Scoring Student Surveys

After you administer your survey to students, you'll want to look at both **engagement** and **worth** in your class, then reflect on actions you can take to improve students' perceptions of engagement and worth. To score your surveys, analyze students' responses using the questions below.

Engagement

We defined **engagement** as students: 1) enjoying what they're doing; 2) finding it interesting; and 3) concentrating deeply on it. To measure engagement, we used the following survey items:

- I really liked what we were doing in class.
- I was thinking more about class than anything else.
- Class was about something interesting.
- I felt excited about learning.
- I felt focused.
- Did you wish you were doing something different?
- I felt bored.

In *The Opportunity Myth*, we combined students' responses from all seven questions to create a single engagement score and determine if a student was engaged in class when they completed the survey. Though not identical to the approach taken in the report, you can approximate this strategy by converting students' responses to each of the above question to a number, and adding these numbers together:

- For questions 1-3, assign the following values: 0 for a response of "Not true," 1 for "A little true," 2 for "Mostly true," and 3 for "Very true."
- For questions 4-5, assign a value of 0 if the student said "No" and 1 if the student said "Yes."
- For questions 6-7, assign a value of 0 if the student said "Yes" and 1 if the student said "No."

Add these values together. Every survey will have a total value between 0 and 13. Higher values represent deeper engagement. Here's what this process might look like:

Question	Response	Numeric score
I really liked what we were doing in class.	Not true	0
I was thinking more about class than anything else.	Mostly true	2
Class was about something interesting.	A little true	1
I felt excited about learning.	No	0
I felt focused.	Yes	1
Did you wish you were doing something different?	Yes	0
I felt bored.	No	1
	Total:	**5**

To approximate the approach from *The Opportunity Myth*, classify any total score that is at least an 8 out of 13 as "engaged." Any score from 0 – 7 would be considered "not engaged." In the example above, the student was not engaged.

Worth

We defined **perceived worth** as learning about something applicable to the real world and important to students' lives right now and/or in the future. To measure perceived worth, we used the following survey items:

- Class today was about something important to my life right now.
- Class today was about something important to my future.
- Class today was about something I can use outside of school.

Just like engagement, in *The Opportunity Myth* we combined students' responses from all three questions to create a single worth score and determine if a student believed their experience was worthwhile. To compute the overall worth score, assign a value of 0 for each response of "Not true," a 1 for each response of "A little true," a 2 for each response of "Mostly true," and a 3 for responses of "Very true." Then add these values together. Every survey will have a total worth score between 0 and 9. In *The Opportunity Myth*, total scores of at least a 5 out of 9 were defined as instances where students perceived their activities as worthwhile.

Using these metrics in analysis

We suggest at least three ways to use the engagement and worth data you collect.

1. **Calculate the overall engagement and worth rates for your school or classroom**. Calculating the percent of surveys that are classified as "engaged" or "worthwhile" will give you a simple statistic to look at day-to-day as you test different assignments or instructional approaches in your classroom. You might consider using the percentages for each grade reported in *The Opportunity Myth* to loosely benchmark how your classroom compares to a large sample of classrooms from across the country.

2. **Track the total engagement and worth scores over time.** For a more nuanced measure of engagement and worth, you can track the total scores (on a 0-13 scale for engagement and 0-9 scale for worth) across classrooms or over time.

3. **Track engagement and worth across grade levels.** *The Opportunity Myth* found that both engagement and perceived worth tended to decline as students got older: While elementary students tended to be engaged more often than not, middle and high school students were not more than half the time. Using these surveys throughout your school will help you understand the extent to which engagement and worth might change as students age.

Other considerations

The Opportunity Myth found students' engagement varied substantially between teachers. We also found that students' average engagement often varied substantially (some students were consistently more engaged than others), and engagement overall varied day-to-day. This means that measuring engagement reliably requires as much data as possible. By surveying as many of your students as possible on multiple days, you will be able to more reliably assess the engagement in your school or classroom, compared to administering a one-time survey.

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