

Students' Perceptions of Simulated Classroom Environments

A Research Note

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Of special concern to education is the student's perception of the classroom environment. The atmosphere of the classroom may cause individuals to experience feelings of trust, welcome, and warmth or lack of welcome, chill, and lack of trust. Student's perceptions of classrooms are also affected by family culture, personality, and experience.

The purposes of this research were to study: 1) students' perceptions of selected attributes of classroom environments defined by experimenters as human, intermediate, and non-human, 2) student's preferences for selected classroom environments, 3) the relationship that existed between students' perceptions of a selected classroom environment and their preference for the environment, and 4) selected demographic variables related to students' perceptions of the physical environment of the classroom.

Human Environment relates to the ability of

built space to accept the imprint of individuals on their surroundings, to become personalized. Soft architecture welcomes and reflects the presence of the human being. *Intermediate Environment* is an environment which neither welcomes nor repels individuals. It is a neutral setting. *Non-Human Environment* refers to hard architecture whose surfaces resist human imprinting.

A sample of 200 eighth grade students from 20 schools in the state of Missouri participated. Instrumentation included an Environmental Attribute Scale, slides of the varying classroom environments, and Personal Data Form. A pilot study consisting of 40 pairs of adjectives was administered to a group of eighth grade students for the development of the Environmental Attribute Scale. The classroom environments were selected to represent the various classrooms by a panel of experts. The simulated classrooms were developed to depict humanness and non-humanness from a review of literature and then evaluated by experts as to the human or non-human qualities. The analysis of the data consisted of analysis of variance by ranks, mul-

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tivariate analysis of variance, Friedman's analysis of variance, and regression analysis.

Results and Conclusions

The sample of students participating in the study consisted of 51 percent males and 49 percent females. Fifty percent of the students resided in rural areas, 20 percent in suburban areas and 30 percent in metropolitan areas. Findings of the study included: Students' perceptions of the classroom environments differed significantly for the non-human, intermediate, and human classrooms. There was a significant relationship bet-

ween students' perceptions of the classroom environments and their preferences for the classrooms. Students' perceptions of the human classroom environment was significantly related to the background variable of size of residence. Sex was a significant factor in perception of the classroom environments, and males perceived the non-human classroom as more human than did females. The human classroom was perceived as being significantly more human by females than by males. Students' perceptions of human, intermediate, and non-human classroom environments was not significantly related to their place of residence: rural, urban, or metropolitan.