

Bored? Not in a SmartLab!

According to national surveys recently conducted by the Gallup Organization and Creative Learning Systems, students in SmartLabs report being far less bored, and are far more likely to feel interested, challenged and excited than in school overall.

Gallup Survey Finds Widespread Boredom Among U.S. Students

The Gallup Organization conducted a survey of U.S. middle and high school students' attitudes towards school. Students, age 13-17, were asked to pick three words from a list of adjectives that best describe how they usually feel in school. The most frequent response, cited by fully half of all students surveyed, was "bored". The next most frequent response was "tired". No more than 31% selected a positive word like "happy" or "challenged".



"Nearly half of former students surveyed said that a major factor in their decision to drop out was that classes were not interesting"

The Silent Epidemic – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The implications of these findings are well documented. Bored learners are less likely to succeed academically, they frequently exhibit attendance and behavioral problems, and are at greater risk of dropping out of school.

Students Report High Levels of Interest in SmartLab

A similar survey conducted with over one-thousand SmartLab students in schools throughout the U.S. provides a stark contrast to the findings in the Gallup Organization survey. Students were given the same list of adjectives and asked to select those that best represented their feelings in a SmartLab. The most frequently cited response among SmartLab students was "interested" cited by 56% of those surveyed. The next most frequently chosen word was "excited" followed by "challenged", "happy", and "appreciated".



Contrast in Survey Responses

The contrast between responses in the two surveys was dramatic indeed. Students were less than half as likely to report feeling “bored” and “tired”, and more than two and one-half times more likely to report feeling “interested” and “excited” in a SmartLab as compared to school overall. Similar differences were observed across the spectrum of survey responses. In total, SmartLab students described their feelings with positive words 67% more frequently than in the Gallup survey. Comparative survey results are illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.

Conclusion

SmartLabs encourage students to excel in ways most classroom experiences cannot. The project-based, learner-centered approach to STEM and digital media arts has long been recognized as a powerful way to engage and motivate students of all ability levels. In a SmartLab, learning becomes relevant and engaging. It is well understood that students learn and perform better when they are interested, excited and challenged. Many schools recognize the need to improve academic performance and reduce drop-out rates by addressing root causes such as boredom and lack of motivation. This survey illustrates how SmartLabs can play an important role in this effort.

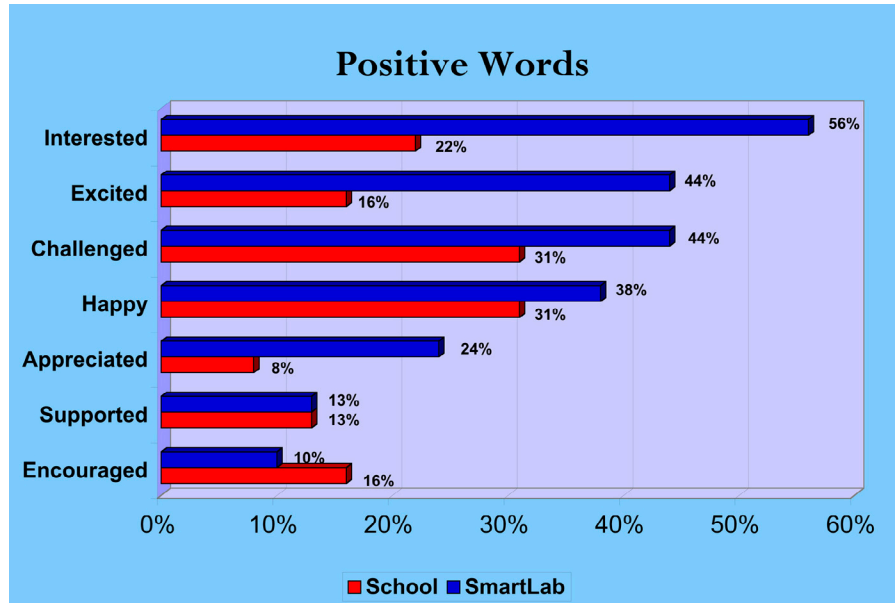


Table 1 - Comparison of SmartLab and School Survey Responses – Positive Words

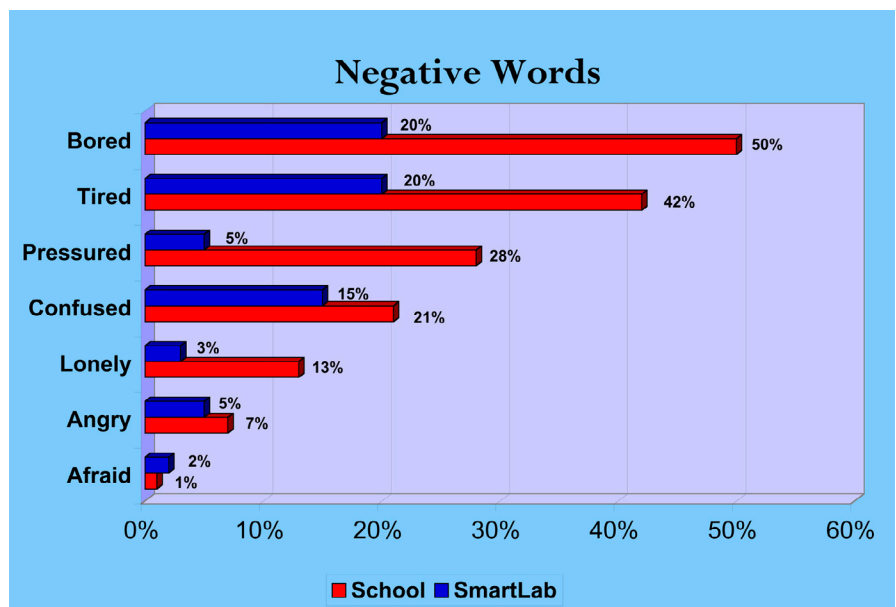


Table 2 - Comparison of SmartLab and School Survey Responses – Negative Words

Source of school survey data – “Most Teens Associate School with Boredom, Fatigue”
Gallup Organization, June 8th, 2004