

Undergraduate students' engagement in a community-based afterschool program

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What counts as a community?

- Aprendemos unos de otros
- Nos escuchamos
- Trabajamos juntos
- Nos ayudamos y colaboramos
- Brindamos espacios para pensar
- Nos damos la oportunidad de compartir
- Nos respetamos



LEAFY as a community-based afterschool program

Literacies in Environmental Awareness and Farming for Youth



LEAFY as a community-based afterschool program

Who is part of this community:

- Faculty
- Graduate students
- Undergraduate students
- Young participants



LEAFY as a community-based afterschool program

Multiple ways of learning together:

- Poetry
 - Critical observation of what is around us
 - Critical reflections towards environmental issues



LEAFY as a community-based afterschool program

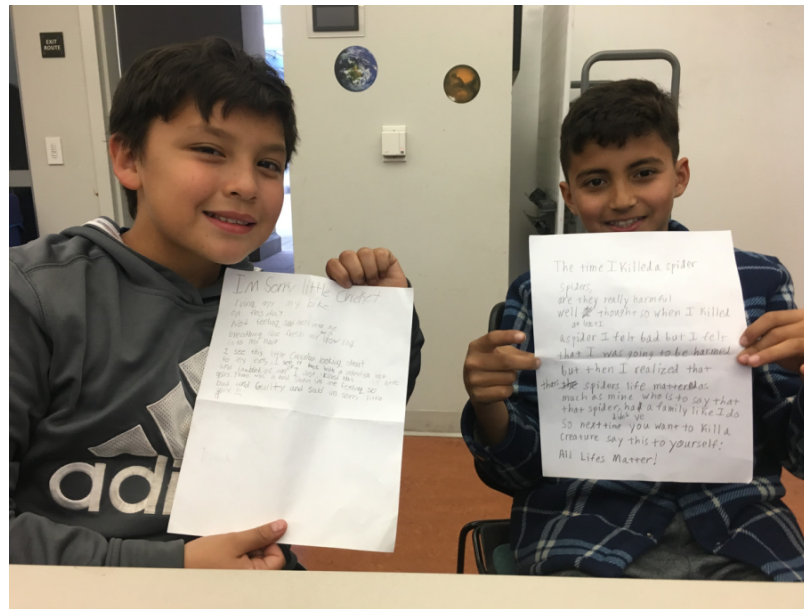
Multiple ways of learning together:

- Gardening
 - Transforming spaces
 - Learning how to plant and about food security (edible vegetables)



LEAFY as a community-based afterschool program

Building a great place to share ideas, knowledge and emotions; and building intergenerational connections/bonds.



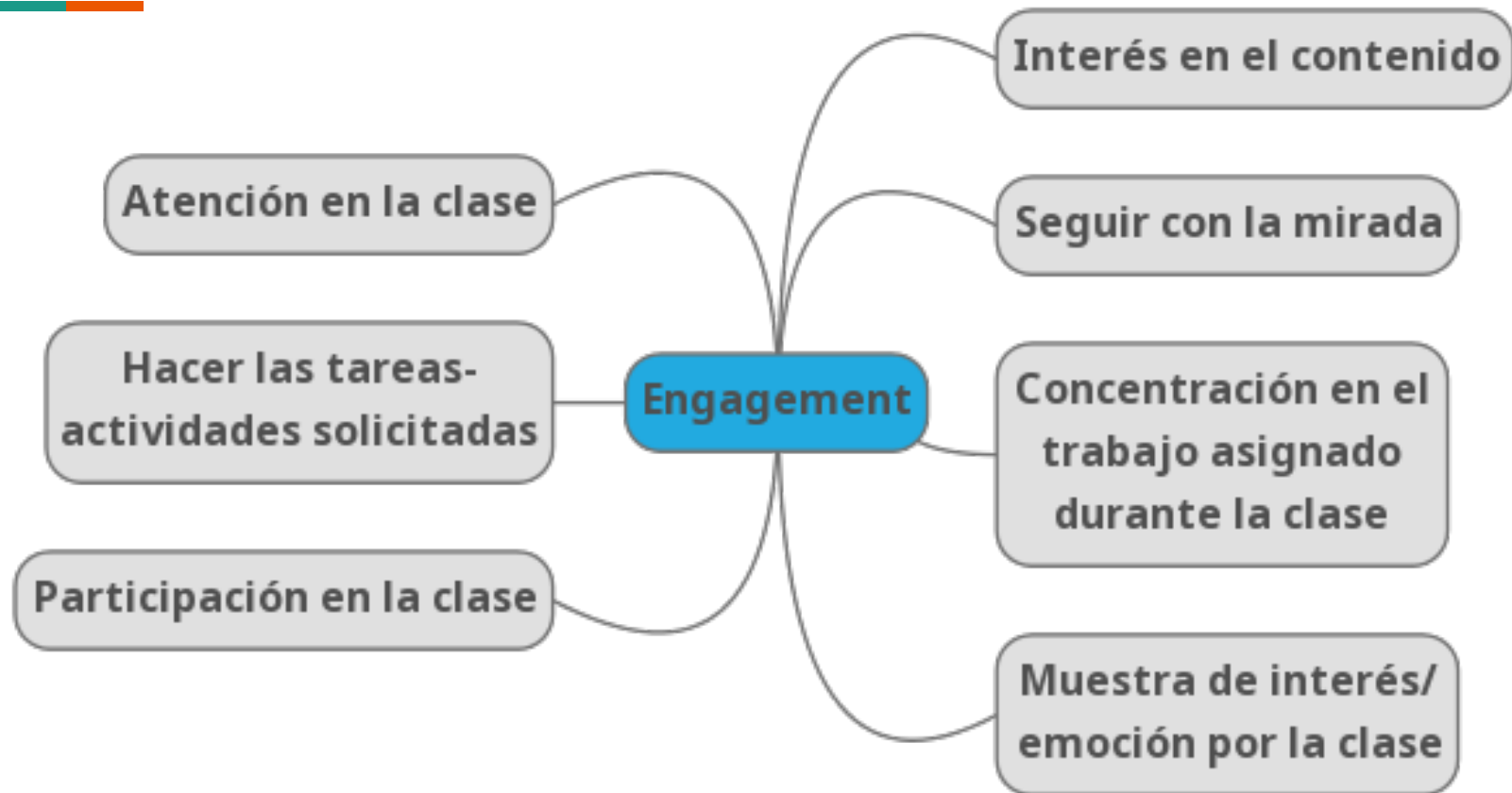
Why student engagement?

Multiple theories and approaches (e.g. Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Trowler, 2010)

- El desglose categorial de la aproximación conceptual de “Engagement” es complejo y puede generar imprecisiones
 - Engagement comportamental
 - Engagement emocional
 - Engagement Cognitivo

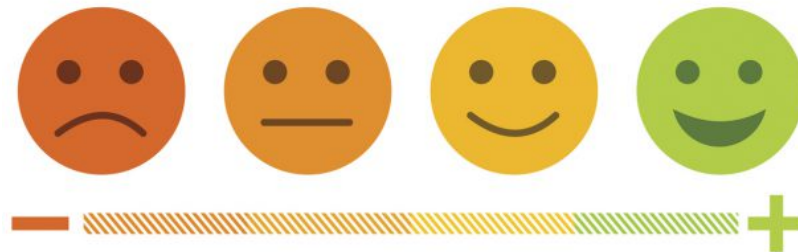


Why student engagement?



What about our undergraduate students (facilitators)?

- What is their perception of being engaged in this afterschool program?
 - How the program allows (or not) high levels of engagement in the facilitators?





What is the approach of this study?

- Ethnographic approach (Spradley, 1979; Brinkman, 2013; Skukauskaite, 2017; Mitchell, 1984).
 - Facilitators (insider) perspective of what it means for them to be engaged.
 - Conversational interviews to 2-quarters participant about their experiences, thoughts and perspective of being engaged (13 participants).



Engagement in a community-based program:

- **Agency:** leadership in activities with youth; can do attitude re: environment
- **Belonging:** fit with program; part of a community culture with youth; don't need a "green thumb"
- **Co-learnership:** models/teachers for youth, learning from/with youth

Preliminary findings



Agency

[The program] really makes us feel like we're important, I guess? And we're connected? And that all of our ideas and opinions matter and I think LEAFY does a really good job at like, expressing that to all of us. Um, and even if we don't contribute, like I didn't necessarily come up with any ideas, but just feeling like I could if I wanted to, was really helpful.

Preliminary findings



Co-learnership

I think it's important to like make connections with the kids. Both because you know that you're helping them, and being a mentor to them in a certain way, and also as students who are thinking about going into teaching, it gives us like hands-on experience, making connections with students in a more like casual context than in a classroom.

Preliminary findings



Co-learnership

Well with Daniel [kid], I don't know it was kind of like out of random because I didn't even know he knew my name you know and he kind of like screams like "Jenny!" And so it's kind of like nice like you remember me and I don't know like maybe you'll remember me in the future or something like that and like I know I'll remember him you know and so it's like yeah I volunteered there and I remember this kid that was like super smart and he liked photography and everything

Preliminary findings



Belonging

I think it's the relationships that you form with our peers, like undergrads, and then also the kids, um. It's just a really, like, welcoming environment. Everyone, I don't know if that was just our group of people, but probably not, it's probably always like that. Um, where I feel like we've all become friends to a certain extent, and we feel like we're doing something good and we've made an impact on the kids

Preliminary findings



Belonging

I feel like we feel like a family, and like it's we're welcome to come back in the future, to stay involved in the program, and I think for people who are thinking about being teachers, it's like I have a better understanding of how children can learn outside of the traditional classroom setting...and [also] that it's pretty easy to establish connections, even with kids who are a lot younger than you, by doing a project together like this. I think it's rewarding, again, for everyone involved to be able to do it, to contribute their own ideas, to have the agency to do that. Um, so yeah. I would recommend it to other undergrads. {Laughter}



Thank you!

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