



# WHAT DID YOU DO IN SCHOOL TODAY? – LATEST INSIGHTS INTO STUDENTS' INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

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Are students just 'doing' school or are they engaged with their studies? How does a student's level of engagement influence learning, achievement, and teaching? Since 2007, the Canadian Education Association's (CEA) initiative on student engagement, entitled *What did you do in school today?*, has shed light on such questions through survey results from over 60,000 students. The latest series of *What did you do in school today?* reports focus on student engagement, academic outcomes, instructional challenge, and intellectual engagement.

*Intellectual engagement* is defined as a serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning, using higher-order thinking skills (such as analysis and evaluation) to increase understanding, solve complex problems, or construct new knowledge. Three measures of intellectual engagement include interest and motivation, effort, and quality of instruction.

## REPORT ONE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

JODENE DUNLEAVY, J. DOUGLAS WILLMS, PENNY MILTON, AND SHARON FRIESEN

The first report examines the relationship between nine measures of student engagement and their impact on a student's marks in Language Arts, Science, and Mathematics. Findings suggest that a strong relationship exists between a student's marks in these subjects and their behaviour towards homework, level of attendance, and effort put into doing well in class. Teachers and administrators are invited to think critically about marking practices and its impact on student learning, student engagement, and teaching.

## REPORT TWO: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGE AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

J. DOUGLAS WILLMS AND SHARON FRIESEN

The second report examines the relationship between instructional challenge, as it exists in middle and secondary schools, and the nine measures of student engagement. Findings suggest instruction is poorly matched for many of the students surveyed. In one instance, intellectual engagement was increased through collaborative activities between, and among, teachers and students. Reforms that focus on the classroom may foster more effective teaching practices.

## REPORT THREE: TRENDS IN INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

JODENE DUNLEAVY, PENNY MILTON, AND J. DOUGLAS WILLMS

The final report revisits findings on intellectual engagement from the *What did you do in school today?* initiative's *First National Report* (2009). Three years later, intellectual engagement levels in many schools have improved. Principals, teachers, and students have all contributed to increased levels of intellectual engagement at local levels. Improvements have not occurred uniformly across all schools and districts, however. In light of these findings, the authors call for greater knowledge exchange on what has and hasn't worked – along with greater transparency in school and classroom practices.

To download these reports and for more information, please visit: [www.cea-ace.ca/wdydist](http://www.cea-ace.ca/wdydist)

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