Students from Low-Income Families Achieving in an Out-of-School Enrichment Program

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Introduction

GT Students from Low-Income Families
- Fewer identified for placement in GT programs (Ford, Harris, Tyson, & Trotman, 2002; Vaa Tancio-Bakke, Patton, & Prifram, 1991)
- Differs from other gifted students (Slocumb & Payne, 2000)

- Dialogue, cognitive skills, home environment

Enrichment programs for GT Students
- Opportunities not provided in a regular classroom setting (Glazerwski-Kubinski, 2009)
- Increases self-concept (Feldhusen, Slocumb, & Kellogg, 1990; Kellett & Moore, 1989; Rinn, 2006)
- Incorporates differentiation
- Patton’s Three Stage Model (Moon, Fohlman, & Dillan, 1994) - improves critical thinking and problem solving skills

Super Saturday
- Enrichment program for gifted and talented students in grades Pre-K through 8 (Feldhusen & Payne, 1989)
- All content at levels two or more grade above the students’ actual grade level
- High-quality instructors - certified teachers, graduate students, or doctoral students who attended a training session prior to teaching in the program

Project HOPE
- Funded by Jack Kent Cook Foundation
- 5 participating school corporations
- Provides full travel, free transportation, and free materials to Super Saturday and Super Summer programs

The purpose of this study was to learn about the experiences and perceptions of 5-7 students participating in Project HOPE during the fall of 2008. We chose participants from our pool of HOPE Scholars and observed them in Super Saturday classes, and then interviewed them about their Super Saturday experiences.

Method

Participants
- Schools: 5 participating school corporations
- Students
  - Identified as low-income and qualified as a HOPE Scholar
- All HOPE Scholars were given consent and assent forms – 37 of 115 were completed
- Final sample = 33 out of 37 were either interviewed and/or observed by HOPE staff

Design
- Grounded-theory approach (Stemmons & Cobb, 1990) - observations and interviews.
- Team of researchers - assisted with analysis, discussion, coding, and constant comparison (Patton, 1990)
- Descriptive exit data from student program evaluations were compared - consumed HOPE vs. non-consumed HOPE and HOPE vs. no HOPE.
- Observation protocol = observed each participant for 10 minutes
- Interview protocol: Interviewed on 16 or 5 day of Super Saturday
- Semi-structured interview questions

Results

Qualitative Findings
- Four major themes:
  - Students had positive experiences (22 of 26)
  - Students learned new, above grade concepts (25 of 26)
  - Students participated in interactive learning (25 of 26)
  - Students experienced social support (6 of 26 interviewed, 24 of 26 observed)

- Teacher’s observations, above grade level concepts:
  - CR 1 in Web Design described what she learned by saying, “I learned how to do hyperlinks… and how to add pages on websites” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
  - CR 2 in Veterinary Medicine described why she would return to the Super Saturday program, “…I think it’s a fun experience learning about things you really want to learn about” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
- Students’ interviews, above grade level concepts:
  - CR 3 in Web Design believed that the best thing about her Super Saturday experience was, “Probably making new friends” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
  - CR 4 in Veterinary Medicine stated: “We dissected a pig’s heart… a sheep’s brain” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
  - CR 5 in Veterinary Medicine commented that other gifted students who participate in enrichment programs receive.

- Students learned new, above grade level concepts:
  - CR 1 in Web Design described what she learned by saying, “I learned how to do hyperlinks… and how to add pages on websites” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
  - CR 2 in Veterinary Medicine described how she learned about veterinary medicine.

- Students participated in interactive learning:
  - CR 3 in Web Design believed the best thing about her Super Saturday experience was, “Probably meeting new friends” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).
  - CR 4 in Veterinary Medicine described how she learned about veterinary medicine.

- Students experienced social support:
  - CR 3 in Web Design believed the best thing about her Super Saturday experience was, “Probably meeting new friends” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).

- Interview question number four asked students what they liked least about the program.

- Students learned new, above grade level concepts:
  - CR 1 in Web Design described what she learned by saying, “I learned how to do hyperlinks… and how to add pages on websites” (personal interview, November 8, 2008).

Discussion

- The findings of this qualitative study are limited because these results are from one out-of-school enrichment program. This program had certain criteria that the students had to meet in order to participate in this program. Other enrichment programs may not have the same criteria. In addition, enrichment programs can vary widely in their curriculum, instructors, and student population. Because of this variability among programs, we cannot generalize these findings to other enrichment programs that provide opportunities for low-income gifted students.

Limitations

References


2009 NAGC Convention St. Louis, MO November 5-8, 2009

Qualitative Findings

Descriptive Findings

The students who attended the last day of Super Saturday completed an evaluation of their class using either the Primary Grade Evaluation or My Class Activities (MCA)

Primary Grade Evaluation Form
- HOPE consent (n = 7; 4.48, SD = 2.28)
- HOPE nonconsent (n = 27; 4.41, SD = 2.26)
- non-HOPE (n = 35; 4.56, SD = 1.15)

- My Class Activities consists of 15 items that measure: interest, challenge, classes, and enjoyment