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A Link Between Administration And Creativity?

Since it is generally assumed that creativity is desirable, the question arises of how can schools be improved to foster its development. To investigate one aspect of this problem, a study was undertaken by the writer. The purpose of this research was to examine longitudinally, the relationship between the creativity¹ of elementary school children and the school organizational climate² to which they had been exposed. The instruments utilised to gather data were the *Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire*³ and the *Torrance Tests of Creativity (Verbal Form A)*.⁴ The O.C.D.Q. describes the behavioral interaction of a school's faculty. This interaction can be classified along a continuum of climates: Open, Autonomous, Controlled, Familiar, Paternal, Closed. Also, there are eight subtests of climate, four of which pertain to the behavior of teachers as a group: Disengagement, Hindrance, Esprit, Intimacy; and four which pertain primarily to the principal's behavior: Aloofness, Production Emphasis, Thrust, and Consideration. Torrance's *Tests of Creativity* sampled the creative traits of Fluency, Flexibility, and Originality on seven parallel tasks.

procedure and analysis of data

In 1971, the O.C.D.Q. was re-administered to the faculties of a sample of Saskatchewan elementary schools whose climates had been determined by Harvey⁵ in 1963. Thus climate trend over a period of time was determined. Meanwhile, Torrance's *Tests of Creativity* were completed by a random sample of Division II (upper elementary) students in each school.

The study involved sixteen schools, 174 teachers, and 331 students.

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in creativity scores for students who had been exposed to continuously open climates as compared to students who had been exposed to continuously closed climates. For the purpose of this study, climates which fell in the open half of the climate continuum were classified as "open" and climates which fell in the closed half of the continuum were classified as "closed." This was done for both the 1963 and the 1971 O.C.D.Q. data, giving four possible groups of climate trend: Closed-Closed; Closed-Open; Open-Closed, and Open-Open.

The creativity scores of the students who were exposed to Closed-Closed and Open-Open climate trends were compared using a t-test. The same statistical procedure was utilised to compare creativity data partitioned by Open or Closed climates in 1963. A similar analysis was performed according to 1971 climate data. An analysis of creativity scores according to sub-test scores of the O.C.D.Q. for 1971 was also undertaken. This was achieved by comparing groups of the four highest scoring and four lowest scoring schools on each sub-test of the O.C.D.Q.

findings

Creativity was related positively to continuously open school climate and negatively to continuously closed school climate ($t=3.50$, significant at 0.01 level).

Creativity, as indicated in 1971, was positively related to climates which were described as open in 1963 and negatively related to climates which were described as closed in 1963 ($t=2.65$, significant at 0.01 level). A similar finding was evident for climates described as open or closed in 1971 ($t=2.35$, significant at 0.05 level).

Of the subtests of the O.C.D.Q., Disengagement (the tendency of the faculty to be "not with it" or in a state of anomie) and Production Emphasis (the principal's tendency to supervise too closely, be directive and authoritarian) were negatively related to creativity. Intimacy (the teachers' friendly relationships with each other) and Thrust (characterised by the principal as being helpful and co-operative in his efforts to contribute towards task accomplishment) were related posi-

tively to creativity. There were no significant relationships found between creativity and Aloofness, Hindrance, Consideration, and Esprit.

These findings seem to meet with and extend the context of previous research in this area. Feldvebel⁶ found that the achievement of fifth grade students was related negatively to Production Emphasis; also, Turner and Denny⁷ found a similar relationship between creativity of students and teachers who tended to be "business-like" and "overcontrolling" in their relationship with pupils. Andrews,⁸ in an extensive study conducted in Alberta, discovered a relationship between Intimacy and achievement which parallels the findings of the present study.

From all these results, two things seem clear: (1) an open climate is desirable if student creativity is to be encouraged; (2) there are certain dimensions of a faculty's behavioral interaction that vary concomitantly with creativity. If the principal's leadership style is authoritarian or is in some way threatening so that it conflicts with co-operative group functioning, then neither openness nor creativity is enhanced. Thus, it would seem that a desirable approach to administration is one where decision-making is a function and responsibility of the group. The group is, of course, co-ordinated by a principal who attempts to facilitate growth in the individual and in the school, not by close, authoritarian supervision but by co-operative evaluation and by the example he himself/she herself sets. In summary, this study detected evidence of relationships between the creativity of children and school organizational climate to support the use of democratic practices in school administration.

references and notes

1. Torrance's operational definition of creativity was utilized for the purpose of this study. "Creativity is a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, and so on; identifying the difficulty; searching for solutions, making guesses, or formulating hypotheses about the deficiencies; testing and retesting these hypotheses; and finally communicating the results."
2. School organizational climate was defined as the totality of interactions of the faculty of a school as they perceive it.
3. A detailed description of the O.C.D.Q. with research, development, and underlying conceptual schemes can be found in:

Administration and Creativity?

- i) A. W. Halpin and D. B. Croft, *Organizational Climate of Schools*, Chicago: Midwest Administration Centre, University of Chicago, 1963.
- ii) A. W. Halpin, *Theory and Research in Administration*, New York: Macmillan, 1966, Chapter IV.
4. E. P. Torrance, *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking, Norms Technical Manual*, Princeton: Personnel Press, Inc., 1966, p. 6.
5. R. F. Harvey, "School Organizational Climate and Teacher Classroom Behaviour," Doct. Dis., University of Alberta, September, 1965.
6. A. M. Feldvebel, "Organizational Climate, Social Class, and Educational Output," *Administrator's Notebook* (University of Chicago), Vol. XII, No. 8 (April, 1964), pp. 1-4.
7. R. Turner and D. Denny, "Teacher Characteristics, Teacher Behavior and Changes in Pupil Creativity," *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 69, No. 5 (February 1969), pp. 265-270.
8. J. H. M. Andrews, "School Organizational Climate: Some Validity Studies," *Canadian Education and Research Digest*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December 1965), pp. 317-334.