

### **A Visual Critical Ethnography of Youth Development in a Rio De Janeiro Favela**

By Bryn Hafemeister

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#### **Abstract**

Favelas are Brazilian informal housing settlements that are areas of concentrated poverty. In Rio de Janeiro, favelas are perceived as areas of heightened criminal activity and violence, and residents experience discrimination, and little access to quality education and employment opportunities. In this context, hundreds of non-formal educational arts and leisure programs work to build the self-esteem and identity of youth in Rio's favelas as a way of preventing the youth from negative local influences.

The Morrinho organization, located in the Pereira da Silva favela in Rio, uses art as a way for the local male youth to communicate their lived reality. This study used a visual critical ethnographic methodology to describe the way in which the Morrinho participants interpret living in a favela. Seventeen semi-structured interviews with young men aged 15 to 29, the feature-length documentary film on the organization, 206 researcher-produced documentary style photographs of the Morrinho artwork, and the researcher's field notes were analyzed. Truth claims, ways of seeing as communicated through words and actions, were induced through a cyclical process of reconstructive horizon analysis that incorporated the societal context and critical theory.

The participants communicated their concerns about life in a favela; however, they did not describe their societal positions in terms of complete marginalization. They named multiple benefits of living in Pereira da Silva, discussed positive and negative experiences in school, and described ways they circumvented discrimination. Morrinho as an organization was described as an enthralling game and a social project

that benefited dozens of local youth. Character development was a valuable result of participation at Morrinho. The Morrinho artwork communicates a nuanced vision of both benevolent and violent social actors, and counters the overwhelmingly negative dominant characterization of Rio de Janeiro's favelas.

This study has implications for an inclusive critical pedagogy and the use of art as a means to facilitate a transformative education. Further research is recommended to explore terminology used to refer to favelas, and perceptions that favela residents have of their experiences in public education.

#### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of the study have implications for policy and practice in working with the youth of an oppressed population. This research shows the value of youth development programs to promote understanding among different socioeconomic classes. Freire (2009) considered this a critical step in liberation of the oppressed and the participation of all peoples in society.

Further application of this research is for educators to incorporate application of the students lived reality in the curriculum. If an educational curriculum is to work toward equality, it "must be forged with, and not for, the oppressed" (Freire, 2009, p. 48). Incorporation of a student's lived experiences allows the student to build upon previous knowledge and deepen his or her understanding of what is being studied.

Promoting understanding among various classes, using a student's reality in curriculum development, and incorporating arts in the curriculum work toward an ultimate goal of empowering youth for positive development. As is the goal of Non Formal Education (NFE), an end objective of youth empowerment can have important consequences for those who do not come from the dominant classes of society. In the Brazilian tradition of NFE, this empowerment leads to what Freire (2009) termed conscientização, or the

development of a critical consciousness. This critical consciousness allows students to work toward their own equal treatment by becoming political actors, which is necessary to work toward equal treatment in policy and practice toward favelas of the Rio de Janeiro government and society.

### **The Relationship between Metacognition, Self-Actualization, and Well-Being among University Students: Reviving Self-Actualization as the Purpose of Education**

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#### **Abstract**

This non-experimental, correlational study ( $N = 513$ ) examined the relationships among self-actualization, well-being, and metacognition. Need-satisfaction and non-defensiveness were also tested as mediators in the relationship between metacognition and self-actualization. A battery of paper-and-pencil self-report measures was administered to a sample of undergraduate and graduate students in a public university in South Florida. Correlational and hierarchical regression analyses and structural equation modeling for mediational analysis were used to test the hypotheses.

The results largely supported the hypotheses with only a few exceptions. Students who demonstrated a higher level of self-actualization experienced higher well-being (the result of this hypothesized relationship was equivocal for parent students,  $n = 61$ ). Moreover, need-satisfaction and non-defensiveness were found to be significantly and positively associated with self-actualization, providing preliminary supporting evidence for Maslow's (1968) and Rogers' (1951, 1961) theories of self-actualization. In addition, students with higher levels of general metacognitive competence were more likely to demonstrate a higher level of need-satisfaction, non-defensiveness, self-actualization, and well-being (the result of the third hypothesized relationship was equivocal for female immigrant education students,  $n = 78$ ). Further, metacognition and need-satisfaction, and metacognition and non-defensiveness shared common variance in predicting self-actualization. The

relationship between metacognition and self-actualization was mediated by need-satisfaction and non-defensiveness, except for non-education students ( $n = 201$ ), for whom no mediational effect was detected by non-defensiveness.

In sum, the findings imply that general metacognitive competence, which can be taught as a set of skills, theoretically contributes to students' self-actualization and well-being. This study provides support for a conceptual model of self-actualization, which introduces this phenomenon as a goal-oriented process that is essential to students' well-being and can be attained by exercising metacognition. The discussion of the findings highlights implications of this study for theory, research, and practice as a guide for scholars, researchers, and practitioners in the field of education and psychology.

#### **Implications for Practice**

The findings provide empirical support for the practical implications of the conceptual model tested for tackling cognitive, emotional, and psychological dilemmas in educational settings, as well as in coaching and counseling. For instance, in an educational context, there are several daily emotional and psychological challenges that teachers and school personnel need to address in classrooms and on school grounds.

The conceptual model presented in this study provides a theoretical foundation for practice and research to develop curricular and instructional interventions that teaches specific metacognitive skills focused on developing need-satisfaction, reducing defensiveness, and promoting the use of adaptive coping strategies. This model could be extended in a practical sense to include any other psychological growth-oriented challenges of students as metacognitive goals.

The age appropriateness of interventions must be acknowledged to accommodate stage and age of cognitive development. Some metacognitive interventions may be useful for adolescents in the areas of belonging and esteem needs to encourage them to become involved in shared activities and community-based learning, and to develop the same

respect and recognition for their peers as they would wish for themselves (i.e., their esteem needs).

The present study suggests directions for practice and research to develop a self-coaching curriculum with an aim for self-actualization. For the development of an evidence-based self-coaching curriculum, the researcher suggests developing a metacognitive instructional model of coaching that teaches metacognitive skills specifically related to need-satisfaction and defense/coping mechanisms.

### **The Efficacy of an Interactive Computer System for Teaching Developmental Mathematics to College Students**

By Jeffrey Miranda

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#### **Abstract**

Many students are entering colleges and universities in the United States underprepared in mathematics. National statistics indicate that only approximately one-third of students in developmental mathematics courses pass. When underprepared students repeatedly enroll in courses that do not count toward their degree, it costs them money and delays graduation. This study investigated a possible solution to this problem: Does using a particular computer assisted learning strategy, combined with using mastery learning techniques, improve the overall performance of students in a developmental mathematics course?

Participants received one of three teaching strategies: (a) group A was taught using traditional instruction with mastery learning supplemented with computer assisted instruction, (b) group B was taught using traditional instruction supplemented with computer assisted instruction in the absence of mastery learning and, (c) group C was taught using traditional instruction without mastery learning or computer assisted instruction. Participants were students in MAT1033, a developmental mathematics course at a large public 4-year college.

An analysis of covariance using participants' pretest scores as the covariate tested the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the adjusted mean final examination scores among the three groups. Group A participants had a significantly higher adjusted mean posttest score than did group C participants. A chi-square test examined the null hypothesis that there were no significant differences in the proportions of students who passed MAT1033 among the treatment groups. It was found that there was a significant difference in the proportion of students who passed among all three groups, with those in group A having the highest pass rate and those in group C the lowest. A discriminant factor analysis revealed that time on task correctly predicted the passing status of 89% of the participants.

It was concluded that the most efficacious strategy for teaching developmental mathematics was through the use of mastery learning supplemented by computer-assisted instruction. It was also noted that time on task was a strong predictor of academic success over and above the predictive ability of a measure of previous knowledge of mathematics.

#### **Implications for Practice**

As the number of mathematically unprepared students continues to grow in colleges and universities across the United States, the need for developmental mathematics courses will continue to play an important role in the future of the workforce, especially in STEM related jobs. As Boylan (2009) stated, "Postsecondary institutions must serve the students they have, not those they wish they had, and they must serve these students through some sort of developmental education" (p. 20). Institutions of higher education and faculty members must search for teaching and learning strategies that address the need of students enrolled in developmental courses, especially those in developmental mathematics courses. Mastery learning coupled with computer assisted instruction to supplement traditional instruction could be the solution to low academic performance and high withdrawal rate among students in developmental mathematics courses in higher education.

**The Relationship between Selected  
Standardized Test Scores and Performance in  
Advanced Placement Math and Science Exams:  
Analyzing the Differential Effectiveness of  
Scores for Course Identification and Placement**

By Josue Urbina

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**Abstract**

There is a national need to increase the STEM-related workforce. Among factors leading towards STEM careers include the number of advanced high school mathematics and science courses students complete. Florida's enrollment patterns in STEM-related Advanced Placement (AP) courses, however, reveal that only a small percentage of students enroll into these classes. Therefore, screening tools are needed to find more students for these courses that are academically ready, yet have not been identified.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which scores from a national standardized test, Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test / National Merit Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), in conjunction with and compared to a state-mandated standardized test, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), are related to selected AP exam performance in Seminole County Public Florida Schools. An ex post facto correlational study was conducted using 6,189 student records from the 2010 - 2012 academic years.

Multiple regression analyses using simultaneous Full Model testing showed differential moderate to strong relationships between scores in eight of the nine AP courses (i.e., Biology, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Physics B, Physics C Electrical, Physics C Mechanical, Statistics, Calculus AB and BC) examined. For example, the significant unique contribution to overall variance in AP scores was a linear combination of PSAT Math (M), Critical Reading (CR) and FCAT Reading (R) for Biology and Environmental Science. Moderate relationships for Chemistry included a linear combination of PSAT M, W (Writing) and FCAT M; a combination of FCAT M and PSAT M was most significantly associated with Calculus AB performance.

**Implications for Practice**

These findings have implications for both research and practice. FCAT scores, in conjunction with PSAT scores, can potentially be used for specific STEM-related AP courses, as part of a systematic approach towards AP course identification and placement. For courses with moderate to strong relationships, validation studies and development of expectancy tables, which estimate the probability of successful performance on these AP exams, are recommended. Additionally, findings established a need to examine other related-research issues including, but not limited to, extensive longitudinal studies and analyses of other available or prospective standardized test scores.

**Investigation of Escape and Negative Student  
Behaviors Related to Florida State High Stakes  
Test Preparation in Miami-Dade County  
Public High Schools**

By Ilia Molina

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there was a relationship between pressure to perform on state mandated, high-stakes tests and the rate of student escape behavior, defined as the number of school suspensions and absences. The state assigned grade of a school was used as a surrogate measure of pressure with the assumption that pressure increased as the school grade decreased.

Student attendance and suspension data were gathered from all 33 of the regular public high schools in Miami-Dade County Public Florida Schools. The research questions were: Is the number of suspensions highest in the third quarter, when most FCAT preparation takes place for each of the 3 school years 2007-08 through 2009-10? How accurately does the high school's grade predict the number of suspensions and number of absences during each of the 4 school years 2005-06 through 2008-09?

The research questions were answered using repeated measures analysis of variance for research question #1 and non-linear multiple regression for research

question #2. No significant difference could be found between the numbers of suspensions in each of the grading periods, nor was there a relationship between the number of suspensions and school grade. A statistically significant relationship was found between student attendance and school grade. When plotted, this relationship was found to be quadratic in nature and formed a loose inverted U for each of the four years during which data were collected. This indicated that students in very high and very low performing schools had low levels of absences while those in the midlevel of the distribution of school performance (C schools) had the greatest rates of absence.

Identifying a relationship between the pressures associated with high stakes testing and student escape behavior suggests that it might be useful for building administrators to reevaluate test preparation activities and procedures being used in their building and to include anxiety-reducing strategies. As a relationship was found, it sets the foundation for future studies to identify whether testing-related activities are impacting some students emotionally and are causing unintended consequences of testing mandates.

### **Implications for Practice**

School site administrators who are responsible for C schools should reevaluate test preparation activities and procedures to include anxiety-reducing strategies. Commonly used techniques, such as teaching test-taking skills, test simulations, and data debriefings might be supplemented with taking steps to ensure that the students are not only prepared academically, but also emotionally for state testing and the pressures associated with high-stakes tests.

School district and state officials should act strategically by developing district and/or statewide initiatives and policies designed to help alleviate these escape behaviors and consequently improve overall school success. As the school districts and state department of education deploy support to schools in need of improvement, they should consider differentiated support for these schools. Support for schools where students are not thriving should also assist in rehabilitating the school's climate and culture.