative assessments from both Unit 2 and Unit 3 in order to see how helping plan the lessons affected engagement and student achievement. I also hope to take surveys from before and after the project to see how the students feel that the project benefitted their learning, enhanced their engagement, and if it allowed them to use creative thinking.

With yours, Mrs. Showalter's, and parent permission, I would love for our Shaw Stars from my current third grade placement to participate in my fun project!

Thank you,

Ericka Brockunier



## Appendix B2



4337 Grimsley Road  
Springdale, AR 72762  
Phone (479) 750-8898 Fax (479) 333-0101

January 14, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

Ericka Brochunier is an intern at Shaw Elementary for the 2015-16 school year. She presently is requesting permission to involve our students with her Honor's Thesis Project, An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning.

We are very excited about having our students involved with this research. We understand that research supports the inclusion of creativity in the classroom as a necessary skill to build for students growing up in the twenty--first century. It is important for students to develop these creative skills in order to build problem -solving, and create new ideas to improve our world!

Thank you for the opportunities that this will allow our students to grow academically through creative problem solving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia Voss".

Cynthia Voss  
principal, Shaw Elementary

## Appendix C

### **An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning in One Third Grade Classroom**

Principal Researcher: Ericka Brockunier

Hello! My name is Ericka Brockunier, and I am a senior studying Elementary Education at the University of Arkansas. I have been the intern in your child's classroom since October. I hope to become an elementary schoolteacher after graduating in May. For my last year of undergraduate school, I am working on an honors research project. I am seeking your permission to allow your child to be a part of the study.

My project involves studying student success in relation to creative involvement in their learning. In other words, I am wanting to allow students to guide planning upcoming lessons for the upcoming reading unit asking for their input on how they would like it to be taught. I am hoping this opportunity will give them a chance to be creative in a way that benefits their learning. This project includes a thirty minute brainstorming session at the end of each week for planning, as well as a 20 minute reflection period at the conclusion of each week of lessons. This will total 50 minutes a week for about eight weeks.

Research suggests that creativity is a skill, vital to success in future generations. Students need to be able to think in new ways, creating new things and problem-solving using available resources. My aim for this project is to give students time to build on their creative skills in a way that fosters engagement in their learning. With a 20-minute reflection period at the end of each set of lessons, students will be given the opportunity to look at successes in the way each lesson was taught, and possible areas of improvement. Students will be able to target misunderstandings and increase their own engagement by guiding the planning of the lessons. By building on reflections about previous lessons, students will be able to create new ways to learn about the reading unit, and they will be able to use problem-solving skills to make sure they understand the content by how it is taught.

There are no risks to your child participating in this creativity and engagement-based project, but there are anticipated benefits, as they will be building creative thinking, problem solving, and investing in their learning and success. This project aims to allow kids to use their minds creatively, in a way that promotes engagement and supports their success. Data will be collected weekly, as well as before and after the project begins and ends. All information obtained by this study will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by the law. All data presented in this research thesis will remain anonymous.

Students usually express their desires to use their creativity and try new ways of learning. I am excited to hear about new ways of teaching content that I have never considered. Thank you for considering your student to be a part of this project. It is going to be a fun adventure! Attached is the consent form needed to be a part of this project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have! I am excited to get started working on this fun project with your child!

Ericka Brockunier  
Honors Childhood Education Major  
University of Arkansas  
(479) 249-5788  
[edbrocku@uark.edu](mailto:edbrocku@uark.edu)

## Appendix D

### INFORMED CONSENT

***Title: An Investigation of Creativity, Engagement, and Academic Success Using Student-Led Lesson Planning in One Third Grade Classroom***

***Researcher:***

Ericka Brockunier, B.S.E. Student  
Marcia Imbeau, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor  
University of Arkansas  
College of Education and Health Professions  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
123 PEAH  
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201  
(479) 575-3570  
mncunnin@uark.edu  
edbrocku@uark.edu

***Administrator:***

Ro Windwalker, CIP  
IRB Coordinator  
Research Compliance  
University of Arkansas  
109 MLKG Building  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
(479) 575-2208  
irb@uark.edu

*Description:* This study is an honors project designed to build creative skills and enhance engagement within learning content. This study requires that your student actively participate in activities and assessments. Students will be involved in a 30-minute brainstorm session per week, during which they will create and decide on how the week's lessons should be taught. This information will be used to shape the lessons to make them engaging for the student, and benefit absorption of the content. Students will be involved in a 20-minute brainstorm session at the end of each week, during which they will reflect on what they learned, what they need more practice with, and how they would be most engaged in regards to the teaching method. Data will be taken from pre-assessments, post assessments, formative assessments, and surveys given during the brainstorming and reflecting periods. The study will begin with consent, and end by February 26, 2016.

*Risks and Benefits:* There are no risks associated with this study because it involves content that students will be learning anyway. The potential benefits include improving the development of students' skills in creative thinking, increasing engagement, and increasing academic achievement.

*Voluntary Participation:* Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

*Confidentiality:* Confidentiality will be established and maintained using pseudonyms for any names recorded during observations and assessments. All information collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy.

*Right to Withdraw:* If you decide to participate in this program, but at any time and for any reason change your mind, you may withdraw your consent. There would be no negative consequences for this decision.

*Informed Consent:* I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the description of this study.  
(Please print name)

I understand the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, the potential risks and benefits, how confidentiality will be established and maintained, and the option to withdraw.

My signature below indicates that I freely agree to participation in experimental study and that I have received a copy of this agreement from the researcher.

I am allowing my child to participate in this study, and I understand that they are expected to participate fully. I know that I can contact the researcher with any questions that I may have.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## Appendix E



How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

If we could draw it or map it out.

How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

as a story

Appendix F

# What keeps you engaged?

- drawing
- doodling
- modeling
- brain breaks
- iPad
- xbox
- drawing what I'm learning
- subjects you enjoy
- Kid president
- Videos
- books (kittens/puppies)
- moment of silence
- Science
- experimenting
- math
- scootpad
- be creative
- typing

# What makes you feel creative?

- Problem Solving
- colorful
- building something new
- compliments
- independent project
- improvements
- painting
- game (Minecraft)
- doing something w/ new learning
- Creating something w/ friends
- come up w/ jokes

Appendix G1



Survey 1

C

What is main idea?

The whole idea of the story.

Why are key details important?

So they <sup>be there to</sup> can support the main idea.

Did you enjoy learning about main idea?

1 (2) 3 4 5

Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about main idea?

1 2 (3) 4 5

Were the lessons for main idea interesting for you?

1 (2) 3 4 5

Do you enjoy using your creative skills?

1 2 3 (4) 5

Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?

1 2 (3) 4 5



Appendix G2

Survey 1

What is main idea?

the main thing

Why are key details important?

to explain the main idea

Did you enjoy learning about main idea?

① 2 3 4 5

Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when learned about main idea?

1 ② 3 4 5

Were the lessons for main idea interesting for you?

① 2 3 4 5

Do you enjoy using your creative skills?

1 2 3 4 ⑤

Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school or

① ② 3 4 5

## Appendix H LESSON PLAN

Ericka Brockunier  
Reading- Central Message and Key Details

February 22, 2016  
3rd Grade

### Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

### Learning Goals:

#### Students will...

<p><b>Understand</b> that the central message of a text involves identifying what the author's purpose for writing was, and that key details support the assertion of the central message.</p>
--

<p><b>Know</b> what "central message" means, what key details are, and why they are important.</p>
--

<p><b>Be able to</b> identify the central message, and support it with key details.</p>
---

### Materials:

*Colors of the Wind* song lyrics, printed, class set  
Pencils/highlighters  
*Colors of the Wind* available to play music  
Central message and key details template  
Daily survey- class set

### Procedures:

**Previous Learning:** Student has received explicit instruction regarding main idea and key details. Student has also received instruction in identifying a myth, folktale, and fable. Student has had some exposure to central message, however it has not been an in depth exploration or discussion.

**Schema Activation:** Tell students they will be listening to a song to determine its meaning. Ask students if they have ever listened to the song on the radio, and been able to identify what the singer is singing about, and maybe why the singer chose to sing that song.

1. After brief discussion involving song artists and their purpose for writing, tell students they will listen to a song, and try to determine the purpose for the composition of this song. Tell them it is one they should know and be familiar with, already.

2. Play the song aloud, and allow students to sit, and listen to the song. This will allow them time to focus on how it sounds overall.
3. Give students time to collaborate after the song, to discuss what they think the song was about, and what the writer's purpose might be. Monitor discussions and look for misconceptions.
4. Give students the lyrics, and give them time to read over them. Play the song again, and allow students to read along on their lyric sheets.
5. Allow students to discuss amongst their table partners about the purpose for the song, its main meaning, and site three possible examples within the text that support their conjectures.
6. After discussion time, allow students to share out, as a whole group. Use this time to address any misconceptions.
7. Then, allow students to work independently to complete the central message and key details template. Use these as an assessment for basic understanding.
8. When students have finished their templates, give them the daily survey.
9. Make sure to explain each piece- creativity, engagement, and understanding. Review how creativity relates to problem-solving and using knowledge to improve things. Review how engagement represents how interested they were in the activity, or how motivated to learn they were during the activity. Explain that the rating scale is 1-5, 1 being not at all, 3 being sometimes, and 5 being absolutely.
10. Give students time to complete the survey, then allow them to converse with table groups about the suggestions for the next lesson. Allow students to share out to the class, then give them time to make their own decided suggestion on the template, and turn it in. Explain to students that their suggestions will be used to shape the next lesson, because they are the ones planning the upcoming lessons!

## **Appendix I**

E

Central Message: Nature is more than money

Key Details:

- You think you own whatever land you land on
- How can there be so much you don't know
- And you have been so many places

D

Central Message: Be free and do not be controlled by money

Key Details:

- She sings about being free
- She wants people to stop thinking nature is nothing



How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

If we could draw it or map it out.

How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

do a story

**Standard:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

**Learning Goals:**

**Students will...**

<p><b>Understand</b> that the central message of a text involves identifying what the author's purpose for writing was, and that key details support the assertion of the central message.</p>
--

<p><b>Know</b> what "central message" means, what key details are, and why they are important.</p>
--

<p><b>Be able to</b> identify the central message, and support it with key details.</p>
---

**Materials:**

*Arachne and Athena* myth, teacher copy

"Talking stick"

Central message template with drawing area for key details

Pencils and crayons

Daily Survey- class set

**Procedures:**

**Previous Learning:** Student has received explicit instruction regarding main idea and key details. Student has also received instruction in identifying a myth, folktale, and fable. Student has had some explicit instruction of central message, and one experience of applying their knowledge.

**Schema Activation:** Tell students they will be participating in a "pass the stick" game while reading a myth. Ask students if they remember what a myth is. Discuss components of a myth. Ask students if they can remember any myths that they have read.

1. After brief discussion involving myths, ask students if they remember what the central message is. \*\*The author's purpose for writing.
2. Tell students they will listen to a story (myth), and try to determine the purpose for the composition of this story.
3. Have students get into a circle on the floor, and give a student the "talking stick". Tell students before beginning that if they hear the name "Arachne", the stick-holder must

pass the stick to their left, and if they hear the name “Athena”, the stick-holder must pass the stick to their right. This will allow student to focus on the different characters, and hopefully assist them in differentiating between the characters.

4. Begin reading the story, allowing students to pass the stick each time a name is read.
5. After reading the story, have students share out into the circle what happened in the story.
6. Ask students what central message is **\*\*author’s purpose**. Ask students what they think the author’s purpose for writing this story might be. Have students talk with their elbow partners. If more explanation is needed, ask students for what lesson the author might be wanting to teach the reader, through the story.
7. Have students return to their desks to complete the template, independently. Allow students time to write the central message, and draw the key details. Drawing the key details will also support the students who usually struggle choosing key details to share, because drawing them will force them to focus on the three main events, which usually portray the author’s purpose.
8. After giving students time to work, allow them to share their drawings with their table groups.
1. When students have finished their templates, and had a chance to discuss, give them the daily survey.
2. Make sure to explain each piece- creativity, engagement, and understanding. Review how creativity relates to problem-solving and using knowledge to improve things. Review how engagement represents how interested they were in the activity, or how motivated to learn they were during the activity. Explain that the rating scale is 1-5, 1 being not at all, 3 being sometimes, and 5 being absolutely.
3. Give students time to complete the survey, then allow them to converse with table groups about the suggestions for the next lesson. Allow students to share out to the class, then give them time to make their own decided suggestion on the template, and turn it in. Explain to students that their suggestions will be used to shape the next lesson, because they are the ones planning the upcoming lessons!

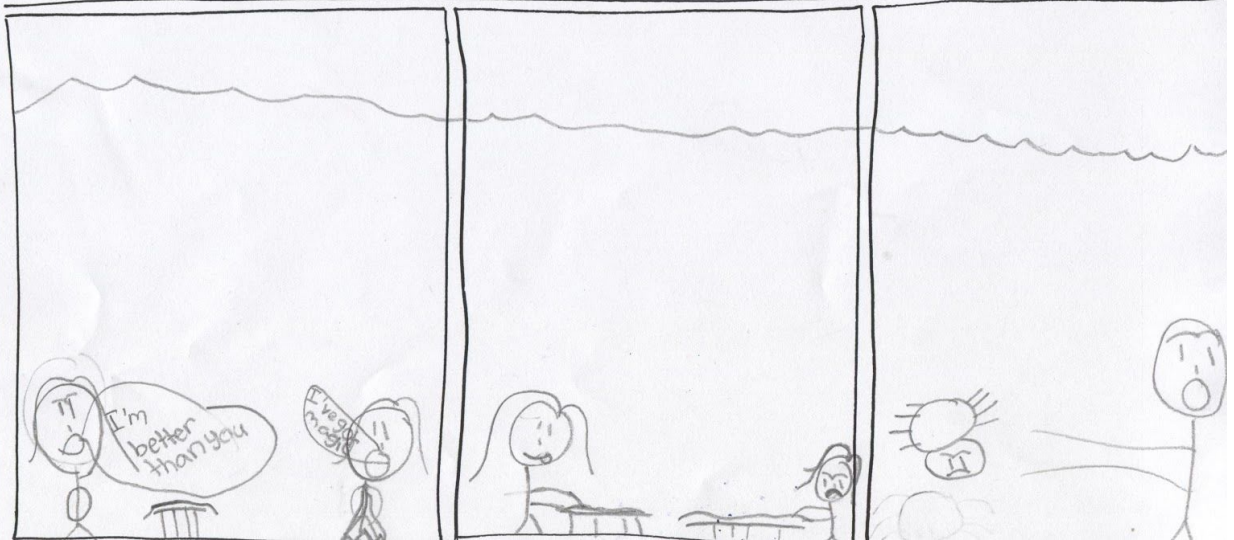
Appendix L



Title: Arachne and Athena

Central Message:

Respect other people.





## Appendix M

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

Get into Partners and make a poster or something like that.

How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

nd key details?

we could do a play or craft.

## Appendix N LESSON PLAN

Ericka Brockunier  
Reading- Central Message and Key Details

February 24-26, 2016  
3rd Grade

### Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

### Learning Goals:

#### Students will...

<p><b>Understand</b> that the central message of a text involves identifying what the author's purpose for writing was, and that key details support the assertion of the central message.</p>
--

<p><b>Know</b> what "central message" means, what key details are, and why they are important.</p>
--

<p><b>Be able to</b> identify the central message, and support it with key details.</p>
---

### Materials:

*The Magic Fish* fable

Pencils/markers/crayons

Construction paper (large pieces)- enough for each partnership

Daily survey- class set

### Procedures:

**Previous Learning:** Student has received explicit instruction regarding main idea and key details. Student has also received instruction in identifying a myth, folktale, and fable. Student has had exposure to central message through two lessons for which they had to extract the central message and key details from both sources. The majority of students have grasped how to do this.

**Schema Activation:** Tell students they will be listening to another story to determine its meaning. However, they will be able to create a "movie-style" poster about it, and perform a skit for the class! Ask students if they have ever seen a movie poster. Discuss what it looked like, and the components it had.

1. After brief discussion involving movie posters, have students get focused by having them sit on the carpet. Let them know that they need to be looking for the central message- the author's main purpose- while it is being read.
2. Read the story aloud to students. Allow them to share out about the events in the story, and possible purposes for the author to write the work.
3. Introduce the project to students: they must complete a "movie-style" preview poster that includes the central message of the story, as well as perform a skit that exemplifies the main events, or key details that support the central message. They will be given the rest of the time to practice, and they will be expected to rehearse and perform the following day.
4. Ensure that the criteria are posted on the board, and group students in partnerships, according to academic ability and their abilities to collaborate with each other. Once students are in groups, allow them to complete their posters and design a skit that successfully explains the key details and central message.
5. After time to complete both, remind students to rehearse a few times before presenting.
6. Before the end of this lesson, pass out the daily surveys and remind students how they should be completed. Allow them time to complete each rating, thoughtfully.
7. The following day, open the lesson by reminding students of the presentation criteria. Allow them to rehearse for ten minutes.
8. Have students sit on the floor with their partners, and hold their skit posters. Ask students for volunteers to go first. When presentations begin, take notes for criteria, evidence of understanding, and any additional notes about the performances.
9. After each performance, allow the audience to ask questions. Tell the audience that they need to keep the presenters accountable for all parts of the presentation, and to ask if they accidentally leave out a critical piece.
10. The following day, allow some time for discussion about the week's events involving creativity, engagement, and understanding. Allow students to share out their noticings.
11. Hand out the final assessment, and allow students plenty of time to answer each question, thoughtfully.

## **Appendix O ANECDOTAL RECORDS**

Partnership	Central Message	3 Key Details	Additional notes
G&M	✓	✓	Song about being thankful for what you have
H&J	✓	✓	too many details - intervene on <u>main events</u> in a story
I & W	✓	✓	flopping fish skit - asking questions/advice
E & Q	<del>#</del> ✓	✓	forgot to mention cm - added it after poster
D & R	✓	✓	Robot video game poster w/ selfish creepers analogy
K & X	✓	✓	lots of laughing - understood content but had difficulties articulating it
A & N	✓	✓ *	had to go back and explain w/ facilitation - intervene to make certain they get it
C & V	✓	✓	C = solid V = shaky - make sure she understands CM
L & P	✓	<del>#</del> ✓	chair skit - on the maintaintop
S & T	✓	✓	greedy - grocery store analogy
F & U	✓	✓	got everything - need to challenge F
B & O	✓	✓	a lot of laughing but they articulated everything accurately.

Appendix P

How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5



How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

Do the same thing  
but with more time to do it

How engaged were you for this lesson?

1      2      3      4      5



How creative did you feel during the lesson?

1      2      3      4      5

How well do you think you understand central message and key details?

1      2      3      4      5

What do you think we could do for the next lesson so that you are engaged and you can better understand central message and key details?

let us pick our  
partners

W

Survey 2

What is central message?

the central message is the moral  
of the story.

Why are key details important?

to support the moral

u

Survey 2

What is central message?

central message is the thing  
you learn

Why are key details important?

to prove that that is  
the moral

Did you enjoy learning about central message?

ce

1 2 3 4 5

Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about central message?

1 2 3 4 5

Were the lessons for central message interesting for you?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you enjoy using your creative skills?

1 2 3 4 5

Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?

1 2 3 4 5

Did you enjoy learning about central message?

1 2 3 4  5

Did you feel like you were able to use your creative skills when we learned about central message?

1 2 3 4  5

Were the lessons for central message interesting for you?

1 2 3 4  5

Do you enjoy using your creative skills?

1 2 3 4  5

Do you feel like you get to use your creative skills at school often?

1 2 3  4  5