DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 360 584 CG 024 963

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TITLE Psychological and Personal Dimensions of Students and Teachers in High Schools for the Visual and Performing Arts.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS High Schools; *High School Students; Locus of Control; *Personality Traits; *Psychological Characteristics; *Secondary School Teachers; *Theater Arts; *Visual Arts

ABSTRACT

Little is known about the students and teachers in high schools for the visual and performing arts. This study was conducted to examine the affective dimensions, particular needs and interests, and distinct patterns of characteristics of these students and teachers. Students (N=191) and artist/teachers (N=102) in high schools for the visual and performing arts located throughout the U.S. and Canada participated in the study. All participants completed a questionnaire on demographic information, self-perceptions about personal traits, and self-opinions about learning and teaching in the arts; Rotter's Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement; and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Form F. Arts students also completed the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. The findings suggest that the majority of secondary arts students and their artist/teachers share an intuitive orientation. Despite their artistic successes, secondary arts students and teachers were not highly internally directed. Students' scores suggest that they experience high anxieties and emotionality. Both students and teachers differed from the norm both psychologically and artistically. An appendix describes the survey instruments. (Contains 26 references.) (NB)

Psychological and Personal Dimensions of Students and Teachers in High Schools for the Visual and Performing Arts

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, Georgia, April 13, 1993

High schools for the visual and performing arts are well recognized "both as a phenomenon and as a harbinger of the future" (Curtis, 1987, p. 128). But, little is known about the students and teachers in these schools. Although secondary arts students have been identified as "artistic", few attempts have been made to determine their other characteristics. In fact, quite often "the process used to identify them, once accomplished, marks the end of attempts to know and understand their unique, individual qualities" (Sanborn, 1979, p. 426). For example, these students "are often considered to be different types of persons" (Belnap, 1973, p. 21), with different personality attributes. But, whether they are merely psychologically different from the majority of adolescents has not been determined.

Information about which counseling topics and teaching practices best meet secondary arts students' emotional and educational needs, and how they view themselves and their aptitudes is also tentative (Zimmerman, 1985). Questions concerning their personal and school problems, family dynamics, anxieties, coping mechanisms, perceptions about being labeled artistic and attending a special school, and views about their counselors, teachers and peers remain unanswered.

Artist/teachers' attributes are also unknown. They are hired because of experience, "excellence and professional standing [in the arts]" (Carpenter, 1987, p. 32), rather than pedagogical training. Many hold advanced degrees but, few have taken courses in teaching methods. Yet, some have won teacher of the year awards competing against seasoned educators in other disciplines and, as a group, artist/teachers have a

reputation for teaching excellence (Gear, 1984; Richards, Gipe & Duffy, 1992).

These are reasons for "a total lack of body of research about teachers for students with superior abilities in the arts" (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984, p. 98). Unlike certain periods in ancient Greece, modern society regards artistic pursuits as more avocational than professional (Gear, 1984; Jaeger, 1939). Consequently, instruction in the arts usually takes a subservient role to instruction in other disciplines (Clark & Zimmerman, 1987). Moreover, compared to other educators, artist/teachers represent a small pool of teachers isolated from the mainstream of education. There is also an ongoing and unresolved problem associated with research investigating teacher characteristics (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984). Most studies fail to discriminate between attributes of good teachers, teachers best suited for teaching academically gifted students, and teachers best suited for teaching artistically talented students (The Advocate Survey, 1971). A few lists of desired artist/teacher characteristics such as pleasing personality, patience, and knowledge of subject matter have been offered. But, these lists are vague, purely speculative and based more upon intuition than research. Further, "large expensive studies of groups of creatively gifted people are not being done. Instead the focus is the case study or qualitative research on one or a small number of people" (Piirto, 1992, p. 140). Therefore, information about specific and "ideal teacher characteristics for artistically talented students is missing . . . except as it can be inferred" (Clark & Zimmerman, 1984, p. 90).

The Creative Personality

There are justifications for assuming that secondary arts students and their arts teachers differ in cognitive and affective ways from their

peers and colleagues in regular academic settings. Both groups are selected on the basis of exceptional abilities in the arts and the relationship between certain personality attributes and artistic performance is well established (Richards, Gipe & Duffy, 1992). Personality refers to a unique pattern of traits or attributes which determine to a large extent how individuals interpret and deal with life, what they consider important, and how they make decisions (Lawrence, 1986). Aspects of personality affect an individual's cognitive functioning (e.g., thinking, styles of information gathering, conceptualizing, perceiving, understanding, and modes of decision-making (Jung, 1971; Kiersey & Bates, 1978). Personality characteristics also influence an individual's affective dimensions, such as beliefs, "wants, motives, purposes, aims, values, needs, drives, impulses, [and] urges" (Kiersey & Bates, 1978, p. 2). Further, the conscious, rational portion of personality influences an individual's interpersonal behaviors (Gough, 1987). Qualities of empathy, open-mindedness, responsibility, leadership, flexibility and conscientiousness, all indicative of ego strength, relate to personality characteristics.

Self-reports of highly creative individuals lend further support to the idea that secondary arts students and their teachers differ from the norm. In a well-known investigation of artistically talented adults, study participants indicated that as adolescents they were unusually shy, sensitive, non-conforming, rebellious, undisturbed by perceptual complexity, unwilling to accept facts unless personally investigated, independent in thought and action, and challenged by the task of creating order from disorder. Moreover, as adolescents, they felt alone, isolated, and tense produced by their on-going "struggle to achieve creative solutions to difficult problems" (MacKinnon, 1962, p. 494). Secondary arts students and artist/teachers also refer to themselves as "being

different" (Laciura, 1989); that is, more creative, more independent, more individualistic and more unconventional than average (Richards, Gipe & Duffy. 1992).

Purpose of the Study

Experts agree that students in arts schools need special guidance designed for their particular needs and instruction, and mentoring from special teachers with special aptitudes (Piirto, 1992; Renzulli, 1988; Zimmerman, 1985). However, first, the affective dimensions, particular needs and interests and distinct patterns of characteristics of these individuals must be documented. In order to provide this needed information, the following study was conducted.

Methodology

One hundred ninety-one students and 102 artist/teachers in high schools for the visual and performing arts located throughout the United States and Canada volunteered to participate in the study. All study participants completed: 1) a researcher-devised questionnaire designed to elicit demographic information, self-perceptions about personal traits, and self-opinions about learning and teaching in the arts (e.g., arts students responded to questions concerning grade, age, specific arts discipline, and self-opinions regarding topics such as personal anxieties and perceived parental expectations; artist/teachers responded to questions concerning job satisfaction, and self-opinions regarding their personality characteristics and teaching beliefs and practices); 2) Rotter's Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement (i.e., Locus of Control) (1966), which examines the degree to which individuals believe that they have influence over their

achievements and; 3) the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Form F (Briggs & Myers, 1976), which measures dichotomous personality characteristics of introvert/extravert, sensate/intuitive, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving. Arts students also completed the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (1983), which assesses an individual's feelings of apprehension, tension, nervousness, and worry as a transitory state and as an enduring disposition or tendency (See the Appendix for a further description of these instruments).

Data from the questionnaires and the Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement were analyzed by descriptive statistics. Data from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator were categorized according to Jung's description of basic personality types. Data from the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory were compared to normative data from high school students. Frequency distributions were calculated (e.g., the number and percentage of study participants holding an extravert, intuitive, perceptive, feeling (ENPF) orientation). Cross tabulations were then conducted to explore possible relationships among variables, and correlation coefficients were calculated in order to determine the strength of relationships among particular variables (e.g., state-trait anxiety and locus of control scores).

Results: Students

The 191 arts students (145 females, 43 males, three not stated), were in grades eight through 12 with nine arts disciplines represented (general arts, dance, creative writing, instrumental music, mass media, vocal music, theatre, theatre design, and the visual arts). The majority of students were dancers, theatre majors, and instrumental musicians. The students listed English and history as favorite academic subjects with 61% planning to attend college, 12% planning to attend post-secondary

arts school, 4% expecting work after high school but, not in their arts discipline, and the remainder undecided about future plans.

Consistent with findings of a Canadian Study (Robson & Gitev, 1991), the majority of study participants were first or second-born children in moderate income families. Close parental/child relationships were reported, and almost half of the students considered their parents to be "artistic", with most students reporting that parental expectations for their arts and academic success were too high.

The majority of students self-selected to attend arts school. However, 12% feel pressured to remain in arts school, citing reasons such as, "My parents want me to be this BIG STAR"; "Constant competition is tiring", "I have no extracurricular or social life"; "The hours are too long" and, "You have to compete with each other even if you don't care about it". Some students complained about problems attending a special school (e.g., "Some people at my home school give arts students a hard time"; "Counselors at my home school don't think of arts school as a real school"; "The teachers at my home school complain about arts classes", and, "Artist/teachers give students unequal treatment"). Yet, over 82% indicated that they would continue in the program regardless of future opportunities for stardom. The majority believe that attending arts school gives them "a better chance to become a good artist", "exposure to different races and types of people", and, "more opportunities for expression, independence, creativity, and meeting famous people". Yet, several students dislike "being labeled as artsy and gifty", citing reasons such as "Students of other schools regard this school as special treatment atmosphere"; "Getting singled out is a disadvantage" and, "Once I was labeled, the students and teachers in my high school began to treat me differently".

Injuries have caused 38% of the students to miss class or rehearsal,

and 17% have performed against medical advice. Twenty-three percent reported that they smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol, almost 8% reported using illegal drugs; 16% take medication to help them sleep and 53% are dissatisfied with their weight. Because of time constraints, these students view little television and read very little for pleasure, do little homework and have no free time for socialization or extracurricular activities. However, many work after school and also take private classes in their arts discipline.

The students consider their peers in arts school to be competitive and only average in understanding and caring and also report experiencing a wide range of emotions during a one-week time span (e.g., anger, anxiety, failure, frightened, happy, hyper, inadequate, jealous, lonely, resentful and sad). They recognize that they are different from their peers who do not attend arts school and state that they would only share school-related and personal problems with friends and parents as opposed to siblings, arts or academic counselors, administrators, or artist/teachers. The majority of students consider artist/teachers as average in closeness but extremely knowledgeable. They also state, "Artist/teachers tell us what to do, but we do what they say because they are usually right".

The anxiety level of these students is quite high. Over 50% report performance anxieties which many students attempt to reduce through deep breathing, relaxation exercises or yoga routines. Students' average anxiety scores are also high (state=41.93) with a range of 20-79 and trait=44.35 with a range of 20 to 78). The respondents worry about competition, scholarships, grades, parents, success, personal appearances, arts abilities, money, health, close relationships with friends, world resources, racism, war, peer acceptance, failure, rejection, death, dying

young, pregnancy, homework, auditions, the future, their intelligence, eating habits, weight, body proportions, habits of procrastination, finding the perfect mate, and achieving special roles and awards.

As a group, these students are externally directed with an average Locus of Control Score of 13, and a range of 2 to 23. A high Locus of Control Score (i.e., an externally directed belief), is also correlated with these students' dispositions toward high state and trait anxiety ($p < .005$). Unlike the majority of the general population, most of these students (65%) hold an intuitive orientation.

Results: Artist/Teachers

Artist/teachers report that they have a good self-image, believe that they are more intelligent than most individuals, are self-confident, have wide interests, a good sense of humor, and do not suppress their uniqueness. They state that they are intense, independent, decisive, energetic and flexible, with a strong sense of self-worth. They believe that they are outspoken, stand up for what they believe is right, and recognize that individuality is sacred. They are absorbed in their art form. However, unlike many creative individuals described in the literature, their art form is not their entire way of life and many did not recognize their artistic giftedness until early adulthood.

As instructors, artist/teachers make their own decisions regarding pedagogical methods, curriculum, and evaluation of students and are confident about their effectiveness as teachers. They consider themselves to be natural-born teachers, and think that they know what is best for their students. They expect students to accept responsibility and have high expectations for their students' futures. They also believe that not every artist can become a good teacher, and consider themselves to be experts in their field.

The majority of artist/teachers are only slightly internally directed and therefore believe that there may be a small possibility of a causal relationship between their behavior and success and achievements. According to Jungian personality typology, artist/teachers, like the majority of creative individuals assessed, are highly intuitive. Unlike the majority of creative individuals described in the literature however, artist/teachers prefer to deal with the outer world by using judging processes rather than perceiving processes.

Discussion and Implications

Some methodological issues are pertinent to the study: 1) participants were volunteers; 2) female arts students were predominantly represented and; 3) data were gathered by instruments designed to elicit distinct information. Therefore, research information cannot be generalized cavalierly to students and teachers in high schools for the visual and performing arts who did not participate in the study. However, participants' responses demonstrate considerable consistency, lending credence to the results. Not surprisingly, the majority of secondary arts students and their artist/teachers share an intuitive orientation. "The presence of the intuitive ... type ... stands out" (Piirto, 1992, p. 133). Thus, the assumption that these individuals are "different" from most of the general population is valid. Intuitive persons represent a very small percentage of the general population. They come to conclusions in a holistic sense without working problems through in a linear, step-by-step way. Intuitive persons may be unable to explain how they arrived at their conclusions. Yet, their conclusions are frequently correct. They are independent, imaginative, liberal, self-actualizing, zestful, intense, and confident.

Unlike most creative individuals described in the literature

however, the artist/teachers in this study do not possess a perceptive (i.e., a somewhat "laissez-faire") attitude but hold a judging orientation. This particular characteristic may be what inherently makes artist/teachers different from other artists. A judging orientation dictates a more orderly and reliable or secure lifestyle. The organization of teaching provides this order.

Surprisingly, despite their artistic successes, secondary arts students and their teachers are not highly internally directed. While their creative nature dictates independence, decisiveness and a strong sense of self-worth, perhaps arts students and artist/teachers perceive themselves as having less control over their environment and achievements as they would like.

Secondary arts students' high anxieties and emotionality certainly need to be recognized by teachers, school administrators and counselors, and parents. Emotionality and a tendency to worry are attitudes which typify most adolescents. However, these arts students are more anxious (both state and trait), than their peers in regular academic settings. Perhaps the high expectations of parents and artist/teachers for these students' achievements, along with the students' lack of free time, contribute to their anxieties and feelings of pressure.

The findings of the study indicate that secondary arts students and artist/teachers possess some strikingly similar characteristics (e.g., an intuitive orientation, artistic aptitudes and very little internal direction). Ultimately, these characteristics may be what sets these two groups apart from other individuals in regular school settings. Secondary arts students and artist/teachers are different from the norm both psychologically and artistically which may cause inner-conflicts, feeling of lack of personal control, and anxieties. Thus, the very characteristics

which make these students' outstanding may produce "inherent contradiction(s) between acceptance and achievement" (Kagan & Cole, 1972, p. 39). Documenting secondary arts students' and artist/teachers' unique characteristics will assist these two groups of individuals to understand themselves and help others to appreciate both their artistic natures and aptitudes.

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Appendix

Research Instruments

Researcher-Devised Questionnaires

The questionnaires required study participants to respond to statements by deciding how well each statement described the respondent and circling a corresponding number (e.g. 1=very much unlike me; 2=somewhat unlike me; 3=somewhat like me and 4=very much like me), to complete open-ended statements or to answer specific questions. The arts students' questionnaire contained 79 items (some items suggested by Robson & Gitev, 1991). The artist/teacher questionnaire contained 72 items. Some representative items for arts students were:

#18. Did you miss out on anything by attending arts school? If yes, specify_____

#48. Consider your parents' expectations for you (e.g., academic, social, sports, arts) (Fill in appropriate number) (1=too high, 2=moderately high, 3=average, 4=somewhat low, 5=too low)

--------academic--------social--------sports--------arts

Some representative items for artist/teachers were:

#51. I am outspoken (1=not at all, 2=somewhat, 3=frequently, 4=almost always)

#58. I am aware when I change my teaching behavior from adult to whimsical (1=not at all, 2=somewhat, 3=frequently, 4=almost always)

Generalized Expectancies for Internal versus External Locus of Control of Reinforcement (Rotter, 1966)

This instrument measures the construct of locus of control. Locus of control indicates an individual's beliefs about "the relationship between one's own behavior and its consequences" (Rotter, 1966, p. 21). The instrument consists of 29 forced choice items: Rotter (1966) reports moderate to good reliability and validity coefficients ranging from .49 to .83.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs & Myers, 1976)

This instrument, based on Jung's personality typology, is a self-report personality inventory designed to measure the variables of extraversion/introversion (E/I), sensation/intuition (S/N), thinking/feeling (T/F), and judgement/perception (J/P). Form F, employed in this study has been used in over 800 empirically-based research studies. Internal validity is moderate to high and reliability is good based upon correlation coefficients of .87.

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, 1983)

This instrument is a self-administered 40-item Likert-scale assessment designed to measure an individual's state (at the moment) and trait (i.e., continuous/anxiety. Scores ranges from '20' to '80'. More than 2,000 published studies have employed the STA I. Text-retest correlations for the T-anxiety scale range from .65 to .75 for highschool students. Lower coefficients on the S-anxiety scale are to be expected since this scale reflects an individual's situational anxieties.