

INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

“Having it All” at Sleep’s Expense: The Forced
Choice of Participants in Advanced Placement Courses
and International Baccalaureate Programs

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The gifted can suffer from too many demands on their time and attention. This qualitative study tested the theory that advanced placement (AP) and international baccalaureate (IB) participants may feel forced to choose between academic success and social acceptance. The results, however, did not support the theory. Not only did gifted students not consider the necessity of choice between academic success and productive navigation in the social environment, they believed that they could, and should, maintain both high levels of academic success and healthy social lives. They reported that they could only have it all, both social and academic success, at the expense of sleep.

Research suggests advanced students may regard their abilities as a social stressor—a factor hindering normal social interaction (Coleman & Cross, 1988; Cross, Coleman, & Stewart, 1993; Manaster, Chan, Watt, & Wiehe, 1994; Manor-Bullock, Look, & Dixon, 1995). In response, these students may feel forced to choose between overtly acknowledging and revealing their talents, which may hurt their chances of social acceptance but allows them to achieve academic excellence, and hiding their abilities, which may derail their chances of academic excellence but preserve their social status. One group of students who may be put in a position of making such a choice are those in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs: two of the most common methods of serving advanced students in high schools. The College Board provides syllabi and exams for over 30 AP courses from which a school may choose courses to offer. Students can elect any number of courses from the array offered in their school (College Board, 2005). AP courses are more widely offered than the IB program (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2003, 2005), which is a program of

study that involves completion of a prescribed number of required courses, exams, essays, and projects during the last two years of high school (IBO, 2003).

Therefore, the question emerges: Do the participants in these programs feel forced to choose between social acceptance and academic success? Have they already made a choice by enrolling in these courses?

THE FORCED CHOICE OF ADVANCED
STUDENTS

Advanced learners, in general, are intellectually curious, show initiative and flexibility in thinking, exhibit great efficiency in problem-solving (Renzulli, n.d.; Saul, 1999), learn at a fast pace, understand advanced and complex concepts (Janos & Robinson, 1985; Karnes & Oehler-Stinnett, 1986; Renzulli; Tannenbaum, 1983), and are able to apply those concepts in novel situations (Renzulli). Although they differ cognitively, the research has not supported inherent social/emotional differences between advanced students and the general population, nor is there solid evidence of specific vulnerabilities associated with advanced intellectual ability. However, some advanced learners might face problems that inhibit positive social/emotional development as a result of the interaction between their predispositions (e.g., anxiety

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and perfectionism, cognitive and emotional intensity and sensitivity, and asynchrony in development) and their environment (e.g., educational placement, social networks, and level of support for their special needs from significant others; Robinson, 2002).

A manifestation of one such problematic interaction between advanced intellectual ability and social context is the perception of one's own advanced intellectual abilities as a social stressor, a trait hindering normal social interaction. This belief forms the basis of the Stigma of Giftedness paradigm (SGP; e.g., Coleman & Cross, 1988). According to SGP, the result of believing *others* regard giftedness as a differentiating factor may be that giftedness becomes a stressor in certain social contexts, thus thwarting normal social interaction (Coleman & Cross, 1988; Cross et al., 1993; Manaster et al., 1994; Manor-Bullock et al., 1995). In other words, some gifted students believe that when *others* view them as gifted, they are perceived as different and are treated as such.

The data from a number of research studies suggest that in order to avoid the "perceived negative social effects of recognized high ability" (Swiatek, 2002, p. 66), gifted adolescents may employ social coping strategies, such as displaying interest in anti-intellectual, pop culture topics and activities; withdrawing from enjoyed activities that others see as "nerdy;" intentionally doing poorly on tests; failing to hand in assignments; never volunteering answers in class; and even denying their own giftedness (Brown & Steinberg, 1990; Chan, 2003, 2004, 2005; Rudasill, Foust, & Callahan, 2007; Swiatek, 2001, 2002; Swiatek & Dorr, 1998). Tannenbaum (1983) explained the students' dilemma:

There is evidence to show that the gifted are influenced by their peers', parents', and teachers' feelings about their abilities. If they are seen as mental freaks, unhealthy personalities, or eccentrics simply because they are brainy or creative, many of them will avoid the stigma through conformity. Some would rather underachieve and be popular than achieve honor status and receive social ostracism. (p. 466)

Gross (1989) describes this conflict in gifted students as a *forced choice dilemma*.

THE FORCED CHOICE DILEMMA

The forced choice dilemma as described by Gross (1989) posits that all gifted students face a conflict between their drives to pursue intimacy and to achieve at high levels, placing them in situations where they must choose one or the other. Most students strive both to cultivate meaningful relationships with their peers and family and to achieve to the best of their abilities; however, pursuing both requires extensive time and effort, and pursuing one takes time away from the pursuit of the other. With the extensive pressure to

pursue academic excellence that gifted students report (Sowa, McIntire, May, & Bland, 1994), gifted children experiencing the forced choice dilemma feel that they must choose *either* academic excellence *or* intimacy, while students of average ability can theoretically pursue both simultaneously. Furthermore, Gross postulated that gifted students' perception of a stigma attached to giftedness exacerbates the dilemma, as it becomes a choice not only of time allocation, but between fulfilling one's own academic expectations and being socially accepted. Therefore,

If the gifted child chooses to satisfy the drive for excellence, he or she must risk forfeiting the attainment of intimacy with age peers. If the choice is intimacy, the gifted may be forced into a pattern of systematic and deliberate underachievement to retain membership in the social group. (Gross)

THE CURRENT STUDY

Gross's (1989) theory of the forced choice dilemma has yet to be tested with a sample of advanced students, despite the bleak implications of this dilemma for students if it were true that gifted students could *either* be academically successful and a social outcast *or* socially successful and an academic underachiever. In order to explore the validity of this dilemma with advanced students, we sampled current and former Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) participants.

METHODS

Sampling Rationale

Twenty-three high schools from seven states were selected for participation in a larger study investigating the "fit" of AP and IB courses for a broad range of gifted high-school secondary students. Selected schools represented a purposive sample, ensuring varied geographic regions and levels of community size (metropolitan, suburban, and rural), varied school poverty levels, diverse cultural groups of students in the AP courses and/or IB programs, and variations in the scope and services of courses and programs offered to highly able secondary students (AP courses, IB programs, and both AP courses and IB programs in the same school). Of the 23 schools in the original sample, 4 schools from one state were chosen for in-depth multiple case analysis (Yin, 1994). The ethnic and racial breakdown of these 4 schools was comparable to, if not more diverse than, the demographics of the 23 sites and the average demographic distribution across the United States (College Board, 2006). This smaller sample was chosen using stratified purposeful sampling in order to ensure that 2 schools offered AP courses and 2 offered IB, and that among the schools offering each program, they varied in community size and

TABLE 1
Description of Study Sites

School	Student demographics (state averages: White: 60% Black: 27% Hispanic: 7% Asian: 5% Native American: <1%)	Percentage eligible for free or reduced lunch (state average is 33%)	Average test scores (state language arts average is 88%, state math average is 86%)	Ratio of advanced courses to school population	Participation rate
Appleton (AP)	White: 18% Black: 25% Hispanic: 47% Asian: 10% Native American: <1%	54%	Language Arts: 84% Math: 72%	1:71	23%
Parks (AP)	White: 86% Black: 13% Hispanic: <1% Asian: <1% Native American: <1%	22%	Language Arts: 91% Math: 84%	1:53	Between 15 and 20%
Ignacious (IB)	White: 68% Black: 22% Hispanic: 4% Asian: 6% Native American: <1%	21%	Language Arts: 90% Math: 91%	Not Available	10% in Diploma Program
Crayton Heights (IB)	White: 35% Black: 15% Hispanic: 26% Asian: 21% Native American: <1%	37%	Language Arts: 89% Math: 81%	Not Available	40% in Diploma, Certificate, and Pre-IB

demographic distribution (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Table 1 shows the demographics of the 4 study sites.

Study Sites

- *Appleton High School.* A public urban high school offering AP courses, Appleton High School had a disproportionately high percentage of Latino and Asian American students and a low percentage of African American and Caucasian students relative to state demographics. At the time of the study, students at this high school were performing below the average on the state tests. Appleton offered 28 AP courses to their almost 2,000 students and had a school-wide AP participation rate of 23%.
- *Parks High School.* A public rural high school offering AP courses, Parks High School had a disproportionately high percentage of Caucasian students and a low percentage of African, Asian, and Latino students relative to state demographics. At the time of the study, the students at this high school were surpassing the average on the state test. This school offered 6 AP courses for its 426 students, and according to the school guidance counselor, between 15 and 20% of the student body participated in AP courses.
- *Ignacious High School.* This public suburban magnet high school offering the IB program had ethnic demographics fairly representative of those of the state, but the students at this high school were surpassing the average

on the state test. At the time of the study, 10% of the student body was enrolled in the IB Diploma Program, but this percentage did not take into account students enrolled in pre-IB or IB-track programs. This school's IB program offered eligible students the option of earning a full Diploma in IB, which required the completion of 6 academic courses and examinations in 6 different subject areas, an Extended Essay, and a minimum of 150 hours in the Creativity, Action, and Service Program.

- *Crayton Heights High School.* This public urban high school offering IB courses had a disproportionately high percentage of Latino and Asian American students and a low percentage of African American and Caucasian students relative to state demographics. At the time of the study, the students at this high school were performing below the average on the state test, but 40% of the student body was participating in pre-IB and IB certificate and diploma programs. The IB program at this school allowed students to complete either a Diploma or a Certificate program, which allowed more flexibility in class choice. The IB program was a school within a school, designed to draw students to an otherwise low-performing site.

Participants

The researchers interviewed 84 students within the four schools. Each school was asked to nominate participants representing the program's diversity in gender, ethnicity, and experience with their school's program; therefore, the

students we interviewed consisted of both current and former program participants. Fifty-seven percent ($n = 48$) of the participants were female.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviews

Interviews followed semistructured interview protocols (see Appendix A). The researchers conducted student interviews mainly through small focus groups composed of three to five students per session. Students who were eligible, but not participating in either program, usually were interviewed individually to increase the opportunity for them to reveal their unique experiences. In text, quotes are labeled by the school from which the student came (e.g., Ignacious), the interview type (i.e., Student Focus Group "SFG," or Student Interview, "SI"), and the identifying number of the interview from which the quote emerged.

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to increase the validity of findings, the researchers triangulated data sources and used multiple data collectors and analysts. Researchers recorded field notes after each interaction within the schools. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Initially, the interview data were in the first stage of content analysis; similar responses were assigned specific codes indicating commonality in response. Discriminant responses also were collected and coded. Then, weak codes, those that exhibited low commonality and many discrepant responses, were pruned, and strong codes, those that were highly common across interviews (including both current and former participants) and had few or no discrepant responses, were refined and collapsed into relevant, common themes as recommended by Yin (1994). Table 2 provides a description of relevant themes and frequency of emergence in each school.

RESULTS

Do AP and IB Students Report Experiencing a "Forced Choice Dilemma" Whereby They Must Choose Between Academic Success and Social Acceptance?

The AP and IB students interviewed in this study did not report experiencing the forced choice dilemma between academic achievement and social acceptance as Gross (1989) theorized. Achieving academically was not a choice for these students at this point in their academic careers. By enrolling in AP and IB courses, they already had prioritized academic achievement. Furthermore, the AP and IB participants in this study did not believe they were rejected by

TABLE 2
Table of Common Themes and Frequency of Emergence by School

Common Themes	Percentage of Interviews That Included Theme			
	Appleton (AP) (%)	Parks (AP) (%)	Ignacious (IB) (%)	Crayton Heights (IB) (%)
Importance of social acceptance	56	100	44	60
Importance of academic success	56	100	67	100
Conflict between social life and academic success	22	50	33	60
Sleep/fatigue	33	50	44	80
Sacrificing sleep in order to "have it all"	22	50	44	100

their peers for their academic achievement, as Gross's theory dictates. AP students did not report feeling rejected by their peers at all. For example, one AP student noted:

Everyone gets along really well. S2: Yeah. S1: Like especially in our grade, everybody . . . [there are] not that many people at all that don't get along with each other. Maybe like a handful, but other than that, we're all just like, "So, let's all go to the basketball game!" (Parks, SFG1)

IB students, on the other hand, did report the existence of a range of negative feelings between program participants and nonparticipants. They attributed negative reactions to the IB program structure (i.e., the required course sequence and schedule and the requirement that students take multiple IB courses), which they felt limited their ability to be exposed to and interact with nonparticipants in the program. For example, a group of IB students explained:

S1: You're pretty much with the same people for the next 4 years. I mean, I've had the same people in every class. Some of the people in my classes now, like, half of us go to the same class next after that one. We all walk together. S2: There's like a down side, because like our classes are a unique group of people that are up at the top and you only interact . . . it's like a different world. You might as well be going to a different school if you're in IB. S3: You really don't get a chance to socialize with the other people here who go to regular classes. It's like you don't know them really. (Crayton Heights, SFG1)

Another IB student noted, "There is a very strong divide between IB and non-IB. Not like real strong, because I don't think people really discriminate, but it's there" (Ignacious, SFG9). Another explained: "There were a lot of complaints about the IB people feeling superior and people being like, 'Ughh.' So we just came to an impasse because it's a 'school within a school.' What can you do?" (Ignacious, SFG9). Finally, a former IB student confirmed these negative feelings: "The IB students sometimes are just

exclusive. Some of them are not, but some of them don't talk to anyone who's not in IB because they're in IB and they're better than you are" (Ignacious, S15). Although IB students, who spent more time in advanced classrooms than AP students, noted less positive feelings between themselves and nonparticipants, they felt it was a consequence of the grouping structure of the program and did not feel their general education peers rejected them for being smart. Therefore, these advanced students did not view academic success as in conflict with social success.

In fact, the students in this study did not suggest in their responses a need to choose between having a social life and achieving academically at all. They believed they could successfully balance both. For example, an IB student noted: "It's all about time management. If you know how to balance your time and everything, you can have your social life and your rigorous IB classes" (Crayton Heights, SFG4). An AP student agreed: "It's like athletics, clubs, still go out on the weekends, still hang out with your friends, but you get the job done" (Parks, SFG1). Most of the interviewed AP and IB students emphasized the importance, from their point of view, of maintaining both a social life and academic achievement. An IB student's comments echoed this idea: "You have to balance out extracurricular activities and all the things you do after school with school" (Ignacious, SFG1). In addition to being important, students felt that "having it all" could also be a learning experience in itself. IB students explained: "S1: You can have a social life and a job and do the IB Diploma. S2: That's what I'm doing. S3: It teaches you a lot" (Crayton Heights, SFG1). In short, AP and IB students did not see academic achievement and social acceptance as mutually exclusive; they wanted to, and believed that they could and should, "have it all."

However, in order to have enough time to have it all—time for a heavy workload and time to spend with friends—most students indicated they had to sacrifice something. A group of Ignacious IB students, for example, illustrated the dilemma:

If you want to go out, you are not going to get your homework done . . . S2: Or you're not going to sleep (laughing).
S1: And then you get down to like 4 hours of sleep, and you die the next day. (Ignacious, SFG4)

Most students in this dilemma chose to sacrifice sleep. Therefore, if the AP and IB students in this study faced a "forced choice dilemma," it was between a desire to have it all and the need to sleep.

In general, AP and IB students tended to prioritize maintaining both academic success and an active social life over getting enough sleep. Students noted that they chose to sacrifice sleep because they owed it to themselves to socialize with friends for the hard work they did during the week and because they could sleep through their other classes. For example, a group of IB students noted:

S1: I need to go out! S2: Yeah, we need to. S1: The way I see it is I'm working so hard all week and I owe it to myself to go out. S2: You can sleep in class. S3: It's not like I sleep anyways, so what's the...I'm going out! S2: If I'm lucky, I'll get to sleep in. S3: And if not, I doze off in class. (Crayton Heights, SFG4)

The need to sacrifice sleep in order to maintain social and academic activity was more prevalent in the comments of IB students than AP students. IB students, those students who tended to attend more advanced classes per week than AP students, were more likely than AP students to report having more work, and therefore, to experience chronic fatigue and a desire to sleep in their spare time. For example, IB students commented, "I don't remember a day I have not been tired since freshman year" (Ignacious, SFG1); "Seriously, so many people are chronically tired" (Ignacious, SFG9); "Sometimes I think, 'God, I want to go to bed now!'" (Ignacious, SFG1); "S1: If I get 6 hours of sleep, I am so happy! S2: Well, yeah. We all don't get enough sleep. [All students agree]" (Crayton Heights, SFG4); "I spend most of my [free] time asleep. Any spare moment" (Ignacious, SFG1); and "I: What do you do for fun? S1: Sleep" (Ignacious, SFG1).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Having it All, Sleep Sacrifice, and Stress

Students in this qualitative study did not report experiencing a forced choice dilemma as described by Gross (1989). Gross posited that a forced choice exists between academics and affiliation, stemming from the social rejection accompanying the pursuit of academic achievement. This hypothesis was not supported in this study. Although IB students reported feeling separated and different from non-IB students because they did not have extensive opportunity to interact with the other students, neither AP nor IB students interviewed in this study indicated that they felt rejected by their general education peers for their abilities or by their choice to pursue academic excellence. Student interviews instead seemed to indicate that AP and IB students believed they could, and should, pursue both academic achievement and social lives, even though they needed to sacrifice sleep in order to do so.

The consistent reporting of sleep sacrifice by AP and IB students is of concern. Neither sleep nor sleep sacrifice was mentioned in the interview protocol, making their constant mention during the interviews an unsettling surprise. Research suggests that sacrificing sleep has detrimental emotional and physical consequences with potential impact on student health and school performance, such as memory problems, attention lapses, slowed reaction time, depressed mood, irritability, decreases in divergent thinking, ill health, increased school absences, and poor grades (Carskadon,

1999; Dahl & Carskadon, 1995; Frederickson, Rhodes, Reddy, & Way, 2004; Randazzo, Muehlbach, Schweitzer, & Walsh, 1998; Roberts, Roberts, & Chen, 2001; Sadeh, Raviv, & Gruber, 2000). Despite the consequences of getting insufficient amounts of sleep, most of the AP and IB students in this sample indicated that going to bed late, getting up early, and sometimes not sleeping at all was the only way they could fit everything in. And despite the fact that they repeatedly indicated that they *chose* to pursue both academic achievement and a social life, most complained of experiencing a great deal of stress as a result of their demanding schedules.

These students did not seem willing to sacrifice either academic achievement or social opportunities in order to abate the stress. It appeared very important to the students that they be able to achieve both and be perceived as being capable of achieving both. Research on gifted females (Callahan et al., 2004; Hollinger & Fleming, 1984; Reis, 1995) illustrates the existence of a similar phenomenon in young gifted women. Callahan et al. called the phenomenon the *Superwoman Syndrome*, which is characterized by a desire to “do it all”—that is, fulfill multiple roles—without the knowledge of how to manage and balance these roles, leaving women overwhelmed and unable to participate in activities they find personally fulfilling. Could many of the advanced students interviewed in this study be experiencing a related “Superstudent Syndrome,” in which they feel pressured to fulfill the multiple roles of high-achieving student and successful social being, without support or tools to balance them?

The finding of student perceptions of “satisfactory” social interactions also needs further exploration. The students in the study are cocooned to some extent within the AP and IB courses and programs with built-in social structures much like athletes experience in the team setting. Does this environment provide opportunities for these students to socialize outside of their classes? Are those outside interactions critical to the full development of satisfactory lifelong adjustment?

Although these results emerge from a small sample of purposefully selected schools, it raises the specter that AP and IB students, in general, feel that stress and fatigue are conditions that they must willingly accept as intrinsic to the academic paths they are on—paths they see leading directly toward successful futures. It seems important, then, that high schools in general should turn to their students to discuss their experiences. While it may turn out that students are faring well, schools may also find that students are experiencing the stress, pressure, and sleep sacrifice described by the students in our sample. If such conditions are present, high schools should consider providing support structures for these students, such as seminars on stress reduction, coping with stress, time management, and making healthy choices about one’s time. In any case, it is also worthwhile to examine the

nature of the heavy workload within AP and IB courses to ensure students are encountering rich, challenging curriculum, not simply more work.

In addition, educators and researchers concerned with secondary education need to investigate the extent to which advanced high school students really are experiencing successful social lives along with successful academic lives as a *choice* and the extent to which they are feeling pressure to have it all. Do high-ability students *not* enrolled in advanced courses experience the same desire to balance academic achievement and social life? Furthermore, we need to investigate to what extent the modern college admissions process, in which students are encouraged to take the most challenging courses offered in their high schools while also participating in a broad array of extracurricular activities, contributes to the heavy demands AP and IB students put upon themselves or are pressured to take on, as well as the consequences of this experience on their social/emotional and cognitive well-being.

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APPENDIX A: AP/IB INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

AP/IB Student Interview Questions

Remember to have students answer the questions for the designated AP or IB course. For example, if this focus group is Biology, they should answer all the questions based on the AP or IB Bio course. Also, you do not need to ask the probing questions after each question if students have already responded to it.

I Decision to Participate in AP/IB

1. Which AP/IB courses are you taking?

II Impressions of AP/IB Class and Teachers

2. What courses did you take to prepare you for taking this AP/IB course?
 - Were there prerequisites? If not, did you take some classes that you thought would lead up to this?
 - Did anyone advise you on what to take?
 - Were your choices good ones? Why or why not?
3. How would you describe the content you are learning in this course? (Probe for indicators of depth, complexity, abstractness, etc.)
 - Is it challenging? In what ways?
 - When you finish class, does your mind feel tired? Do you really have to think in class?
 - In class do you find the answers to questions you've always wondered about?
 - Do you make connections in class between new areas of study and prior learning?
 - Do you now feel like a specialist in ____ (whatever the AP/IB subject area is)?
 - Do you feel better informed now?
 - Do you feel that you have gained skills or knowledge you could apply to other areas?
4. Do you enjoy what you are doing in AP/IB classes? Why or why not?
 - Do you enjoy (or not enjoy) it because of the teaching? The assignments? What you're learning? The people in your class?
5. In AP/IB, are you given opportunities in class to practice or apply what you are learning to real-life situations or to apply the knowledge in solving new problems?
 - How do you think you could use what you've learned in class in the real world?
 - Do you see how professionals solve problems with this knowledge?
6. Contrast the instruction you receive in AP/IB classes with other classes you have taken.

- Do you find a significant difference in the instruction you receive in AP/IB courses than the instruction in other classes? Explain.
 - Do you find the AP/IB teachers offer a faster pace of instruction in their classes compared to other courses? Explain.
 - Do you find the AP/IB teachers offer more or less or equal amounts of independent learning in their classes? Explain.
7. Why did you decide to enroll in the AP/IB program? (What was appealing, what did you hope to gain . . . ?)
 - When did you decide AP/IB was right for you?
 - What was the biggest factor motivating you to enroll in the AP/IB program? What nonacademic and academic factors increase or decrease your motivation to learn?
 - Are there other options for gifted or advanced students? What? Why choose AP/IB over those options?
 - Are you taking any other college-level courses in another setting at this time? Have you in the past?
 - Would you consider yourself to be a high achiever? What has led you to that conclusion?
 8. What was the biggest factor motivating you to take AP courses? (Ask about the specific AP courses they are enrolled in.) What nonacademic and academic factors increase or decrease your motivation to learn?
 - What academic factors contribute to your continued enrollment in AP courses?
 9. What are the social advantages to your enrollment in AP/IB?
 - When do you feel more comfortable answering questions and participating in discussions: when you are in your AP/IB classes or when you are in regular classes? Why?
 - Do you like the other students in your AP/IB classes? Why or why not?
 - To which group of students do you feel more similar: other AP/IB students or non-AP/IB students?
 - Do you feel like AP/IB students understand you better or worse than students not enrolled in AP/IB?
 10. Were there any negative factors that discouraged you from taking certain AP/IB courses? What?
 - Did the work, the course content, peers, parents, teachers ever make you think twice about enrolling in AP/IB?
 11. What are the social disadvantages to your enrollment in AP/IB?
 - Do kids who aren't enrolled in AP/IB classes have a certain perception of students who are enrolled?
 - Have you ever felt like you had to choose between academic success and social acceptance by kids not in AP/IB?
 12. Who or what has the biggest influence on you regarding educational decisions? Explain how.
 - Think about your peers, parents, and teachers and talk about their influence on you.
 13. Are there any changes that need to occur in the AP/IB program to better reflect your learning?
 14. How does the grading factor into your decision of taking AP/IB courses?
 - Do you consider the weighting of grades at all when you are registering for courses?

III General Educational Achievement, Motivation, Attitude

15. What are the greatest contributors to your educational achievement? Why?
 - What makes you want to do well?
 - What helps you do well?
 - What do you consider to be your biggest school-related achievement so far? (Were you proud to tell your parents? What things do your friends congratulate for?)
16. What are the greatest limitations to your achievement? Have there been people or programs that have helped you address those limitations? Were they effective? Why or why not?
 - What makes it hard for you to do well?
 - What do you do then?
 - Who do you go to for help?
17. What are the best educational experiences you have had? [This can be in middle or high school.] What characterizes a good learning experience for you?
18. What is your definition of success? [Note: don't guide students to say in school—this answer can be for any aspect of their life.]
19. What nonacademic and academic factors contribute to your successes?
 - What about school helps you succeed?
 - What outside of school helps you succeed?
 - What about you helps you succeed?
20. There is research on teenagers that says even when teens are experiencing great academic success in a class, they don't want to be there. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Does it apply to you and explain why.
 - Have you ever felt this way? Do you feel this way about AP/IB courses you are taking now?
 - Have you ever had friends who felt this way?
21. What is your attitude toward school? Toward particular courses?
 - Overall, how do you feel about school? Good, bad?
 - Are you learning a lot in class?

22. Do you feel any social pressure from peers who are or are not in the same program as you? If yes, who exerts that pressure? In what way?
- For the peers who aren't in the same program, do you feel your school experience is the same or different from theirs?
 - Do you have brothers or sisters? If yes, explain how your school experiences are the same or different from theirs. Parents?

IV Other

23. In what ways do your teachers consider your interests and learning styles when they teach? Explain.

- Do your teachers lecture as well as write on the board and use overheads?
- Do they show movies or pictures?
- Do you ever have a choice of how you can turn in an assignment: write a paper, make a poster, make a video, etc.?
- Are the AP/IB teachers' styles ones that do or don't suit you better?

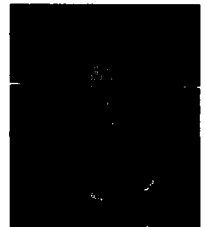
24. What kind of extracurricular activities do you enjoy?
- What do you do for fun?
 - Do you ever get a chance to do anything like this in class? Which class and how?

AUTHOR BIOS



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