

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTING A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Patricia Toney Mclin, Arkansas State University

mclin@astate.edu

Larry R. Dale, Arkansas State University

dalex@astate.edu

ABSTRACT

The conventional wisdom is that many students have a perception of economics and accounting as both difficult to understand and biased in its predictions. To the extent that this opinion holds true it would translate into a negative attitude toward these subjects. The purpose of this study is to determine precisely what student attitudes toward economics and accounting are and if those attitudes are changed by formal exposure to the discipline. Further, were there any differences in attitude toward the teaching of economics and where economics belongs in the overall curriculum? Three very different groups of students were examined for this study.

The first group consisted of in-service classroom teachers in grades Kindergarten through Junior College. These experienced educators were earning graduate credit for advanced studies in economic education. Group II consists of elementary education majors enrolled in a required course called Economics for Elementary Teachers. The purpose of this course is to provide pre-service elementary education majors with some basic background in Economics and instruction in teaching materials and methods relative to economics in the Kindergarten through grade six curriculum. The majority, 87%, had some previous course work in economics or economics for teachers. A sub-group included in-service teachers attending a seminar or noncredit workshop in either Texas or Arkansas was included in the study. These workshops are sponsored by their respective state councils on economic education and by a center for economic education at either Arkansas State University in Jonesboro or Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. Group III includes accounting students enrolled in Accounting I and Cost Accounting I. The group included a total of one hundred eleven (111) accounting students.

Group III primarily served students pursuing a business major along with accounting. It would seem that the attitudes toward economics and accounting could vary dramatically among the three groups of students. All participants had a significantly positive attitude toward both subjects in the curriculum, although the teacher groups were more positive about economics inclusion than accounting into the elementary level curriculum.

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