

# Advanced placement courses impacts



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## **Abstract**

Advanced Placement (AP) Programs have enabled high school students to realize their academic goals. To begin with, the college enrollment numbers are on an increasing trend. Not only have these numbers improved, but also the students' performances have progressed as manifested by better examination scores and grades. Despite its far-reaching success, the initiative is having been a victim to several challenges and problems in the United States of America. Additional resources and time are expended on the program, creating a conflict of interests. Furthermore, socio-economic inequalities determine the extent to which various schools and demographic backgrounds offer Advanced Placement Program courses and the capacity levels. Gauging the impact of Advanced Placement Programs are not limited to the performance indicators but stretches to other aspects which would give more guidance on ways to make better policies.

Keywords: Advanced Placement Program, high school students, grades, impact, enrollment.

### Impacts of Advanced Placement Courses on the Students

Advanced Placement has witnessed massive growth in the number of participating students in recent years. The process entails giving high school exams upon which students with high scores are granted university placement. Many colleges and universities in the U. S. and Canada started using Advanced Placement to determine the academic success of students who have applied for admission (Ackerman, Kanfer, & Calderwood, 2013). Varsities assess the courses suitable for each student, against their

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preferences. Higher learning establishments adhere to merit through ensuring undergraduates participate in activities that match their skills and aspirations. Students under Academic Placement get a glimpse into college courses, while varsities use it to evaluate qualification levels of its applicants.

Incorporation of Advanced Placement programs into high school curriculum provides students with the opportunity to get in touch with advanced courses pertinent to their career interests (Warne, 2017). Previewing various advanced level courses allows the learners to make rational choices of their undergraduate courses. In this regard, the College Board has fast-tracked the rollout of these initiatives into American high schools, through constituting a series of realizable and effective plans. Even though AP provides a forecast to learners and tertiary learning establishments, its uptake determines the level of selection (Ackerman et al., 2013). Male students have a higher chance of trying Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) classes than their female counterparts. As far as Advanced Placement is concerned, the level of representation by various groups would be helpful in the determination of STEM persistence.

Advanced Placement has soared in popularity as a method for exposing well-performing high school students to superior academic content.

Approximately more than three million school children have expressed willingness to participate in the process (Warne, 2017). Therefore, the formulation and implementation of AP is an important academic milestone in the United States of America. Tutors are provided with the conceptual framework for future courses, allowing them to transfer knowledge to their

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learners in ways easily comprehensible to them. Content is limited to introductory college-level courses that would give a simulation of the university experience. The success of individual undergraduate success has a positive correlation to the grades attained in the AP courses undertaken (Ackerman et al., 2013). Previewing tertiary level content improves the capabilities of interested students as they prepare for forthcoming learning opportunities.

### Quality of Education

This section of the paper will provide an analysis of the impacts that Advanced Placement courses has on the quality of education in the American education system. By examining a couple of qualitative and quantitative studies, I provide a connection to academic performance, college completion, and the chances of admission. Measures of quality are underpinned by progressiveness and, therefore, its basis is the comparison of either similar or related variables. The magnitude of developments can thus be determined by identifying superiors and inferiors from the collected data. Regional and interschool comparisons are also made to receive an honest state of affair's regarding the program. In as much as quality is measured, the degree of outreach in all communities, minorities included, goes a long way towards understanding the uniformity of the curriculum.

### Research Findings on the Advanced Placement Courses

Different study projects have been used to give a complete picture of the Advanced Placement Programs. Despite the fact most of them have yielded related outcomes, some studies have come up with specific findings.

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According to Warne (2017), Advanced Placement Programs may be defined as academic courses directed towards high school students, whose material is college based, but still taught by secondary teachers. Issued subjects are examinable, with standardized tests being taken to determine the student's progress on a yearly basis. Unification of the examination process into an involving activity requires a commitment to excel. Introduction of Advanced Placement initiatives has been important in the success of students and learning institutions throughout the United States of America.

Both students and teachers are provided with the exclusive opportunity for collaboration and professional development among the high school and advanced education faculties. Such joint efforts are paramount in providing students with top-notch quality education services to enhance their knowledge and understanding (College Board, 2014c). Most of the American students would not be beneficiaries of quality education in the absence of AP. Embedded in the academic policies is the need to use a common syllabus, combined with sufficiently trained teachers to help in achieving compliance with the tenets of commendable education (Education Commission of the States, 2016). Learners are furnished with well-polished, yet challenging material developed by the teaming up of post-secondary and secondary curriculum developers who work to best serve the needs of the recipients. Perceived benefits of the program outweigh the disadvantages therein. At the current moment projects highlighting its advantageous aspects are limited (Warne, 2017). Many components are yet to be figured out due to the wide variety of the available courses. However, there exists evidence pointing to student's engagement, levels of academic

accomplishment, and the general effects. While developing P-16, where educators join hands to create a fair environment that enables all students to achieve high scores, quality improvement remained to be the main objective. The practicality, academic performance, enrollment figures over the years, and the institutional adoption of the program possibly allude to the fruitfulness of Advanced Placement. The operational framework for the program was developed to ensure qualifying undergraduates maintain the excellent performance that earned them these slots.

Beneficiaries of the Advanced Placement program usually record high levels of success, particularly because they graduate from the college on time as compared to those who did not access it (Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013). When analyzing the relationship between first-year grade point average (FYGPA) and the functionality of AP examinations, the development of an aggregate score was found to be the best predictor. In addition, it provided reliable results when measuring student improvement. Colleges can, therefore, use this calculation to determine the suitability of their admissions across selected professions. Other related variables such as the highest and lowest scores, the proportion of AP courses taken, as well as the number of courses whose results were above average related antagonistically to FYGPA making them ineffective for regular usage. Exposure to an increased number of advanced placement exams proportionately enhances academic competence.

Notably, academic performance among students at undergraduate levels is directly correlated to their involvement in Advanced Placement exams prior to joining higher learning institutions. A higher number of AP students

graduate from varsities with higher scores in comparison to those who never participated at all (Mattern et al., 2013). An evaluation of the effects of critical thinking programs to courses taken showed increased participation from AP students (Kramer, 2016). Furthermore, the eligibility is merit-based, dependent on scores from a standardized exam rather than in-school performance. Higher scores observed among the Advanced Placement students is a product of student effort rather than intelligence. Already aware that success in higher education is based on distinction, the desire to receive high scores is upheld.

Students participating in the Advanced Placement program, as well as the number of total examinations, are on the rise since the adoption of the merit-based system (Kramer, 2016). At the onset, the initial eligibility requirement was only a high school performance rather than high school GPA and results from a varsity administered interview. Currently, a result achieved in any AP exam is factored into college credits. Even though a lot of time is spent by students studying for AP examinations, a good performance would probably mean that they will be exempted from some units in varsity, hence a shorter college stay. Learner decisiveness is optimized due to the boosted chances of admission. Rationality is also exercised by new entrants who have landed scholarships, due to hands-on experience with some career activities. Advanced Placement programs increase the student possibility of achieving the Grade Point Average that improves the prospects for landing bursaries.

There has been an increment in the willingness by both schools and learners to get involved in recent years. According to the data contained in the report <https://assignbuster.com/advanced-placement-courses-impacts/>

by College Board (2015), 17861 schools and 3855 colleges were using the Advanced Placement programs in 2010. In 2015, the number increased to 21594 schools and 4154 colleges. Each year since its preliminary use, related exams have witnessed a similar growth, alluding to the fact that the enthusiasm amongst students is on the rise. It is estimated that the total number of academic facilities willing to offer Advanced Placement shall maintain the growth projections (College Board, 2015). Academic Placement exposes students to the reality of the college studies prior to their joining. Consequently, the number of Advanced Placement program students joining the college level of studies is higher than their counterparts who never participated in any of its packages (Warner, 2017). Academic achievement due to AP is holistic, extending to both recipients and administrators.

#### The Inequalities in Advanced Placement

De la Varre, Irvin, Jordan, Hannum, & Farmer (2014) conducted an investigation to determine why students drop out of online-based education programs, especially among individuals from rural areas. The results and findings of the study revealed that online courses in rural areas have not effectively bridged the inequality gap due to a lesser urban outlook. Even though cyber courses were started to eliminate issues related to geographic seclusion, teaching staff retention, low student enrollment, and financial constraints, the dropout paint a dull scene. More than 39% of the students from the rural areas of the United States of America quit the online Advanced Placement courses (De la Varre et al., 2014). Amongst the reasons cited were environmental hardships, lack of motivation, parental preference, missing guidance from teachers, and medium accessibility among others.

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Even though the reach is widening, some areas lag behind due to an array of redeemable factors. SAS policies pertaining to AP are implemented, the College Board ought to ensure equity during the rollout phases. Fairness ensures that rural recipients, at a comparative disadvantage, are also provided with homogenous effective and conducive academic opportunities as those which are enjoyed by the urban-based mates.

Advanced Placement students are often prepared for demanding and tougher academic life in the colleges hence providing them with the opportunity of becoming more successful. Access to the program is often influenced by racial and social stratification (Klugman, 2013). Therefore, schools hosting the disadvantaged students are often affected by different issues such as resource deprivations. This made Klugman (2013) call for the need to equalize the accessibility of the Advanced Placement. During the calculation of the class rank, Klopfenstein, & Lively (2016) determined that high schools occasionally provide additional weight to scores which are highly regarded in the Advanced Placement program. For courses widely accepted as complex, the weighted grades act as incentives. In case these motivations are exclusive to certain parts of the country, at the expense of others, there are higher chances they will be academically backward. Students under AP realize their academic dreams by perusing those courses that are perceived to be complicated and difficult. At all times, equity and uniformity shall be handy during service delivery.

Participation in the Advanced Placement classes should be used as an indicator of the level of readiness of the students wishing to join colleges (Cisneros, Holloway-Libell, Gomez, Corley, & Powers, 2014). Approximately <https://assignbuster.com/advanced-placement-courses-impacts/>

80% of schools in Arizona are currently offering Advanced Placement courses (Cisneros et al., 2014). However, there exist variations in the number and types of courses taught from one school to another. Schools that accommodate students from minority populations are least likely to be diverse. On the other hand, majorly White schools are endowed with cross-cutting subjects (Cisneros et al., 2014). Black and Hispanic communities are under Advanced Placement too, but the variety and resources directed towards them are usually lesser than their white folks. From these findings, it is a safe conclusion that the disparities witnessed are indicative of probable discriminations of the various American backgrounds.

Most of the Advanced Program students have the ability to major in courses that they were able to pursue while still at high school level of education. They have already gained some acclimatization in terms of the expected academic toughness and commitment. Once they set foot into the university, they are not at beginner levels of proficiency, but rather approaching intermediacy. There exists a relationship between the acquired academic capabilities through AP and the distribution of enrolled students (College Board, 2014a). In STEM courses, the larger quotient of students getting commendable GPAs was under Advanced Placement is a sign that it enhances the capacities of its beneficiaries. Those under AP greatly featured as high performers.

### Claims and Themes

Based on the information gathered from the aforementioned articles, several subjects of discussion have been highlighted. These studies touched on the

following topics related to Advanced Placement: the benefits of participation, challenges faced by students, and the potential problems affecting the program in the United States of America. With reference to the illustrations presented in the study conducted by Warne, Larsen, Anderson, & Odasso (2015), mere enrollment into an Advanced Placement course barely produces benefits to the students. Nevertheless, the students who are able to take and excel in the Advanced Placement exams effectively obtained higher ACT scores. Notably, the level of success registered by students is not impacted by demographic, socioeconomic, or academic variables.

Part of the advantages of Advanced Placement course is that it helps in raising the chances of admissions to American colleges for a large number of high school students. According to Warne (2016), students who pursued an AP curriculum were admitted into college faster than those who did not give it a try. Furthermore, it has been determined that the engagement with varied materials aided student performance due to better flexibility towards knowledge (Warner, 2014). A student's future academic prospects are improved at the same time their cognitive abilities are enhanced. Tertiary institutions are becoming more interested in student performances in Advanced Placement, with some even converting these scores into college credit to reduce their work burden once enrolled.

McKillip & Rawls (2013) insinuated that student's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) performances are influenced by their engagement in the Advanced Placement program. According to a study conducted by McKillip & Rawls (2013), AP students scored higher grades in their SAT tests. Prior to joining university courses, they had effectively prepared in the preceding years.

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Grouping grades of AP and non-AP students into separate categories over various university exams, the average score for the former were higher (Warner, 2016). In addition, by covering different foundational concepts, familiarity was at a higher level, increasing the comprehension capacity. Student confidence is also bolstered, due to the fact that students' interaction with the material they once considered as too complex. (Sadler, Sonnert, Hazari, & Tai, 2014). Self-assurance, better performance, and acquaintance with future content lay the groundwork for maintaining student excellence.

Another important theme or claim that I was able to establish following the examination of the studies conducted on the impacts of AP was the perceived and confirmed challenges. A lot of time is spent on AP, reducing the available free time for a student. Learners are expected to work harder to achieve success in the related exams. On the other hand, those not involved in AP have more leisure at their disposal. Most of the students able to complete college-level education are AP participants (Schumacker, 2014). However, this level of accomplishment is realized at the expense of other social aspects. High achieving students are exposed to advanced academic content (Kanno & Kangas, 2014). On the dark side, the commitment required to achieve these goals is involving. AP recipients get to familiarize with next-level material but at some expense to their social and individual involvements.

Though started for good reasons, Advanced Placements propagates academic inequalities (Cisneros et al., 2014). Schools which are largely composed of students from minority populations of the United States of

America were provided with inadequate resources that cannot allow them to become successful in their studies. This casts a cloud of negativity that sparks a debate over its importance in the academic sphere especially amongst university administrators (Warne, Larsen, Anderson, & Odasso, 2015). Students have been negatively affected by policies related to Advanced Placement (Schumaker, 2014). Rural-based learners are victim to challenges that drive them to drop out rather than continue with their involvements (de la Varre et al., 2014). According to the College Board (2014b), additional procedures that would ensure uniformity in the learning conditions need to be enacted to enhance effectiveness. Colleges are warming up to AP beneficiaries, while gradually overlooking individuals who never participated. Among them are children from Black and Hispanic schools, who may have never had any knowledge about its existence, not even the opportunity to choose from the scarce placements available.

Urbanization has worked in the favor of Advanced Placement programs. Persons from the countryside are under the cusp of a series of inadequacies that discourage their participation. The teaching fraternities in these localities are undersupplied and are, therefore, more subtle to AP. To try and keep up with the deficit, AP courses have been introduced on an online basis (de la Varre et al., 2014). However, access to the internet is hampered by underequipped technology. Students lacking the guidance of teachers are not properly motivated or advised on the need to take up Advanced Placement courses. In this regard, their enthusiasm is lacking, easily pushing them to drop out. Back at home, their parents who majorly venture in the informal sector lack the necessary information they would use to inspire their

progenies to adopt AP courses. The reception of Advanced Placement in the rural areas is mild due to undermotivation, low tutor participation, and unfavorable parental influence.

## Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the significance of AP to high school students, by providing an analysis that establishes the benefits and its impact on the quality of education in America. Collectively, significant achievements have been accomplished due to its formulation and implementation. Individuals targeting college spots are exposed to content that makes them more competent and prepared. In a similar regard, their performance in school is raised due to exposure to next level content that is challenging and requires more critical thought. In the long run, Advanced Placement students have a smoother transition into the university tutorship. AP provides them with the opportunity to earn college credits. In addition, they are already conversant with most of the beginner's material, easily assuring them of a smoother transition to the colleges. High school teachers are provided with conceptual frameworks that guide their education outlines. They are therefore able to provide their students with distinct opportunities of great help to their professional and intellectual abilities. Chances of college completion for AP students are higher than their passive recipients.

Furthermore, STEM courses that are widely acclaimed as more challenging have seen the number of enrolled students increase proportionately. Not only has the turnover improved, but also the average performance of Advanced Placement students in these degrees outclasses those who did not

try any of its offerings. Resilience is instilled, readying them for the more challenging higher learning landscape. Academic performance at tertiary levels is positively influenced due to the nurturing of skills and gifts. Colleges are also able to assess the applicants and effectively determine the unique traits and shortfalls in each of their possible new entrants. Despite the noted success of the AP initiative, the inequality it promotes due to insufficient policies is a subject of discussion. Majorly white schools are better equipped compared to those hosting minority populations. Also, in the rural sphere, a series of factors drain enthusiasm and rigor from its students who ultimately drop out. If the equity situation is not addressed promptly, the future of AP programs may take a political turn.

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