DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 272   EA 019 662

AUTHOR   Teddlie, Charles; And Others
TITLE   Contextual Differences in Effective Schooling in
             Louisiana.
PUB DATE   Apr 87
NOTE   16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
             American Educational Research Association
             (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE   Reports - Research/Technical (143) --
             Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Standards; Elementary Education; *Middle
             Class; Regression (Statistics); *School
             Effectiveness; *Social Class; *Socioeconomic
             Status
IDENTIFIERS *Effective Schools Research; *Louisiana

ABSTRACT
        Now that the school effectiveness field is maturing,
more refined and contextually sensitive observations about schools
are possible. This paper focuses on socioeconomic status (SES) as one
social context variable demonstrating substantial predictive power in
numerous school improvement studies. Instead of viewing middle class
behavior as superior and lower class behavior as deficient, this
paper explores how human variation may be exploited for the
enrichment of all members of society. To this end, data from
third-grade classes in 12 urban, suburban, and rural Louisiana school
randomly selected districts were gathered during the 1982-83 school
year, and six groups of schools were identified: (1) middle-SES
effective schools, (2) middle-SES typical schools, (3) middle-SES
ineffective schools, (4) low-SES effective schools, (5) low-SES
typical schools, and (6) low-SES ineffective schools. In one stage of
this study, nine matched pairs of schools selected by regression
techniques were examined. While findings disclosed definite
similarities between effective middle- and low-SES schools,
interesting dissimilarities were also revealed. Compared to their
middle-SES counterparts, low-SES effective schools emphasize present
expectations; offer more external rewards; hire initiator--instead of
manager-principals; buffer schools from negative community influences
when more positive outreach fails; hire younger, more idealistic
teachers; and concentrate on basic skills. Included are 3 tables and
13 references. (MLH)

ED286272

EA 019662

CONTEXTUAL DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING IN LOUISIANA

Charles Teddlie
University of New Orleans

Sam Stringfield
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Denver, Colorado   80295

Robert Wimpelberg
Peggy Kirby
University of New Orleans
New Orleans, Louisiana   70148

2

CONTEXTUAL DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTIVE
SCHOOLING IN LOUISIANA

Sociologists, psychologists, and educators (e.g., Blumberg, 1972; Brown, 1965; Curtis and Jackson, 1977) have long recognized the existence of different social class or socioeconomic status (SES) groups. A frequently used method for categorizing schools is the SES of the parents of students in those schools.

It is also widely accepted that SES has a variety of measurable effects on the behavior of individuals within various groups. For instance, Cohen and Hodges (1972) found that individuals from lower SES groups have the following characteristics: 1) they have a sense of powerlessness, 2) they feel deprived, and 3) they exhibit insecurity. Perhaps, as a result of these characteristics, their social activity tends to be oriented toward family and away from participation in voluntary organizations.

A reading of the literature on SES and behavior indicates that much research has been undertaken with the assumption that the behavior of the middle class is a standard against which the behavior of other classes is to be judged. Yando, Seitz, and Zigler (1979) refer to this as a "deficit" model in which lower-SES groups are considered inferior to middle-SES groups.

These authors (Yando, Seitz, & Zigler, 1979) go on to reject this deficit model. They state that we should
> ... adopt in its place a difference approach in which no group is considered superior to any other.... A commitment to such a difference approach would urge behavioral scientists, and ultimately laymen, to deal with the central question of how human variation can be exploited for the enrichment of all members of society. (p. 2)

Implicit in this position is the idea that different methods may be needed to optimize outcomes for groups from different social contexts. Recent models (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Duckett, Park, Clark, McCarthy, Lotto, Gregory, Herlihy, & Burleson, 1979; Edmonds, 1981; Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979) based on school effectiveness research have proposed lists of characteristics that should result in school improvement. The same basic set of characteristics appear in the models, primarily because many of the studies were conducted in lower-SES, inner city schools. If the school effectiveness

models are to become more broadly applicable to a variety of
social contexts, future models must include evidence from studies
conducted in a wider variety of settings.

It is reasonable to suggest that efforts to describe or
change a social organization need to be sensitive to the larger
social context within which that organization exists. The issue
one then faces is determining the critical list of social context
variables that make a difference in the organization of interest
(that is, schools).

In the current paper, we make no effort to produce an
exhaustive list of variables which may be necessary for full
contextual understanding of schools. Rather, we will focus on a
single variable which has been shown to have substantial
predictive power in a variety of studies: socioeconomic status.

The findings are based on four years and two phases of the
Louisiana School Effectiveness Study (LSES). We will briefly
describe the study and then present several of the major
findings. We interpret these findings as suggesting a few
universal characteristics of high quality schooling, and several
context specific characteristics. Similarities between the
findings of LSES and other studies will be noted.

Description of the Second and Third Phases of the Louisiana
School Effectiveness Study (LSES-II and LSES-III)

The LSES consists of five phases ranging from a pilot study
(1980-82), to a macro level study of 76 randomly selected schools
(1982-84), to micro level case studies of 16 schools (1984-86),
to a school improvement study, and finally to a model building
phase. The data referred to here are from LSES-II and LSES-III.

Data for LSES-II were collected during the 1982-83 school
year in the third grade of 76 schools from 12 school districts.
The study sample was drawn to be highly representative of the
statewide population (Teddlie, Falkowski, Stringfield, Desselle,
& Garvue, 1984).

The 12 participating districts included urban, suburban, and
rural areas from northern, central, and southern regions of
Louisiana. All schools from the districts were stratified on two
dimensions: average percent correct on the language test of the
Louisiana Basic Skills Test and average educational level of
students' mothers. Schools were randomly sampled within these

strata.

The multivariate analysis of variance design for LSES-II included two independent variables: 1) whether the student body of the school came from middle or low SES backgrounds, and 2) whether the student body scored above, at, or below how well they were predicted to score on a norm-referenced test (Educational Developmental Series, lower primary level). This design allowed for the comparison of six groups of schools: 1) middle-SES effective schools, 2) middle-SES typical schools, 3) middle-SES ineffective schools, 4) low-SES effective schools, 5) low-SES typical schools, and 6) low-SES ineffective schools.

A factor analysis of the students' parents socioeconomic data was performed to divide schools in middle- or low-SES groups (Teddlie et al., 1984). A multiple regression model was used to divide schools into those who scored above their predicted score (effective schools), those who scored near their predicted score (typical schools), and those who scored below their predicted score (ineffective schools).

LSES-III (Teddlie & Lauricella, 1986) followed in part the general design of LSES-II. However, two major differences existed: 1) whereas LSES-II consisted mainly of quantitative data collection and analyses, LSES-III focused on a case study approach by including qualitative data collection and analyses, and 2) LSES-III incorporated a classroom-level teacher effectiveness study within a general school effectiveness study. Field research and data collection for LSES-III were conducted during the 1984-85 school session.

At the onset of LSES-III, the research team decided to select nine matched pairs of schools. The study population included all schools with third grades from the same 12 districts used in LSES-II, as well as a large urban district. The total study population consisted of 345 schools. The 13 school districts were located in various geographical areas and represented a variety of population and economic compositions indicative of the state of Louisiana.

Regression models similar to those from LSES-II were used to select schools for LSES-III. A school was considered for inclusion in the study based on three criteria. A school became a candidate for study if the school scored above prediction (+ residual score) both testing years or below prediction (- residual score) both testing years. Consideration was also

5

given to any school that scored <u>substantially</u> above or below prediction at least one testing year. Finally, a school became a study candidate if a matching outlier having an opposite direction residual score and similar SES composition could be identified within the specific school system (or in a contiguous system consisting of small rural districts).

Once the potential pairs of schools were identified based on the previously mentioned criteria, selection began within a number of constraints. First, of the pairs selected, three pairs were to be from rural areas, three from small city or suburban areas, and three from urban areas. Second, the pairs must be from northern, central, and southern regions of the state. Also, the study sample had to include pairs of predominantly minority, predominantly majority, and mixed student populations. Finally, no school system could contribute more than one pair to the sample. (One exception was made to allow the study of a pair of extended-day program schools.)

Based upon the previously mentioned selection criteria and constraints, nine pairs of schools were chosen for the study sample. Upon observation, the third grade status in one school proved to be anomalous within the school and it, along with its comcomitant opposite, was omitted from the sample, leaving eight matched pairs.

<u>Effective</u> <u>Schooling</u> <u>Characteristics</u> <u>Generalizable</u> <u>Across</u> <u>SES</u>
<u>Contexts</u>

Data from many studies, including the LSES, indicate that there are a number of characteristics of effective schools that should be found regardless of the SES of the school. These include: 1) focus on academics as first priority of the school, 2) positive academic climate as perceived by students, 3) high academic engaged time-on-task, and 4) safe and orderly environment.

In LSES-II, schools that obtained the lowest student achievement relative to prediction provided a mixed message on goals (e.g., achievement is the most important goal of our school... and so is student self-concept and social development and...). Everything can't be most important, and principals from both middle- and low-SES effective schools felt academics were the first priority.

In schools achieving above prediction in LSES-II, almost all

students reported that teachers and peers cared about grades.
Very few of these students felt that their peers would tease them
if they made good grades. In these same schools, principals
reported a strong sense of school success. These results were
found for both middle- and low-SES effective schools indicating
that a positive academic climate was perceived by students
regardless of the SES context of the school.

In LSES-II, principals in effective schools estimated that
their students spent forty more minutes per day in reading than
was estimated by principals in ineffective schools. Over six
hundred hours of classroom observations in LSES-III confirmed
this finding. Effective schools had significantly higher
percentage of time-on-task behavior in their classrooms than did
ineffective schools. This finding occurred across both middle-
and low-SES schools.

Observation in both LSES-II and -III indicated that safe and
orderly environments were necessary for effective schooling,
regardless of the SES context of the schools themselves. While
such environments are prerequisite for effective schooling
regardless of SES context, our observations in LSES-III indicate
that the process for getting there is different in middle-SES as
opposed to to low-SES schools. Particularly in inner-city low-
SES schools, substantial amounts of planning and on-going
investments of time and other scarce resources are often
necessary to assure consistently safe environments for students
and staff. For instance, at one effective low-SES school in
LSES-III, several hours a day of teacher and aide time were spent
monitoring the school hall and yard for intruders. This policy
came after a violent crime was committed against a student on the
school yard during the previous year. Such surveillance was not
typically necessary in effective middle-SES schools observed in
the LSES.

Characteristics Associated with Effectiveness in Middle- and Low-SES Schools

While there are definite similarities between effective
middle- and low-SES schools, there are a number of very
interesting differences between the two groups of schools. Our
research indicates that effective schools have implemented
somewhat different strategies, depending on the SES context of
the particular school under examination. Characteristics
associated with effectiveness in middle- and low-SES schools are
found in Table 1.

LSES-II results indicated a difference in future educational expectations by teachers in effective middle- and low-SES schools. Teachers in effective middle-SES schools held very high future and present educational expectations for their students, while teachers in effective low-SES schools held high present, but more modest future educational expectations. While principals and teachers in effective low-SES schools had modest long-term expectations for their students' achievement, particularly in regard to higher education, they held firm academic expectations for their students while at their schools.

Results from recent research in California (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986) confirm these differences with regard to teacher expectations. The teacher expectations results are particularly interesting since previous school effectiveness models (Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1981) call for uniformly high expectations as a cornerstone for effective schooling.

To further illustrate this point, the pattern of means from LSES-II for one question dealing with teachers' expectations is presented in Table 2. An interesting trend can be seen in this data. There is an exaggerated difference in teacher expectation for the ineffective middle-SES group as opposed to the effective low-SES group. This occurs despite the fact that the effective low-SES group actually outachieved the ineffective middle-SES group. The teachers of students in the ineffective middle-SES group think their students will go much further in school than do teachers from the effective low-SES group.

Even though teachers from the low-SES effective group didn't believe their students would go as far in school as other groups, they managed to instill the belief in their students that they could achieve. The students in the low-SES effective group not only believed they could achieve well at the third grade level, but also that they could do well in later schooling. The teachers in the low-SES effective schools apparently got the message to their students that they could achieve by concentrating on present, rather than future success in school. If the students were told they could achieve at the third grade level, they extrapolated that they could achieve in later schooling. The students believed this even though their teachers were concentrating on present expectations and had doubts about future expectations.

The second difference between effective middle- and low-SES

schools concerns the visibility and importance of the external
reward structure of the schools. In several of the effective,
low-SES schools in LSES-III, we repeatedly encountered public
displays of individual academic achievement. For example, honor
rolls were highly visible outside the principals' offices,
academic awards ceremonies took place, and excellent student work
was displayed everywhere. The principals in these effective low-
SES schools spent a greater proportion of their time developing
and maintaining external rewards as opposed to the principals in
effective middle-SES schools.

A major difference between effective low-SES and middle-SES
schools on this reward structure dimension has to do with the
overtness of the display. In one effective low-SES school
observed in LSES-III, there were academic slogans on signs
throughout the building. Examples of the slogans included: "The
only thing more expensive than education is IGNORANCE" and "The
smaller your education, the smaller your paycheck." Such overt
symbols were typically not found in middle-SES schools,
partially because principals and staff there knew rewards for
academic achievement were more likely to be found at home. For
example, data from LSES-II indicated that teachers in effective
middle-SES schools perceived the students' parents to be highly
concerned with quality education.

A third difference between effective low-SES and middle-SES
schools in LSES-II revolves around principals' characteristics.
As was the case with teachers, principals exhibited significantly
different opinions regarding their students' academic future in
low- and middle-SES effective schools.

Principals in the effective low-SES schools projected that a
smaller percentage of their students would finish high school
than any of the other groups. They also indicated that fewer
parents from their schools believed that their children would
obtain college degrees. This occurred in spite of the facts that
their students were scoring well above expectation and that their
students believed they would go far in school.

The principals, like their teachers, see students in these
low-SES effective schools making modest gains through the hard
work of the school, almost in spite of the parents and local
community. In contrast, the principals in effective middle-SES
schools projected that a larger percentage of their students
would finish high school and that a higher percentage of the
students' parents believed their children would graduate from

college than any of the other groups.

These differences in attitudes on the part of the middle-
and low-SES principals were reflected in their behavior at their
schools. Teachers reported that principals in low-SES effective
schools observed their classes an average of 2.4 hours per
semester. Teachers in effective middle-SES schools reported only
1.4 hours of observation per semester. Additionally, teachers in
effective low-SES schools reported the greatest frequency of
principal assistance in academic matters. The reported frequency
of principal assistance in academic matters was less in effective
middle-SES schools than in effective low-SES schools. It appears
that principals in effective middle-SES schools allow teachers
greater responsibility for and ownership of instructional
leadership. We have speculated that principals in effective low-
SES schools tend to be initiators regarding academic programs
within the school, while those in effective middle-SES schools
tend to be managers of the academic programs to use Hall and
Griffin's (1982) terminology.

A fourth difference between effective low-SES and middle-SES
schools has to do with the contact between the school and the
community. In LSES-II, teachers in effective middle-SES schools
were in frequent contact with parents and perceived the parents
as being highly concerned with quality education. This was not
the case in effective low-SES schools where teachers and
principals perceived parents not to be very involved with the
education of their children. The students in these effective
low-SES schools saw their teachers as the adults who were pushing
them very hard to succeed.

Results from Hallinger and Murphy's (1986) research confirm
this difference between effective low- and high-SES schools in
California. The principals in effective low-SES schools in their
study tended to protect the boundaries of their schools from the
intrusions of the low income community surrounding them. On the
other hand, principals in effective high-SES schools were more
informal and less concerned about controlling and monitoring
instruction. In general, according to Hallinger and Murphy, the
effective high-SES principal worked to involve the community in
the school, thus taking advantage of high parental expectations
for success.

A fifth difference between low-SES and middle-SES schools
has to do with principals' authority in selecting staff and with
the characteristics of the staff s/he selects. Data on this

issue from LSES-II are found in Table 3. Principals in effective
low-SES schools were the most likely of any group to say that
they had major input in hiring their own teachers. Twenty-three
percent of the principals in this group said that they hired
their own teachers. Only eight percent of the principals in
effective middle-SES schools reported this authority.

Additionally, the teachers in the lor-SES effective schools
were the least experienced of the groups of low-SES schools;
that is, they had less experience teaching third grade and
teaching in their school than did the typical low-SES or
ineffective low-SES groups. This indicates that principals with
hiring authority in low-SES schools might seek out younger,
possibly more idealistic teachers for their schools. The
opposite holds true for the middle-SES schools where the least
experienced group of teachers were found in the ineffective
schools.

The sixth difference between effective low-SES and middle-
SES schools has to do with curricular offerings. Hallinger and
Murphy (1986) found a narrower focus on basic skills in the
effective low-SES schools and a broader curricular emphasis in
the effective higher-SES schools in their study. Observations
from effective low-SES and middle-SES schools in LSES-II and -III
tend to confirm these conclusions. On the other hand, our
observations indicate that the narrow focus on basic skills in
effective low-SES schools was also found at typical and
ineffective low-SES schools.

Conclusion

We believe that the field of school effectiveness is rapidly
maturing. One indicator of that maturity is the ability to make
more refined, contextually sensitive observations about schools.

SES correlates of student achievement have been documented
for decades. School alterable correlates have been identified
within the past ten years.

The LSES researchers and others in this symposium are now
exploring the interactions of those two sets of correlates.
They are finding that while some main effects occur, interactions
between SES and school alterable variables are equally important.
The implications for practice in the understanding of these
variables are considerable.

Table 1

Characteristics Associated with Effectiveness
in Middle- and Low-SES Schools

Middle-SES Schools	Low-SES Schools
1. Promote both high present and future educational expectations.	1. Promote high present educational expectations. Be sure that the students believe that they can perform well at their current grade level. Allow high future educational goals to develop later.
2. De-emphasize visible external rewards for academic achievement. Such rewards should be unnecessary if an adequate orientation is found at home. Taking time from school for providing rewards may take away from valuable class time.	2. Increase the external reward structure for academic achievement. Make high achieving students feel special.
3. Hire principals with good managerial abilities. Increase teacher responsibility for and ownership of instructional leadership.	3. Hire principals who are initiators, who want to make changes in the schools. Encourage a more active role for the principal in monitoring classrooms and providing overall instructional leadership.
4. Increase contact with the community. Encourage parents with high educational expectations to exert a press for school achievement.	4. Carefully evaluate the effect of the community on the school. If the community does not exert a positive press for school achievement, create boundaries to buffer the school from negative influences.
5. Hire more experienced teachers.	5. Hire younger, possibly more idealistic teachers. Give the principal more authority in selecting her/his own staff.
6. Expand curricular offerings beyond the basic skills.	6. Focus on basic skills first and foremost with other offerings after they have been mastered.

12

Table 2

Teacher Expectations for Likelihood of Students Attending College

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Students' Parents

		Middle SES	Low SES
School's Performance Relative to Expectation	Effective	2.81	4.12
	Typical	3.43	3.50
	Ineffective	3.19	3.95

Note: Smaller numbers indicate a higher expectation for the students. The specific values for the scale are as follows: one = 90% or more, two = 70 to 89%, three = 50 to 69%, four = 30 to 49%, and five = less than 30%.

Table 3

Percentage of Principals Who Make Hiring Decisions on Teachers

Sccioeconomic Characteristics of Students' Parents

		Middle SES	Low SES
School's Performance Relative to Expectation	Effective	8%	23%
	Typical	0%	9%
	Ineffective	0%	0%

References

Brookover, W. B. & Lezotte, L. W. (1979). Changes in school
characteristics coincident with changes in student achievement.   East
Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, College of
Education, Michigan State University.

Blumberg, P. (Ed.). (1972). The impact of social class. New
York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Co.

Brown, R. (1965). Social psychology. New York: The Free Press.

Cohen, A. & Hodges, H. (1972). Characteristics of the lower blue
collar class. In P. Blumberg (Ed.), The impact of social class,
New York, Thomas Y. Cromwell Co.

Curtis, R. & Jackson, E. (1977). Inequality in American
communities. New York: Academic Press.

Duckett, W., Park, D., Clark, D., McCarthy, M., Lotto, L., Gregory, L.,
Herlihy, J. and Burleson, D. (1980). Why do some urban schools
succeed? The Phi Delta Kappa study of exceptional urban elementary
schools. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.

Edmonds, R. (1981). The characteristics of effective schools: Research
and implementation. Unpublished manuscript. Michigan State
University.

Hall, G. E., & Griffin, T. (1982). Analyzing context/climate in school

    settings--which is which? Paper presented at the annual meeting of

    the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Hallinger, P. & Murphy, J. (1986). The social context of effective

    schools. American Journal of Education, 94, 328-355.

Rutter, M., Maugham, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J. with Smith, A.

    (1979). Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effect on

    children. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Teddlie, C., Falkowski, C., Stringfield, S., Desselle, S., &

    Garvue, R. (1984). The Louisiana School Effectiveness Study:

    Phase Two, 1982-84. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State

    Department of Education.

Teddlie, C., & Lauricella, A. (1986, April). Quantitative

    results from the Louisiana School Effectiveness Study. Paper

    presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational

    Research Association, San Francisco.

Yando, R., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (1979). Intellectual and

    personality characteristics of children: Social-class and

    ethnic-group differences. New York: John Wiley and Sons.