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Impact of Brain Breaks on Student Engagement, Motivation, and Achievement in a Third-Grade Classroom

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Abstract

In a third-grade classroom in a highly populated city, a researcher was concerned about her students' focus level in the afternoon. Students have a long day at school, their brains get exposed to so much information on a typical day, and it is hard to retain the knowledge as well as being able to stay focused and motivated throughout each and every day. This study investigated how brain breaks affect student engagement, achievement, and motivation. For the entirety of a math unit, math instruction was taught incorporating planned brain breaks throughout each lesson. Data was collected from pre- and post- assessment scores, participation data, observational notes, exit tickets, and a student survey. This data reflected how well participants were able to stay focused, stay motivated, and reach sufficient achievement. Results showed that while brain breaks positively influenced both participants' achievement and engagement levels, participants' motivation levels were not significantly affected. Results did not show a preference amongst preferred types of brain breaks.

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