INTRODUCTION

Six years ago, a public secondary school with an existing enrichment program for students identified as gifted and talented modified its programp so that students could pursue topics based on individual interest and produce products based on personal learning strengths. This philosophy emphasized student interest and choice and was grounded in Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model (1977; Figure 2), a model for gifted education supported by 40 years of research.

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of students enrolled in the modified program and to identify factors that supported students’ achievement orientation attitudes and behavior.

Statement of the problem: 90.7% of districts use Advanced Placement (AP) course options as the main program optioning for gifted secondary school students (Callahan, Moon, & Oh, 2014).

This is problematic as:
1. Acceleration alone does not meet the needs of all academically capable students (Delcourt, 1988; Foist, Hertberg-Davis, & Callahan, 2009; Hebert, 1993; Hertberg-Davis & Callahan, 2008).
2. The use a singular intervention for all gifted students incorrectly suggests gifted students are a homogeneous group (Neihart, Reis, Robinson & Moon, 2002; Reis & Renzulli, 2009).
3. A one size fits all approach increases the probability of a mismatch between gifted programming and the needs of gifted students, which could result in decreased motivation and an increased risk of underachievement (Siegel & McCooch, 2005).

Research Question: How do gifted secondary school students, their parents or guardians, and the classroom enrichment teacher perceive the relationship between students’ participation in Type III Enrichment and students’ achievement orientation attitudes, including self-efficacy, goal valuation, environmental perceptions, and the resultant behavior of self-regulation?

METHODS

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using a hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Miller & Crabtree, 1992).

Data Sources:
• Data were collected from three different format sources, including semi-structured interviews, short answer surveys, and student work.
• From three different perspectives, including student, parent, and teacher; and
• At various times throughout the enrichment process.

Participants:
Participants included 10 grade 9 students, 6 parents, and the classroom enrichment teacher.

FINDINGS

Goal Valuation
• Identity: I mostly focused on running because I’m a runner myself. (Star)
• Long Standing: It’s just when I was little, something just triggered in my mind. I saw a plane once, then all of a sudden I’m like, I want to be a pilot. (Jary)
• New/Emerging: last year I got a concussion during softball season. (Brianna)

Environmental Perceptions
• Parents: My dad, he is pretty good at math, so he has been helping me. (Lilly)
• Gifted Peers: I think my peers are my best motivation because all of us are really working together in one way or another. (Robert)
• They don’t judge you on anything you do; They’re very supportive when it comes to if you’re giving up, they encourage you to keep going… (Jary)
• Regular Education Peers: Sometimes there’s kids that don’t really pay attention or don’t care. They talk when you’re talking and they don’t listen (Jay).
• Mentors: If I needed help she would just guide me in the right direction, and it helped a lot, because I got stuck a couple of times when I stayed after. (Jake)
• Teacher: She knows what she’s talking about. She knows how to do what she’s talking about. She knows how to get to the students. It’s very good. (Charles)

Self-Efficacy
• I just felt like I did something that I didn’t think I could do. (Charles)
• I was very proud of that because it was kind of hard to make. And then my audience enjoyed it. My teacher liked it, so I felt very proud of myself. (Star)

Self-Regulation
• I find it easier to like focus in class if I like what I’m doing. (Robert)
• It basically helps you for the future because you understand how to manage your time. (Alpha)
• the teacher really pushes us to make sure that all of us, our stuff is done. (Robert)
• My parents…they made sure I got my work done. (Star)

SIGNIFICANCE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In illuminating the positive effects of participation in enrichment, findings from this study can be used to promote avenues and services for gifted secondary school students in addition to AP courses. Future research should include more research into the effects of research-based enrichment programs that are implemented with fidelity by teachers with knowledge of and training in gifted education pedagogy and practices.