ABSTRACT

This teacher action research study was designed to discover the observed and reported experiences of 24 students and their teacher in a ninth grade elective course entitled “Introduction to Family and Consumer Science” when the course text was used as a reference rather than the only curriculum source. Participants included 19 girls and four boys within a traditional high school in a predominantly white, middle class small town.

The course included units on Personal Development/Consumerism, Child Development, Sewing, and Interior Design. Data collection methods included surveys, student artifacts, and participant observations, and interviews with students.

The teacher action researcher discovered that textbook use can be minimal in the Family and Consumer Science classroom, as methods involving more active learning help students effectively achieve the goals of the course. A strong sense of classroom community in which students are offered meaningful choices can lead to engagement and a desire to go on learning. Student-centered instruction offers students varied methods to support their individual social and academic needs, leading to more engagement and academic success. Teacher-centered instruction is useful in the classroom during the scaffolding process to assure a strong foundation from which students can build.