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The purpose of the current investigation, a master thesis, was to test two instructional strategies that promote student preparation for and participation in class: reading objectives and participation sheets. Astin's (1984) Involvement Theory contends, the more involved a student is, the more he or she will learn. Testing the strategies for classroom involvement was only the first step toward improving students' overall engagement in their college experience. Based on the review of literature, five hypotheses and four research questions were posited.

A series of hypotheses predicted that students who were required to complete reading objectives and participation sheets would have more perceived engagement, affective learning, cognitive learning, motivation, and willingness to talk in class than the students who were not required to do so. It was also predicted that the quasi-experimental group would perform better on quizzes and exams. Research question one inquired if there were relationships among the dependent variables: classroom engagement, affective learning, cognitive learning, motivation, and willingness to talk in class. Research questions two and three sought to explore the instructors' perceptions of the use of the tools. Research question four inquired if evidence of student engagement could be found in the students' extended comments from their reading objectives. The results revealed that none of the hypotheses were supported. However, four significant correlations were found: classroom engagement and affective learning, classroom engagement and motivation, willingness to talk in class and affective learning, and willingness to talk in class and motivation. Also, evidence of student engagement was found in the extended comments. In addition, instructors found the use of the tools to

make a positive difference in their instruction and found notable differences between the control and quasi-experimental groups. The instructors felt that the quasi-experimental groups had better quality classroom discussions, a more pleasant classroom climate, and that they, as instructors, were able to get to know their students better in the quasi-experimental group more than the control group because of these classroom tools.

The findings of this study warrant future research and indicate many important implications. Many first year level courses are large lectures, where students are asked to listen, take notes, and memorize information for the test. These courses, unfortunately, are based on the assumption that students are passive learners. The use of reading objectives and participation sheets can ultimately impact the way that class time is spent. By implementing these tools, we are making it clear to our students that we expect them to come prepared for class (by reading and reflecting on the material ahead of time) and to participate in class (by offering their insightful ideas to their classmates for discussion). Instead of spending class time lecturing over material that students should have read before class, we are spending class time holding students accountable to get involved in discussions by sharing their insightful contributions with their classmates.