DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 047 471 EC 031 740

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TITLE	Cognitive, Behavioral, and Affective Activities in the Classrooms of Gifted Secondary Students.
PUB DATE	70
NOTE	6p.; Author's Masters thesis submitted to the University of Southern California
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Advanced Placement Programs, Cluster Grouping, *Exceptional Child Research, *Gifted, High School Students, *Student Attitudes, *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

To compare and evaluate the perception of cognitive, behavioral and affective activities in the classroom as determined by gifted students and their teachers, gifted students in two high schools were studied. Two programs, the Advanced Placement Program and the Cluster Grouping Program were selected for the study. It was concluded that the Advanced Placement Program resulted in significantly greater emphasis on cognitive levels occurring in the classroom (higher thought processes), a more active student role, and a more relaxed, open atmostphere. The Cluster Grouping Program (enrichment for gifted students in the normal classroom setting) was felt to be unsuccessful, with classes remaining teacher centered with a passive student role. (CD)

COGNITIVE, BEHAVIORAL, AND AFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOMS OF GIFTED SECONDARY STUDENTS

Mary Ann Hession Golden

The purpose of this study was to compare and evaluate the perception of cognitive, behavioral, and affective activities in the classroom as determined by gifted high school students and their teachers. This study was also undertaken to determine the effectiveness of two gifted programs: the Advanced Placement Program and the Cluster Grouping Program, and to evaluate the areas of emphasis which these programs contain.

The eleventh and twelfth grade gifted students in two Pasadena, California high schools constituted the population. English, Life Science, Mathematics, Physical Science, and Social Science classes were used.

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) consisted of homogeneously grouped classes of gifted students in which the students were given more intensive and advanced course material than other students at that grade level. The Cluster Grouping Program (CG) consisted of classes in which two or more gifted pupils were placed in a classroom with students of average and above average ability. In this program, the gifted students were given more intensive material, extra assignments, and projects according to the teachers' discretion. The students were also unaware as to which students were identified as gifted.

The Class Activities Questionnaire (CAQ) developed by Dr. Joseph Steele was the instrument used to elicit student and teacher responses. The CAQ was administered to individual classes of the Advanced Placement Program and to the Cluster Grouping Program students as a whole group in May 1970. All teachers were given their Teacher Predicted and Ideal forms to fill out before administration to the students. The student forms were completed anonymously.

The CAQ forms were computer scored by Dr. Steele according to the Four Dimensions of: Lower Thought Processes, Higher Thought Processes, Classroom Focus and Classroom Climate. A system of consensus scoring, analysis of variance, and t-tests were used.

As a whole, both groups scored more than fifty percent consisten on all items for the first ten factors.

More students in both groups perceived interpretation as the most highly emphasized cognitive factor in their classes (AP—86%, CG—44%).

Teachers of both Advanced Placement and Cluster Grouping classes predicted that their students would see interpretation as being most emphasized (AP—28%, CG—38%), however, Cluster Grouping teachers also predicted analysis (38%). The teachers would also ideally or intend to emphasize interpretation (AP—72%, CG—31%). In addition, Cluster Grouping teachers ideally emphasized analysis (31%) and synthesis (31%).

More Advanced Placement students saw synthesis as the cognitive factor not being emphasized (14%), whereas, more Cluster Grouping students saw evaluation (44%), analysis (38%), and synthesis (38%) as not being emphasized in their classes.

Advanced Placement teachers predicted their students would see memory (43%) and synthesis (43%) as not being emphasized. Cluster Grouping teachers predicted memory (50%) as not seen emphasized in their classes. Both groups of teachers would ideally de-emphasize memory (AP—86%, CG—57%).

Students as a whole tended to agree more with the teacher Ideal than with the teacher Prediction of cognitive factors.

Advanced Placement students saw humor (100%), discussion (100%), ideas valued over grades (100%), and enjoyment (100%) as the most highly emphasized classroom condition factors in their classes. Their teachers predicted discussion (43%). Cluster Grouping classes saw humor (88%) as the most highly emphasized classroom condition factor, while their teachers predicted humor (82%) and divergence (63%) as perceived in the classroom.

Ideally, the Advanced Placement teachers would emphasize enjoyment (86%), discussion (72%), and enthusiasm (72%). The Cluster Grouping teachers intended to have humor (82%), discussion (69%), independence (69%), and divergence (69%) emphasized.

Advanced Placement students saw test/grade stress (14%) as not emphasized, whereas, their teachers predicted least emphasis on independence (72%). The Cluster Grouping students saw enthusiasm (57%) as not emphasized, while their teachers predicted least emphasis on test/grade stress (63%) and lecture (63%). All teachers intended to have test/grade stress (AP—72%, CG—57%) de-emphasized and the Cluster Grouping teachers also would ideally have lecture (57%) de-emphasized.

Both students and teachers of the Advanced Placement Program

saw the teachers as talking 60 to 75 percent of the time. Cluster Grouping students saw their teachers as talking 60 to 90 percent of the time, while the teachers saw themselves talking 25 to 75 percent of the time.

Advanced Placement students indicated they spent more time (more then 2 hours) on homework than their teachers perceived (1 to 2 hours), although they exceeded their teachers' Ideal. Cluster Grouping students indicated they did less homework (less than 1 hour to 2 hours) than their teachers perceived (1 to 2 hours) and they did not meet their teachers' Ideal (more then 2 hours).

Students as a whole agreed more with the teacher Ideal or intent than with the teacher Prediction on classroom condition factors.

The wide variety of student opinion showed no consistent pattern. Therefore, no conclusive statement can be made concerning students' opinions or affective activities, except that most students were favorable toward their teachers.

Cluster Grouping classes as a whole showed a lack of emphasis on any cognitive level occuring in their classes. However, these classes were very close to emphasizing at least some emphasis on lower thought processes. Advanced Placement classes gave significantly (.05 level of confidence) greater emphasis to higher thought processes and had a more positive classroom focus and a significantly (.05 level of confidence) more positive classroom climate than Cluster Grouping classes.

The following conclusions apply to and are representative of the two groups of gifted students collectively. However,

the classes did differ widely on various factors and some differences may be significant for a few individual classes.

It can be concluded that:

1. Grouping gifted students together as in the Advanced Placement Program results in significantly greater emphasis on Higher Thought Processes, a more active student role (Classroom Focus), and a more open and relaxed atmosphere with correspondingly more enthusiasm (Classroom Climate).
2. The attempt to provide enrichment for gifted students in the normal classroom setting as in the Cluster Grouping Program is unsuccessful; teachers apparently do not vary the type of activities emphasized, although they may increase the difficulty or quantity of activities for the gifted students in their classes. Classes remain essentially teacher centered with a passive student role.
3. Teachers tend to either overemphasize or underemphasize factors such as teacher talk and homework.
4. Students in these programs seem to perceive factors and work according to teacher ideals rather than what the teacher predicted they would do or perceive. Thus, this indicates some lack of the teacher's awareness of his behavior and how he is being perceived.

These results seem to indicate that the Advanced Placement Program is the more effective method of instruction for gifted classes. Thus, it is advisable that other programs for the gifted include the characteristics of this program in their curriculums for effective teaching.

It seems evident that more teachers should be encouraged to evaluate their classes according to this method in order to analyze the effectiveness of their teaching roles, behavior,

and course content for further improvement of their teaching.

This study may also prove to be of research benefit for and inspire further study of the gifted.