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Comparison of Teacher's Attitudes of Disciplinary Instances in Technology Education and Teen Living Classes

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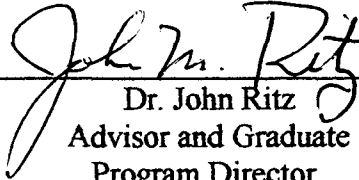
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of the Requirements for
the Master of Science in Education Degree

By
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APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Danny D. Rhudy under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLES OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We have seen movies such as Grease, Porkie's, or even the television shows such as Happy Day's. In many of the television shows and movies we see, the troubled youth or "trouble-makers" were portrayed as being permanent students in "shop". These students were categorized as never amounting to much. These students would never be considered scholars, technicians in the space industry or even at best be able to balance their own checkbooks. The only job these students could or would ever be able to hold after completing school would be work that no one else would want or physically intensive work that paid at minimum wage. This was the perception that many held through the 60's and as late as the 80's. So these students were placed in "shop" for the teacher to "train" to be productive members in society. The perception seemed to be that if the "trouble-makers" were kept busy, these students would not be in trouble. This was the considered solution to the problem. If the student was not causing trouble, then there was no problem. The "shop" class became the holding ground for all students that chose not to perform the requirements of the core curriculum.

Today students are looked at in a different light. Instead of labeling the student as a "troublemaker" or a "slacker", the cause for the student's actions is continually being investigated. Many programs such as mainstreaming and the monitoring of at risk students have been used in various forms. These programs are in place today. Recently new legislation has been introduced by the Senate Judiciary Committee such as the Pennsylvania State Education Association's (PSEA) 1994 Task Force on Violent and Disruptive Students and Change That Works to establish programs and provide for both

the students and school employees welfare. This association's reform agenda has an adopted policy of placing disciplinary students in technology education.

This study will examine the number of disciplinary instances of students in the eighth grade. It will compare the number of disciplinary instances between two technology education and two teen living classes. It will examine if technology education is used for providing a platform to educate disciplinary incidental students over other elective classes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to compare teacher's attitudes of disciplinary instances in technology education as compared to teen living classes of eighth grade students as a predicator that disciplinary students are placed in technology education in a greater number than in other elective classes.

RESEARCH GOALS

In order to properly compare the disciplinary instances of the eighth grade technology classes to the other elective classes, certain objectives must be met. These include:

1. Determine the disciplinary instances of eighth grade students in technology education.

2. Determine the disciplinary instances of eighth grade students in other elective classes, in this study, teen living will be used.

3. Determine if a significant difference in disciplinary instances exists between grouping methods.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFCANCE

Many students with disciplinary instances have been relocated into technology education classes. In previous years, these courses where mainly woodshop, metalshop and automotive type classes. The purpose for the relocation was to provide a platform for the student to complete high school and receive training for society without disrupting the school itself. These disciplinary instances where mainly grouped into smoking, drinking, truancy and fighting between students. Today technology education has developed into so much more than just a basic "shop" class. The disciplinary instances have also grown too. There are firearms and weapons brought to school. Fighting is no longer with just hands or fists between two people, but with gang implications. Fights have been to the death for little or no reason. Teachers and other faculty members have been attacked and beaten. They are not out of harms way and for no other reason then the teachers and facility are members of the establishment.

The Office of Education, Research and Improvement (OERI) was created in 1994 for educational research, development, dissemination and improvement. This institution supports a range of research and development activities designed to improve education of at-risk students. As with the PSEA 1994 Task Force, the student's and teacher's welfare is in mind.

When disciplinary students are returned to school, where are they placed? After disciplinary actions have been taken and the student's rights have been met, a review of the defining moments has to be conducted to see what has taken place. This review starts

with the teacher. In order for the teacher to accomplish this, there is the need to know where disciplinary students are placed. (Hicks-Brooks, 1999)

There have been numerous studies on at-risk and mainstreaming students, but little research is documented on the placement of disciplinary students or where the highest level of instances occur. In this study the researcher will examine the placement of disciplinary students in technology education. It will compare disciplinary instances between technology education and teen living classes. This comparison will show where disciplinary instances occur most between the two groups and where modification to the curriculum and teacher training can be emphasized.

LIMITATIONS

The limitation placed on this study include:

1. Only the disciplinary instances of technology students and teen living course students will be examined.

2. The classes that will be used are eighth grade technology and teen living course classes.

3. The school system in this study is in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assuming that several factors are in place, such as proper support, the researcher can then suggest several other assumptions. The assumptions made about this study are:

1. The purpose of disciplinary actions are to:

   - hold students accountable for their behaviors

- establish discipline when needed

- maintain an atmosphere conductive to learning

- preserve the safety, health, and general well-being of students and/or staff

2. Each school has developed disciplinary guidelines for violations of classroom rules, the school code of conduct, and the district code of conduct.

3. Students have a certain "due process" rights in matters of discipline. Due process is the provision to a student of:

   (a) notice of charges against him/her regarding an alleged misconduct, and

   (b) an opportunity to be heard regarding the charges, e.g., an opportunity to present his/her version of the situation.

4. Persons responsible for the student shall be notified in an appropriate and timely manner of disciplinary actions involving the student. Appropriate notification is important in ensuring the involvement and cooperation of the family as well as protecting the interests of the student.

5. If a student believes their rights to be informed of the charges and to present their version of the situation were violated or if the student maintains their claim to innocence, the principal will review the evidence and either uphold the decisions of the responsible administrator, modify the decision, or exonerate the student. If the principal is the responsible administrator, their decision is final and may not be appealed. (Ernst, 1998)

PROCEDURES

The researcher decided to compare the disciplinary instances of technology education students to the disciplinary instances of teen living students. The number of disciplinary instances of both technology education and teen living course classes are compared in this study. The researcher has examined the number of disciplinary instances of the classes by review of disciplinary data held by the school. The type and number of disciplinary instances will be compared using a t-test to determine if there is a significant difference between the two groups of students.

DEFINITIONS

Key terms and ideas need to be defined to better understand this study. These included:

1. **Mainstreaming** is the art of placing special needs students in "regular" classroom settings along with students who do not have special needs. The length of time in the classroom may be for a few hours a day and in some cases it is their homeroom class. Professionals and social workers may take the student for a couple hours with the rest of the time being spent in the regular classroom. The idea is to allow these students to observe normal children so they may be better prepared to participate with and in society.

2. **Defining moments** are times when we openly define the practices we want to follow in our interaction. These can be one of the following:

   Breach is when someone steps outside the bounds of what is expected of him or her.

Crisis is the stage that allows sides to build up their power and redefine their statements about the purposes and practices.

3. **Emotional or behavioral disorder** means a disability that is characterized by behavioral or emotional responses in school programs so different or appropriate for the age, cultural, or ethnic norms that the responses adversely affect educational performance, including academic, social, vocational or personal skills.

4. **Personality disorder** includes students who are socially withdrawn, isolated, unresponsive, immature, depressed or feeling inadequate.

5. **Conduct disorder** are significant points that the behaviors are inappropriate for the situation and the behavior's (1) occurrence is more or less frequent than normal, (2) intensity is usually more than normal, and (3) duration is longer than normal.

6. **PSEA 1994 Task Force on Violence and Disruptive Students and Change That Works** is legislation that:

   - Expands "in loco parentis" to all professional teachers and principals who have charge of students.

   - Requires conflict training for teachers and instruction for students.

   - Provides for maintenance of disciplinary actions when a student transfers.

   - Provides civil and criminal immunity for school employees who assist injured students.

   - Requires reporting by school employees of criminal acts or potential acts of violence.

   - Allows civil action against parents or guardians for property damage by students.

- Provides disciplinary and counseling procedures for drug and alcohol violations.

- Provides procedures for placement of violent or disruptive special education students in alternative education settings.

- Allows alternative education placement based on a student's delinquency status in the determination of safety risk posed by the student.

- Provides for criminal penalties for school-related assaults and terroristic threats.

7. **Technology education student** is a student where their course of study is split in four recurring components. These are (a) Resources, (b) Processes, (c) Systems and (d) Impacts. The curriculum is student directed and formulated from experiences with resources of technology and the processes of problem solving and creativity. This is presented to assist the student to better understand the development, impact and potential of technology.

8. **Teen Living student** is a student where their courses are based around home economics and living courses vice vocational education courses.

OVERVIEW

This chapter introduced the reasons and different types of research completed on disciplinary instances in technology education. The research that has been completed in this study is the comparison of disciplinary instances in technology education to disciplinary instances of teen living classes.

In the following chapter there is a review of other research on disciplinary instances in school to highlight the need and importance of this study. Chapter III will include how the methods and procedures will be implemented. Chapter IV will include new information discovered from this research. The final chapter will include a summary of the research. It will draw conclusions based on the research and offer recommendation for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter II of this study is a review of the literature. It will review problems in mainstreaming, school actions, student discipline, students that are struggling with life and student assessments and effects they may have in technology and elective education classes.

PROBLEMS IN MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming came about because children with special needs have the need to receive public education. Disciplinary children are placed into this category because there is no set program developed for them specifically. More often then not, teachers are given disciplinary students or at-risk students with special needs and have to or are expected to improvise. The teacher may be placed into a power struggle with the student. This effects morale and interests of all the students. There is also the problem of the parent(s) insisting that there is no problem at all. Another problem for the teacher to overcome is when the parents of a "normal" student are informed that an at-risk or disciplinary student is disrupting the class. The tendency is for the parents to pull their "normal" child out of the class for placement into another class.

It takes a special teacher and training coupled with experience gained in order not to loose emotional control and professional stability. The teacher has to decide when and where the line is to be drawn and have the disciplinary student removed from the class. It is important to determine if the mainstreaming of a disciplinary student is the answer and

can the teacher handle the student as well as the situation occurring. (Hicks-Brooks, 1999)

SCHOOL ACTIONS

Disciplinary actions that schools report for the most part are expulsions, transfers to other schools, and suspensions. Schools may choose to invoke any of the disciplinary actions for offenses. There are other disciplinary options schools may choose to use depending on the severity of the offense and the experience of the school staff. Serious crimes that are reported are violent crimes, tabacco, alcohol, drugs, weapons other than firearms and firearms. (Author, 1997)

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Appropriate student behavior is essential to the educational environment. This is the only way learning can be supported. Students sometimes engage in behavior not appropriate for the classroom or the school. In these cases, there are specific guidelines developed for the student to follow and the teachers to enforce. The school and the school district develop these guidelines. These guidelines establish where disciplinary actions are needed. These same guidelines help maintain an atmosphere conductive for learning and provide for safety, health and general well being for students and staff alike. (Earnst, 1998)

STRUGGLING STUDENTS

Students having trouble may be categorized into two levels. In order to categorize

the student some trial and error experiments have to be conducted. These trial and error

experiments are considered the best way to figure things out. (Johannsen, 1998)

Problems may relate with a particular teacher, influence from friends and/or peers, and/or

weaknesses in the parenting strategy or lifestyle. Trouble may continue despite the

teacher's or the parent's efforts. These students are considered special needs children by

the way they are demonstrating their coping ability. Their coping ability may be

demonstrated in a wide range of actions.

MORE COPING ABILITY				LESS COPING ABILITY		
RESILIENT	INDEPENENT	HARDY	AVERAGE	VULNERABLE	FRAGILE	DISABLED
				STRUGGLING		

Coping Scale
Table 1.

A resilient child finds a way to thrive despite the tragedy around them. An

independent child manages to raise itself for what ever the reason may be. A hardy child

thrives on average or better parenting and influences, and the average child does well

enough with so-so parenting and influences. A vulnerable child does well in favorable

conditions, while a fragile child seems to fall apart everytime something goes wrong.

The disabled child has nearly constant symptoms of mental disorder.

These categories are arbitrary. The important idea to remember is that students

cope more or less well for internal reasons. Parents and teachers may do more harm than

good by subjecting children to more stress and strain if care is not taken. Teachers and parents will be more successful with students that have better coping abilities. Students with lesser coping abilities will require less exposure to problems and progressively better than average monitoring. It is a significant advantage for the teacher to know if a student has special needs as opposed to average needs.

STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

It is often argued that a major function of the school is to sort and classify students. Assessments are one of the ways schools accomplish this. Assessments, however, do construct a dilemma for teachers due to the diverse values and literary practices of the groups of students they teach. Issues such as how the students at risk are defined, the student's knowledge and experiences and cultural values associated with the students learning needs to be examined. Unexamined values and beliefs can unwittingly influence the teacher's teaching practice. Mainstream literary practices and competencies are socially and culturally constructed which act as a social judgement with social consequences.

The assessment itself may not provide a level playing field or be free of bias. Assessment tools such as standardized tests, teacher-devised assessments or portfolios may provide a baseline to start from but should not be considered fully objective. The teacher has to consider which assessment method will provide the best baseline to reflect the literacy development. This is especially true with students from diverse backgrounds.

If teachers are to make a difference for students then they need to examine assessments in all manifestations. Students' success and failure is not just measured at

"transition points" such as the end of a term or the year. It is constructed moment by moment as students engage in events offered by the teacher's programs and the teacher assesses the students' competencies during those events. (Wilkenson, 1998)

BENEFITS

There are several benefits to placing disciplinary children with normal children. One of the benefits is the socialization with other learning students. The disciplinary student needs to learn and display what is proper behavior in and out of the classroom. Along with this benefit the disciplinary student is better prepared for real world situations since they are exposed to a wide variety of people. The disciplinary student may have higher self-esteem since they are no longer segregated from their peers and treated like an outcast.

CONSEQUENCES

While there are many benefits to placing disciplinary students in technology education classes, the consequences should not be overlooked. The consequences may include low self-esteem, lower grades and the possibility of skipping class. The disciplinary student may exhibit low self-esteem due to the difficulty of being placed into and having to master a new subject. Associated with this may be a grade drop too. The lack of one-on-one attention or the loss of any other specialized services that may have been received by the student may cause this drop.

SUMMARY

With the use of mainstreaming techniques as an answer for all, problems that occur for inclusive teaching need to be examined. This includes placement into a class as well as what happens within the classroom. Teacher training and curriculum development are key factors as well as the supervision and assistance of the disciplinary student. The benefits and consequences of transferring and placement of disciplinary students need to be examined. Chapter III will discuss the methods and procedures used to gather data for this study. The methods of data analysis will be explained.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter III contains a description of the methods and procedures used to obtain the needed information for this study. It describes the population of the study and the statistical data to be obtained from a middle school in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The analysis of how the data will be treated is described in detail.

POPULATION

The students included in this study are in two eighth grade technology classes and two eighth grade teen living at a middle school in Virginia Beach, Virginia. There are 36 students in two eighth grade technology classes and 35 students in two teen living courses.

INSTRUMENT

This study analyzed the students' disciplinary action given by their teachers during the school year as recorded in the teacher's grade books. The disciplinary actions will be recorded in a matrix for analysis. The disciplinary actions included are in-class detentions, Saturday detentions, in-school suspensions, out of school suspensions and expulsion. Students that have been transferred into and out of these classes will also be taken into account.

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was obtained from the technology education teacher's grade book and the teen living teacher's grade book for the 1998-1999 school year. The numbers of disciplinary instances were supplied directly from the teachers.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The researcher will use a t-test to determine if there is a significant difference between the numbers of the students' disciplinary infractions recorded in the technology and teen living classrooms. Reviewing the number and percent of disciplinary actions in both groups will provide further analysis. The two teen living classes and the two technology education classes were combined to create the two sample means. The sample means being one group of teen living students and one group of technology education students. The disciplinary incidents were recorded per event and not by the student. In collection of the data, the incidents were unable to be distinguished if one student may have been responsible for the increased number in the data collected. The data also did not distinguish whether the disciplinary actions were male or female.

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the methods and procedures used to collect the data for this research study. The disciplinary instances of the four eighth grade classes were collected for statistical analysis and comparison. Chapter IV discusses the findings of the study and data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings from data collected during this study. The data described were a result of collection of disciplinary actions given by teachers to students of four eighth-grade classes, two being technology education classes and two being teen living classes.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

The following data represents the disciplinary actions given to the four eighth grade classes. The disciplinary actions were from the 1998-1999 school year. These actions were collected from the teacher's grade books. Table 2 displays the disciplinary actions given to the students from 1998-1999 school year in technology education and teen living courses. All actions were counted individually per incident per class.

Class	Students	Saturday Detention	In-class Detention	In-school Suspension	Out-of-Sch Suspension	Expulsion
Teen Living	19	0	1	4	0	0
Teen Living	18	0	1	6	0	0
Tech Ed	19	0	2	7	0	0
Tech Ed	19	0	3	9	1	0

Disciplinary Actions

Table 2.

Figure 1 presents the disciplinary actions recorded for each class per incident in a bar graph format. This format was chosen for its clarity in presenting relationships and percent comparisons between the classes and the disciplinary actions recorded.
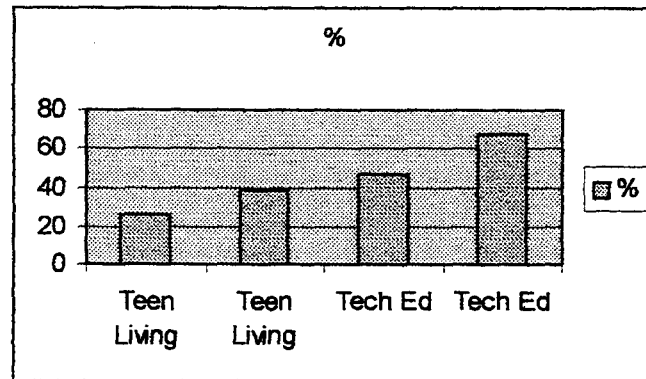

Figure 1.

Percentage of Disciplinary Actions Recorded per Class

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

In order to determine if a significant difference existed between the technology education classes from teen living classes, the two-tailed statistical t-test method was applied to the data. Table 3 lists the t-ratio and significant levels for the technology education and teen living classes. The resulting calculations from performing the two-tailed t-test are also listed in this table. For this study, data was considered good when statistically significant at the .01 level.

t-test	Level of Significance at .01 For a Two-tailed test
.55	2.7

Table 3.

t-test Ratio and Significant Level

OVERVIEW

This chapter reported the results of data collection of disciplinary instances recorded from technology education and teen living classes. Statistical analyses of the findings were reported. A summary of the study, with conclusions and recommendations will be made in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to summarize this research study on the comparison of teacher's attitudes of disciplinary instances in technology education and teen living classes. Within this chapter are sections on summary, conclusions and recommendations.

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to compare the teacher's attitudes of disciplinary instances in technology education and teen living classes. It determined if technology education classes were used to place students that had a higher rate of disciplinary actions over students in other elective classes. Four classrooms (two technology education classrooms and two teen living classrooms) at a Virginia Beach, Virginia, middle school served as the target population for this study. The student's disciplinary instances were collected and a statistical t-test method was applied to the data to determine if a significant difference existed between the technology education classes and the teen living classes. The data was obtained from the students' technology education and teen living class teacher's class book.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions can be made from the data collection and interpretation of the statistical findings in relation to the following goals:

1. **Determine the disciplinary instances of eighth grade technology education.**

    The disciplinary instances of the technology education classes in 1998-1999 school year totaled to 22 for 36 students in two classes.

2. **Determine the disciplinary instances of eighth grade students in other elective classes.**

   The disciplinary instances of the other elective education classes in 1998-1999 school year totaled to 12 for 35 students in two classes.

3. **Determine if a significant difference in disciplinary instances exists between grouping methods.** Analysis of the data showed a greater amount of disciplinary students were in technology education than in teen living classes. The t-test indicated a significant difference at the level of .01 did not exist between the disciplinary instances tabulated in the different grouping methods. The t calculated was 0.55. At the .01 level of significance, 2.7, the t-ratio was not exceeded. The level of significance of .05 was 1.8, which also was not exceeded. Therefore, the following conclusion can be made. There was not significance between the two sample groups.

   Several other factors could have caused the amount of instances documented to include student adjustment to the classroom, different teacher's tolerances, student to teacher ratio, student's performance and student's attitude. The number of disciplinary instances in the technology education classes showed that technology education classes had a higher tendency for disciplinary students but the difference was not significant at either the .01 or .05 levels of significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

   Based on the results and conclusions of this study, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1. Schools should monitor disciplinary actions of the students by each teacher. This provides a database of how each teacher documents and or handles problems in their own classroom and the period of the class.

2. Placing disciplinary students into a classroom should be done on a case by case situation. Every student is unique and has different circumstances that may have impacted their lives. Placing them into a class will impact the other students in the new classroom.

3. Parents should be informed of their child's behavior in school. The collaboration between teacher and parent is essential for all the students in class.

4. A follow-up study comparing vocational and non-vocational courses with further detail in the data such as male or female, if disciplinary instances where documented from one student or from multiple students and have both subject groups teachers monitor and mark instances at the same level of tolerance.

5. In conclusion, it is recommended that a study on the affects of disciplinary students should be completed with all students in a school. The study would develop a profile of what are the most documented actions and how each teacher reacts or deals with the incident for each period of the day.

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