

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the effects implementing choice has on ownership and motivation in the social studies classroom. All students were enrolled in a required 19th Century American Cultures class in a small public high school in the Northeast. Choice was introduced in a variety of ways within the instruction, assessment, and enrichment aspects of the classroom. The study explores whether choice allows students to develop a “voice” within the classroom. This “voice” was created by allowing the student to make choices about how they learned material, how they were assessed on the material they learned, and how enrichment was offered. Participants were made aware of their preferred learning styles and strongest intelligences to aid in making choices that worked best for them. The choices came in a variety of forms that included the use of literature circles, contract learning, alternative assessments, multiple intelligence activities, varied teaching strategies, and constructivist activities. Data was gathered through surveys, journal entries, choice logs, and interviews. The study suggests that choice can have a positive affect on student motivation and ownership within the classroom. Student comments reflect on their feelings of ownership, their motivation to complete or not complete assignments and activities, and their overall thoughts on choices.