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Providing Voice and Choice in the Classroom: The Effect of Choice Boards on Student Motivation and Attitudes

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PROVIDING VOICE AND CHOICE IN THE CLASSROOM: THE EFFECT OF CHOICE BOARDS ON STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES

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DEDICATION

This body of work is dedicated to my family and dear friends who encouraged me throughout this adventure. Completing this journey was only possible as you all walked this path by my side, faithfully uplifting me to continue this undertaking even when life's challenges tried to divert me. Your love and enduring support will always be remembered.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research was to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies influenced sixth-grade students to engage in the classroom. Engagement in the classroom is necessary for students to meet educational goals. To engage in learning, students need intrinsic motivation to encourage them to strive to meet their potential. Research in personalized learning shows students who are provided opportunities for "voice and choice" show higher signs of achievement in meeting their goals (Pane et al., 2017). This action research study was guided by two research questions that explored the effect of personalized learning in the social studies classroom. The first question addressed in what ways and to what degree personalized learning would affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies. Additionally, the second research question investigated what ways and to what degree personalized learning impacted students' attitudes toward learning social studies.

This action research study explored the learner-demonstrated principle with teacher-created choice boards aligned to the social studies standards. Participants in this study were 17 sixth grade students in a social studies class at a suburban public middle school. The intervention, teacher-created choice boards was a form of personalized learning used to motivate student engagement and attitudes towards learning social studies. Quantitative data collected included findings from pre- and post- surveys using the Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary as well as Instructional Materials

Motivation Survey. Qualitative data was collected from teacher-created exit tickets and focus group interview responses. Convergent parallel mixed methods were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data separately and then integrate the results for the comprehensive findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mertler, 2017). The comprehensive findings suggested using personalized learning with sixth grade students can increase participants' motivation to engage and improve attitudes towards learning social studies. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

National Context

Historically, the benefits and deficits of education have been major topics in politics, news outlets, and general public conversation. With the recent COVID-19 crisis, public education has been thrust into the limelight as politicians, parents, and teachers disagree about the amount of loss students have encountered due to the hiatus from school that began in March 2020 when nearly all schools across the nation closed their doors due to the pandemic. In their 2020 study, Harris et al. found schools responded to the abrupt closure with personalization and engagement in instruction and communication with students as well as breadth of services and equitable access. During the spring, teachers guaranteed no students would falter as a result of the prolonged time away from school. Asynchronous lessons were delivered remotely, and packets were disseminated to those without technology access only to find many students became disengaged in learning during the extended intermission. All these efforts did not produce the same quality of education found in classrooms pre-COVID (Dorn et al., 2020). With 55 million students out of school, public educators pondered how to implement teaching methods in the fall, fearing the loss of instruction would hinder students returning to face-to-face, hybrid, and virtual classes (Kuhfeld, Soland, et al., 2020). Would educational losses be found when school reopened in the fall?

Towards late summer, then President Trump demanded schools reopen in the fall to stabilize the economy, and psychological experts worried parents about the socio-emotional problems children would face from the closures. Yet educators fixated on ways they might ensure children would receive an appropriate education when faced with the prospects of returning to remote instruction. Teachers became overburdened learning new technology to differentiate instruction and support students who might be academically behind as the prospect of online learning in the fall became more than a premise, a stark reality. Seeing how brick-and-mortar schools were completely disrupted by COVID-19 in the spring, parents found online learning more appealing (Paul & Wolf, 2020). As of October 2020, the Gates Foundation reported nationally that 45.5% of kindergarten to twelfth grade children were attending all remote classes.

Though parents found online learning more advantageous than face-to-face instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic, a growing number of students viewed online learning as a release from the responsibilities of classroom instruction. The immediate closure of schools left teachers little means of holding students accountable for engaging in the curriculum. Accountability was neglected and students' attitudes toward learning changed, leading them to become disengaged. At the start of Fall 2020, when online learning grew by exponential rates, the problems arose because students were not ready for synchronous online learning nor motivated to be engaged as they were not held accountable for asynchronous learning at the end of the previous school year. In October 2020, The South Carolina State Department of Education announced the creation of ENGAGE South Carolina, an attendance recovery program aimed at helping to re-engage K-12 students who became fully or partially disengaged from their education due to the

COVID-19 pandemic (Mathis, 2020). This is a student outreach and coaching program to support all public schools at no cost. To ensure learning continuity, this program provides support for students struggling to stay engaged despite changes in learning environments.

Local Context

Wilson Middle School (WMS) is a large, public school in a small, suburban school district in South Carolina. Our school district is composed of 25 schools: fifteen are elementary schools, six are middle schools, three are high schools, and one is an alternative school. We are one of the largest middle schools in our district with a population of approximately 1200 students and 69 classroom teachers. Many were online students during the 2020-2021 schoolyear with totally remote education. For the 2021-2022 schoolyear, each grade level contains one online class of approximately 30 students meeting synchronously six and one-half hours daily. We are a Title I school with a free and reduced lunch population of 47%, which allows us to receive additional federal funds for student achievement, parent involvement, and professional development.

During the 2020-2021 schoolyear, our district, facing overcrowding due to regulations for social distancing, created a virtual academy in each of its 25 schools to allow teachers to remain in their home schools. As the former Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) at Barker Elementary School (BES), I accepted the fifth-grade virtual academy teacher position for BES in August 2020. BES does not have a transient population, so most students completed their entire elementary education at our school. As such, I taught elementary students technology from kindergarten through Spring 2021, so I understood the basic competencies of elementary students with respect to technology in the classroom.

As a result of the COVID-19 Spring 2020 shutdown, our district began providing required technology instruction on hybrid and online learning for teachers and staff three days per week throughout the summer. At the beginning of the 2020 -2021 school year, all third through twelfth grade students were issued Dell laptops to assist with prospective e-learning in the fall. Little technology training was provided to students with the exception of the acceptable use and care of the device information. Faced with teaching in an online classroom after an eight-year hiatus from the face-to-face classroom, I became the virtual fifth-grade social studies, science, and math teacher to 66 children aged ten to eleven years old from two separate schools. As the former ITS, I had an ongoing relationship with most of my BES students. However, my students from my other elementary school were unfamiliar to me as were their technology skills. Student disengagement became a reality with synchronous learning.

In Fall 2021, I transferred from elementary to middle school to teach social studies in a sixth-grade face-to-face classroom setting. Most of these students have spent the last two years of their education in transit between face-to-face instruction and online learning. Some students are returning to the classroom after 18 months of online learning while others were home-schooled during the pandemic. The learning curve for all these students is steep as there have been many disruptions in their educations since the pandemic began. As a result, motivation and attitudes towards learning have waned as documented by the amount of discipline referrals and students' refusals to submit assignments in a timely manner. Apathy in focusing on learning and completing assignments is seen across grade levels as retention was not an option due to the pandemic.

Conversations with fellow teachers illustrated the problems with student engagement are evident in the entire sixth grade. Concerned the fall would be a repetition of the previous year's learning challenges, we as teachers brainstormed interventions to be incorporated in our instruction that would promote student engagement. During the 2020 emergency learning situation, students were not held accountable for attending online classrooms to continue learning, therefore, students were not engaged. In the 2020-2021 schoolyear, many parents elected to have their children attend online school in lieu of face-to-face instruction. With students transitioning to face-to-face instruction, student engagement is essential for learning to be successful. Luo et al. (2018) found that the level of engagement affects student performance in learning environments.

In August 2021, I was provided the opportunity to relocate to Wilson Middle School (WMS) as a sixth-grade social studies teacher due to low student numbers in the fifth grade at BES. Moving to middle school presented me the opportunity to follow fifth-grade students to the middle level with the intent of providing engaging material in social studies. The purpose of my action research will be to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies will influence sixth-grade students to engage in the classroom.

Statement of Problem

Sixth grade students at WMS are required to maintain a synchronous six and one half-hour school schedule daily. By the end of the day, students are disengaged in the social studies curriculum, as their school days are extended compared to the previous year. Many students cite boredom with daily attendance which leads to a lack of participation in the social studies classroom. Additionally, a growing number of students

readily attend class yet, they are not participating in class. Personalized learning in social studies is a promising strategy to affect students' motivation to engage in the social studies classroom at WMS.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this action research was to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies influenced sixth-grade students to engage in the classroom.

Research Questions

The following research questions addressed the problem in this action research:

1. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?

2. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?

Researcher Subjectivities and Positionality

As a National Board Certified teacher with 25 years of K-8 experience, I am pursuing a degree in educational technology as my next personal and professional goal. Being reared in a small town, I saw technology slowly change black and white televisions to color, albums to eight tracks, then my slide rule to a TI-30 calculator. No one was available to teach me to use technology, so I taught myself. At my local college, computer languages reigned with a mainframe housed in a room in the science building. Always yearning to know more, I became tech-savvy and open-minded to problem-solving with Fortran and COBOL computer languages.

Still a risk-taker, my personal skills gained while discovering technology have been instrumental in the success I have had in my professional life, specifically in my current position as a sixth-grade teacher. I teach sixth-grade social studies to 95 students at WMS. Leading technology for instruction, my former middle school classroom at Farrell Middle School was a model for district teachers. I wrote grants for laptops and a projector in my classroom before presentation boards were available. When laptops and presentation boards were introduced district-wide, I became an adjunct for a local college, teaching technology integration graduate classes to area educators. As an innovator in the field, I believe educational technology mobilizes the classroom spirit, as it opens windows to the world and beyond for teachers and students.

My worldview is constructivism, as I believe learners gain new knowledge by actively constructing new knowledge using prior knowledge as a foundation. My aim for this action research is to understand what participants need to thrive in the social studies classroom while implementing educational technology. I am a positive person, choosing to see things as relative to what is occurring at the time, with the probability that all will work out in the end (Lee, 2012). As such, my view is more specifically social constructivist since I will conduct research in my workplace participating with my fellow teachers to promote engagement among all sixth-grade students in the social studies curriculum through the implementation of choice boards as a personalized learning intervention.

My positionality was to begin as an insider with other insiders since I would be contributing to improved practice and instruction in social studies classrooms within my school (Herr & Anderson, 2005). However, I negotiated my positionality as the space

between insider-outsider for my action research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). My outsider relationship as a teacher may have been perceived as an issue; however, as an insider I have been teaching with these students for years in one aspect or another. In studying the integration of choice boards, ethics was subjective from the power relationships to the personal bonds I had with my students (Zeni, 1998). As teacher and students, we mutually respected each other in their educational journey. As a constructivist, one possible bias was that I see the best in every situation no matter how dire. To me, understanding *why* is more important to creating change than demanding change for change itself. For my action research, I taught my sixth-grade students to use choice boards in a manner that was motivating and engaged them in their studies.

As the relationship among my research study, my students, and me was intertwined with their educations, my subjectivity empowered me to self-monitor and reflect to remain steadfast and not soften as I truly wanted my students to succeed (Peshkin,1988). My constructivist values and beliefs propelled me to understand the why, find solutions, and work towards a change with personalized learning choices for every student. My goal was not world change, but school change beginning with my sixth-grade students and perhaps spreading district-wide in the near future.

Definition of Terms

Personalized Learning

For this action research project, personalized learning was defined according to the South Carolina Department of Education's (SDE) Framework for Personalized Learning as:

> Personalized learning is an educational framework that supports all students as they seek to achieve the knowledge, skills, and characteristics identified in the

> Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. By fostering student ownership of learning, developing learner profiles and learning pathways and adopting flexible learning environments, each student's education experience is tailored to meet his or her unique strengths, needs, and goals. (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020).

Engagement

A constant issue in face-to-face education is student engagement in the classroom; student engagement is a joint effort between parents, teachers, and students. The concept of engagement encompasses a student's ability to participate behaviorally, cognitively, emotionally, and motivationally in the learning process (Bandura, 1993; Bandura, 2006; Hew et al., 2018; Ifenthaler et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2005). In their 2004 study, Fredricks et al. concluded student engagement may appear as attending classes, participating in questioning, and showing enthusiasm towards classes and teachers.

Motivation

Student motivation is multi-faceted. "Motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness and volition" (Lai, 2017, p. 2). Educators and researchers alike view motivation as a pivotal point in the learning scenario, as it is a factor in a student's performance (Curtis & Werth, 2015; Huang et al., 2004: Keller, 2016).

Attitude

Attitude was defined as a way of thinking that is reflected in a student's behavior and actions. Improving attitude changes in children promotes confidence, making them

critical to learning and engagement in the online and face-to-face learning environments (Balentyne & Varga, 2017; Kamrath & Brooker, 2017; Long & Szabo, 2016).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When COVID-19 closed South Carolina schools in March 2020, our state superintendent publicly mandated students would not be held accountable for any new learning during the crisis. Nationwide, educators voiced their concerns about student engagement during online learning (Chambers et al., 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Kuhfeld, Soland, et al., 2020; Sahni et al., 2021). The purpose of my action research was to explore how incorporating personalized learning in social studies will influence sixth-grade students to engage in the social studies classroom. This research is guided by two research questions that investigate (a) in what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies and (b) in what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies.

Literature Review Methodology

In reviewing current peer-reviewed literature, Boolean search methods were employed to delve into the theme of student engagement in the learning environment with the specific variables: student engagement, motivation, and attitudes in concurrence with personalized learning. University of South Carolina Databases including ERIC, ProQuest, and EBSCO, as well as the AECT member database, were used to search for peer-reviewed sources for this literature review. Though initial searches included key

words and phrases, such as personalized learning, engagement, and motivation, in the K-12 setting within the past ten years, the more recent searches are limited to a five-year span and also address accountability and relationships as factors determining success in the classroom setting. Authors of dissertations, articles, and books note that personalized learning options that provide students with voice and choice in their learning opportunities promote higher levels of motivation and engagement. As the literature search expanded, data instruments, tools, and surveys addressing motivation and engagement were included. Though the review of literature is continuing, the results of the literature search thus far highlight several topics for discussion relevant to the purpose of discovering the effect of a personalized learning tool on student engagement in the classroom.

Initially, this literature review affords an overview of the learning environment and personalized learning which will be provided with teacher-created choice boards aligned to the sixth-grade South Carolina Social Studies standards. Subsequently, the literature review branches to weave personalized learning, engagement, motivation, and attitudes together as variables in the broader discussion. This literature review is specifically organized with four major headings: (a) Personalized Learning, (b) Engagement, (c) Motivation, and (d) Attitude.

Theoretical Background

Framing this action research study on the effects of a personalized learning intervention on student engagement in a sixth-grade social studies classroom is Keller's motivation, volition, and performance theory (MVP) using the ARCS- MVP model as the instructional design model (Keller, 1987; Keller, 2008a). The definitive focus of the

MVP theory is on performance, and the key goal is to integrate motivational and volitional influences with learning processes. The MVP model theory explains the interconnectivity of students' attention, relevance, and confidence to direct students' efforts to reach their goals. It also illustrates how performance is changed by external factors such as relationships with teachers, instruction, and resources to determine the outcomes leading to satisfaction. The MVP model is a cyclical model as the satisfaction attained influences students' intrinsic motivation. As an external input, personalized learning is the manner in which educators differentiate the pace and approach to learning to accommodate individual students' needs to reach their potential when learning curriculum standards (Beghetto, 2019; DeArmond & Maas, 2018; Lokey-Vega & Stephens, 2019; South Carolina Department of Education, 2020; US Department of Education, 2017). Teachers and students work together to empower students with voice and choice in respect to their learning progression, thus creating a student-centered pedagogy.

Historically, student-centered pedagogies were popularized with the progressive education movement in the early 1900s with scholars like Dewey (1938) and Piaget (1948). Subsequently, Bloom (1968) explicated his theory that any student can learn any academic outcome if they are provided sufficient time and quality instruction. Personalized learning is also validated by the constructivist approaches to education in which the learner has an active role in the learning process. Glaser (1984) proposed a now well-accepted fact that students learn in different ways and that their personal prior knowledge is a highly influential factor in the learning process.

Keller's ARCS- MVP model and theory address processing, cognitive, and emotional processes and their relation to motivation, learning, and performance (Keller, 2008a; Keller, 2016; Li & Keller, 2018).

Personalized Learning

Various definitions of personalized learning blur the educational realm for teachers and students in the classroom. According to the 2017 National Education Technology Plan, personalized learning is a means to "afford historically disadvantaged students greater equity" and it includes "instruction in which the pace of learning and the instructional approach are optimized for the needs of each learner" (US Department of Education, 2017, p. 9). According to the South Carolina Framework for Personalized Learning, "personalized learning is an educational framework that supports all students as they seek to achieve the knowledge, skills, and characteristics identified in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate" (South Carolina Department of Education, 2020). The SCDE targets four areas to provide personalization in a learner-centered approach: student ownership, learner profiles, learning pathways, and flexible learning environments.

Numerous definitions include problem-based learning, project-based learning, and inquiry-based learning with scaffolding for performance, methodology, and motivation focusing on pacing instruction and assessment to the individual learner's needs. For the purpose of this action research study, personalized learning is the manner in which educators differentiate the pace and approach to learning to accommodate individual students' needs for students to be able to reach their potential when learning curriculum

standards (Beghetto, 2019; DeArmond & Maas, 2018; Lokey-Vega & Stephens, 2019; South Carolina Department of Education, 2020; US Department of Education, 2017).

As with the varying definitions, schools and classrooms differ in respect to forms of personalized student learning. Personalized learning can entail what a student chooses to learn, providing learners individualized choices and opportunities in various topics, methods, products, and environments (Beghetto, 2019; Hromalik & Koszalka, 2018; Lokey-Vega & Stephens, 2019; Prain et al., 2018). Many personalized learning reforms request that school leaders modify learning for individual students with strategies to include creating learning paths and tailoring instruction to specific learning needs, preferences, and interests, which presents significant challenges for teachers (DeArmond & Maas, 2018; Petersen & Gundersen, 2019). Specific personalized learning tools and strategies fit into six categories: relationships, positive culture, learner-centered experiences, authentic experiences, collaboration, and the self-regulation of learning. An and Mindrila (2020) documented "lack of time, lack of technology, lack of knowledge of learner-centered instruction, and assessments were major barriers" (p. 133) in supporting learner-centered instruction.

Student learning can be personalized using several venues: (a) differentiated content, (b) assessments, (c) active forms of learning, and (d) direct academic instruction. Personalized learning strategies allows teachers to tailor instruction to individual student needs to be more successful and engaged in learning (Dede, et al., 2017; Olofson et al., 2018; Ramachandran et al., 2019). Through defining personalized learning, a significant guideline is to provide children a voice and choice, permitting students an active role in determining the direction their learning will take, as well as the method by which they

will demonstrate mastery of their goals (Bray & McClaskey, 2015; DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh, 2019; DeMink-Carthew et al., 2017).

Engagement

A constant issue in face-to-face education is student engagement in the classroom; the concept of engagement encompasses a student's ability to participate behaviorally, cognitively, emotionally, and motivationally in the learning process (Hew et al., 2018; Ifenthaler et al., 2018; Muir et al., 2019). Two specific models of engagement arose during my research which bear various connotations: the ACE (Adaptability, Connection, and Equity) and OLSit Frameworks. The ACE Framework measures a student's ability in three realms: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. The OLSit Framework promotes enhancing engagement through Own it, Learn it, and Share it, more of a project-based learning approach than a personalized learning environment (Borup et al., 2020; Lee & Hannafin, 2016). Each framework focuses on students' personal attributes, engagement, and production as well as their abilities to interact, ask questions, and make new connections (Hickey et al., 2020; Purarjomandlangrudi & Chen, 2020). Keller's MVP model theory includes engagement as part of the motivation and information processing interface, leading to learning and performance (Keller, 2008a; Keller, 2017).

Engagement and Personalized Learning

Personalized learning is an effective way to increase engagement in students in the learning environment. Modern day educational reformers focus on student engagement in their learning models by referencing it as the most important link to achievement (Dewan et al., 2019; Gedera, 2015; Han & Ellis, 2020). Personalized learning is touted as a key to improving student curricular engagement and academic

attainment. Through personalized learning, students gain autonomy and the power to feel they are determining their own learning paths (Glaser, 1984; Moltudal et al., 2020; Peterson & Gundersen, 2019). Both students and teachers require more freedom and flexibility to improve engagement for learning, allowing for the perpetual growth of personalized learning (Ferlazzo, 2017; McLester, 2012; Morris, 2020; Prain et al., 2013). Personalized learning choices provide students voice and choice, the ability to decide what and when to engage and interact with digital learning materials (Ifenthaler et al., 2018).

Recent studies show satisfaction in the environment leads to active participation and engagement. Martin and Bolliger (2018) found strategies with positive learner experiences, such as active learning opportunities, collaborative group work, student presentations and discussions, sharing resources actively, creating course assignments with hands-on components, and integrating case studies and reflections, fostered increased engagement. Likewise, Orcid et al. (2019) concluded that student satisfaction with learning resources led to active participation, a major factor in achievement. Bai (2020) researched the use of mobile technology in a K-12 setting, finding that it provided an individualized learning experience that allowed students access to learning resources based on their own needs, promoting engagement in the classroom. Han and Ellis (2020) found students were more engaged cognitively when provided choices through personalized learning. Learners reported positive perceptions of the learning environment and deeper understanding when engaged through personalized learning. Wright et al. (2016) reported high levels of student engagement when they used web-based video in a

study to create an active learning classroom with high quality online educational materials to provide the personalized learning experience.

Motivation

In the literature, motivation is addressed from several viewpoints. “Motivation refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness and volition” (Lai, 2017, p. 2). Educators view motivation as a pivotal point in the learning scenario. Young children are excited to begin their learning journey when they reach kindergarten age, but the joy gradually fades as students learn the nuances of school (Kaya, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2008; Valeski & Stipek, 2001). Engaging the intrinsically motivated child in learning is far easier than doing the same for the extrinsically motivated student because the former has an inner desire to achieve for the joy of success while the latter expects an incentive or positive outcome from a parent or teacher (Higasi, et al. 2017; Kirmizigül, 2021; Sansone et al., 2011).

Motivational models such as Keller’s Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS) Model provide explanations of behavior and learning with relation to attention while creating guidelines for customizing learning experiences in the online and face-to-face classrooms (Avcı, 2020; Bovermann et al., 2018; Keller, 2016; Park & Lim, 2020; Thornton, 2017). In this action research project, Keller’s ARCS model was the focus as it is relevant to both engagement and motivation. In 1979, Keller developed his model of learner motivation which has been evolving through the past 35 years (Keller, 1987a; Keller, 2016). The updated 2017 ARC-MVP model is valid for both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated students, though the former need little motivation to actively engage in the learning process. The original ARCS model components were

attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Table 2.1 displays the newer components of the ARCS-MVP model.

Table 2.1 *Keller's ARCS-MVP Model*

Categories	Components
Attention	Capture interest
	Stimulate inquiry
	Maintain interest
Relevance	Relate to goals
	Match interests
	Tie to experiences
Confidence	Success expectations
	Success opportunities
	Personal responsibility
Satisfaction	Intrinsic satisfaction
	Rewarding outcomes
	Fair treatment
Volition	Self-regulation
	Metacognition
	Grit
Performance	Overarching outcome that links all elements of the motivation model

Though Keller has revised this model twice from ARCS to ARCS-V (2007) and MVP (2008) his core belief remains that metacognition, desire, and persistence are integral parts of motivation. The MVP model evolved to include processing, cognitive, and emotional processes and their relation to motivation, learning, and performance (Keller, 2008a; Li & Keller, 2018).

In recent studies, motivation was found to be one of the important factors influencing discussion performance and course satisfaction (Gómez-Rey et al., 2016; Wei & Chou, 2020). Hromalik and Koszalka's findings (2018) offered evidence that providing scaffolding was helpful to language learners by monitoring performance, methods of learning, use of time, and motivation.

Considerations should be made for motivational factors when addressing components for differentiation of instruction and scaffolding to help struggling students with skills and behavior (Bovermann et al., 2018; Kahn et al., 2017; Kazakoff et al., 2018; Yeh & Chu, 2018). Motivational support increases learning motivation, thus triggering interest and motivating learners to actively regulate their own learning (Li et al., 2020; Park & Lim, 2020; Renninger & Bachrach, 2015; Sansone et al., 2011).

Motivation and Engagement

Though motivation is a crucial factor in students' engagement, few researchers link motivation and engagement in elementary and middle schools; student engagement is often determined by the attentiveness students have in their learning (Bonk & Lee, 2017; Bovermann & Bastiaens, 2020; Lin et al., 2017). In a recent study, Martin and Bolliger (2018) concluded that educators target motivational resources as major players in engaging students though the liabilities were important to students. Danka (2020) found motivation is a central issue, concluding learner autonomy fueled by extrinsic motivation must drive student learning. Ryan and Deci (2000a) reported different types of motivation lead to engagement. Positive emotions and attending to students' motivational needs to promote engagement have been cited as intrinsic reasons for student engagement in the learning environment. Alternately, students requiring more extrinsic motivation were not provided choices that personalized learning affords with tools stimulating their learning processes with attention and interest (Caruth, 2018; Cho, 2019; Corpus et al., 2016; Ha & Im, 2020; Olivier, et al., 2019; Skinner et al., 2016). Personalized learning provides learners self-directed paths, increasing students' independence since engagement impacts their learning results, with success depending on

students motivated by interest to be engaged in the learning process (Baranova et al., 2019; Inayat & Ali, 2020; Varier et al., 2017).

Recent studies document that learner autonomy, competence, and relatedness are important factors in intrinsically motivating students. Bovermann and Bastiaens (2020) concluded student motivation is one of the most important indicators for success in the learning environment. Tan et al. (2017) found strong links between greater learner self-awareness and reflection as precursors of enhanced learning motivation and the three types of engagement—cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Scogin and Stuessy (2015) concluded there were direct associations between motivation, mentoring, and engagement, recommending that educators provide nurturing environments to sustain autonomy, competence, and relativity to learning, which when combined will produce higher engagement.

Motivation and Personalized Learning

The drive to excel is a growth mindset for students depicting motivational competency that can be affected by personalized learning activities to support readiness. Many teachers create personalized learning activities with motivation in mind instead of mastery. If students find the activities motivating and engaging, they will work towards mastery (Lai, 2017; Redding, 2016). Teachers attempt to give students more autonomy over their own learning, providing learners choices to promote interest and motivation.

Recent studies depict personalized learning as a method to motivate and engage students in the learning process. Alamri et al. (2020) recorded positive results infusing personalized learning in courses. Their participants reported the interventions were engaging and met their personal needs for motivation. Campbell and Cox (2018) showed

similar results in their research when using personalized learning to provide voice and choice to their students. When comparing studies, some teachers were cautioned about negative aspects such as the challenges of planning, instruction, and monitoring student learning. Some educators reported that students were largely motivated and maintained a high level of engagement when using personalized learning strategies; whereas in others, preservice teachers saw the significance of personalized learning and felt equipped to personalize learning for future students (Amro & Borup, 2019; Arnesen et al., 2019; Higashi et al., 2017). These secondary and post graduate studies show the probable benefits of providing middle school students autonomy through personalized learning to motivate them extrinsically in the learning environment.

Attitude

In their 1975 presentation to the American Educational Research Association, (AERA), Blair and Kershner summarized the issues with defining attitude thusly: "The main problems which have complicated the study of specific attitudes have been the lack of an accurate definition of the word 'attitude' and the inability to consistently isolate attitudes as discrete behavioral attributes." This truth is still evident today, 45 years later. As educators, attitudes of children and coworkers are never guaranteed to remain stable. A look, a poor grade, or the death of a pet can change a student's or an adult's attitude instantly. Attitudes play a major role in how children perform in both face-to-face and online environments. Montebello (2016) concluded the attitudes and self-determination of students in the classroom environment are a greater issue than motivation. Recent literature searches provided several articles in which researchers addressed attitudes in relation to the learning environment and found no significant results (Basaran et al.,

2016; Hill, 2010; Long & Szabo, 2016; Ullah, 2017). Are these results representative of children growing up in a culture filled with technology? The prominent gap in the literature that was evident in the last century still exists today.

Attitude and Engagement

A positive school climate implements personalized learning as an approach to enhancing student achievement where students learn different approaches to support successful participation in the classroom environment. Yilmaz (2017) concluded readiness is vital, as it predicts motivation and engagement in the environment. Engagement has been studied by many researchers in deference to student success with many speculating student engagement in late childhood is affected by teacher support (Cheng et al., 2019; Goldin et al., 2019; Kearney et al., 2016; Weyns et al., 2018). By fostering a positive classroom environment, teachers are creating a supportive classroom atmosphere. Student choice, a significant player in personalized learning, is cited as improving attitude and engagement; choices related to the actual learning activity provide more positive results than choices of partners or time management (Dawes, 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2019; Schmidt et al., 2018).

Attitude and Personalized Learning

Throughout the literature, changing attitudes through learner satisfaction is cited as a predictor of academic success in the learning environment. Researchers show academic efficacy in the classroom is an important motivator for the attitudes of the learners. Student choice through personalized learning intrinsically enhances students' attitudes, producing satisfaction and autonomy in learning achievement (Li & Wong, 2020; Waldrip et al., 2016). Relating the results of their flipped classroom study, Zhai et

al. (2017) promoted keeping a watchful eye on the learners' satisfaction model since learners' satisfaction has been proven to be a vital predictor of learning outcomes and behavioral intention to continue learning (Li & Wong, 2020; Waldrip et al., 2016).

Research suggests personalized learning enhances learner satisfaction, engagement, and motivation by providing autonomy for children. As a constructivist, I believe authenticity is a condition for learning. However, our learning environment is an enigma for some students. There have been many studies describing personalized learning and student choices for secondary and post-secondary students but few related to upper elementary and middle school students. Currently there are many gaps in the literature with regards to the learning environment, attitudes, and personalized learning, especially for middle school setting. As the purpose of this action research is to explore how personalized learning (PL) will affect change in students' motivation to engage in the social studies classroom, my research will add to the literature base by providing information on how personalized learning through student choice boards affects student motivation, engagement, and attitudes in the classroom environment for sixth-grade students.

Chapter Summary

In this literature review, several topics are addressed and interwoven to provide background for this action research project. The purpose of this study is to explore how a personalized learning intervention will affect student engagement in the sixth-grade social studies classroom. The pandemic promoted an online learning environment, thus changing the face of the classroom in both the online and face-to-face settings for many unprepared students. Motivation, engagement, and attitudes are three different yet

interrelated constructs to be addressed by implementing personalized learning choices for students in the social studies classroom. Though the results of these studies showed learning engagement and motivation in challenge-based learning environments are significantly related to learning and performance, most were employed in the secondary and post graduate fields. Few studies occur in the middle school realm, and only one addressed the content area of social studies, which leads to a gap in the research field for personalized learning choices for middle school student in the social studies classroom.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this action research was to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies influenced sixth-grade students to engage in the classroom. The following research questions addressed the problem in this action research:

1. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?

2. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?

Research Design

Traditionally, research has been conducted to generalize for a population as a whole, often being conducted by a researcher not vested in a specific locale. Companies gather data to promote their educational materials to school districts using national norms. Individual states conduct research to meet federal guidelines. Research is conducted in a variety of forms, one being action research, which is conducted to address a specific problem. Action research is defined as inquiry into the teaching and learning process by someone with an interest in improving a specific site (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Mertler, 2017). Action research will fill the need to focus on my research questions by allowing me to develop an action plan that is site-specific (Mills, 2011). I collected

and analyzed data from willing participants to personalize their learning. I applied the action research process to explore how personalized learning would affect a change in my students' motivation and attitudes to engage in the sixth-grade social studies classroom.

A convergent parallel mixed methods design was used for my action research specifically to acquire a deeper understanding of student engagement; I could evaluate the effects of personalized learning using both qualitative and quantitative data components to explore the variables contributing to a particular topic while expanding and strengthening my study's conclusions (Creswell, 2013b; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). This mixed methods approach aligned with my research as I explored how personalized learning with choice boards effects a change in students' motivation and attitudes to engage in the sixth-grade social studies classroom. Per current literature, this research was mixed methods since I collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data independently from my 17 students through surveys, exit tickets, and interviews over a four-week period (Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2013a; Feldon & Kafai, 2008; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Next, I merged the results of both data sets in order to interpret the combined results and validate the effects of personalized learning. I designed this research to understand the phenomenon at WMS rather than to generalize information for public discourse (Stake, 2005). By utilizing a convergent parallel mixed method design, I was able to produce stronger results when I compared the data sets and determined if they yielded similar results when evaluating the effects of my intervention introduced in this personalized learning intervention (Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2013b).

Setting

This action research was conducted at WMS, a large, suburban public middle school with a population of 1215 students and 69 classroom teachers. As described in Chapter 1, WMS is a "town" school with the school population being comprised of 58% Caucasian, 28% African American, 7% percent Hispanic, and 7% multi-racial children. Since 47% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch, WMS is a Title I school receiving supplemental funds from the federal government. Students followed a typical bell schedule, with direct instruction being a district focus. In the middle school setting, students have four core subjects: English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies along with two elective classes such as art, physical education, computer science, or Spanish. Since direct instruction is considered the target in the middle classroom, core subjects are taught in sixty-minute blocks. Each student was provided a district-issued Dell laptop to use in the classroom and at home. Children who had issues with Internet connections were also provided district-owned hotspots for home accessibility.

This action research specifically transpired in my social studies classroom with each student having access to their district-provided Dell device for instructional purposes. Our district follows a learning model that specifies that each student will attend classes as mandated by the six and one half-hour face-to-face schedule. The South Carolina Social Studies Curriculum determines the standards to be taught; however, our district maintains that a strict pacing guide be followed to ensure students are progressing at a simultaneous rate in each subject districtwide. All sixth-grade teachers implement common direct instruction following common Smartboard lessons and the district pacing guide. Core subject lessons, including social studies are planned during weekly team

planning meetings. Each social studies lesson follows the direct instruction model for content since time is limited to sixty-minute sessions. Students generally demonstrate their learning with daily checks for understanding and paper-pencil quizzes or tests at the end of each social studies unit. To motivate students to be more engaged at the end of the day, my intervention focused on providing students personalized learning through teacher-created choice boards aligned to the essential questions for our South Carolina social studies standards. After daily direct instruction via the Smartboard lesson, students chose their learning paths from the teacher-created choice boards. This action research was a pilot of personalized learning in the social studies classroom setting through teacher-created student choice boards.

Participants

Student enrollment in our district schools is determined by location within specific zones for regular education students. Special education students attend the middle school with classes that meet their identified disability, as these classes are limited due to the small nature of our district. Each school's administrators determine which students are placed in individual teachers' classrooms. As a sixth-grade core teacher at WMS, I teach social studies in four different classes ranging from 19 to 24 students in each period. My fifth period class of 24 students was invited to participate in this action research study This class is inclusive with one student with an individual education plan (IEP) identifying her disability as autism providing an adult support person. Two additional students have 504 accommodation plans, one for anxiety and ADHD and one identified with ADHD and behavioral issues. Of the 24 students invited to participate, 20 students returned their consent forms with their parent's signature (See Appendix A). Of

the 20 remaining students, one was moved to another sixth-grade team, one moved to a different school, and one was dropped from the intervention for truancy, leaving 17 participants in the action research study.

The 17 participants in this action research study ranged from 11 to 12 years of age. Eleven were males and eight females, composed of nine Caucasian, six African American, one bi-racial, and one Asian-American student. Two of these participants were identified as special education, one with an IEP for autism and one with a 504 for ADHD and anxiety. Of the remaining participants, three were classified as slow-learners, receiving additional reading assistance by attending a reading intervention class during their elective periods. Screener data from the district-mandated NWEA Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing at the beginning of the year categorized six participants as average, with seven of the remaining participants scoring low average and four low in reading comprehension.

When schools were closed during Spring 2020, many students were presented with teacher-created choice boards for special areas: music, art, and physical education. Core teachers did not provide choice boards as there was no accountability required of students due to COVID-19 protocols. Adequate technology was not available to all students as there were limited devices to provide student access in our district. This lack of available technology and skill sets required by both students and teachers to navigate online learning during the school shutdown did not permit a focus on personalized learning. During the summer of 2020, our district provided weekly professional development for teachers in preparation for virtual instruction and the upgrades in technology. By Fall 2020, technology in the form of new devices and hot spots were

purchased to provide technology for all students. Microsoft Teams was adapted as our learning management system throughout the district. With technology and access in place, personalized learning could be accessible to individual students in our district.

Intervention

In this action research study, I introduced a personalized learning intervention to explore how it will motivate students to engage in our social studies classroom. For the intervention, I used teacher-created choice boards aligned to the essential questions for each social studies unit as mandated by the SC Department of Education in the 2019 Social Studies Curriculum Framework.

Intervention Design

Engagement was the focus of this research study as it related to student motivation and attitudes in the social studies classroom. Empirical research demonstrated Keller's ARCS learning theory was significant to this action research (Alamri et al., 2020; Han & Ellis, 2020; Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Reynolds & Caperton, 2011). His theory focuses on motivation to participate as a means of engagement contextualizing motivation and attitudes with respect to engagement. Aligned with this theory, personalized learning for students and incorporating choice boards as an instructional approach provided voice and choice in the social studies classroom (Christenson et al., 2012). Table 3.1 displays the alignment between the ARCS model theory, variables, and personalized learning components.

Table 3.1 *Operationalized Variables*

Categories	Variables	Personalized Learning Components
Attention	Active participation and variety	Introduction to various software programs and

		online media for hands-own learning. Teacher created- choice boards with different options aligned to the essential questions.
Relevance	Perceived worth and choice	Teacher will model using software programs to create products. From the teacher-created choice boards, participants will choose which technology tool they will use to create their responses to the essential questions.
Confidence	Self- growth and learner control	Teacher will provide individualized instruction and feedback to assist participants' progress. Participants' choice of partners and medium.
Satisfaction	Immediate application	Participants will use new acquired technology skills to respond to the essential questions.

Stages of Intervention Implementation

As participants are rising sixth-graders, many do not have a complete understanding of various technology software that can be strategically used to improve their learning. General knowledge of technology, both hardware and software, is essential for 21st century learners. During the initial weeks of school, participants learned to care for their district-issued laptops and navigate software to prepare them for the personalized learning intervention. I modeled proper care and techniques necessary to maintain working order of their devices. As we are a Microsoft district using Teams as our learning management system, beginning technology training focused on Office 365 and

the Microsoft Office Suite. I taught participants to access and use Teams, Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, One Drive and Forms. Front-loading participants with these essential software skills provided them the necessary tools to succeed in their sixth-grade educational journey.

During the beginning weeks of school, the first social studies unit was taught following the direct instruction protocol. Participant learning mimicked previous years' instructional methods using Smartboard lessons, checks for understanding and paper-pencil or Microsoft Forms online assessments.

Before the first practice round began, all participants who returned a signed consent form participated in two student surveys: (a) the Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary (SEI-E) and (b) Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) administered through Microsoft Forms to provide a baseline for data collection.

The intervention implementation began with a practice round during the second social studies unit to introduce participants to choice boards and the technology needed for success. After the practice round, there were four additional rounds of participants interacting with the teacher-created choice boards. The sixth week of the intervention was reserved for focus group interviews to collect additional qualitative data from the participants. There was a total of six weeks of the personalized learning intervention process. Table 3.2 below depicts a timeline of the rounds for intervention process.

Table 3.2 *Intervention timeline*

Rounds	Timeframe
Round 1	Practice Round Ancient Civilizations Choice Board
Round 2	Beginning data collection- Classical Civilizations Choice Board
Round 3	Continuing data collection- Crusades Choice Board
Round 4	Continuing data collection-Feudalism Choice Board

Round 5	Continuing data collection- Renaissance, Reformation and Counter- Reformation Choice Board

The following sections describe the rounds and their stages in detail.

Intervention Rounds. As previously mentioned, the intervention occurred in five total rounds. To familiarize participants with the personalized learning intervention and its technology skills for success, the first round of the intervention was a practice round. The initial practice round introduced participants to the intervention technology relevant to the individual choices. Procedures including use of the software programs assigned in the choice boards, modeling of previous student submissions, and submission of their final projects were included in the practice round. The implementation procedure described in the following paragraphs was followed; however, no data collection occurred through exit tickets during the practice round. The second round immediately followed the first practice round which began data collection for the intervention.

Intervention Implementation

Practice Round Implementation. During the practice round, the procedure was explained to participants that personalized learning would provide them choices in how they demonstrated the knowledge they acquired in this unit of social studies. Next, the essential question was introduced in a mini lesson using the Ancient River Valley Civilizations Smartboard Notebook to provide background knowledge. Then, the practice was distributed to each of their Class Notebooks and modeled as to how to access the choice board for reference. Participants were introduced to the personalized learning intervention with a practice choice board about ancient river valley civilizations (See Appendix A). The practice choice board prompt was the essential question aligned to the

2019 South Carolina Social Studies Standard 6.1: Demonstrate an understanding of the organization and transformations of world civilizations to 550. The essential question addressed two indicators: (a) 6.1 CO Compare the development of social systems among the early river valley civilizations and (b) 6.1 CE Summarize the environmental factors that influenced the interactions between early civilizations. The prompt for this choice board was the essential question: How did the ancient world civilizations begin to interact with one another? The practice board included teacher-created choices that were comprised of creating a narrative using Microsoft Word, generating a timeline with images using Microsoft Publisher, accessing Discovery Education Studio (DE) to produce a digital board, creating a Flipgrid video, and creating a more personalized product with teacher approval. During the practice round, mini-lessons were presented through direct instruction each day, followed by the modeling of programs and software for participant success with personalized learning. Participants were introduced to a software application and an online program daily during the first week. After the choice activity and technology requirement for the day were modeled and explained, participants practiced in groups to learn how to use the new technology to complete the daily assignment. Participants were provided examples of projects and hyperlinks to online guides demonstrating how they could create different projects with the daily software applications. Table 3.3 outlines the timeline for the practice round week.

Table 3.3 *First Week Practice Round Timeline*

Day	Tasks
Day1	After mini-lesson, teacher explained personalized learning intervention, reviewed location in Class Notebook, and introduced Ancient Civilizations Choice Board. Participants asked questions to clarify the procedures they would follow.

Day 2	Teacher provided participants an example of a narrative created in Microsoft Word. Teacher modeled: • SC Discus, South Carolina's Online Library • Microsoft Word to create a narrative Participants practiced their online research skills using SC Discus to find information about the Seven Wonders of the World. After finding information in the online library, participants creative a three-paragraph narrative with Microsoft Word. Individualized teacher assistance was provided when needed.
Day 3	Teacher provided participants an example of an interactive timeline created in Microsoft Publisher. Teacher modeled: • Accessing resources in SC Discus • Creating a timeline and hyperlinking resources to dates to create an interactive timeline Participants chose 5 dates to research in SC Discus. After they collected their information and weblinks, they created a timeline in Publisher putting their dates with pictures in chronological order. When their timelines were created, participants practiced hyperlinking their pictures with the weblinks from SC Discus. Individualized teacher assistance was provided when needed.
Day 4	Teacher provided participants an example of a student created story board in Discovery Education. Teacher modeled: • Accessing resources in Discovery Education • Creating story board in Discovery Education Participants chose a topic to research in Discovery Education. After they collected their information, text, photographs, and links, participants created a story board in Discovery Education. Individualized teacher assistance was provided when needed.
Day 5	Teacher provided participants an example of a student created video in FlipGrid. Teacher modeled: • Using the special effects in FlipGrid • Creating video in FlipGrid Participants chose a prompt to respond to in FlipGrid. After they practiced making videos and using special effects. Participants created five-minute videos in FlipGrid. Individualized teacher assistance was provided when needed.

The second round immediately followed the first practice round which began data collection for the intervention. Additionally, the second through fifth rounds of the intervention implementation was organized into three distinct stages.

Intervention Stages. The social studies personalized learning intervention and data collection occurred weekly with three distinct stages in rounds two through five: Stage 1 Direct instruction and participant choice, Stage 2 Student activities, Stage 3 Choice board submission. Table 3.4 below outlines the three stages of implementation that were replicated in the four rounds of the personalized learning intervention. Throughout each stage of the intervention, participants were provided opportunities to consult peers and teachers with questions and discussion.

Table 3.4 *Intervention Implementation Stages*

Stage of Implementation	**Activities**	**Duration**
Stage 1	Smartboard mini lesson with introduction of choice board and a new software application Participants chose an activity to support the essential question	1 day
Stage 2	Participants completed the requirements of the chosen activities	2-3 days
Stage 3	Participants submitted activities electronically or by hyperlink through Teams	1 day

At the end of practice round, mini-lessons were presented through direct instruction each day, followed by modeling of new programs and software that students needed to be successful with personalized learning. Participants were introduced to a new software application or online program each week during the second through fifth weeks.

After the new choice and their technology requirement for the week were explained, participants practiced in groups to learn how to use the new technology or began their weekly assignment. Student examples of projects and hyperlinks online guides to demonstrate how they could create different projects with the software applications were provided weekly. For the remaining days in stage 2, mini-lessons daily were delivered, and participants continued their personalized learning with choice boards. Participants were provided additional technology assistance as needed. Participants submitted either an electronic copy of their personalized learning activity or a working link through Teams on day 5, the final stage of each round.

Round 2 Implementation. During stage 1 of round 2, the Classical Civilizations choice boards (Appendix B) were assigned to each participant's Class Notebook. During the first lesson of the unit, the essential question was introduced with background knowledge using the Classical Civilizations Smartboard during a mini lesson. Access to the Classical Civilizations choice board was demonstrated to participants reminding them of their choice for personalized learning. Participants who decided to request approval for their individual ideas met with the researcher in online breakout rooms for a small group discussion. Participants used the remainder of the class time to research and to begin answering the essential question through their choice board activity. At the end of the period, participants were reminded to save their daily work on their choice board activity. For the remaining days in stage 2, mini lessons were delivered daily after which participants continued personalized learning with their choice boards. The researcher continued to provide participants with additional technology assistance as needed. By the completion of stage 3, participants submitted either an electronic copy of their

personalized learning activity or a working hyperlink through Teams and created an exit ticket through Microsoft Forms.

Round 3 Implementation. During stage 1 of round 3, the Crusades choice boards (Appendix C) were assigned to each participant's Class Notebook. During the first lesson of the unit, the essential question was introduced with background knowledge using the Crusades Smartboard during a mini lesson. The researcher demonstrated where to access the Crusades choice board reminding them of their choice for personalized learning. Participants who decided to seek approval for their own ideas met with the researcher in Teams breakout rooms for a small group discussion. Participants used the remainder of the class time to research and begin answering the essential question through their choice board activity. At the end of the period, participants were reminded to save their activity for the following day. For the remaining days in stage 2, mini lessons were delivered daily, and participants continued personalized their learning with the choice boards. Participants were provided additional technology assistance as needed. By the completion of the unit, stage 3, participants submitted either an electronic copy of their personalized learning activity or a working link through Teams and completed an exit ticket through Microsoft Forms.

Round 4 Implementation. During stage 1 of round 4, the Feudalism choice boards (Appendix D) were assigned to each participant's Class Notebook. During the first lesson of the unit, the essential question was introduced with background knowledge using the Feudalism Smartboard during a mini lesson. The researcher demonstrated where to access the Feudalism choice board reminding them of their choice for personalized learning. Participants who decided to seek approval for their own ideas met

with the researcher in online breakout rooms for a small group discussion. Participants used the remainder of the class time to research and begin answering the essential question through their choice board activity. At the end of the period, participants were reminded to save their activity for the following day. For the remaining days in stage 2, mini lessons were delivered daily, and participants continued personalized their learning with the choice boards. Participants were provided additional technology assistance as needed. By the completion of the unit, stage 3, participants submitted either an electronic copy of their personalized learning activity or a working link through Teams and completed an exit ticket through Microsoft Forms.

Round 5 Implementation. During stage 1 of round 5, the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter- Reformation (RRCR) choice boards (Appendix E) were assigned to each participant's Class Notebook. During the first lesson of the unit, the essential question was introduced with background knowledge using the RRCR Smartboard during a mini lesson. Access to the RRCR choice board was provided to participants reminding them of their choice of personalized learning. Participants who decided to seek approval for their own ideas met with the researcher in Teams breakout rooms for a small group discussion. Participants used the remainder of the class time to research and begin answering the essential question through their choice board activity. At the end of the period, participants were reminded to save their artifact for the following day. For the remaining days in stage 2, mini lessons were delivered daily, and participants continued their personalized learning with the choice boards. Technology assistance was provided to the participants as needed. By the completion of the unit, stage

3, participants submitted either an electronic copy of their personalized learning artifact or a working link through Teams and completed an exit ticket prompt.

On Day 1 of the final week of the intervention implementation, participants were assigned the SEI-E through Teams as a post-study survey. After completing the post-study survey, focus group interview sessions began. The first focus group met for the remainder of Day 1, with the second and third focus groups meeting on Day 2. Participants were assigned the IMMS through Teams on Day 3 as a post-study survey. Day 4 concluded focus group interviews with the remaining two groups of participants.

Data Collection

Three data sources were used to address the research questions of this study: (a) student surveys, (b) exit tickets, and (b) student focus group interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mertler, 2017). Confidentiality of student participants was ensured through the use of pseudonyms during the action research study. Table 3.5 provides an overview of the research questions and corresponding data sources.

Table 3.5 *Research Questions and Data Sources*

Research Questions	Data Sources
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	• Student Surveys • Student Exit Tickets • Student Focus Group Interviews
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	• Student Surveys • Student Exit Tickets • Student Focus Group Interviews

Student Survey

As participants are rising sixth-graders, lengthy surveys tend to be an enigma to manage. After a thorough review of instruments, the researcher was unable to find one

single survey for middle school students that would measure the variables which required participants to take two individual Likert style question surveys. In general, participants around this age faced with a survey of 69 questions or two separate surveys, do not possess the stamina to provide accurate information for such a lengthy assessment. Sixth-grade students will randomly choose answers without reading when faced with lengthy or multiple assessments.

Two previously validated surveys were used before and after the personalized learning intervention: (1) the Elementary Student Engagement Instrument (SEI-E), which is designed to measure cognitive and affective engagement during the formative years of education (Carter et al., 2012), and (2) the Instructional Materials Motivational Scale (IMMS), which Keller (2008a) designed to measure student reactions to instructional materials describing learners' motivational attitudes in context (Keller, 2008b).

The SEI-E. The Student Engagement Inventory- Elementary (SEI-E) is the elementary version of the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI) for high school students. The SEI is used in high schools throughout many U.S. school districts (Reschly et al., 2014) with the psychometric properties verified by many studies (Appleton et al., 2006; Betts et al., 2010; Lovelace et al., 2014; Reschly et al., 2014) (See Appendix E for a paper-pencil copy of the SEI-E.).

Carter et al. (2012) examined the psychometric properties of the elementary version (SEI–E) of the SEI measuring engagement during the elementary years. The researchers found four factors of the SEI-E demonstrated acceptable internal consistency as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .64 (FGA) to .82 (PSL) as

depicted in Table 3.6 below. The motivation factor was not addressed when testing internal consistency of SEI-E.

Table 3.6 *Four Factor Solution Cronbach's Alpha Values*

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Name
1	.81	Teacher-Student Relationships
2	.82	Peer Support for Learning
3	.66	Family Support for Learning
5	.640	Future Goals and Aspirations

Thirty-three Likert style statements gleaned from the SEI-E were used to measure readiness to engage during this action research study. This survey measures affective and cognitive engagement using five factors as described in Table 3.7 below using student self-rating questions.

Table 3.7 *Factors Determining Engagement*

Engagement		Factors
Affective Engagement	•	• Teacher-Student Relationship • Peer Support for Learning • Family Support for Learning
Cognitive Engagement	•	• Future Goals and Aspirations • Intrinsic Motivation

Students rated the statements in the SEI-E survey by choosing one of the five points: (1) Strongly agree (2) Agree, (3) In the middle, (4) Disagree, or (5) Strongly disagree. The 33-question survey (Appendix E) was transferred to a Microsoft Forms document for electronic delivery to the participants. Participants completed the surveys before the practice choice boards were introduced and then repeated the surveys at the

end of the intervention for comparison to determine the significance of the effect of the personalized learning intervention.

The IMMS. The IMMS (Appendix F) is comprised of 36 Likert style questions to determine how motivated students are in a specific course. The IMMS is designed to be used with secondary students and post-secondary students, or adults. Keller (2008a) recommends modifications for younger students who may lack sufficient literacy skills specifically reading aloud or paraphrasing items. I modified the original statements from the IMMS by adding phrases in the statements to change the language to fit the reading level of my students and to address the course content. Below Table 3.8 displays the internal consistency of the IMMS scales based on Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3.8 *Internal Consistency of the IMMS*

Scales	Alpha Scores
Attention	.89
Relevance	.81
Confidence	.90
Satisfaction	.92
Total scale	.96

The 36 Likert type items in this instrument are aligned to the research questions (see Table 3.9 below) to provide data for the areas of students' motivation to engage and attitudes towards engaging in the sixth-grade social studies classroom.

Table 3.9 *Research Questions Aligned to Survey Statements*

Research Questions	Survey Statements
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	1. I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things. 2. Compared with other students in this class I expect to do well. 3. It is important for me to learn what is being taught in this class. 4. I like what I am learning in this class.

	5. I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course. 6. I think I will be able to use what I learn in this class in other classes. 7. I expect to do very well in this class. 8. Compared with others in this class, I think I'm a good student. 9. I often choose paper topics I will learn something from even if they require more work.
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	1. If I don't do well in school, it's because I'm not smart. 2. I don't pay attention during class. 3. I feel nervous when I'm in school. 4. I don't understand why I get the grades I do. 5. How often did you come to class and find yourself? a. without what you need to do classwork. b. without reading materials. c. without your homework done.

Based on relevant literature, motivation is a major factor in student engagement in the classroom learning environment. Only two statements address motivation in the SEI-E, providing very little data for this variable in the research study. The IMMS was recommended by the previous defense committee, as it is a well-known, validated survey addressing motivational factors...Participants rated the statements in the modified IMMS survey by choosing one of the five points: (1) Not true, (2) Slightly true, (3) Moderately true, (4) Mostly true, or (5) Very true. The 36-question survey (Appendix F) was transferred to a Microsoft Forms document for electronic delivery to the participants. They completed the surveys before the practice choice boards were introduced then repeated the surveys at the end of the intervention for comparison to determine the significance of the effect of the personalized learning intervention.

Student Exit Tickets

The third instrument employed was student exit tickets using teacher-created open-ended prompts to obtain the views and opinions of the participants during the invention. Studies show exit tickets give students a voice to express their ideas about learning and provide teachers insight into what students value to inform instructional decisions (Fowler, et al 2019; McLaughlin, 2012).

During weekly sixth-grade team meeting sessions, fellow educators and I created exit tickets for both motivation and attitudes toward the learning environment. The exit tickets prompts were worded to align with the choice boards and the learning environment (Appendix H). The goal was to discover which instructional tools would motivate students to engage in different classrooms. The exit tickets were delivered to students as Microsoft Forms assignments. Below Table 3.10 displays the open-ended questions for the student exit tickets aligned with the two research questions for qualitative data collection.

Table 3.10 *Research Questions Aligned to Exit Ticket Prompts*

Research Questions	Exit Ticket Prompts
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	1. Provide an example of how choice boards make you feel about participating in class. Do you participate more or less because we can use choice boards? Explain why, please. 2. What are some things you are doing in class now that show your participation in SS is changing? Explain.
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	1. What is different about how you do your work when you have a choice board activity instead of taking a test? Explain, please. 2. Have your work habits changed since we have been using choice boards? How?

Student Focus Group Interviews

The fourth instrument employed was researcher-student focus group interviews using teacher-created open-ended prompts to obtain the views and opinions of the students after the invention (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As referenced in the national and local context, student engagement is a trending issue across the sixth grade in our school. During our weekly sixth-grade team meeting sessions, fellow educators and I reviewed literature related to motivating student engagement in the classroom (Christenson et al., 2012; Fisher et al.,2021; Miller, 2015; Miller, 2020; Miller et al., 2019). With this knowledge as guidance and understanding the needs of our students, we created interview prompts for both motivation and attitudes toward the learning environment. We specifically reworded the prompts to align with the choice boards and the learning environment (Appendix I). The collaborative goal was to ascertain the effects of various instructional tools in motivating students to engage in the varied classroom settings.

For liability reasons, one-to-one interviews are not recommended with our district, so all student interviews were conducted in focus group settings in the classroom. These semi-structured focus group interviews met after the intervention during small group sessions and provided information to explore the effect of the personalized learning intervention (choice boards) on the student engagement in the social studies classroom. Table 3.11 displays the open-ended questions for the focus group interviews aligned with the two research questions for qualitative data collection.

Table 3.11 *Research Questions Aligned to Focus Group Interview Prompts*

Research Questions	Focus Group Interview Prompts
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade	1. Please describe and provide an example of how using a choice board has changed

students' motivation to engage in social studies?	your work habits in our social studies classroom. 2. Who can give me an example of how using choice boards changes your motivation to participate in class? 3. Would you provide examples of changes in how much you want to participate in our social studies class? 4. How would you describe any changes in your participation?
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	1. Describe any changes in how you feel about school since using a choice board. 2. Would you provide an example of how choice boards make you feel about social studies. 3. Would you provide an example of any changes in the way you feel about social studies? 4. How would you describe those changes in your feelings?

As previously described, three data sources were used to explain the results of this study: (a) student surveys (b) student exit tickets, and (c) student focus group interviews (Creswell, 2018; Mertler, 2017). Confidentiality of the participants was ensured through the use of pseudonyms during the action research study. Table 3.12 is a review of the research questions aligned to the corresponding data sources.

Table 3.12 *Research Questions and Data Sources*

Research Questions	Data Sources
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	• Student Surveys • Student Exit Tickets • Student Focus Group Interviews
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	• Student Surveys • Student Exit Tickets • Student Focus Group Interviews

Data Analysis

In this mixed methods action research project, four data instruments were used to explore the research questions through both qualitative and quantitative methods (Mertler, 2017). Data was gathered in this research study using two surveys, exit ticket responses, and interviews. The quantitative data was analyzed with descriptive statistics, Wilcoxon signed rank tests, and paired samples tests. The qualitative data was analyzed with inductive analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed then compared for thematic similarities and differences. As displayed in Table 3.13, both qualitative and quantitative information were collected from data sources aligned with each research question for this study.

Table 3.13 *Data Analysis Alignment*

Research Questions	Data Sources	Data Analysis Methods
RQ1: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	Student Surveys	Descriptive statistics Paired samples *t*-tests Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests
	Student Exit Tickets	Inductive Analysis
	Student Focus Group Interviews	Inductive Analysis
RQ2: In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	Student Surveys	Descriptive statistics Paired samples *t*-tests Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests
	Student Exit Tickets	Inductive Analysis
	Student Focus Group Interviews	Inductive Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Pre- and post-survey data was collected and disaggregated according to the administrative scoring procedures of the SEI-E and IMMS instruments. The responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The pre-and post- survey data for both quantitative instruments was analyzed with JASP online software to test the reliability of each of the subscales in each survey. Initial analysis with JASP provided the means and standard deviations for each subscale. For descriptive purposes, the means provided the researcher knowledge of the collective levels of data from participants. The standard deviation showed the difference between the calculated means for the data sets. These analyses found that the choice boards did not produce a statistically significant effect on student motivation to engage and student attitudes towards learning social studies (Adams & Lawrence, 2019).

Since there were multiple subscales in each data set, Shapiro-Wilk Normality test in JASP was used to discern normality of the subscales. Several subscales were not normally distributed which dictated further testing. Parametric paired samples *t*-tests were used to analyze the remaining normally distributed subscales to determine if there was a change in the research variables. For the subscales that showed non-normal distribution, the nonparametric Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to assess if there was a significant change in the variables (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). Since both datasets had multiple subscales the possibility of a Type I error increased (Armstrong, 2014; Cabin & Mitchell, 2000; Cohen, 1982; Rios, 2021). To accommodate this as a possible issue, the Bonferroni correction was used to change the significance threshold. With both parametric and nonparametric testing and the Bonferroni correction used for Type I errors, only one subscale of proved to be significance and it was a medium effect size. Findings from the quantitative data analysis showed there was no significant change in participants motivation to engage or the impact on their attitudes from the intervention.

Qualitative Data

Student exit ticket responses and focus group interview responses provided qualitative data for RQ1 and RQ2 to compare with the quantitative data collected from the surveys in a convergent parallel mixed methods design. Exit ticket responses were downloaded from Microsoft Forms into an Excel worksheet. Student focus group interviews were recorded during each session and transcribed with Microsoft Transcribe into a Microsoft Word document to begin the analysis process. Transcripts were coded to determine patterns and relationships to categorize the responses of the semi-structured focus group interviews (Saldana, 2013; Saldana & Omasta, 2017).

At the beginning of the transcription process, eclectic coding was used to look for recurring codes using the inductive analysis methods. The transcript from the first focus group interview were read to discover initial codes to cover the sample. Next, it was read again to apply in vivo codes from the voices of my participants. I uploaded the exit ticket transcripts and the focus group interview transcripts into Delve subsuming codes. Using Delve online coding software, similar codes could be merged and a codebook with definitions was created. Then, I read the transcript from my second focus group interview online applying the codes created from the first transcript. I noted where the codes did not match or where I might need additional codes. Finally, I returned to my transcripts and recoded my data until all data is coded. Once all the transcripts were initially coded, the process of merging codes and subsuming began using focused then pattern coding. Categories were created from codes to secure an unbiased look at the themes throughout my data. When the themes emerged, a hierarchical frame was created to organize the codes within the themes based on how they relate positively or negatively to the variables of motivation and attitudes. These themes enabled analysis of the effect of personalized

learning on student motivation to engage in learning social studies and student attitudes toward engaging in the social studies classroom (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; Saldana, 2021; Williams & Moser, 2019).

The data from all instruments, (i.e., pre- and post-surveys, student exit ticket responses, and focus group interviews) was stored on my laptop and poly-angulated according to recurring codes and themes to generate conclusions for this action research study.

Procedures and Timeline

The procedures for this action research study were divided into phases: Phase 1 Preparation, Phase 2 Participant Training, Phase 3 Data Collection, and Phase 4 Data Analysis. Each phase included a timeline and description of the roles of the researcher and participants. Table 3.14 provides a summary of the procedures and timeline for this action research study.

Table 3.14 *Phase Descriptions and Timeline*

Phase	**Role**	**Activities**	**Time Frame**
Phase 1: Preparation	Researcher	1. Identify participants (specific class) 2. Distribute parent and participant letters 3. Obtain parent consent forms 4. Identify focus groups 5. Assign section to Class Notebook	1 week
	Participants	1. Return signed parent consent forms	
Phase 2: Participant Training	Researcher	1. Administer pre-surveys through TEAMS 2. Instruct students in choice boards 3. Model choice board selections 4. Explain choice board rubrics 5. Provide students a practice choice board	1 week
	Participants	1. Complete pre-surveys in the Assignment section of TEAMS 2. Complete practice choice boards	

Phase 3: Data Collection	Researcher	1. Deliver Smart Notebook Lessons for direct instruction 2. Assign students choice boards for each social studies unit 3. Interview focus groups when personalized learning intervention is complete. 4. Administer post-surveys through TEAMS	5 weeks
	Participants	1. Complete a choice board for each social studies unit 2. Participate in focus group interviews when personalized learning intervention is complete. 3. Complete the post-surveys in TEAMS	
Phase 4: Data Analysis	Researcher	1. Transcribe focus group interviews 2. Conduct inductive analysis of focus group interviews 3. Gather statistics from pre- and post-surveys 4. Run paired samples *t*-tests on descriptive statistics on pre- and post-survey data	5 weeks

Phase 1: Preparation

In Fall 2021, students in the social studies classes who would be invited to participate in the action research study were identified. After identification, the participating students' parents received an invitation to for their child to participate via each student as well as a digital copy through Microsoft Teams Class Notebook. The invitation described the study and requested parental consent for participation. The students and parents were able to return the printed invitation and forms or electronically sign the documents in the Class Notebook providing consent to participate in the action research study. Students who submitted the proper documentation to participate were

assigned an additional section in their Class Notebooks denoting their focus groups and times for the duration of the study.

Phase 2: Participant Training

At the beginning of Phase 2, after consent forms were collected, all participants completed two pre-surveys the SEI-E and the IMMS which were be delivered through Microsoft Forms. The surveys were administered virtually through their Teams Assignments. The participants were instructed how to electronically access choice boards through Class Notebook for their personalized learning. It was understood by the participants that their choice boards were created to provide them an alternate manner to answer the essential questions for our social studies curriculum. Selected technology selections were modeled with accompanying submissions from previous students. The technology requirements for the choice boards were explained in detail to the participants. Choice board grading rubrics were provided with explanations and models of submissions. Students completed and submitted a practice choice board to insure they understand how to use the choice boards in personalized learning and how to submit their work as assignments in Microsoft Teams.

Phase 3: Data Collection

Participants received daily direct instruction with a Smart Notebook file before proceeding to their personalized learning interventions. Participants in the action research study were expected to complete a choice board for each social studies unit as the intervention. Participants also completed weekly open-ended exit tickets after each choice board was completed. When the intervention was complete, participants met with the researcher and their peers in small focus groups to discuss open-ended questions

pertaining to their experiences in personalized learning with choice boards. The focus group interviews were recorded for transcription within twenty-four hours. At the end of Phase 3, the SEI-E and IMMS surveys were administered with Microsoft Forms through Teams Assignments as post-surveys.

Phase 4: Data Analysis

During Phase 4, Data was analyzed from four instruments (i.e., student surveys, exit ticket responses, and student focus group interviews) through qualitative and quantitative methods (Buss & Zambo, nd; Mertler, 2017).

Qualitative data from the transcribed focus group interviews was disaggregated; The individual participants' responses to the open-ended exit ticket prompts and focus group interview transcripts were analyzed. The inductive analysis process began with open coding to discover patterns in their responses. Since inductive analysis is an iterative process, multiple rounds of coding were conducted to analyze data without bias for recurring themes across the transcriptions.

For the quantitative results of the action research study, the survey responses were downloaded for analysis. Descriptive statistics, the sample means, and standard deviations were used to determine if there was a statistical difference ($p < .05$) between the pre-surveys and post-surveys. The Shapiro-Wilk tests were run through JASP to discern normality. Parametric and nonparametric tests were used to analyze the data sets. Paired samples *t*-tests were run for the normally distributed subscales and Wilcoxon signed rank tests analyzed the subscales that were not normally distributed. The Bonferroni correction was used to address the possibility of Type I errors because there were multiple subscales. The qualitative findings were compared to the qualitative data

analysis to determine the effects of the intervention in this action research. The results of the paired samples *t*-tests and Wilcoxon signed rank tests determined there was no significant support of the qualitative themes from the exit ticket responses and the focus group interview transcriptions.

Rigor and Trustworthiness

Rigor and trustworthiness are essential to establishing the quality and authenticity of research by depicting a true picture of the procedures and results (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Mertler, 2017). Rigor in action research addresses the quality of the design and the alignment of the methods to the research are crucial elements, while trustworthiness addresses the ability to portray the findings of the research as being authentic (Cypress, 2017). For this action research study, the researcher leaned more towards qualitative research with thick, rich descriptions, and used a convergent mixed methods approach of collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data during the intervention to provide two multiple ways of interpreting the data (Maxwell, 2010). The following sections discuss the plan used to insure rigor and trustworthiness in the action research through triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and an audit trail.

Triangulation

In this mixed methods design, the quantitative and qualitative data analyses were converged to with unsimilar results from the surveys and interviews (Mertler, 2017). The data was triangulated by addressing the research questions multiple times to verify students' surveys exit ticket responses, and interviews were representative of their actions in the sixth-grade social studies classroom. Pre-and post-survey data was compared to reflect the learning environment in the classroom with the data obtained from the exit

ticket responses and semi-structured interviews (Shenton, 2004). The analysis of the qualitative data confirmed the effectiveness of the personalized learning intervention, but the quantitative data disputed it. This combination did not increase the rigor and trustworthiness of the study.

Member Checking

To increase the rigor and trustworthiness of my research, member checking was included where participants are asked to verify information for truthfulness (Creswell, 2013; Mertler, 2017). Member checking occurred at the end of the intervention as participants were provided opportunities to review information within their focus group interviews and the observer notes for accuracy. They were encouraged to evaluate the truthfulness of the polished transcriptions, results, and findings prior to submission in this dissertation. No discrepancies were noted by the participants in this project (Creswell, 2013). This procedure assured the authenticity of the data retrieved from the semi-structured focus group interviews was a valid and true representation of the dialogues. It promoted a sense of trust among participants and readers of the research, an additional component for rigor and trustworthiness.

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing was manifested with the online members of the Slytherin cohort. Throughout this adventure, this cohort has been close and willing to talk to each other about their works in progress. As students and teachers, we reviewed and questioned our processes and findings to provide each other an external source of verifying our results (Creswell, 2018). In addition, peer debriefing was manifested through weekly focused discussions with my dissertation chair who was another significant element in the process

of obtaining this degree. Peer debriefing by outside sources encouraged me to consider alternate opinions and viewpoints during my research, adding yet another measure to ensure rigor and trustworthiness.

Audit Trail

As a final method to provide rigor and trustworthiness, an audit trail was produced by journaling through the research process. For reflexivity, photos are included related to the coding, and analysis of data (Mertler, 2017). The audit trail provided evidence and documentation for analyzing the data and reporting the findings, which will support the rigor and trustworthiness of this research to readers.

Plan for Sharing and Communicating Findings

The purpose of this action research was to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies influenced sixth-grade students to engage in the classroom. The literature review indicated that student engagement in the classroom is an issue many educators seek to address. By presenting these findings through multiple venues, stakeholders are provided an alternate manner in which to focus on student engagement by providing personalized learning for students in the social studies classroom.

The findings of this research will be shared and communicated with several stakeholders at both local and state levels. As the study has ended, data will be reviewed with my fellow sixth-grade teachers to co-construct meaning; as primary stakeholders, these teachers will be the first to receive a copy of the results of this research during a weekly grade-level meeting (Banister, 2007). Next, I will present the findings to fellow middle school teachers at our monthly meeting via PowerPoint with visuals to explain the

benefits of this research as well as the findings and conclusions drawn. A handout will be providing to cohorts with the discussion section of this manuscript and a verbal synopsis outlining the results of this project to assist them in integrating additional technology with their teachers. Additionally, an abbreviated PowerPoint will be shared with the district school board and review panel as our district prepares for personalized learning for every child. Finally, at the state level, one of the proposals I submit to the annual South Carolina Council for Social Studies Conference in February 2023 is to promote personalized learning using choice boards to address engagement in middle social studies classrooms. I will also submit a proposal for the SC EdTech conference in October 2023 that will include information gleaned from my action research study to encourage personalized learning in the middle social studies classroom. I will protect the identities and confidentiality of the participants throughout the study and future publications by using a fictitious name for our school and addressing my students as Student A, Student B, Student C, and Student D (Mertler, 2017).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this action research was to explore how incorporating choice boards as a tool for personalized learning in social studies influenced sixth-grade students to engage in the social studies classroom of a large suburban middle school in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?
2. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?

In this chapter, quantitative and qualitative data analysis and findings depict how and to what degree personalized learning effects sixth grade students' motivation and attitudes to learn social studies. Seven of the original 24 participants left the study for various reasons including the Covid-19 pandemic, changes in allocations, and family moves. The pre-survey data for each of those students was removed as they left the study, prior to final data collection and analysis. The data analysis for this mixed method study includes quantitative data from the elementary version of the Student Engagement Inventory (SEI-E) and the Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) collected from students pre- and post- intervention and qualitative data from student exit tickets and student group interviews with the remaining 17 study participants.

The beginning of this chapter focuses on the quantitative data analysis and findings of the SEI-E and the IMMS pre- and post- intervention surveys. Qualitative data analysis and findings from the student exit tickets and group interviews comprise the second section. The final section synthesizes the quantitative data findings with the qualitative data findings for comparison and analysis to determine in what ways and to what degree the personalized learning intervention affects sixth grade students' motivation to and their attitudes toward learning social studies.

Quantitative Findings

Student Engagement Instrument- Elementary

The SEI-E (Carter et al., 2012) was presented to participants through Microsoft Forms at the beginning of the study before and after participants used choice boards. The SEI-E (Appendix E) contained 33 self-reported 5-point Likert-type scale items divided into 7 subscales: teacher student relationship (TSR), peer support for learning (PSL), family support for learning (FSL), future aspiration and goals (FGA), intrinsic motivation (IM), behavioral engagement (BEH), and disaffection (DISS). Affective engagement is measured by responses to statements addressing the TSR, PSL, and FSL subscales while cognitive engagement is determined by responses to the statements addressing the FGA and IM subscales. The subscales range from 2 to 19 questions within each domain displayed in Table 4.1. Participants rated the 33 statements in the SEI-E learning questionnaire by choosing one of five points: (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) In the Middle, (4) Disagree, or (5) Strongly Disagree. The 33 items in the instrument provide data depicting participants' attitudes towards engaging in the sixth-grade social studies

classroom (RQ2). Since the sample size was low, I did not run the Cronbach's Reliability Analysis for the SEI-E.

Table 4.1 *Student Engagement Inventory- Elementary Subscales with Survey Items*

Subscale	Survey Item
Teacher Student Relationship	3, 5, 10, 13, 15, 20, 21, 26, 29
Peer Support for Learning	4, 6, 7, 14, 22, 23
Family Support for Learning	1, 12, 19, 27
Future Aspirations and Goals	8, 11, 16, 18, 28
Intrinsic Motivation	17, 30
Behavioral Engagement	31a, 31b, 31c
Disaffection	2, 9, 24, 25
Affective Engagement	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29
Cognitive Engagement	8, 11, 16, 17, 18, 28, 30

Descriptive Statistics

Initial analysis of the SEI-E data sets with JASP provided the descriptive statistics displayed in Table 4.2. All overarching seven subscales as well as the affective engagement and cognitive engagement subscales slightly decreased from the pre-survey to the post-survey (see Figure 4.1). The smallest decrease was found in the participants' disaffection from the pre- survey (M = 2.63, SD = 0.03) to the post- survey (M = 2.61, SD = 0.16). The largest decrease was found in participants' intrinsic motivation from the pre-study survey (M = 4.03, SD = 0.20) to post-study survey (M = 3.67, SD = 0.16). The highest overall mean responses were found in the behavioral engagement subscale pre-survey (M = 4.24, SD = 0.34) and post- survey (M = 4.06, SD = 0.31) with consistent standard deviations. The lowest overall mean responses were found in the student disaffection subscale pre- survey (M = 2.63, SD = 0.03) to the post- survey (M = 2.61, SD = 0.16) as well as the lowest difference in standard deviations between the two surveys.

Table 4.2 *Descriptive Statistics- Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary*

Subscales	Pre-Survey		Post-Survey	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Teacher Student Relationship	3.80	0.35	3.57	0.24
Peer Support for Learning	3.79	0.50	3.44	0.34
Family Support for Learning	4.24	0.23	4.01	0.23
Future Aspirations and Goals	4.20	0.28	4.01	0.29
Intrinsic Motivation	4.03	0.20	3.67	0.16
Behavioral Engagement	4.24	0.34	4.06	0.31
Disaffection	2.63	0.03	2.61	0.16
Affective Engagement	3.89	0.41	3.62	0.34
Cognitive Engagement	4.15	0.26	3.91	0.30

Note. Five-point Likert-type scale between 1 and 5; n=17

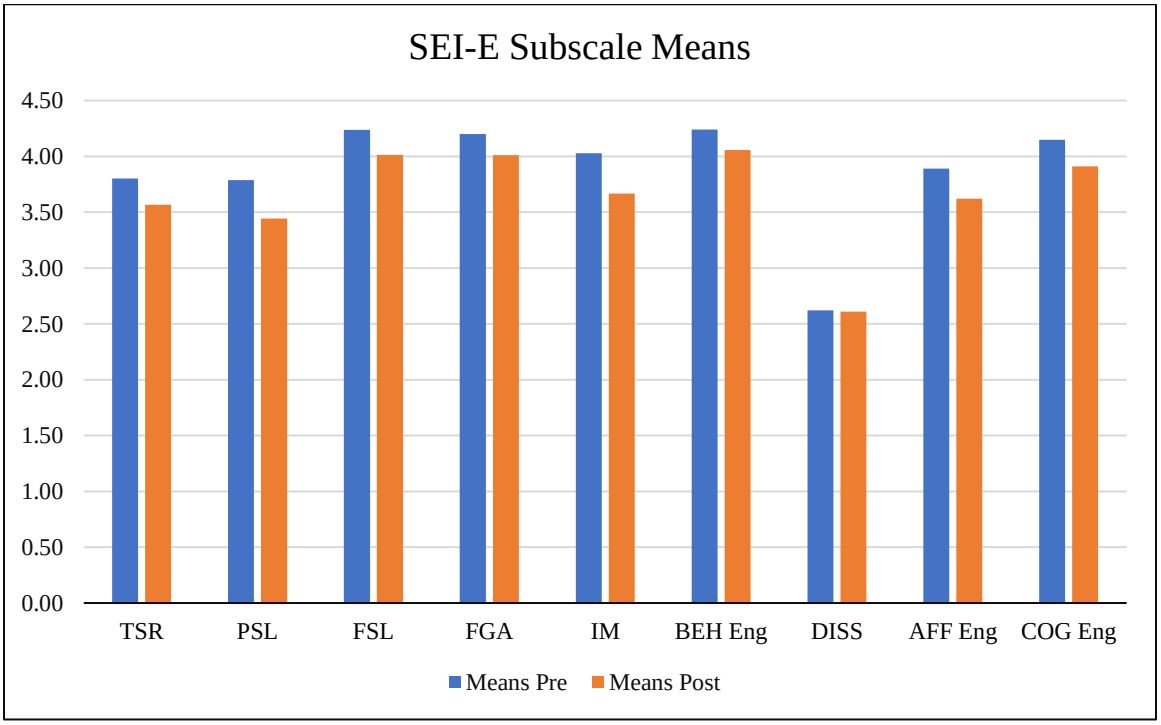

Figure 4.1 SEI-E Subscale Means for Pre-survey and Post-survey Data. This chart provides a visual of the means of each subscale of the SEI-E; responses were reported on a scale of 1(“Strongly Agree”) to 5 (“Strongly Disagree”).

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Tests

The SEI-E contains seven main subscales with two additional subscales for affective and cognitive engagement which dictates discerning normality. Using JASP

software, Shapiro-Wilk Normality tests were performed on each subscale to ascertain normal distribution. Findings from the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests for each subscale are presented in Table 4.3 below. It was noteworthy that the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests for teacher student relationships ($p < .01$), affective engagement $p < .01$) and cognitive engagement ($p = .03$) are not normally distributed with *p*-values less than the significant value of $p < .05$. The amount of subscales within the instrument dictate further analysis of these remaining data fields.

Table 4.3 *Shapiro-Wilk Normality Tests- Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary*

Subscales	*W*	*df*	*p*	*d*
Teacher Student Relationship	.98	8	<.01	.89
Peer Support for Learning	.78	5	.08	.66
Family Support for Learning	.82	3	.22	.21
Future Aspirations and Goals	.82	4	.09	.79
Intrinsic Motivation	-	1	.39	-
Behavioral Engagement	.75	2	.60	.27
Disaffection	.81	3	.86	.68
Affective Engagement	.90	18	<.01	.76
Cognitive Engagement	.89	6	.03	.68

Note. A dash means that there were $n < 3$ observations.

Paired Samples t-Tests

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests show six of the SEI-E subscales have a normal distribution with $p > .05$. Using JASP software, the subscale data from the pre- and post-study surveys was analyzed for statistical significance with paired samples *t*-tests (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). The results show that several of the subscales in this instrument are not statistically significant with $p > .05$ (Table 4.4). The SEI-E contains multiple subscales within the instrument which increases the possibility of a Type I error. To accommodate this as a possible issue with the data, the Bonferroni correction was used to change the significance threshold to $p < .006$ (Armstrong, 2014; Cabin &

Mitchell, 2000; Cohen, 1982). With *p*-values greater than the threshold of significance, there is not at least a 95% confidence level that the results are due to the intervention and not by chance.

Table 4.4 *Paired Samples T-tests- Student Engagement Inventory- Elementary*

Subscales	Pre-survey		Post-survey		*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*				
Peer Support for Learning	3.80	0.50	3.40	0.34	2.21	5	.08	.90
Family Support for Learning	4.24	0.23	4.00	0.23	1.53	3	.22	.77
Future Aspirations and Goals	4.20	0.28	4.01	0.29	2.26	4	.09	1.01
Intrinsic Motivation	4.03	0.20	3.67	0.16	1.44	1	.39	1.02
Behavioral Engagement	4.24	0.34	4.06	0.31	.63	2	.60	.36
Disaffection	2.63	0.03	2.61	0.16	.19	3	.86	.10

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests

Results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests show three of the nine subscales had non-normal distribution. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests were conducted to determine if there were statistically significant changes to these survey subscales before and after the study (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). The SEI-E contains multiple subscales within the instrument which increases the possibility of a Type I error. To accommodate this as a possible issue with the data, the Bonferroni correction was used to change the significance threshold (Armstrong, 2014; Cabin & Mitchell, 2000; Cohen, 1982) to $p < .006$. It was noteworthy that *p*-values in the teacher student relationship pre- survey ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.35$) and post-survey ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.24$), $t(8) = 4.02$, $p = .004$), as well as the affective engagement subscale pre-survey ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.41$) and post-survey ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.34$), $t(18) = 4.36$, $p < .001$) were less than the significant value of $p < .006$. The Wilcoxon signed-rank data from each of the subscales is presented in Table 4.5. It is noteworthy that two subscales, teacher student relationship ($p < .01$) and

cognitive engagement (p = .04) were not statistically significant. Only one subscale, affective engagement ($Z = 3.59$, $p < .001$, $r = .76$) proved to be statistically significant and was found to have a medium effect size. In the SEI-E survey, 19 of the 33 questions were directed towards the affective engagement subscale.

Table 4.5 *Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests- Student Engagement Inventory- Elementary*

Subscales	Pre-survey		Post-survey					
	Mdn.	*SD*	*Mdn.*	*SD*	*Z*	*df*	*p*	*r*
Teacher Student Relationship	4.06	0.35	3.78	0.24	2.55	8	<.01	.89
Affective Engagement	4.28	0.41	3.89	0.34	3.59	18	<.00	.76
Cognitive Engagement	4.56	0.26	4.44	0.30	2.20	6	.04	.68

The Instructional Materials Motivation Survey

The Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) was presented to participants through Microsoft Forms before and after choice boards were introduced. The IMMS (Appendix F) contained 36 self-reported 5-point Likert-type scale questions divided into 4 subscales: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction that correlate with Keller's ARCS model for determining student motivation (Keller, 2008a). The subscales range from 6 to 12 questions within each domain (Table 4.6). Participants rated the 36 statements in the IMMS questionnaire by choosing one of five points: (1) Not true, (2) Slightly true, (3) Moderately true, (4) Mostly true (5) Very true. The 36 Likert type items in IMMS instrument provide data depicting participants' motivation towards engaging in the sixth-grade social studies classroom according to the four realms of attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Since the sample size was low, I did not run the Cronbach's Reliability Analysis for the IMMS.

Table 4.6 *Instructional Materials Motivation Survey Subscales with Survey Items*

Subscale	Survey Item

Attention	2, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 28, 29, 31
Relevance	6, 9, 10, 16, 18, 23 ,26 ,30, 33
Confidence	1, 3, 4, 7, 13, 19, 25, 34, 35
Satisfaction	5, 14, 21, 27, 32, 36

Descriptive Statistics

Initial analysis of the IMMS data sets with JASP provided the descriptive statistics displayed in Table 4.7. The means of three of the four subscales increased from the pre-survey to the post-survey (see Figure 4.2). The largest increases were found in the subscales for confidence from the pre-study survey (*M* = 3.19, *SD* = 0.39) to the post study survey (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 0.35) and attention from pre-study survey (*M* =3.14, *SD* = 0.41) to the post-study survey (*M* = 3.39, *SD* = 0.36). A decrease was found in participants' satisfaction from the pre-study survey (*M* = 3.33, *SD* = 0.38) to post-study survey (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 0.27). The highest overall mean responses were found in the satisfaction subscale for the pre-study survey (*M* = 3.33, *SD* = 0.38) and the confidence subscale in the post-study survey (*M* = 3.46, *SD* = 0.35). The lowest overall mean responses were displayed in the attention subscale for the pre-study survey (*M* = 3.14, *SD* = 0.41) and the satisfaction subscale for the post-study survey (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 0.27).

Table 4.7 *Descriptive Statistics- Instructional Materials Motivation Survey*

Subscales	Pre-Survey		Post-Survey	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Attention	3.14	0.41	3.39	0.36
Relevance	3.22	0.48	3.33	0.46
Confidence	3.19	0.39	3.46	0.35
Satisfaction	3.33	0.38	3.28	0.27

Note. Five-point Likert-type scale between 1 and 5; n=17

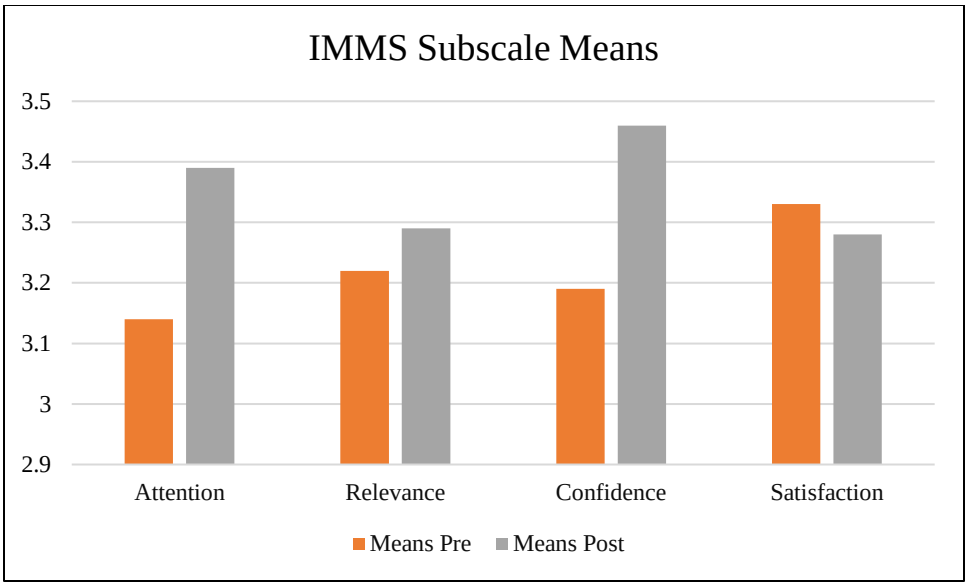

Figure 4.2 IMMS Subscale Means for Pretest and Posttest Data. This chart provides a visual of the means of each subscale of the IMMS; responses were reported on a scale of 1("Not true") to 5 ("Very true").

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Tests

The IMMS contains four subscales attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction which directs determining normality. Shapiro-Wilk Normality tests were performed on each subscale to ascertain normal distribution using the open-source data software JASP. Findings from the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests for each subscale are presented in Table 4.8. The significant results of the tests show normal distribution ($p >$ .05) for three subscales, attention (p = .36), relevance (p =.63), and confidence (p = .29). The satisfaction subscale shows non-normal distribution or each subscale.

Table 4.8 *Shapiro-Normality Tests- Instructional Materials Motivation Survey*

Subscales	*W*	*df*	*p*	*r*
Attention	.93	11	.36	.71
Relevance	.95	8	.63	.76
Confidence	.91	8	.29	.45
Satisfaction	.78	5	.04	.73

Paired Samples T-Tests

The results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests show three of the IMMS subscales have a normal distribution with $p > .05$. Using JASP software, the subscale data from the pre- and post-study surveys was analyzed for statistical significance with paired samples t-tests. The IMMS contains multiple subscales within the instrument which increases the possibility if a Type I error (Cohen, 1982; Rios, 2021). To accommodate this as a possible issue with the data, the Bonferroni correction was used to change the significance to $p < .013$. The results show two of the subscales of this instrument are not statistically significant with $p > .05$ (Table 4.9). With *p*-values greater than the threshold of significance no statistical significance was found as there is not at least a 95% confidence level that the results are due to the intervention and not by chance. The amount of subscales within the instrument dictate further analysis of the remaining data fields. For the attention subscale, pre- survey ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .41$) and post-survey ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .36$), $t(11) = -2.94$, $p = .01$) the *p*- value is greater than the significant value of $p < .0125$.

Table 4.9 *Paired Samples T-Tests- Instructional Materials Motivation Survey*

Subscales	Pre-Study		Post-Study		*t*	*df*	*p*	*d*
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*				
Attention	3.14	0.41	3.39	0.36	-2.94	11	.01	-8.49
Relevance	3.22	0.48	3.33	0.46	-.62	8	.55	-2.07
Confidence	3.19	0.39	3.46	0.35	-2.09	8	.07	-.70

Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests

Since the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality tests show a non-normal distribution for the satisfaction subscale with $p < .05$, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant change to the satisfaction

subscale before and after the study (Adams & Lawrence, 2019). The Wilcoxon signed-rank data for the subscale is presented in Table 4.10. To correct the possibility of false statistical significance with multiple subscales, a Bonferroni correction was used to assess the *p*-value (Armstrong, 2014; Cabin & Mitchell, 2000; Cohen, 1982). Using the Bonferroni correction, the significance of *p* was adjusted to ($p < 0.013$). The change in the satisfaction subscale was not statistically significant ($p = .10$) though it did have a medium effect size.

Table 4.10 *Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests- Instructional Materials Motivation Survey*

Subscale	Pre-survey		Post-survey					
	Mdn.	*SD*	*Mdn.*	*SD*	*Z*	*df*	*p*	*r*
Satisfaction	3.50	0.26	3.39	0.30	.94	5	.10	.73

When participants completed the post-surveys, the researcher noted the average time of completion for each post-survey as displayed in Figure 4.3 below. This is discussed as a limitation to the quantitative data in Chapter 5. Figure 4.3 shows documentation of the average time of participants for the surveys.

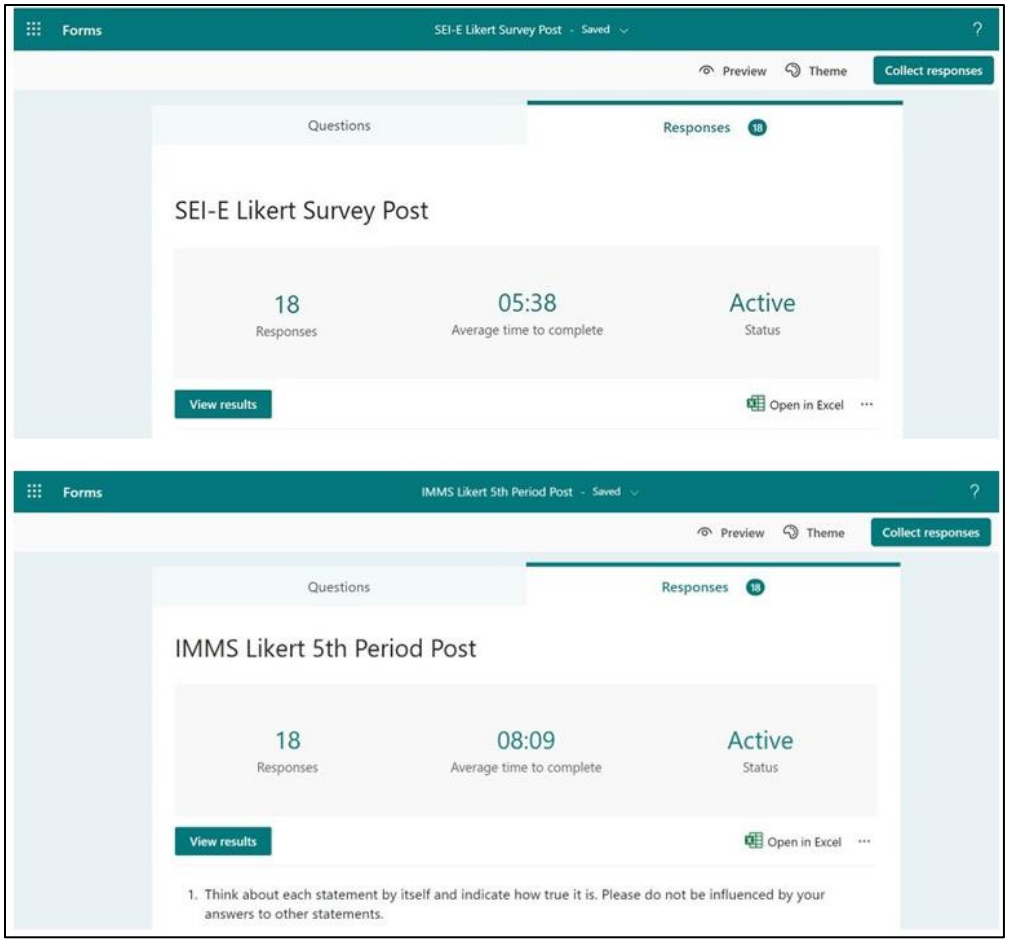

Figure 4.3 Post- Survey Times. Average time of SEI-E and IMMS post-surveys.

Qualitative Findings

For this mixed methods research, qualitative data was collected from exit tickets and focus group interviews. During the intervention, all participants were assigned four exit tickets through Microsoft Teams using Microsoft Forms to provide quick formative assessments through individualized feedback (Fowler, Windschitl, & Richards, 2019). The responses from each exit ticket were downloaded as a Microsoft Excel document then converted into Microsoft Word transcripts. The focus group interviews were conducted in the final week of the action research study using Microsoft Teams for recording then Microsoft Word for transcription. All participants' identifying information

was replaced with pseudonyms before the initial coding process commenced. Table 4.11 provides an overview of the number of sources from the qualitative data instruments and codes applied in the initial process.

Table 4.11. *Qualitative Data Sources*

Qualitative Data Instruments	Sources	Codes
Exit Tickets (4)	68	60
Group Interviews (4)	4	127
Total	72	187

Exit Tickets

At the end of each choice board activity, each participant completed an exit ticket in Microsoft Forms to provide more individualized feedback and information for modifying the choice boards and comparison with the focus group interviews. Below Figure 4.4 provides a snip of the first exit ticket prompt.

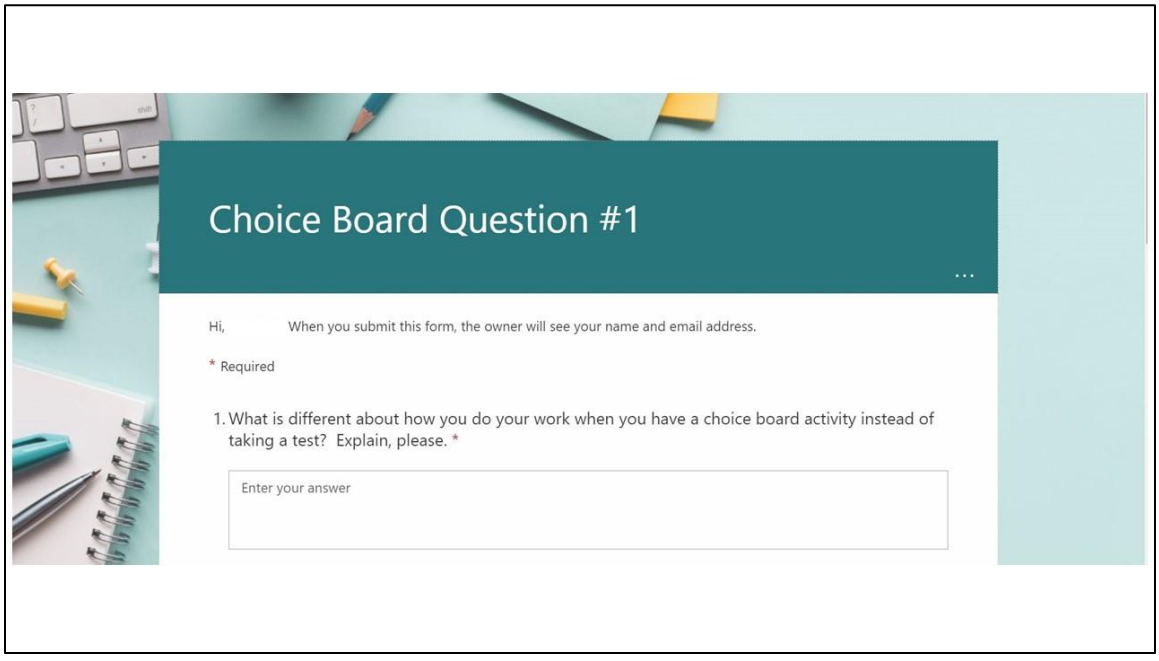

Figure 4.4 Exit ticket prompt. Snip of exit ticket in Microsoft Forms

The open-ended questions were aligned to the research questions, and they prompted participants to explain their thoughts concerning choice boards and noticeable changes in participation and study habits. Each exit ticket contained an open-ended question for the 17 participants, which resulted in a total of 68 data sources. Microsoft Forms provided immediate downloads of the responses through Excel and a word cloud of participant responses. Word clouds illustrate key words and phrases the participants used in their responses. The size of the words in the clouds represent the frequency the words were used in all responses to the exit ticket prompt. Word clouds offered the researcher with a quick analysis of participant responses before in vivo coding began. Figure 4.5 provides a snapshot of the participants' responses as generated by Microsoft Forms. Figure 4.6 shows pseudonyms, exit ticket questions, and responses in Excel before transcription.

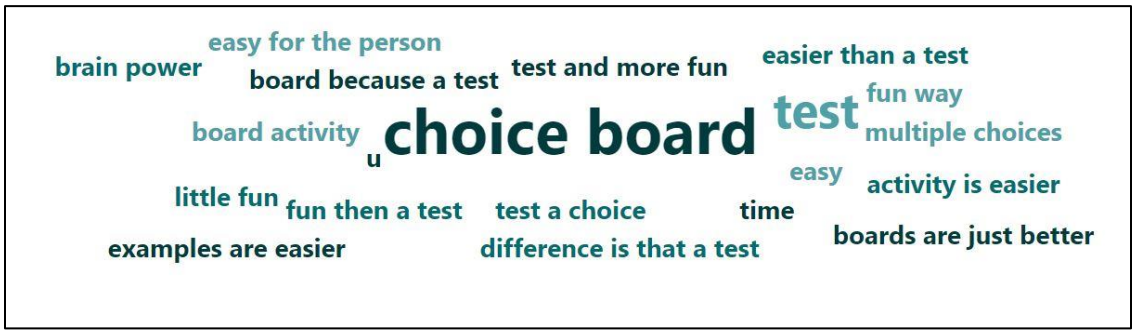

Figure 4.5 Exit Question #1 Word Cloud. Microsoft Forms generates an overview of participant responses.

	Name	What is different abc	Have your work habi	Provide an example	What are some thing
1	Kyle	Doing choice board is m	Yes. It made the activitie	I participate more when	Whenever we do choice
2	Jamie	I love the choice board b	Yes I love it	Yes I participate more.	paying attention
3	Jordan	I get to choose what act	yes, because I don't feel	I participate more becau	I am getting better grade
4	Taylor	Choice boards make me	My work habits have cha	I feel like I participate m	The choice boards make
5	Charlie	I would take the activity	I think so but its definitle	It makes me feel good a	Definitley by doing the w
6	Logan	How I feel a lot less stre	some thing has changed	I participate more becau	i participate a lot and do
7	Ryan	with the choice board yc	I am doing more work ai	I participate way more b	my grade shows an exar
8	Blake	cause choice boards are	my grade goes up and dc	i participate more becau	me participating
9	Alex	I like choice board's bec	yes, because i feel like i l	more because it helps m	I think my learning hobb
10	Emerson	A choice board activity is	My habits changed beca	I participate more becau	Im coping the note and p
11	Drew	i love the choice board b	yes my habbits changed	i participating in class m	paying attention in class
12	Brooklyn	I want to do projects .	To be honest I feel a lot	Choice boards are kind c	I don't anything to partic
13	Cameron	i feel like i get more opti	yes i have found ss more	some power points are l	i getting better grades ar
14	Parker	On a choice board activi	Yes, because it's an easi	Choice boards make me	I have a high A but I had
15	Austin	It feels like it takes more	They've improved.	I feel the same since tes	For me it didn't change r
16	Avery	The difference is that a t	No my work habits have	Choice boards make me	I am understanding more
17	Kennedy	choice bored gives u mo	i have been doing better	it makes me feel really g	paying attention a lot m

Figure 4.6 Exit tickets download. Excel data before import into Delve.

In the beginning the researcher was unfamiliar with the extent to which Delve would disaggregate the data for analysis. To prepare the data for upload, the researcher divided the 68 exit ticket responses from the Excel document into four Microsoft Word transcripts, one for each individual question in relation to the research questions. The individual Microsoft Word documents were formatted so each participant's pseudonym would appear adjacent to their response for ease of identification for discussion. Subsequently, the transcripts were uploaded to Delve for more detailed analysis as shown below in Figure 4.7. As the inductive analysis process began, 187 codes were initially produced.

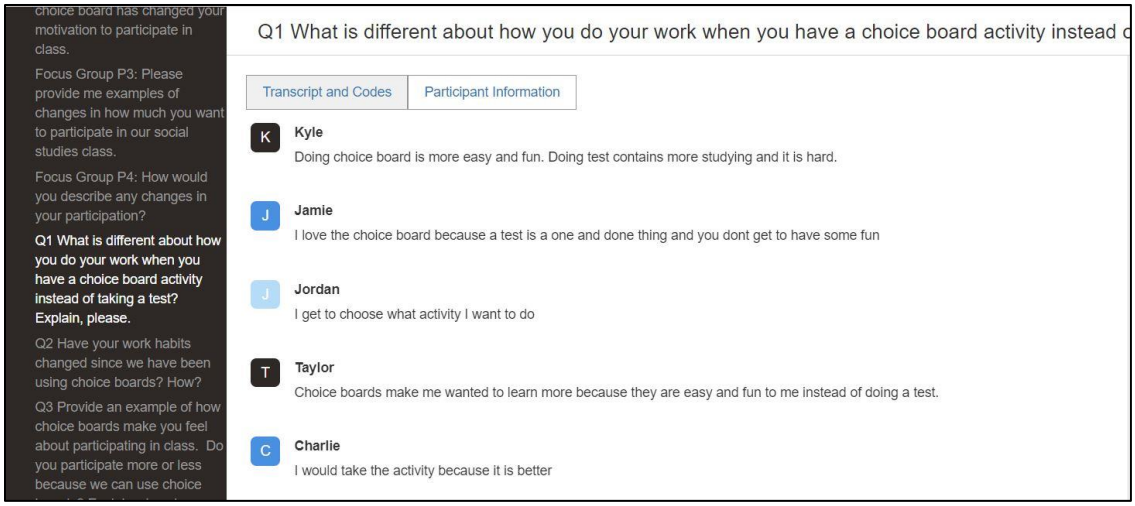

Figure 4.7 Delve transcript. Uploaded exit ticket transcripts by question into Delve.

Focus Group Interviews

After the intervention concluded, the 17 study participants were divided into four focus groups for interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted in the classroom using Microsoft Teams to record the conversations. During the interviews, eight questions were presented to the group for discussion. The first four questions aligned with RQ1 addressing participants' motivation to engage and participate in social studies. The final four questions addressed RQ2 asking participants to describe their feelings using choice boards and any changes they experienced in their habits and feelings about social studies. Each focus group interview was recorded by the researcher via Microsoft Teams. After the researcher presented daily whole group information, the focus group interviews were conducted in the classroom with durations leading to approximately 107 minutes audio recordings total. The first interview was slightly longer as there were five male participants in the focus group. The remaining focus groups were mixed by gender; all groups were mixed by race. The audio recordings were uploaded to Microsoft Word online for transcription into text as shown in Figure 4.8 below. Audio to text

transcriptions were available using the Dictate to Transcribe feature in the O365 version of Microsoft Word.

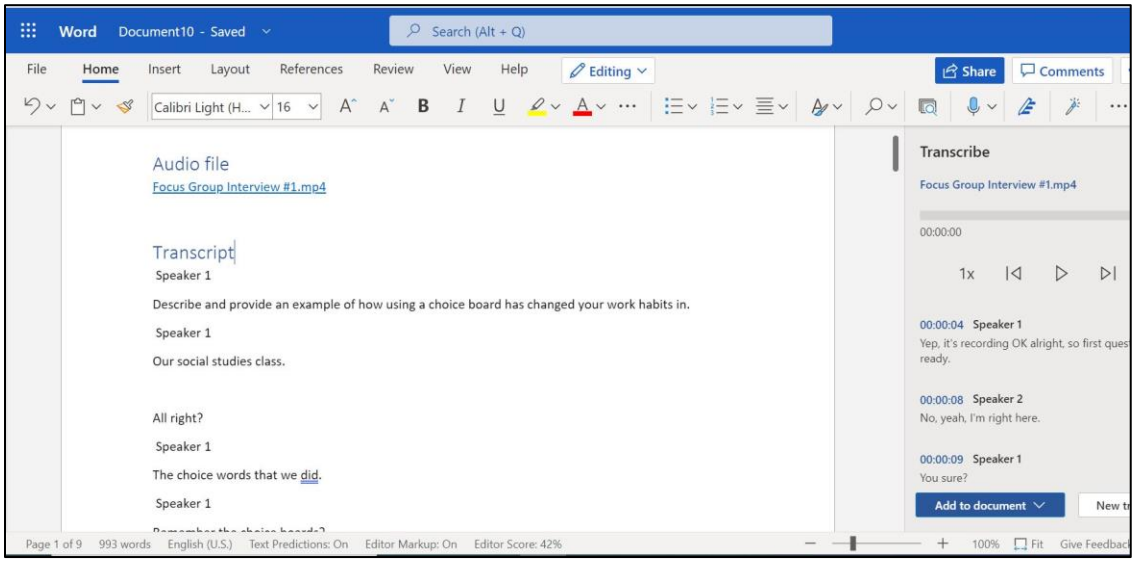

Figure 4.8 Microsoft Word Transcription. Audio recording of focus group interview.

After uploading the focus group interview audio files to individual blank documents, a transcript was created for each focus group interview session. The researcher compared the transcriptions to the audio recordings for accuracy and modified the documents according to discrepancies in language, missed phrases, and changes in speakers. After modifying the transcripts to correlate with the audio recordings, the researcher briefly met with each focus group to clarify the transcripts were an accurate description of their responses. Member checking with the participants provided authenticity and accuracy for the researcher while validating the research process for the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Stake, 1995). Prior to importing the transcripts into Delve software for data analysis, the researcher inserted pseudonyms (Participant #) to provide anonymity for the participants and formatted the document to provide a better manageability for the coding process. The researcher also formatted the transcriptions by

merging the responses to the eight interview questions into four prompts for conciseness. This yielded four prompt transcriptions for the interview questions corresponding to the four exit ticket transcriptions. The first and second interview prompts and exit ticket questions align with RQ1 while the third and fourth interview prompts and exit ticket questions align with RQ2.

Qualitative Analysis of Exit Ticket and Focus Group Interview Data

The first cycle of qualitative data analysis began with eclectic coding as an open coding method for the researcher to explore both sets of data by reading through the transcripts multiple times (Saldana, 2021). The initial findings showed several codes were common to the exit ticket responses and the interview transcripts including (a) emotion (b) in vivo and (c) process codes. After previewing the exit ticket and interview responses, the transcriptions of the participants' voices were imported into Delve software to continue first cycle coding with in vivo coding. The qualitative data was imported by questions and prompts and each data source into Delve, an online coding system, to be analyzed independently by transcript as aligned to the research questions (Delve, 2022). The researcher examined each of the initial eight transcripts to visually explore suggestive codes before beginning the in vivo coding method with Delve. While reading through each of the transcripts, the researcher took notes creating analytic memos to determine what codes would emerge from the initial data. Through immersing oneself in the data for initial coding, the researcher was able to gain a better perspective of the feelings the participants were expressing through their verbal and written comments (Saldana, 2021). This analytical memo process also allowed the researcher to distinguish

expressions that might be discerned differently if read out of context from the conversations, allowing for the entire coding process to unfold more distinctly.

In the initial online coding process of the focus group interview prompts and the exit ticket responses, 187 codes total emerged as shown previously in Table 4.13. The researcher began the initial coding process by reading an individual participant's response to capture the feelings portrayed. To show the participants' voices, the researcher used the participant's words with in vivo codes producing an abundance of phrases and code words. The variety and quantity of the codes derived from participants' written and verbal responses attest to the richness of qualitative data. Figure 4.9 shows the initial online coding process before the researcher organized the transcripts to correctly format in the software.

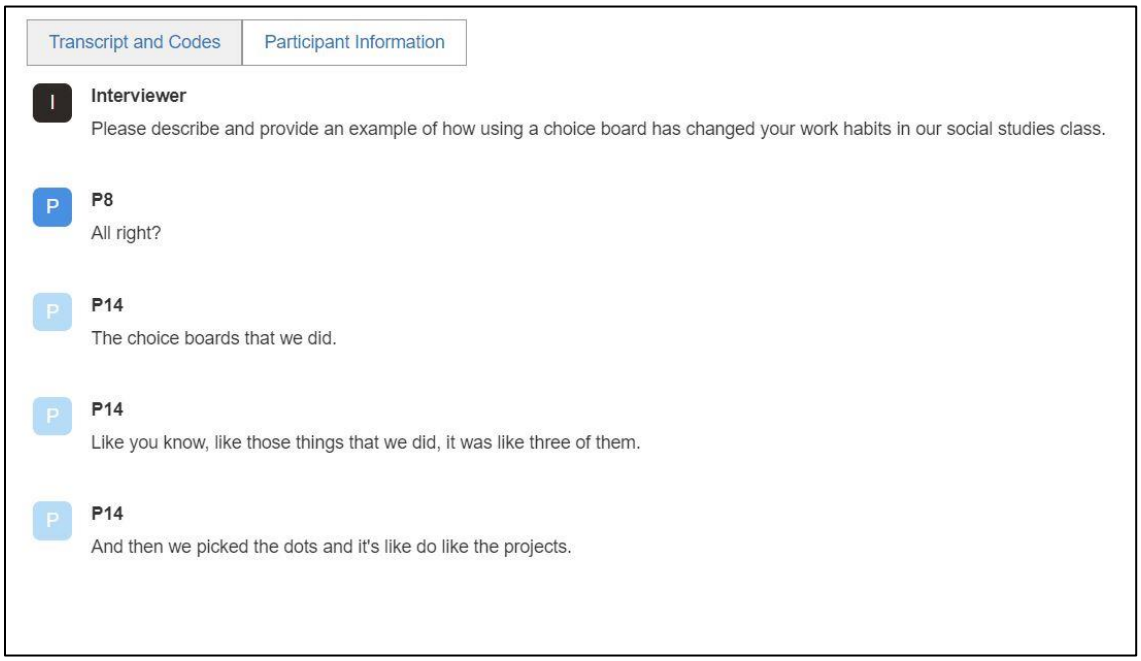

Figure 4.9 Initial Coding in Delve. Beginning coding process before full organization.

Initial codes emerging were simple expressions and phrases from the participant responses yielding a large amount of single codes. Phrases captured included minimal

words such as *like*, *fun*, *like choices*, *enjoy*, *do more* (RQ1) and *asking questions*, *talking to the teacher*, *asking for help*, *understand more*, *options*, *partners*, *someone else,* and *friends* (RQ2). Using Delve to code the transcripts line by line, the emergence of emotion and process codes became more apparent showing participants' experiences with personalized learning, including feelings and practices (See Appendix I). Figure 4.10 shows a representation of the large amount of single codes that emerged during the initial round of online coding.

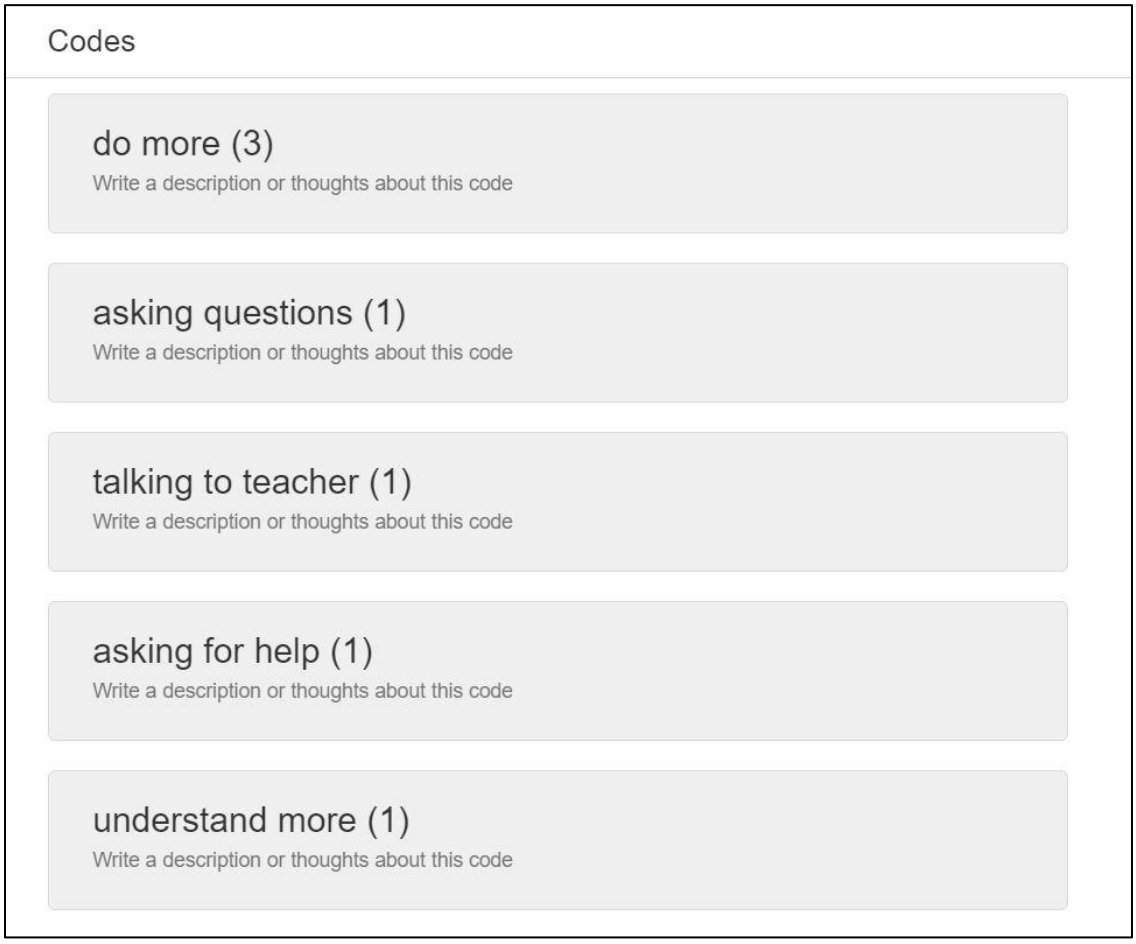

Figure 4.10 Initial In Vivo Codes in Delve. Large amount of single codes to be merged.

After consulting with the dissertation chair about the amount of codes that emerged from the data, the researcher began a second round of first cycle coding by

assembling similar codes or patterns together. The second round of pattern coding entailed merging similar general codes into more specific codes which narrowed the quantity to 72 codes. In a more visual approach, the researcher printed the codes from the Delve software to manually arrange them and subsume the codes into categories. Figure 4.11 below shows pattern coding, the manipulation of the codes into categories before merging them in Delve. Figure 4.12 extends the categories into the Delve software.

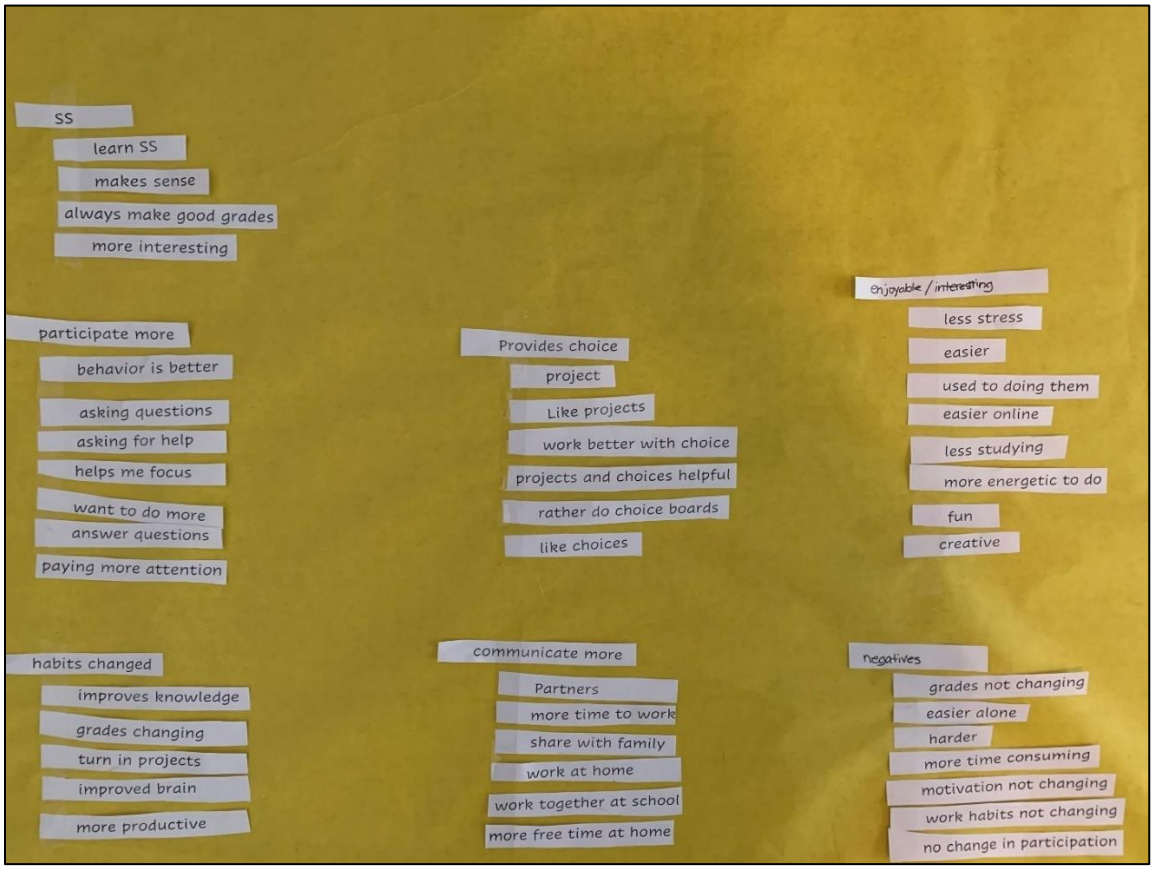

Figure 4.11 Pattern coding. Manual categorizing codes to create categories.

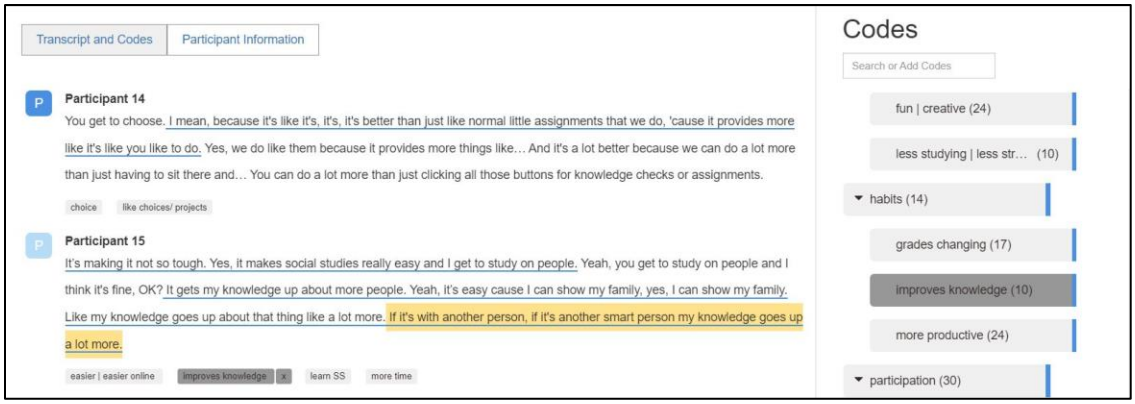

Figure 4.12 Code Merge in Delve. Codes merged and labeled in patterns.

Weekly consultations with the dissertation chair proved beneficial as he assisted the researcher in processing thoughts about the seven categories and 26 codes. Using the Delve software, the 72 codes were merged into 31 more inclusive codes, 26 codes subsumed into the first six categories, positively addressing the intervention and the remaining five codes describing negative aspects were shared as drawbacks. The researcher's initial categories were fragile and did not provide sufficient support to align with the research questions cohesively. From a different perspective, stronger categories were created resulting in another round of online coding. New effective categories were created to subsume 31 codes. Below Figure 4.13 shows the new categories manually aligned to the research questions. Table 4.12 shows the research questions aligned to categories and codes.

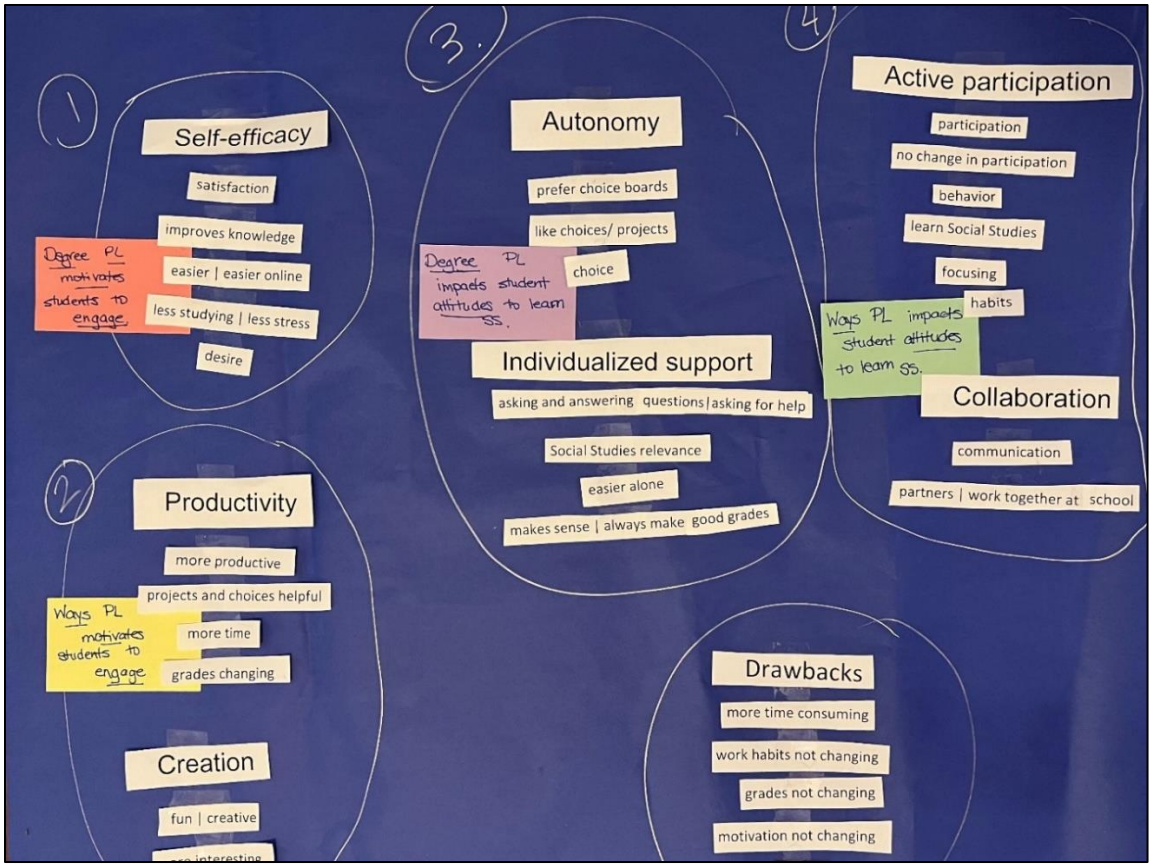

Figure 4.13 Visual Representation of Categories and Codes. Codes subsumed by categories aligned to the research questions.

Table 4.12 *Research Questions Aligned to Categories, Definition, and Codes*

Research Question	Categories	Definitions	Codes
RQ1. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in social studies?	Self-Efficacy	An individual's belief in his ability to complete a task or be successful.	• Satisfaction • Improves knowledge • Easier • Easier online • Less studying • Less stress • Desire
	Productivity	Being able to generate or create something.	• More productive • Projects and choices helpful • More time • Grades changing

	Creation	Creativity is the ability to make something new and useful or valuable.	• Fun • Creative • More interesting
RQ2. In what ways and to what degree does personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?	Autonomy	Students can make their own decisions.	• Prefer choice boards • Like choices • Like projects • Choice
	Individualized Support	Assistance for a student to be self-determined, independent, and productive.	• Asking and answering questions • Asking for help • Social studies relevance • Easier alone • Makes sense • Always makes good grades
	Active Participation	Active participation is the act of students engaging in class.	• Participation • No change in participation • Behavior • Learn social studies • Focusing • Habits
	Collaboration	Working with someone to produce or create something.	• Communication • Partners • Work together at school

During the second cycle of coding the six categories were subsumed into four themes that align the seven categories to the two research questions. The entire inductive coding process yielded stronger categories which allowed four distinct themes to emerge from the data aligning cohesively with each research question. After manually arranging the codes into categories, the researcher edited codes and categories in Delve to mirror

the manual representation for one final round of online coding. Participant numbers were edited to provide gender neutral pseudonyms when extracting quotes from Delve. In the final round of coding, statements were assembled to support the themes which have emerged from the detailed inductive coding analysis. Below Table 4.13 shows the alignment of the themes, categories, and excerpt statements.

Table 4.13 *Alignment of Themes, Categories, and Excerpt Statements*

Themes	Categories	Excerpts
Personalized learning leads to enhanced self-efficacy towards social studies (RQ1).	Self- Efficacy	"I think learning about people with a project more than only reading stuff. It makes more sense and I can make a PowerPoint to show you for my grade not writing lots." Jordan
Personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies (RQ1).	Productivity	"My work habits have changed because when we do the choice boards they are fun to me so they also make me want to work more." Taylor
	Creation	"It kind of feels like it makes it more fun to learn. I love projects. When we did, we chose what we're going to do like you got to choose if you want to do a PowerPoint or a flip grid or did you want to write a paper or what else you want to do. Yeah, it was helpful. I like projects and having a choice. I like doing a PowerPoint better than doing a test." Logan
Autonomy and individualized support promoted engagement in social studies activities (RQ2).	Autonomy	"I mean, because it's like it's better than just like normal little assignments that we do, because it provides more like you like to do. Yes, we do like them because it provides more things like projects, and it's a lot better because we can do a lot more than just having to sit there and… You can do a lot more than just clicking all those buttons for knowledge checks or assignments. Like as the year's going, since we done them a few times. After the first time it was easy, because choice boards are like cars like you

		can do a lot more than just having a normal assignment. You get a lot more options than just a normal assignment." Parker
	Individualized support	"If I don't know, I can ask for help like the FlipGrids. We made one together but I didn't know how to change it, so I asked Avery to show us." Blake
Active participation and collaborative knowledge construction helped students desire to learn more in social studies (RQ2).	Active participation	"I feel like I participate more when we do the choice boards because the choice board get my interest up, so it helps me remember more." Alex
	Collaboration	"I think I do more work with a choice board because I'm doing it with someone else most of the time." Austin

Qualitative Themes

With the exit ticket interviews, participants were asked questions pertaining to the differences they found in working on a choice board activity instead of taking a test and how their habits have changed using choice boards (RQ1) as well as how the choice boards made them feel about participating in class and what they were doing differently in class that showed their participation (RQ2). The questions were aligned to Keller's ARCS model (Keller, 2008a; Li & Keller, 2018) which focuses on learner motivation for success in the classroom. In this action research with the focus being social studies, many of these participants' past experiences are limited to reading from a textbook and answering questions on a multiple-choice test as will be noted in some of their responses. Choice boards provided participants the autonomy to decide what and when to engage and interact with social studies (Ifenthaler et al., 2018).

In the focus group interviews, participants were asked similar but more detailed questions to elicit deeper responses about their self-efficacy, how they were motivated to

participate, and how choice boards made them feel about learning social studies. Participants were vocal about collaboration and creation as well as the improvements in their grades though grades were not a variable in this action research. Engagement in the social studies classroom is pertinent to academic success which is directly related to participants' motivation and attitudes towards their curriculum requirements.

Four themes emerged from the data analysis of the exit ticket questions and the focus group interviews: 1) personalized learning leads to enhanced self-efficacy towards social studies, 2) personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies, 3) autonomy and individualized support promoted engagement in social studies activities, and 4) active participation and collaborative knowledge construction helped students desire to learn more in social studies.

Theme 1: Personalized learning leads to enhanced self-efficacy towards social studies

Self-efficacy, students' beliefs that they can complete the tasks required to meet their goals emerged as a major theme in this action research study. The first theme supported the benefits of providing participants the opportunity to have an active role in their education allowing them to enjoy what they are learning (Bai, 2020; Wright, et al, 2016). Sixth graders new to the middle school environment feel stress when they arrive from learning how to navigate a large school to changing classes with six teachers instead of one. Learning the nuances is overwhelming so providing students the opportunity to build their self-efficacy in social studies allowed them to feel successful. One category emerged for this theme as presented below.

Self-efficacy

It was noticeable that several participants expressed that using choice boards led to feelings of increased self-efficacy when using the intervention study activities to replace sit-down tests. In the focus group interview, when asked how choice boards changed their work habits, Emerson stated: “I participate more because it helps me focus more because tests are just too stressful and I feel like all we do in class are tests in the other classes.” Similarly, Austin externalized positive perceptions of choice boards by emphasizing that they made it easier to learn social studies and understand the content:

> It’s making it not so tough. Yes, it makes social studies really easy… Like my knowledge goes up about that thing like a lot more. If it's with another person, if it's another smart person my knowledge goes up a lot more.

When answering the exit ticket aligned to this question, Kennedy who has a 504 plan for anxiety and ADHD said, “I’m paying attention a lot more and asking for help … and asking questions and going up to my teacher to talk to her when there is a problem and need help. It makes me feel really good...” Additional responses reverberated self-efficacy with Brooklyn writing, “I learned how to look up stuff… I feel like I can tell others about what I found out” and Charlie’s noted that he can “get my grades up cuz I know how to do Flipgrid to tell what I know.”

Comments such as these show students experienced feelings of satisfaction and confidence, as well as reduced stress in the social studies classroom. The analysis showed participants felt confident that they can complete their chosen projects and earn better grades in social studies. Learner satisfaction leads to better attitudes motivating students to be more engaged and productive in the social studies classroom (Montebello, 2016).

Theme 2: Personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies

The second theme, personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies, emerged from participants' comments showing that they were creating items to show their learning of the social studies content. Participants created digital items or narratives to meet the goal of answering the essential questions for each social studies unit. to answer the essential questions. Their commentaries display personalized learning with choice boards made learning more fun and relevant to their social studies goals. This theme showed that choice boards motivated students to be producers in social studies. Results from two categories--productivity and creativity--showed students found they were more productive when they had choices about creating their final product.

Productivity

Participants found personalized learning with the projects and choices motivated them to learn the content, with several documenting better productivity and improvements in grades. The participants explained that personalized learning provided them choices and made learning more fun. Choice boards were interesting and relevant to their knowledge process, thus inspiring productivity. During our focus group interview, Avery stated, "I prefer the choice boards because it's easier for me to get the choice boards done within the PowerPoint's time" and Logan replied "It…feels…more fun to learn. I love projects… choose if you want to do a PowerPoint or a flip grid or … write a paper or what else … I like doing a PowerPoint better than doing a test." Blake stated he felt he was more productive because "you can do a PowerPoint or… a poster. I turned

them in, but I don't always turn in a test [laughs]". Personalized learning provided participants choices that motivated them to be more productive and timelier in their work.

Creativity

Qualitative responses showed participants noticed an increase in creativity with personalized learning with their comments. The participants maintained that they could be more creative with choice boards because they used personalized learning to express their voices with different media, making learning more pleasurable. For example, Charlie explained that "When we do Flipgrid I participate in that because it's fun and I like to do the PowerPoints because I get to be creative." Along these lines, Ryan reported that "You can do a lot more things and use your own ideas with choice boards in social studies." Interestingly, participants also mentioned that personalized learning led to better grades in social studies. Specifically, Jordan said that… "I am getting better grades in SS, because I am doing more work that I want to do because I can show what I know in different ways, and it is fun."

Students found the projects and choices helpful in learning the content with several documenting an improvement in grades. Figure 4.14 below shows a student PowerPoint from the Renaissance Choice board.

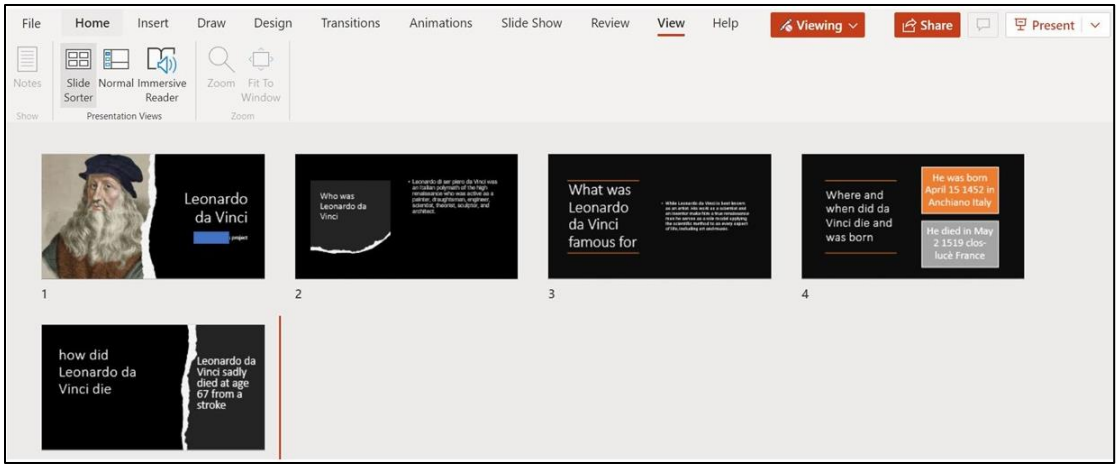

Figure 4.14 Participant PowerPoint. Created for the Renaissance choice board

Participants also used Flipgrid to create videos in response to choice boards to show their learning as seen in Figure 4.15 below showing a snip of a participant's email of a video.

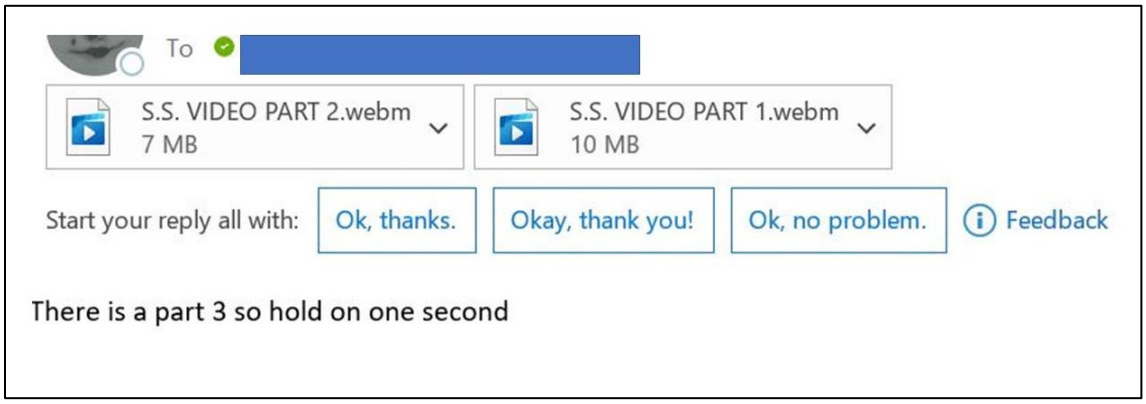

Figure 4.15 Participant FlipGrid video. Participant email of video response

Choice boards made social studies fun and more interesting because students could be creative. Responses to both the exit tickets and the focus group interview questions supported personalized learning as motivating participants to be productive and creative in social studies. When engaging interventions are infused in the curriculum, learners are motivated with positive results (Alamri et al., 2020).

Theme 3: Autonomy and individualized support promoted engagement in social studies activities

Personalized learning provides autonomy to students by giving participants the ability to choose their learning path. Individualized support with the software and technology requirements reinforced participants' engagement in the social studies classroom. The third theme shows that autonomy and individualized support were natural outcomes of personalized learning that encouraged student learning and engagement. Personalized learning by definition customized instruction to meet the individual student's needs. Both autonomy and individualized support emerged as categories discussed in the exit ticket responses and the focus group interviews.

Autonomy

Participants readily agreed they preferred choice boards over tests because they preferred the option to choose what they would do to prove mastery in social studies. Qualitative responses supported studies that show choice provides learner autonomy which is an important factor in motivating students (Li & Wong, 2020; Waldrip et al., 2016). The participants readily agreed that personalized learning presenting them a variety of choices was more favorable to taking notes and being assessed with tests. They also said that choice boards made them more productive in social studies. In the focus group interview, Parker stated

> "I mean… it provides more like you like to do… more things like projects, and … we can do a lot more than just having to sit there…more than just clicking all those buttons for knowledge checks or assignments. After the first time, it was easy, because…you can do a lot more than just having a normal assignment. You get a lot more options."

In response to Parker during the focus group interview, Jordan stated "I think that it helps to do choice boards instead… of notes and tests. I want … a choice of doing different things or PowerPoint…of what you do."

Exit ticket responses also found personalized learning provided participants autonomy as they described that choice boards motivated them more than seatwork that fostered more comprehension in social studies. Two high-achieving students, Taylor and Avery, respectively wrote that "The choice boards make me feel like I know more because they are easier to do than take notes or study for a test." and "I used to not like to do my work, but I do my work now and understand more."

Quotations from the participants during focus group interviews and the exit tickets found personalized learning with choice boards offered a variety of choices that stimulated engagement in learning social studies.

Individualized Support

Individualized support is another advantage of personalized learning. All students had access to technology with district issued laptops but, there was inconsistency in student training other than basic keyboarding skills. The choice board activities used a range of technology and software programs: (1) Microsoft Office Suite to include Teams, Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, Forms, and Excel, (2) FlipGrid, (3) Discovery Education, (4) SC Discus Online Library Resources. Since there was a discrepancy in prior knowledge, each of these was demonstrated prior to the intervention. Students were encouraged to ask questions to achieve technology proficiency. Sixth graders are often timid when they arrive in a large middle school. Responses to prompts show personalized learning encourages students to seek assistance. Ryan remarked "If I don't know how to

do something, I can ask my teacher or my partner if he is smart." Similarly, Blake commented "I can ask for help like FlipGrids. Taylor and I made one together, but we didn't know how to change our background so I asked Avery to show us how she did it," shows how personalized learning promoted individualized support.

Autonomy resounded throughout the class as a valuable benefit of choice boards. Participants repeatedly said they liked choice boards because there was a variety of options for response to the essential question for the social studies standard. Participants acknowledged they were more willing to ask for individualized support when exposed to personalized learning.

Theme 4: Active participation and collaborative knowledge construction helped students desire to learn more in social studies

Personalized learning with choice boards necessitated active participation which motivated participants' desire to learn the social studies content. Participants worked together to create digital responses with the choice board activities. Their collaborative efforts showed students actively participated to meet their goals. The fourth theme showed that active participation and collaboration influenced students' desire to learn more in the social studies classroom. Support for these ideas is documented in both student exit tickets and focus group interviews by participants' responses.

Active Participation

Personalized learning promoted active participation in the instructional setting that helped encourage students desire to learn more in social studies. Participants' responses to exit ticket and focus group interview prompts found students were more engaged in the learning process that they enjoyed working with others and were more

focused on their learning. Participants acknowledged that they participated in class more when using choice boards because they learned more, and their grades increased.

Responses showed participants described choice boards as a fun way to learn and make better grades. Brooklyn wrote “Choice boards make me feel that I participate in class more because while doing the choice board you’re not studying or working by yourself and when you are in class you will know the answers.” Charlie’s response was that he participated more because it was fun. An added benefit related to participation was noted by Cameron when he wrote that he is “paying attention in class and I don’t get in trouble in social studies, and I like the way the choice boards brought up my grade”. Participants said personalized learning made learning fun, so they actively participated more in social studies when using choice boards.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a key element of personalized learning, and choice boards promoted collaborative knowledge construction. Participants concurred that collaborating on choice board activities promoted a desire to learn social studies because they were working with partners. The exit ticket responses and focus group interviews found that participants were more involved in their learning process when offered a voice and choice in their weekly assessments. Austin wrote “I think I do more work with a choice board because I'm doing it with someone else most of the time.” In our focus group interview, Taylor answered “I like doing the choice board with partners and like if you do the choice boards, you can do it together and you want to learn more.” To which Jamie, my Autistic participant responded “Yes, with your friends. I do my work better now when you know, yeah projects because I always have worked better with friends in

Teams on assignments." Participants agreed that working together to complete their choice board activities gives them ownership and a desire to learn social studies. Participants cited past boredom in the classroom as a hindrance to their participation, yet collaborating with partners on choice boards, encouraged them to become active participants in the social studies classroom.

Chapter Summary

After reviewing the data analysis methods, this chapter presented the quantitative and qualitative findings and themes that emerged from the data collected from four instruments. Quantitative data from two surveys, the Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary (SEI-E) version and the Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) modified to address social studies, was analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired sample *t*-tests, and the Wilcoxon signed rank tests when dictated by the data. The SEI-E findings showed only one subscale of the seven, affective engagement (Z= 3.59, $p < .001$, $r = 0.76$) proved to be statistically significant and it was found to have a medium effect size. In the SEI-E survey, 19 of the 33 questions were directed towards the affective engagement subscale. In the IMMS survey, the means of three of the four subscales increased from the pre-survey to the post-survey though none were deemed statistically significant. Possible reasons for the resulting analysis are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Qualitative data from exit tickets and focus group observations were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. Four themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis: 1) personalized learning leads to enhanced self-efficacy towards social studies, 2) personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies, 3) autonomy and individualized support promoted

engagement in social studies activities, and 4) active participation and collaborative knowledge construction helped students desire to learn more in social studies.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this action research was to explore the influence of personalized learning with choice boards on motivation and engagement of a sixth-grade class in a large, suburban middle school in coastal South Carolina. The following research questions were addressed in this study: (1) In what ways and to what degree will personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in the social studies classroom? (2) In what ways and to what degree will personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies? This chapter presents a discussion of the findings related to the research questions, the implications of the findings of this study, and the study's limitations.

Discussion

The quantitative findings of this study revealed no statistically significant changes in motivation for student engagement or attitudes toward learning social studies when using choice boards for personalized learning. For this study, participants were assessed with two separate pre- and post- surveys. Possible reasons for the findings include the amount of assessments required of the participants in the weeks before our post-survey. Studies show student apathy may result from overassessment (Dewitt, 2022; Tarc, 2009). Typical testing simulations in the social studies classroom range from thirty to sixty minutes but, the average time for participants to complete the post-survey was atypical. Post-survey data for the SEI-E (33 prompts) and IMMS (36 prompts) showed average

time on task was not sufficient to read the prompts and respond thoroughly. Figure 4.3 shows documentation of the average time of participants for the surveys.

The qualitative findings found the following four themes: (1) Personalized learning leads to self-efficacy towards social studies; (2) Personalized learning motivated students to be productive in constructing artifacts and writing about social studies; (3) Autonomy and individualized support promoted engagement in social studies activities; and (4) Active participation and collaborative knowledge construction helped students desire to learn more in social studies. The five clusters of Keller's ARCS-V model, attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction, and volition are the foundation for the instructional design of this action research project. Ensuing discussion focuses on the individual research questions and will address the three tenants of Keller's MVP theory: (1) motivation (2) volition and (3) performance as they are the core of this action research study exploring student motivation, engagement, and attitudes towards learning social studies.

Research Question 1: In what ways and to what degree will personalized learning affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in the social studies classroom?

This research question sought to explore how and to what degree personalized learning would affect student motivation to engage in social studies. To focus on this question, the findings from two qualitative data collection methods, students exit ticket responses, and focus group interviews were analyzed and combined. Three categories emerged from the data analysis cycle connected to ways students were motivated to engage in social studies and to what degree they were motivated to engage in social studies through: (1) Self-efficacy (2) Productivity, and (3) Creativity.

Sixth grade students beginning a large middle school have varying degrees of technology skills as four elementary schools merge into one middle school, and there is no district-wide technology curriculum. In the 2020-2021 schoolyear, our district provided each student with a device, but technology training for students was limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Microsoft Teams was used for virtual classroom meetings during the hiatus from in-person instruction, but the technological skills of the teachers determined the breadth and depth of students' technology proficiency with district-based programs (Keller, 2008b; Losike-Sedime & Ngwako, 2016).

After analyzing the results of the pre- and post-surveys, the intervention did not have a significant impact on student motivation to engage in learning social studies. As seen in Figure 4.1, the intrinsic motivation subscale of the Student Engagement Survey - Elementary (SEI-E) decreased from the pre-study survey (*M*= 4.03, *SD*= .20) to post-study survey (*M*= 3.67, *SD*= .16). As seen in Figure 4.2, Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS) pre- and post-survey subscale data found a slight increase in means for attention from pre-study survey (*M*=3.14, *SD* = .41) to the post-study survey (*M*= 3.39, *SD*= .36), relevance from pre-study- survey (*M*=3.22, *SD* = .48) to the post-study survey (*M*= 3.33, *SD* = .46), and confidence from the pre-study survey (*M*= 3.19, *SD* = .39) to the post study survey (*M*= 3.46, *SD*= .35). There was a slight decrease in means for satisfaction from the pre-study survey (*M*= 3.33, *SD*= .38) to post-study survey (*M*= 3.28, *SD*= .27). Further data analysis with parametric and non-parametric tests found there was no significant change in either survey to quantitatively prove the intervention prompted a significant change in student motivation.

Keller's ARCS-V learning design model suggests external inputs of motivational strategies to provide attention, relevance, and confidence for effort direction. Studies suggest pre-teaching and scaffolding technology for students before instruction will enhance technology proficiency to motivate student engagement in activities (Ciampa, 2014; Losike-Sedime & Ngwako, 2016; Smits, 2021). In the ARCS-V design model low volition is characterized with low self-efficacy. Before beginning the intervention, participants showed little enthusiasm in learning new technology. Self- efficacy was low as participants were not equipped with the technological skills necessary to begin the intervention.

Since participants' technology skills were at different levels, technology training in software and online programs was provided to the participants before the data collection commenced. The participants cited boredom in previous classes with the limited use of technology for creativity. Various applications were taught to build on interests and motives, to share expectations, and to prepare them for success. The technology lessons coincided with the practice choice board experience. Learning technology skills and software applications nurtured their attention and provided relevance to social studies with choice boards. The technology experience also instilled confidence in their abilities to be successful with personalized learning.

Though the quantitative findings showed no significant change in student motivation to engage, self-efficacy appeared as a defining factor in affecting student motivation to engage in social studies during the analysis of the student exit ticket responses and the transcripts of the focus group interviews. Self- efficacy is categorized as effort persistence, specifically volition in Keller's MVP Theory.

Choice boards provided interactions that mattered to the students and motivated them to believe they were capable of succeeding (Peters et.al, 2019; Weilbacher, 2019). After the personalized learning with the intervention, a noticeable change in self-efficacy was found in participants' volition in exit ticket responses and the focus group interviews. These participants' responses corroborated findings from previous studies that concluded personalized learning strategies improve self-efficacy in students (Cho et al, 2021; Pilotti et al. 2017; Zarrin & Montazer, 2019).

In the MVP model, learning and performance are a simultaneous result of motivation and volition. Productivity and creativity were identified in this action research as the learning and performance of the participants leading to the consequences of satisfaction to engage them in social studies. In the exit ticket responses and focus group interviews, participants' preference of choice boards over standard assessments was the top phrase in the inductive analysis process.

Motivated by learning software and programs, participants were able to create products that showed their learning more successfully with a project than a multiple-choice assessment. Personalized learning led to participants' productivity and creativity because the choice boards were enjoyable and helped them learn social studies. Participants were motivated to engage, which was accredited to their learning habits improved by using choice boards. The personalized learning experience with choice boards provided participants the opportunity to be more creative and productive in the social studies classroom.

The participants found choice boards fun and easier because they could be creative in their work. Their productivity and creativity were evident in the finished products that included PowerPoints, posters, and studio boards on Discovery Education.

Summary

To respond to the research question in the ways and degree personalized learning affects students' motivation to learn social studies, the action study addressed both quantitative and qualitative findings. Overall, the quantitative findings for the IMMS showed no significant changes in participants' motivation to learn social studies. The qualitative findings, which are the voices of the participants, aligned with Keller's MVP theory. Personalized learning with standards-based choice boards led to enhanced self-efficacy in participants. Learning new software and programs was a motivating external factor with respect to attention, relevance, and confidence, leading to participants' increased volition. By directly enhancing persistence through making learning fun, personalized learning strategies provided participants a voice and choice promoting productivity and creativity. Personalized learning motivated participants to be productive and creative in constructing artifacts to document their learning. The outcome of MVP learning model is the satisfaction of the participants, described in their responses to the exit ticket prompts and the focus group interview prompts. Motivating students with personalized learning choices led to enhanced self-efficacy documented by productivity and creativity resulting in satisfaction. This corroborates studies that have found increasing motivation with fun learning activities stimulates students to be creative, contributing to their learning performance because they believe they can use effective

strategies to learn better (Cho et al, 2021; Gong, 2021; Kirmizigül, 2021; Small & Gluck, 1994).

Research Question 2: In what ways and to what degree will personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies?

This research question sought to explore how and to what degree personalized learning would impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies. To focus on this question, the findings from two data collection methods, students exit ticket responses, and focus group interviews were analyzed and combined. Four categories emerged from the data analysis cycle connected to ways students' attitudes were impacted toward social studies and to what degree they were impacted through: (1) Autonomy (2) Individualized support, (3) Active participation, and (4) Collaborative knowledge construction.

As discussed earlier, the quantitative findings for the SEI-E post-survey showed decreases in all areas as reported by the participants. These findings show a lack of intrinsic motivation to actively participate in the survey as documented by the average amount of time for the surveys in Figure 5.1. Personalized learning promoted a leaner-centered classroom to motivate students' intrinsic motivation to learn.

Choice boards were designated as the intervention in this action research to spark curiosity and interest to gain participants' attention and to encourage them to become active participants in their learning process. Relevance was addressed with each choice board providing participants a variety of choices to use in answering the essential question for each unit of instruction. Student confidence was promoted by giving participants control over their learning process by letting them choose which type of media they would use to answer the essential questions. The goal of this intervention,

personalized learning with choice boards, was to provide effort direction for impacting participants' attitudes. Studies show students who perceive learning is more enjoyable can overcome worries about school and become more motivated in their attitudes toward learning (Borman et al, 2019; Dincer, 2021, Peters et al, 2019).

As part of effort persistence, personalized learning promoted student autonomy with participants making independent decisions, a self- regulated activity. The ability to choose which media and learning strategies to use in creating a product motivated students to engage in social studies. Exit ticket responses and focus group interview transcripts showed the opportunity to choose ranked high with participants. Personalized learning provided methods for students to take ownership of their learning and to enhance their motivation and performance (Liu et al, 2018; Scogin and Stuessy, 2015; Speranzo and Tillema, 2019).

Individualized support was also found to promote participants' engagement in social studies through personalized learning. As sixth graders entering middle school, the participants found the atmosphere daunting with added responsibilities. Since relationships between teachers and students can impact student attitudes toward learning, personalized learning with choice boards provided the opportunity to build relationships with individual support for students from teachers and peers. Data from exit ticket responses and focus group interview transcripts showed participants felt more comfortable asking and answering questions during the intervention. Students who enjoyed using voice and choice with personalized learning built stronger relationships between peers and the researcher. Students were actively engaged in seeking answers to their questions. Students worked collaboratively with each other to complete their

requirements. Choice boards as a personalized learning intervention fostered building relationships between students, their peers, and the researcher. Personalized learning motivated students to engage in the social studies learning experience (Corso et al, 2013; Peters et al, 2019).

Personalized learning provided autonomy and individualized support to promote participants' engagement in social studies. Choice boards as an intervention allowed participants to take ownership of their learning through the autonomy of their choices. Participants acknowledged no longer struggling to ask and to answer questions for individual support from the teacher when using the intervention. Personalized learning through choice boards allowed autonomy, and impacted engagement in the classroom (Scogin and Stuessy, 2015; Speranzo & Tillema, 2019).

Qualitative data found personalized learning promoted active participation and collaborative knowledge construction, showing the impact of the intervention on participants' attitudes toward learning social studies. Choice boards are metacognitive activities that influence the learning performance of students through focusing their attention and engaging them in the learning process.

Participants actively participated in the intervention by creating responses to choice boards with their preferred software or online program. Active participation required mental activities motivated by interest in choice boards and collaboration with partners in the social studies classroom. Responses to exit ticket prompts and focus group interviews corroborated participants' active participation in the learning process. Participants' comments confirmed personalized learning with choice boards impacted

students' attitudes to learn social studies through active learning (Blau & Shamir-Inbal, 2018; Kelly, 2013; Vecchiola, 2019).

Personalized learning fostered collaborative knowledge construction to help participants develop a desire to learn social studies. Qualitative data findings showed working together in pairs or groups stimulated participants' desire to learn social studies. Participants collaborated to produce projects in response to the essential questions for each unit. Comments from participants' responses to the two qualitative instruments revealed they were more attentive and engaged when working with partners than solo. Participants' comments disclosed they felt more engaged and learned more in social studies when they collaborated with their peers on choice board activities. Their responses substantiated collaboration with choice boards helped them understand social studies better than working alone (Kelly, 2013; Winter, 2018; Yezzi-Woodley et al, 2019).

Personalized learning boosted students' desires to learn more social studies through active learning and collaborative knowledge construction. Findings from student responses to exit ticket and focus group interview prompts showed the degree to which students' desires to learn social studies increased. They learned more because they were having fun and engaged in their learning process through active learning activities, collaborative work, and student presentations (Martin and Bolliger, 2018; Orcid et al., 2019).

Summary

To respond to the research question in the ways and to what degree personalized learning impact students' attitudes toward learning social studies, this action research

study addressed both quantitative and qualitative findings. The quantitative findings for the SEI-E pre-and post-surveys found the intervention provided no significant changes in students' engagement. Participants' responses to exit ticket and focus group interview prompts supported Keller's MVP theory of learning. Personalized learning with choice boards led to autonomy and individualized support which promoted a desire to learn social studies. Choice boards motivated participants' interests to learn social studies by providing them multiple choices to respond to the essential questions through various mediums. The autonomy of being able to make their own choices increased their volition and encouraged them to ask questions and seek individualized support for the teacher and their peers. Autonomy and seeking individualized support indicated the ways participants' desire to learn social studies increased. Active participation and collaborative knowledge construction were learning and performance indicators to show the extent to which personalized learning impacted participants' attitudes to learn social studies. Participants' responses confirmed that students enjoyed personalized learning because they participated more, and they believed that their grades reflected the uptick in their participation. Participants also indicated they preferred working with choice boards because they could collaborate with their friends on the assignments and learned more when working together with peers. Satisfaction as an outcome of the MVP theory was verified through both written and verbal responses to the action research study instruments' prompts. These findings supported studies that showed students who find the activities motivating and engaging will work towards mastery (Lai, 2017; Redding, 2016).

Implications

This action research study and its findings add to the body of research on personalized learning by substantiating choice boards can effectively motivate students to engage and impact their attitudes toward social studies. Implications for the researcher, the research context, and the direction of future studies will be addressed as (1) personal implications, (2) implications for middle school social studies, and (3) implications for future research.

Personal Implications

As a researcher, middle school educator, and an educational leader, several implications were evident from this study. Discussions will be aligned with (a) scholarship and practice and (b) unexpected findings.

Scholarship and Practice

This action research study and the knowledge I have attained from my doctoral studies have benefitted me as a researcher and an educational leader. My professional development will be discussed in relation to the knowledge and experience I have attained in the areas of (a)research and (b) personalized learning.

Research. Prior to beginning this journey, I was an Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) with twelve years away from the classroom. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I returned to the classroom as a virtual teacher for a year before returning as a face-to face instructor in 2021-2022. With that in mind, my doctoral journey into empirical research has been modified several times to accommodate the changes in my role as an educator. The knowledge and skills I have accrued during this quest have been an amazing experience in scholarly practice and honed my skills as a

middle school leader and researcher in education. As an ITS, I was familiar with data from the perspective of our school, district, and state but only approached it from surface level as our programs would disaggregate it with a keystroke. The analysis of my quantitative data provided a deeper insight into the importance of obtaining quality data from students and the repercussions of student attitudes towards the overall testing process. The research field was an anomaly to me when the subject of mixed methods was broached. My previous experience with research in the field of education was in 2001. Research has changed dramatically, as I had no recollection of mixed methods research nor action research from the past. My learning curve has grown phenomenally as I have learned not only the advantages of a mixed methods study but also how to proceed with an action research study as a catalyst for alleviating a problem in my field. Learning to synthesize authors' works and writing the literature review with findings from the educational field was powerful for me. As an ITS, qualitative research was not in my repertoire, as all screeners and tests were quantitative, and color coded according to levels. I have found the benefits of coding qualitative data into overarching categories and themes that do not arise in a quantitative assessment. My qualitative data proved that quantitative data does not guarantee the information is accurate. Aligning my research study instrument prompts to my research questions taught me the importance of assuring the wording of the prompts would yield accurate data. The research process has also taught me the value of cyclical research, repeating the process to provide continuing feedback to improve my instruction.

The action research process also introduced me to three new digital tools: Mendeley, JASP, and Delve. As a senior student, my previous research was limited to ink

jet printed papers and highlighters. As a beginning researcher, Mendeley allowed me to collect my literature research materials, to categorize them, and to add notes that can be searched for specific content as well as provide citations for my references. Learning JASP for statistics made quantitative data analysis much simpler than deciding how to determine which formulas were needed in Excel. Using Delve to code, merge, and categorize my qualitative data was much timelier and more efficient than manually coding my exit ticket and focus group interview prompts. Learning the intricacies of each of these programs through the online videos was beneficial as well. In sum, the research process for my doctoral studies has made a significant improvement in my professional research knowledge base. I will use this knowledge to continue applying research in my classroom to address the problems I find in the future. I will encourage my fellow team members to consider applying empirical research as a scholarly practice to find possible solutions for grade level instructional issues that arise in the coming year.

Personalized Learning. As a middle school educator, this action research study has provided me the ability to delve into personalized learning from a practitioner's point of view. Our district purchased a personalized learning program pre-COVID 19 pandemic, but there have been no further details since schools reopened in the fall of 2020. Curious to learn more about the benefits of personalized learning for my students, I chose this topic to explore if it would motivate my students to be more engaged and impact their attitudes toward learning social studies. Through my research, I have learned more about personalized learning both empirically and through the literature. Through my actual classroom study, I have seen personalized learning from an educator's perspective and from my students' points of view. Merging both our views in

perspective, I have gained a better vision of how to personalize learning for my students to effectively motivate them to engage in the classroom. Providing a variety of choices promotes self-efficacy and motivates them to engage and to actively participate in social studies.

Personalized learning aligns to my constructivist point of view as an educator and fills the gap that creates boredom in social studies. As the sixth-grade social studies lead, I am instrumental in sharing personalized learning and choice boards with my sixth-grade team. During vertical planning with the seventh and eighth grade leads, I described how personalized learning effectively impacted my students, motivating them to engage in social studies impacting their attitudes. In 2022-2023, our goal is to further implement personalized learning to motivate our students to engage in the social studies classrooms. I will submit a proposal for our district Learning By Design Institute which will be held in August 2022. As a seasoned presenter at various state conferences, I also plan to submit proposals to both SC EdTech and the SCMSA for their fall conferences. In the future, personalized learning with choice boards will continue to be an integral part of my social studies classroom. My students found personalized learning beneficial in practice, and it enhanced their self-efficacy for social studies. I learned that providing my students a voice and choice in determining the finished products was an impetus to their success in the social studies classroom.

Unexpected Findings

Due to the pandemic, many participants attended elementary school virtually during the 2020-2021 school year, and they were not prepared to return to face-to-face instruction in the fall. Personalized learning revealed findings that as a school

practitioner, I should address the need for a district technology curriculum and focus directed towards attendance issues.

Need for a district technology curriculum. The discrepancy in technology skills among our sixth graders at the beginning of the year was an unexpected finding as a school practitioner. During the third week of school, I surveyed the students to gain an understanding of their technology skills before my intervention. Even though we are a one-to-one school district with each student being assigned a Dell computer, technology skills were lacking for most students. In the 2020-2021 schoolyear, our district decided to make a fiscal change by dissolving the ITS role which provided each elementary school in the district with an ITS. To replace these positions, the media specialist in each school was given the responsibilities of maintaining the students' devices and the district hired 10 Modern Learning Specialists (MLS) to replace the previous 25 ITS. Students are suffering as a result of this change, as there is no longer a district technology curriculum provided for them. Students' knowledge of district programs is correlated to the amount of technology their teachers use in their classrooms. With this technology deficit, many students came to middle school lacking the basic skills of the Microsoft Office Suite. Prior to my intervention, I taught all my students how to access all Microsoft software, including Outlook, Teams, and Forms. Many had no idea how to access their email or send messages on TEAMS. At the middle school level, many of our teachers do not use technology to facilitate instruction, note-taking, or assessments. As a one to-one district, our expectations for student technology should be outlined, so that every student has an equal opportunity throughout our district. Children will be left behind if their teachers are

not technology savvy and equipped to teach their students 21st Century skills (Corso et al, 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Small & Gluck, 1994).

Focus directed towards attendance issues. Throughout the year, student attendance has been recognized as a classroom problem, but there seems to be little recourse for teachers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many attendance issues were overlooked because there was no stringent policy for attendance. Many students were truant from virtual classes last year, so they did not comprehend why they must attend in person during the 2021-2022 school year. In middle school, many students do not leave for school until after their parents have left for work. If they miss the bus, they miss school because they lack transportation. If they oversleep, they miss school because they are not responsible for waking at an appropriate time. Students and parents provide numerous excuses for not attending school, but truancy remains an issue, and it is more apparent in middle school. I found it necessary to delete one of my participant's data because he was truant during the intervention but completed some of the instruments that were delivered electronically to my participants. Many students believed that since they passed fourth grade after attending a partial year and they skipped most of the virtual classes during fifth grade, sixth grade would be a repeat. Daily attendance was not a priority for many sixth graders and their parents would not hold them accountable for attending school. Though attendance is a state requirement, absences were not addressed in a timely manner nor were parents held responsible for their child's attendance.

As a practitioner, I plan to address these unexpected findings with school administrators when we return in the fall. I will request a district technology curriculum be created and implemented at the elementary level to insure all middle school students

are technology proficient in district programs. A coordinated effort would help alleviate discrepancies among students arriving from various elementary schools. Though attendance was addressed with parents and students as well as the attendance secretary, there were few consequences for students or parents. To focus on these issues, I plan to purposefully notify not only the parents and attendance secretary of a child's absences, but also the school administrators. Through a coordinated effort between myself and the school administrators, it may be possible to address attendance issues timelier before students become truant.

Implications for Middle School Social Studies

This action research study explored the effect of personalized learning with choice boards on student motivation to engage and the impact of personalized learning on students' attitudes towards social studies in a sixth-grade middle school classroom. It examined how and to what extent personalized learning affected student motivation to engage and impacted students' attitudes toward learning social studies. The implications of this study will be discussed in relation to (a) personalized learning as an instructional option and (b) the instructional use of choice boards.

Personalized Learning as an Instructional Option

The findings of this research study can promote educators to include personalized learning as an instructional tool in the middle school social studies classroom. Qualitative findings show personalized learning motivated students to engage in the social studies classroom by increasing self-efficacy in participants. They also suggested personalized learning impacted students' attitudes toward social studies by providing autonomy and individualized support to participants. These findings confirmed studies that show

personalized learning provides many benefits for students and leaners to create effective learning experiences (Alamri et al, 2020; Li and Wong, 2020). The challenges of implementing personalized learning, specifically issues of teacher time, technology skills, and training prevented students from experiencing support from their teachers (An & Midrila, 2020; Morris, 2020; Prain et al, 2013; Prain et al 2018). Personalized learning provides educators and learners a mechanism to customize their own learning paths (Beghetto, 2019; DeArmond & Maas, 2018; Lokey-Vega & Stephens, 2019). In the following discussion, two aspects of personalized learning will be discussed: (a) educator preparation and (b) strategies.

Personalized learning requires educator preparation. To include personalized learning successfully, districts need to support educators by providing adequate professional development geared towards personalized learning with the core content and additional time to plan accordingly. Technology skills, relationship building, and goal setting approaches are necessary skills for personalized learning. To prepare students with 21st Century skills, educators need to have proficiency in their technology skills which requires regular professional development to keep current on trends and new software. Teachers need training in relationship building so their students feel supported and respected. Goal setting skills are highly important in personalized learning so that students can take responsibility for their learning.

Districts also need to allocate time for planning to align learner- centered instruction that empowers students as designers in a personalized learning framework (Amro & Borup, 2019; DeMink-Carthew et al, 2017; Juvonen, 2007; Prain et al, 2013; Prain et al 2018). Time is a precious commodity in the school setting, and alignment of

personalized learning activities to the curriculum is time consuming. If provided the time to plan and align personalized learning to the curriculum, educators will be successful in including learner centered instruction in their middle school classrooms.

Personalized learning requires knowledge of differentiating strategies. Learning how to differentiate instruction, the learning process, and the assessment requires learning various strategies for differentiation. Personalized learning is not a one-size-fits-all solution for students, hence the name, personalized learning. It can take the form of teacher instruction: if the teacher decides to differentiate the instruction, it could be in the delivery. The process could be what choices students have in empowering their own learning. The assessment might be in the form of a project, report, video, or a multiple choice or essay test. The teacher is the guide on the side in the personalized learning process, and the students follow suit (Danley and Williams, 2020; DeMink-Carthew & Netcoh;2019; McLester, 2012; Pace et al, 2020).

The Instructional Use of Choice Boards

As instructors reflect on differentiation strategies, they may choose to use choice boards as a personalized learning intervention for product differentiation. Choice boards used as a learning strategy can promote engagement, motivation, and connections to learning. Using choice boards as a learning strategy allows students to create and to produce an artifact to apply their skills or knowledge in a less formal and more interesting way. Choice boards address the four elements that spark motivation: (a) autonomy, (b) competence, (c) relatedness, and (d) relevance (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Choice boards can be aligned to any core content standards, making them versatile for any group of students. Teachers can make instructional choices to guide student learning

using choice boards to provide interest, to show relevance to learning, and to provide students confidence in their ability to manage their own learning paths. Choice boards by the nature of personalized learning create opportunities for student autonomy. Student choices need to be relevant to the instruction addressing varying skill levels to provide options for all students as a personalized learning product. Free spaces provide students an additional realm of choice by which they can choose their own product to show their learning with prior teacher approval (Cutri et al, 2020; Danley & Williams, 2020; Gumpert & McConnell, 2019; Kip-Newbold, 2010; Pace et al, 2020).

Implications for Future Research

The findings for this study suggest implications for further research. This study was initiated from a problem in my classroom with student engagement. Personalized learning was beneficial to participants in addition to motivating student engagement and affecting their attitudes towards social studies. Future research could continue to examine how personalized learning affects students in other aspects. Implications to consider for future research are: (1) implementing personalized learning interventions in other disciplines, (2) examining the impact choice boards have on students with special needs and, (3) investigating the impact personalized learning has on participants' future learning of social studies.

Personalized Learning in Other Disciplines

Personalized learning was specific to sixth-grade social studies but could easily be modified to align with standards in other core areas. My team English Language Arts (ELA) teacher and I discussed collaborating to organize our two curriculums for an interdisciplinary unit within our team. ELA and social studies require similar

competencies for success including reading comprehension, writing, research, and technology skills. Current social studies choice boards can be readily aligned to address both social studies and ELA standards. As team members, our end of summer plan is to create cross-curricular choice boards for personalized learning.

Personalized learning can be used in most subjects if the teacher is motivated and allotted the time necessary to plan and to differentiate the curriculum to accommodate the needs of the students. Choice boards can motivate students to learn content in other disciplines. How personalized learning contributes to self-efficacy for teachers and students would be a topic for future research.

Choice Boards and Special Needs Students

Personalized learning uses multiple differentiation strategies to provide students a voice and a choice in their learning. Another possibility for future research is examining the impact choice boards would have on special needs students in their core classes. Two of my participants were identified as special needs students with individual education plans. During the action research study, both students explained the benefits of personalized learning. They enjoyed creating artifacts with choice boards to apply their skills in creative ways instead of traditional assessments. They enjoyed collaborating with their peers and found they were more productive with personalized learning in social studies. Future research could address how special needs students are motivated to engage in learning when they are provided choices that align with their abilities.

Impact on Future Learning

Another future research study would be to investigate the effect of choice boards on my participants' desire to study history in the future. As a veteran teacher, I have

many students who visit to say they chose their career because of some lasting impression they found in my class. Many remember specific lessons caught their attention when I taught seventh-grade social studies. Will my participants in this action research study return with memories? Does personalized learning have a lasting effect on students? Will the personalized learning in sixth-grade social studies inspire a future history teacher or historian? Research into the long-term effects of personalized learning at the middle school level would be a thought-provoking study.

Limitations

There were several limitations regarding the study and findings that should be addressed. The following sections will discuss the limitations to report specifically: (1) methodological limitations and (2) limitations associated with the findings.

Methodological Limitations

The very nature of an action research study presents limitations as action research is conducted to find a solution to a problem in the researcher's educational setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mertler, 2017). The findings of an action research study are not generalizable because they are context- specific to the participants and settings where they occur. Action research usually addresses a small sample size which would not be generalizable to the larger population. Action research is meant to be site-specific, addressing the researcher's problem of practice to collect data and to analyze findings to make decisions about future practices. Another limitation due to the action research design is possible researcher bias as the researcher was also the classroom educator for the participants, which may possibly cause bias with student responses. To minimize personal bias, the researcher asked participants to review written transcripts their focus

group interviews to confirm the accuracy of their transcribed statements. Another limitation with action research is the length of the actual study--6 weeks--which could have been extended with the change in schools.

Limitations Associated with Findings

There were specific limitations associated with the findings of this action research study. The first limitation is with the size of the study since there were only 17 participants which precluded not running the Cronbach Reliability analysis. The quantitative data was collected with two self-reporting instruments, the Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary version (SEI-E) and the Instructional Materials Motivation Survey (IMMS). Both pre- and post-surveys were delivered to the participants as Likert style prompts via Microsoft Forms. Quantitative data analysis findings showed a decrease in almost every subscale with both surveys. Microsoft Forms gathers average times which showed participants did take the surveys seriously. When surveying middle school students in the future, this researcher will limit the quantitative data to one modified pre- and post-survey to avoid student apathy for assessments. Qualitative data analysis showed more positive results with respect to the findings. One qualitative data source was participants' written responses to exit ticket prompts on Microsoft Forms. Self-reporting is seen as a limitation when collecting data because researchers are collecting perceptions from participants, and they might choose responses based on their opinions favoring what the researcher might want them to report. The second set of qualitative data was collected during focus group interviews with the instructor, which may have placed pressure on the participants to answer prompts in a manner that would please the researcher. Member checking was used to minimize the bias in the qualitative

data. To obtain deeper insights from participants in the future, another data source could be added. Rubrics for the students' artifacts showing an analysis of their work could be used as an additional data source for the study. Videos could be recorded with QR codes created to document their artifacts.

Another limitation is associated with the findings is the truancy of middle school students. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, students have not been held accountable for attendance. One of the student's quantitative data responses were deleted because he was not present for most of the intervention. Since the surveys were available online, he was able to complete the surveys without participating in the personalized learning intervention. His insights would not be considered valid because he was not in attendance for the duration of the personalized learning intervention.

Concluding Thoughts

The research study was designed to address the problem of student engagement and attitudes, which are not only issues at the local level but on the state and national levels as well. Despite the lack of statistical significance in most variables for the SEI-E (Student Engagement Inventory-Elementary) and IMMS (Instructional Materials Motivation Scale) findings, there was a slight increase in the means of three variables of the IMMS: attention, relevance, and confidence. While there is much to be learned about motivating students to engage in the classroom and impacting their attitudes toward learning social studies, the choice boards did motivate students by increasing self-efficacy, student autonomy, and individualized instruction in the social studies classroom.

Personalized learning with choice boards as an intervention provided students with a voice and choice to promote self-efficacy and autonomy. Participants learned how

to use basic technology more effectively as well as new software programs and district sponsored websites. They also worked together to solve issues and to create artifacts. Personalized learning is a teaching practice that allows students choices of the approaches they will use to differentiate their own learning.

Not only does personalized learning benefit students, but it also provides practitioners the opportunity to look more closely at alignment and strategies to determine best practices for the individual classroom. In the 2022-2023 schoolyear, I will be using choice boards as a personalized learning intervention with my fellow sixth-grade social studies educators as engagement and attitudes toward social studies are ongoing issues in middle school. Future research will consider the limitations of the current study and address those during the next cycle of action research.

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APPENDIX A

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS PRACTICE CHOICE BOARD

Ancient Civilizations Choice Board

Choose one activity to demonstrate your understanding of the essential question for 6.1 CO Compare the development of social systems among the early river valley civilizations and 6.1 CE Summarize the environmental factors that influenced the interactions between early civilizations.

Remember to use the resources found under the Additional Resources section in your Class Notebook to complete your activities.

Essential Question: How did the ancient world civilizations begin to interact with one another?

Write a narrative to show your understanding of the four river valley civilizations by addressing the essential question.	Log into Discovery Education. Go to Studio. Address the essential question by creating a board for one of the four river valley civilizations.	Create a timeline for the four river valley civilizations with graphics or illustrations as well as written descriptions.	Using Flip Grid, create a Digital News Report video with the essential question as a hot news topic.	Have your own idea for a project to personalize your learning experience? Please see me for approval before beginning.

APPENDIX B

CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS CHOICE BOARD

Classical Civilizations Choice Board

Choose one activity to demonstrate your understanding of the essential question for 6.1 P Analyze the shift from early to classical civilizations and the enduring contributions of classical civilizations and 6.1 E Analyze the changes and continuities that influenced the organization and technological advances of early and classical civilizations.

Remember to use the resources found under the Additional Resources section in your Class Notebook to complete your activities.

Essential Question: How did advances influence the shift from early to classical world civilizations?

Write a narrative to show your understanding of the changes and continuities between early and classical civilizations by addressing the essential question.	Log into Discovery Education. Go to Studio. Address the essential question by creating a board showing change or continuity between early and classical civilizations.	Create a timeline depicting the changes or continuities that can be found between early and classical civilizations with graphics or illustrations as well as written descriptions.	Using Flip Grid, create a Digital News Report video with the essential question as a hot news topic.	Have your own idea for a project to personalize your learning experience ? Please see me for approval before beginning.

APPENDIX C

CRUSADES CHOICE BOARD

Crusades Choice Board

Choose one activity to demonstrate your understanding of the essential question for 6.2 P *Summarize the increased global exchanges among world societies using the Crusades as a major turning point.*
Remember to use the resources found under the Additional Resources section in your Class Notebook to complete your activities.

Essential Question: What was the impact of the Crusades?

Write a narrative to show your understanding of the impact of the Crusades by addressing the essential question.	Log into Discovery Education. Go to Studio. Address the essential question by creating a board showing the impact of the Crusades.	Create a timeline depicting the impact of the Crusades with graphics or illustrations as well as written descriptions.	Using Flip Grid, create a Digital News Report video with the essential question as a hot news topic.	Have your own idea for a project to personalize your learning experience? Please see me for approval before beginning.

APPENDIX D

FEUDALISM CHOICE BOARD

Feudalism Choice Board

Choose one activity to demonstrate your understanding of the essential question for Standard 6.2 CO Compare the political systems within world civilizations.

Remember to use the resources found under the Additional Resources section in your Class Notebook to complete your activities.

Essential Question: Why did feudalism last so long in Europe and Japan?

Write a narrative to show your understanding of feudalism by addressing the essential question. Use resources from SC Discus	Log into Discovery Education. Go to Studio. Address the essential question by creating a Feudalism board.	Create a timeline for feudalism with graphics or illustrations as well as written descriptions.	Using Flip Grid, create a Digital News Report video with the essential question as a hot news topic.	Have your own idea for a project to personalize your learning experience? Please see me for approval before beginning.

APPENDIX E

RENAISSANCE. REFORMATION, AND COUNTER- REFORMATION BOARD

Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter- Reformation

Choice Board

Choose one activity to demonstrate your understanding of the essential question for Standard 6.3 CC: Analyze the intellectual, political, and social changes in relation to the idea of individual rights from Humanism to the Enlightenment.

Essential Question: Who were the key people of the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation and what were their contributions?

PowerPoint Slide show: Choose two or three key individuals from each era to research. Create at least one slide for each person discussing their contributions. Make sure to include important biographical information. "*Who, when, where, what, why, and how*"	Log into Discovery Education. Go to Studio. Address the essential question by creating a board about a key person from each section or a collection of people from one section.	Create an interactive digital timeline for key individuals and their contributions during the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation with graphics or illustrations as well as written descriptions.	Create a Digital News Report video series using Flip Grid to interview key individuals from each era in the essential question. You may complete this with a partner 😊	Have your own idea for a project to personalize your learning experience? Please see me for approval before beginning.

APPENDIX F

SEI-E

Elementary Student Engagement Survey

Oral Prompt:

"Good Afternoon,

Today, we will complete one of the online surveys for our research study. The survey can be found online in our social studies Team section under Assignments.

This online questionnaire will help me learn about your experiences while attending school. Your responses will be confidential: I will be the only one seeing your individual responses to the questions. Reports of the survey results will only show summarized data. Your honest answers will help me understand how I can serve you and other students better.

For the questionnaire items, you will be choosing how much you agree with the statement by selecting from 'strongly agree,' 'agree,' 'in the middle,' 'disagree,' or 'strongly disagree.' For the last statement, you will choose between 'never', 'once in a while,' 'about half of the time,' 'often,' or 'usually.'

There are 31 items in the survey, and it should take you about 30 minutes. Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Under your Assignments tab, please click the SEI-E Survey Forms link to begin the online questionnaire.

Thank you for your time and your opinions."

SEI-E Survey Questions

1.My family/guardian(s) are there for me when I need them.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

2. If I don't do well in school, it's because I'm not smart.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

3. My teachers are there for me when I need them.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

4. Other students here like me the way I am.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

5. Adults at my school listen to the students.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

6. Other students care about me.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

7. Students at my school are there for me when I need them.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

8. My education will create many chances for me to reach my future goals.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

9. I don’t pay attention during class.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

10. The rules at my school are fair.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

11. Continuing to learn after high school is important.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

12. My family/guardian(s) want to know when something good happens at school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

13. Most teachers care about me as a person, not just a student.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

14. Students here respect what I have to say.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

15. My teachers are honest with me.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

16. I plan to go to college after I graduate from high school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

17. I will learn only if my teachers give me a reward.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

18, School is important for reaching my future goals.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

19. When I have problems at school, my family/guardian(s) are ready to help me.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

20. Adults at my school are fair towards students most of the time.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

21. I like talking to the teachers here.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

22. I enjoy talking to students here.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

23. I have friends at school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

24. I feel nervous when I'm at school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

25. I don't understand why I get the grades I do.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

26. I feel safe at school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

27. My family/guardian(s) want me to keep trying when things are tough at school.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

28. I am hopeful about my future.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

29. Teachers at my school care about the students.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

30. I will learn only if my parent/guardian(s) give me a reward.

◦ strongly agree ◦agree ◦in the middle ◦disagree ◦strongly disagree

31. How often do you come to class and find yourself:

(a) without what you need to do classwork

◦ never ◦once in a while ◦about half of the time ◦often ◦usually

(b) without necessary materials

◦ never ◦once in a while ◦about half of the time ◦often ◦usually

(c) without your homework done

◦ never ◦once in a while ◦about half of the time ◦often ◦usually

APPENDIX G

MODIFIED IMMS

Modified IMMS Survey Prompt and Questions

Oral Prompt:

"Good Afternoon,

Today, we will complete one of the surveys for our research study. The survey can be found online in our social studies Team section under Assignments.

There are 36 statements in this online questionnaire. Please think about each statement in relation to instructional materials you use in social studies and indicate how true it is.

You will choose one of the following answers to indicate your response to each item.

A = Not true

B = Slightly true

C = Moderately true

D = Mostly true

E = Very true

Give the answer that truly applies to you, and not what you would like to be true, or what you think others want to hear.

Think about each statement by itself and indicate how true it is. Please do not be influenced by your answers to other statements.

You will record your responses on the online form by selecting your chosen answer.

Thank you."

Modified IMMS Questions

The following questions will be asked on the online student survey in Teams.

These questions are modified from the IMMS survey to address social studies and the reading level of my students:

1. When I first look at social studies, I have the impression that it will be easy for me.
2. There is something interesting in social studies that gets my attention.
3. Social studies is more difficult to understand than I would like for it to be.
4. After learning the introductory information, I feel confident that I know what I am supposed to learn in social studies.
5. Completing the exercises in social studies gives me a satisfying feeling of accomplishment.
6. It is clear to me how social studies is related to things I already know.
7. Many of the pages in our social studies book have so much information that it is hard to pick out and remember the important points.
8. Social studies materials are eye-catching.
9. There are stories, pictures, or examples that show me how social studies material could be important to some people.
10. Completing social studies successfully is important to me.
11. The quality of the writing in social studies helps to hold my attention.
12. Social studies is so abstract that it is hard to keep my attention on it.

13. As I work on social studies, I am confident that I can learn the content.

14. I enjoy social studies so much that I would like to know more about this topic.

15. Social studies looks dry and unappealing.

16. Social studies is relevant to my interests.

17. The way the information is arranged in social studies helps keep my attention.

18. There are explanations or examples of how people use knowledge in social studies lessons.

19. Social studies is too difficult.

20. Social studies has things that stimulate my curiosity.

21. I really enjoy studying social studies.

22. The amount of repetition in social studies causes me to get bored sometimes.

23. The content and style of writing in social studies conveys the impression that its content is worth knowing.

24. I learn some things in social studies that are surprising or unexpected.

25. After working on social studies for awhile, I feel confident that I will be able to pass a test on it.

26. Social studies is not relevant to my needs because I already knew most of it.

27. The wording of feedback after the exercises, or of other comments in social studies, help me feel rewarded for my effort.

28. The variety of reading passages, exercises, illustrations, etc., help keep my attention on social studies.

29. The style of writing is boring.

30. I can relate social studies to things I have seen, done, or thought about in my own life.

31. There are so many words on each page that it is irritating.

32. It feels good to successfully complete a social studies lesson.

33. Social studies will be useful to me.

34. I cannot really understand quite a bit of the material in social studies.

35. The good organization of social studies helps me be confident that I will learn this material.

36. It was a pleasure to work on a well-designed social studies lesson

APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROMPTS

Focus Group Interview Prompts **Group:**

"Good Afternoon,

Today, we will be discussing how you feel about using choice boards in social studies for our research study. To keep our discussion confidential, I ask that each of you respect the privacy of the group by not talking to others about the questions or responses in our session. I will audio record the discussion only so I can write all of your comments down after we talk.

There are eight prompts for our discussion. Each prompt will ask for your opinions and examples of why you hold those opinions. Your responses will be confidential: I will use pseudonyms (Student A, Student B, etc.) so I can keep your answers private in my research study. Your honest answers will help me understand how I can serve you and other students better.

Does anyone have any questions before we begin?

Thank you for your time and your opinions."

Motivation Prompts

1. Please describe and provide an example of how using a choice board has changed your work habits in our social studies classroom.

2. Who can give me an example of how using choice boards changes your motivation to participate in class?

3. Would you provide examples of changes in how much you want to participate in our social studies class?

4. How would you describe any changes in your participation?

Attitude Prompts

1.Describe any changes in how you feel about school since using a choice board.

2. Would you provide an example of how choice boards make you feel about social studies.

3. Would you provide an example of any changes in the way you feel about social studies?

4. How would you describe those changes in your feelings

APPENDIX I

INITIAL CODE LIST

	Initial Codes
1	alone
2	always makes good grades
3	answering questions
4	answering the social studies question
5	asking friends for help
6	asking questions
7	asking teacher for help
8	asking teacher questions
9	be productive in class
10	be serious
11	behavior
12	being energetic
13	better
14	better choices
15	better opportunity
16	bonding time
17	brainstorm
18	can look up information
19	can make a PowerPoint
20	can make a video
21	changed
22	changes in participation
23	choices
24	choices help
25	choose
26	choose something fun to do
27	choose what I want
28	click buttons
29	communicate more

30 communication
31 creative
32 depends
33 desire
34 distracted
35 do a good project
36 do more
37 do more work
38 do projects
39 do what I want
40 do work together at home
41 doing all the work
42 don't like to do work
43 don't like to participate
44 don't want to do it
45 easier
46 easier alone
47 easier online
48 easy
49 enjoyable
50 family
51 feel better about work
52 feel good
53 feel good about grades
54 feel like I can do the assignments
55 fine
56 Flipgrid
57 focus
58 focus more
59 focusing
60 friends
61 friends in groups
62 fun
63 grades
64 grades are getting better
65 grades changing
66 grades not changing
67 habits
68 happy to work with friends
69 harder
70 helpful

71 helps
72 improved
73 improved habits
74 improved work in social studies
75 improves knowledge
76 interest
77 know answers
78 know answers in social studies
79 know how to do a choice board
80 know how to do a PowerPoint now
81 know more
82 know more about FlipGrid
83 know more about social studies
84 knowledge up
85 learn more
86 learn social studies
87 less stress
88 less studying
89 like
90 like choices
91 like FlipGrid
92 like the PowerPoints
93 like to be in groups
94 like to learn social studies now
95 like to work with friends
96 likes projects
97 love
98 love choices
99 make a story board
100 make better grades in social studies
101 makes sense
102 mess up
103 more choices
104 more fun
105 more interesting
106 more opportunity
107 more productive
108 more studying
109 more time
110 motivation not changing
111 movies

112 not as hard with someone else
113 not feeling trapped
114 not participating more
115 not too hard
116 not so tough
117 not stressful
118 not stressful
119 not talking
120 notes
121 online
122 options
123 options are fun
124 participate more
125 participation
126 partner
127 partners
128 paying attention
129 poster board
130 PowerPoint
131 prefer
132 prefer choice boards
133 productive
134 projects
135 projects help
136 provides more
137 rather do choice boards
138 remember more
139 satisfaction
140 scared
141 share work with partners
142 social studies
143 social studies makes sense
144 someone else
145 still participating
146 story board
147 study
148 stuff
149 stupid things
150 take a test
151 take my time
152 talk

153 talking in class
154 talking to each other
155 talking to friends
156 talking to teacher
157 talking with partners
158 tests
159 think about social studies
160 time
161 time-consuming
162 timeline
163 told my mom
164 trust self
165 turned in work
166 understand more
167 videos
168 want to do more
169 what you like to do
170 will do work now
171 work at home
172 work better
173 work done early
174 work from home with my partner
175 work habits not changing
176 work harder in social studies
177 work harder on projects
178 work in class
179 work in Teams
180 work on FlipGrid
181 work on projects
182 work together
183 work together at home
184 working in groups
185 working more
186 working with friends
187 working with partners

APPENDIX J

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Research Application Form

Project Name: Providing Voice and Choice in the Social Studies Classroom: The Effect of Choice Boards on Student Motivation and Attitudes

Sponsoring Organization(s): The University of South Carolina

Principal Researcher: Deborah Malinoski

Timeline: Beginning Date: September 2021 Completion Date: October 2021

Purpose of Research: The purpose of this action research will be to explore if a personalized learning strategy, choice boards, will have an effect on sixth-grade social studies students. This action research study will focus on two research questions to explore the effect of personalized learning in the social studies classroom. The first question addresses how personalized learning will affect sixth-grade students' motivation to engage in the social studies classroom. Additionally, the second research question will investigate how personalized learning will impact students' attitudes towards learning social studies.

Procedure/Methodology: In this action research I will explore how personalized learning with choice boards effects a change in students' motivation and attitudes to engage in the sixth-grade social studies classroom. I will collect and analyze data independently from my students through surveys, exit tickets, and interviews over a four-week period. Students will complete two pre- and post-surveys and four exit tickets and participate in small focus groups so I can learn the effects of the personalized learning intervention.

Mechanism To Protect Privacy of Participant: To protect the identity of my participants, I will follow these procedures to maintain participant confidentiality:

Survey data: I will collect all data from pre- and post-surveys electronically using Microsoft Forms through our Class Team. Also, I will keep all participants' individual survey data confidential by storing it on my district laptop. Finally, I will summarize data collected from surveys to describe the study findings in my results.

Focus group data: While not a guarantee to maintain confidentiality, I will request each student in the focus groups respect peer privacy by not disclosing information discussed in our focus groups. Though I will record our sessions, I will delete audio recordings of the focus group discussions following transcriptions of the material. I will use pseudonyms when documenting conversations in the student focus groups of this action research study.

Reporting data: When I publish the results of my action research study, all participants' identities will be kept confidential. Also, when I present the results of my action research to other professionals, all identities will be kept confidential.

Number of Participants: There will be approximately 20 participants in this study.

Cost To Participants: There will be no cost to participants.

Type of Participants (e.g., Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity): Participants in my study will be sixth graders enrolled in my social studies class. They will include both male and female children, between the ages of 11 and 13, of varying races, Caucasian, African-American, and multiracial as well Hispanic and non-Hispanic students.

Intended Use of Outcomes/Results: The results will be used as a requirement for completion of my dissertation for my doctoral degree at the University of South Carolina. The results may also be published and presented in the interest of education.

As the researcher/principal investigator, my signature signifies that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX's policy and procedures for research. I assure the Research Review Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the proposal narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the committee in the form of an amendment for its approval prior to implementation.

Principal Researcher _____ Date _____
Signature

Research Review Parent Consent Form

Written consent must be obtained from active participants or from parents or guardians of minor-aged students (i.e. e. students under the age of 18 years) participating in research projects/studies involving identified students or access to student records, except for studies involving observation of unidentifiable students engaged in normal school activities.

Parents must be notified of their rights to review all curriculum materials, questionnaires, and survey instruments that are to be used in the research study. The parent will be informed that the principal of their child's school will have copies of the materials for review at least two weeks prior to the deadline for return of the consent form. Moreover, where age and task appropriate, the individual student's written consent is also required.

District personnel, including teachers, who participate in the research, must also give their consent. All prospective participants must be given adequate information that allows them to make informed decisions regarding participation in a proposed research project.

It is your right, as a parent to have your child participate or not participate in a research project. As a participant, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. There will be no penalties or adverse consequences for students, parents, or guardians for participating in the study. If you do not wish your child to participate in the research project, your child will not be embarrassed or penalized. Please return this form to your child's teacher indicating if you wish your child to participate or not to participate.

Name of Project/Title of Research: Providing Voice and Choice in the Social Studies Classroom: The Effect of Choice Boards on Student Motivation and Attitudes

Name of Principal Investigator: Deborah Malinoski

School:

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian _____

No, It Is My Wish That My Child, _____

_____Do **NOT** Participate In This Research Project.

Yes, I Give Permission For My Child_____

_____To **Participate** In This Research Project.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Research Consent Form: To be completed by the parent/legal guardian of a school-aged participant under 18 years.

Project Name: Providing Voice and Choice in the Social Studies Classroom: The Effect of Choice Boards on Student Motivation and Attitudes

Sponsoring Organization: The University of South Carolina

Principal Researcher: Deborah Malinoski Telephone:

Project Location:

Student's Name _____

Home Address _____ Telephone _____

Student's School _____ Grade _____ Age ____

Participants/Parental Rights and Assurances

I have received a copy of the approved ############################ Research application form for the aforementioned research project. Having read the application I am familiar with the purpose, methods, scope and intent of the research project.

___ **I am willing** for my child to participate in this research project.

___ **I am not willing** for my child to participate in this research project.

If I am willing for my child to participate in this research, I understand that during the course of this project, my child's responses will be kept strictly confidential and that none of the data released in this study will identify my child by name or any other identifiable data, descriptions or characterizations. Furthermore, I understand that my child may discontinue his/her participation in this project at any time or refuse to respond to any questions to which he/she choose not to answer. My child is a voluntary participant and has no liability or responsibility for the implementation, methodology, claims, substance or outcomes resulting from this research project. I am also aware that my child's decision not to participate will not result in any adverse consequences or disparate treatment due to that decision. I fully understand that this research is being conducted for constructive educational purposes and that my signature gives consent for my child to voluntarily participate in this project.

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX K

DISTRICT CONSENT LETTER

Dear Mrs. Malinoski,

I am happy to report the Research Review Committee reviewed the research proposal you submitted and you are granted approval to conduct your research as delineated. For your files, a hard-copy of this approval letter is also being sent to the address listed above.

Since your research is being conducted in , we anticipate receipt of a report of your findings when your research concludes.

If you have any further questions for the committee, please feel free to contact me.

We wish you success in your research and in completing your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Assistant Superintendent

APPENDIX L

INSTITUITIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
DECLARATION OF NOT RESEARCH

Deborah Malinoski
225 Mohican Circle
Summerville, SC 29483

Re: Pro00113842

Dear Mrs. Deborah Malinoski:

This is to certify that research study entitled *PROVIDING VOICE AND CHOICE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOM: THE EFFECT OF CHOICE BOARDS ON STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES* was reviewed on 8/11/2021 by the Office of Research Compliance, which is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). The Office of Research Compliance, on behalf of the Institutional Review Board, has determined that the referenced research study is not subject to the Protection of Human Subject Regulations in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 et. seq.

No further oversight by the USC IRB is required. However, the investigator should inform the Office of Research Compliance prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the status of the project and require another review.

If you have questions, contact Lisa M. Johnson at lisaj@mailbox.sc.edu or (803) 777-6670.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
ORC Assistant Director and IRB Manager