

THE EFFECTS OF GROUP COUNSELING
ON
LOW-ACHIEVING AND/OR UNDERACHIEVING NINTH GRADERS
PARTICIPATING IN AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

By

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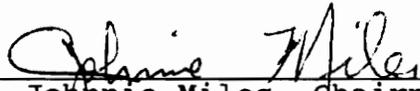
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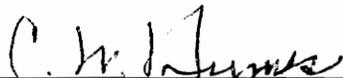
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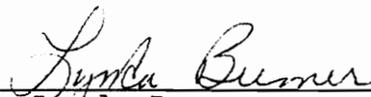
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(ABSTRACT)

This study utilized a Quasi-experimental Pretest - Posttest design to determine whether or not group counseling would improve the achievement (measured by grade point average), self-concept and locus of control (both measured by the SAM) of low-achieving and/or underachieving ninth grade students in an interdisciplinary alternative educational program. Participants in this study were 66 students in an alternative educational program called IMAGESS who were computer-assigned to either a treatment group or a control group. Students who were in the treatment group participated in ten 45 minute group counseling sessions over a four month period of time. Concepts of reality therapy were utilized during the group sessions with an emphasis on goal setting, decision making and problem solving skills. Qualitative information was collected

during the course of the study and utilized to formulate conclusions.

Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, analysis of covariance utilizing parent participation, sex, group membership and the corresponding pretest as covariates. Once suitable predictors were identified, multiple linear regression was used to identify suitable models for future prediction. Although no significant findings could be identified to support group counseling, analysis of covariance produced significant results with the post self-concept and post grade point average variables for parent participation and with the post self-concept variable for the interaction of parent participation and post grade point average.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued its famous report on American education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform" (Pesseisen, 1988, p.11). Since then, educators across the country have been questioning the educational reforms that followed and their effects on certain groups of students. Two of these reforms have to do with more rigorous course work and higher levels of achievement. However, as the requirements for high school graduation are continuously upgraded, local school systems are witnessing an increasing number of students withdrawing from academic participation. Many of these students eventually become frustrated and drop out of school. (McDill et al, 1986)

The issue of the student at risk of dropping out of school is very complex and has been addressed by many researchers and professional organizations in the United States (Bloom, 1976; Cohen, 1985; Enos, Morrow and Dolan, 1989; Glasser, 1969; Pallus, 1984; Raffini, 1988; & Sartain, 1990). Specific causes for educational problems are difficult to identify "because causal factors often are related and overlapping" (Sartain, 1990, p. 8). While these overlapping causal factors present a great challenge for today's educational system, lack of attention to this

chronic problem is producing a mediocre society of unmotivated individuals with poor self-concepts (Glasser, 1986; Greene, 1986 and Raffini, 1988).

According to Larsen and Shertzer (1987), one out of every four students who enter first grade will leave school prior to graduation. Low or failing grades was the most common characteristic of dropouts found in the literature (Lotto, 1982; Larson and Shertzer, 1987; McDill, Natriello & Pallas, 1986 and Ross, 1983). Other characteristics included: communication difficulties (Ross, 1983), truancy, (Ross, 1983), lack of participation in school activities (Larsen & Shertzer, 1987 and Ross, 1983) and behavior (Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 and McDill, Natriello & Pallas, 1986).

Raising academic standards presents special problems for potential dropouts who are often low in academic ability and reading skills. As a result, schools must identify characteristics that can be altered to minimize the adverse effects of these rising academic standards. Natriello (1984) felt that "teachers in high demand classes must challenge low-ability students without overwhelming them" (p. 106). Without help, low achieving students will face frustration and failure (McDill et al, 1986).

Underachiever or Low-achiever

According to Glasser (1986), 50% of all school age children with average to superior intelligence function below their potential in school and often in other aspects of their lives as well. Bricklin and Bricklin (1987), stated that 80% of underachievers have better than average intelligence (p. 11). They defined underachievement as a gap between what a child is capable of doing and what he/she does. However, the same authors indicated that a child with low "potential capacity" would not be considered an underachiever. In reviewing counselor interventions with low-achieving and underachieving students, Wilson (1986) indicated that underachievers were most often identified by a "discrepancy between ability and academic performance as measured by standardized tests and GPA" (grade point average) while low-achievers were usually identified by "failure of at least one academic course and teacher referral" (p. 628). Based on the above definitions, schools are dealing with two groups of students which may exhibit similar characteristics - low-achievers and underachievers. Since the focus of this study was academic improvement and its relationship to self-esteem and locus of control, rather than the etiology of poor performance, information on both low-achievers and underachievers were included.

In discussing the plight of the underachiever, Greene (1986) thought these individuals would fall into a gray area in education since they exhibited only subtle or non-specific problems that are not considered incapacitating enough to warrant remedial assistance. Since the numbers involved have become large, and the students are often quiet and test as capable, these students receive no special attention. Instead most schools have devised a variety of ways of "tracking" these students in order to remove them from other classes where students are learning. This method places a large number of unmotivated students in one classroom where teachers struggle to maintain order. Although the amount of learning that takes place in these classes is minimal, these students usually receive passing grades. (Glasser, 1986)

Characteristics of Underachievers and/or Low-Achievers

Many researchers have identified common characteristics of underachievers/low-achievers as: lack of self-esteem; lack of motivation; attitudinal factors and feelings of unworthiness (Campbell and Myrick, 1990 & Greene, 1986); right brain dominance (Carbo et al, 1986); external locus of control (Nowicki and Barnes, 1973); fear of being ordinary; fear of failure; and a passive-aggressive personality (Bricklin and Bricklin, 1967; Butlor-Por, 1987; & Greene, 1986). According to Greene (1986), repeated experiences of

failure, frustration, and futility, tend to produce "negative" children. These same individuals later become troubled teenagers and poorly functioning adults.

Butler-Por (1987) reported underachievers as having a low tolerance for frustration. This low frustration level prevented them from staying at a task for very long. These students would only try things they know they could do thus being assured of success from the start. Because underachievement is cumulative, factors that might interfere with achievement should be identified as early as possible to assure school success.

Low performing students who are capable of doing well in school but who are unmotivated need special attention (McMullen, 1973 & Morse, 1987). Studies completed by Elliott (1978) and Gold and Mann (1984) indicated that the withdrawal of students from school was often in response to academic and social goal failure. In a Position Statement on Drop-out Prevention, the American School Counselor Association (1989), stated that between 800,000 to 1,000,000 students drop out of school each year due to a lack of academic success. Tardiness, high absenteeism, negative attitudes, apathy, lack of motivation and unwillingness to take responsibility for poor achievement were cited as common characteristics of these students. Many students who begin to withdraw from academic participation in elementary

and middle school proceed to drop out of school during high school. (ASCA, 1989)

Weiner and Kukla (1970) found that highly motivated students felt they had a sense of control while poorly motivated students attributed success to forces outside of their control. Based on the human need to maintain self-respect, students who do not feel a goal is obtainable will often make no attempt which leads to apathy (Sartain, 1990). Students become disengaged in school when they perceive the performance standards to be unobtainable (Natriello, 1984). It is then not surprising that a student who is failing to succeed will choose to leave the environment which continuously bombards him/her with negative feedback (Pallas, 1984).

Role of Parents and Early Life Experiences

Since healthy adjustment to school depends on a child's personality and motivation, early life experiences are critical in shaping a child's academic outlook. Satisfaction of emotional and social needs (basic trust, trust in others, trust in self, autonomy, initiative and self confidence) determines a child's healthy development and personality which in turn will determine how well a child does in school (Butler-Por, 1987).

According to Bricklin and Bricklin (1967), self-confidence is directly related to achievement. If

achievement increases, self confidence will also increase. An individual with an unhealthy sense of self-worth sees himself/herself as being bad or unpleasing. He/she feels disliked by significant others and thinks he/she deserves not to achieve. He/she lacks confidence and distrusts his/her abilities (Bricklin and Bricklin, 1967).

Current research indicates that parents play an important role in helping the underachieving student. The message parents convey, both verbally and non-verbally, is a major variable in student success (Lehr & Harris, 1988 & Sartain, 1989). Since parents often interpret a school from memories of their own past experiences (Strother & Jacobs, 1987), they often resist change due to fear and misunderstanding (White & Riordan, 1990). Communicating with parents then becomes a critical factor in providing help for the underachiever. Because communications is an important factor in helping the underachieving student, schools must make the effort to identify common denominators that provide an open dialogue between the school and the home.

The Role of the School

According to Sartain (1990), almost all students enter school hoping to succeed. In spite of these good intentions, unfair competition in graded schools cause some students to become discouraged very early in their education while

others quit because of lack of parental support. These students often see the school as being insensitive to their needs and inflexible in providing appropriate educational programs. Years ago when students were not successful in school, they worked on the family farm. Today, the job market requires technical skills making a high school education mandatory for survival (Sartain, 1990).

Covington (1976) theorized that we must address the student's apathy in ways that will minimize the implication that the individual lacks ability. Since many students believe that their self-worth is directly related to achievement, lack of success deprives an individual of a major source of self-esteem. Unfortunately the American school system is based on competition which limits the number of students who can feel good about themselves. According to Benjamin Bloom (1981), "the correlation between measures of school achievement at grade three and grade eleven is about .85, demonstrating that over this eight-year period the relative ranking of students in a class or school remains almost perfectly fixed" (p. 133). Students quickly learn once below average, always below average (Raffini, 1988).

When students believe they have a chance for success, the amount of effort they put forth increases. Since norm-referenced tests tell students that ability is more

important than effort, teachers must reassess the manner in which they evaluate students. The greatest threat to self-esteem occurs when an individual exerts high effort and still fails. According to Raffini, strategies that can rekindle student effort include: individual goal setting; outcome-based instruction and evaluation; attribution retraining; and cooperative learning. (Raffini, 1988) Other researchers (Campbell & Myrick, 1990 and Wilson, 1986) have utilized counseling techniques to improve the achievement, self-concept, locus of control, attitude and behavior of low-achieving and underachieving students.

Counseling Strategies

Group counseling is a strategy that has been used effectively with low-achieving and/or underachieving students (Benson and Blocher, 1967; Campbell & Myrick, 1990; Creange, 1971; & DeEsch, 1979) . Group counseling provides students with the opportunity to share with others and assist others in coping with problems they have experienced. Group counseling is prevention-oriented as it teaches the individual how to smooth over the "rough spots" of every day life. It motivates participants to take actions that can maximize their potential and serves as an effective tool for reversing self-defeating behaviors. (Gazda, 1989).

Wilson (1986), reviewed 19 published articles which studied the effects of counselor strategies with low-

achieving and underachieving students from 1960-1983. In each of these studies, the student's GPA served as a dependent variable. In Wilson's article, she stated that "GPA provides a global assessment of performance and is usually the chief criterion for promotion" (p. 628). Included in this review were 14 studies on high school low-achievers and/or underachievers. Wilson's summary indicated that group counseling may be more effective than individual counseling in improving academic performance and that directive and behavioral approaches were more effective than person-centered approaches. In addition, Wilson's summary pointed out the importance of treatment length, the increased success rate when students participated voluntarily and the importance of parent participation as a predictor of achievement for low-achieving and/or underachieving students.

Other studies have demonstrated the usefulness of group counseling and other counselor interventions with secondary students. For example, a study conducted by DeEsch (1979), where disruptive secondary students, who participated in group counseling, demonstrated a decrease in school conflict and also showed improvement in self-concept (as measured on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale). The need for counselors to educate teachers was evident when Lewin, Nelson, and Tollefson (1983), reported that teachers often continued to

feel negatively toward students who had been disruptive even after behavior was improved. Bloom (1976) stated that "25% of achievement variance may be related to the quality of classroom communications" (p. 127). In another study conducted by Rocks, Baker and Guerney (1985), the authors demonstrated the counselor's usefulness in providing training for both teachers and students in interpersonal communications skills. While Rathvon (1991), reported that attitude towards self and school work were more important than skill deficiencies and in need of more than brief counseling interventions.

Few experimental studies conducted with low-achieving and/or underachieving students have been published since 1970. Wilson's (1986) review of counselor strategies with low-achieving and underachieving students indicated that the most common group counseling approaches utilized during the 60's and 70's were person-centered and behavioral approaches. This review, indicated that directive behavioral approaches were more effective than person-centered approaches in raising student achievement.

Preceding paragraphs have addressed recent educational reforms, the lack of achievement in today's schools, the characteristics of low-achievers and/or underachievers, the importance of parents and early life experiences, the impact of self-esteem and locus of control and the schools role in

motivating students to learn. The fact that an increasing number of students appear to be apathetic and withdrawing from academic participation at a time when the technological advances of modern society demand a higher level of functioning from today's graduates warrents the immediate attention of all educators and policy-makers (Sartain, 1990, p. 7). The literature presented above supported the need to explore alternative methods for improving the academic achievement of underachieving/low-achieving students. Group counseling has shown promise for addressing the above concerns.

IMAGESS

In order to improve the academic performance of low-achieving and under-achieving ninth grade students, an alternative educational program was instituted for the 1991-92 school year called IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Social Studies, Science and Vocational Skills). IMAGESS is a "non-traditional" method for helping students learn. Students are instructed in a large inter-disciplinary teaching block that allows for more flexible use of time than the traditional forty-five minute class period. An inter-disciplinary teaching block is made up of four 45 minute class periods. During this block period, students receive instruction in four subjects: English, mathematics, social studies and science. In these blocks, class schedules

vary as follows: four forty-five minute periods; a double period to complete a science lab; a triple period to view a special English video or four periods for a planned field trip or seminar. The flexibility for these decisions are left to the block teachers who have a common planning period daily.

The IMAGESS Program recognizes the fact that children mature at different rates. Some students in Middle School do not acquire the basic skills necessary to succeed in a high school curriculum such as: problem solving ability; study skills; note-taking; communication skills; and responsibility for actions. IMAGESS can ease the transition from middle school to high school by allowing students the opportunity to mature as they learn and emphasizing these basic skills.

Participants in the IMAGESS Program include low and underachieving ninth grade students who are of mixed ability levels (heterogeneous grouping) and who will have the opportunity to improve their basic skills in a supportive setting designed to decrease their risk of failure. Students participate in creative instruction which meets curriculum requirements while addressing individual student needs.

The focus of the IMAGESS Program is to assist students in becoming more successful in school. IMAGESS encourages cooperative learning that combines fun and lively

interaction while it develops a sense of belonging. Groups work individually and cooperatively in solving problems. Problems can be as simple as structuring a better sentence, completing a set of math problems, planning a science experiment or an educational game teaching orienteering skills.

In addition to English, mathematics, social studies and science, students also took health and physical education, a monitored study hall and/or their choice of elective classes. Elective classes, physical education, lunch period and study hall were taken with the rest of the ninth grade class.

The goals of IMAGESS were as follows:

- .to improve academic achievement
- .to improve attitudes regarding learning
- .to provide an opportunity to gain skills
 necessary for college or work
- .to assist students in resolving academic deficiencies
- .to increase critical thinking abilities and foster
 independent thought
- .to assist the student in identifying the relationships
 among the required academic courses
- .to provide an alternative for those students who are
 not able to cope with the abrupt changes from
 middle school to high school

While IMAGESS is an alternative educational program developed to address the academic achievement of low achieving students, research indicates that the deficiencies of low achieving students extend beyond the classroom including: lack of motivation, attitudinal factors and feelings of unworthiness (Campbell and Myrick, 1990 & Greene, 1986) right brain dominance (Carbo et al, 1986); external locus of control (Nowicki and Barnes, 1973); fear of being ordinary, fear of failure and a passive-aggressive personality (Bricklin and Bricklin, 1967; Butlor-Por, 1987 & Greene, 1986). In order to provide a more holistic approach to the problem, group counseling was initiated to address the above deficiencies and the Director of Guidance was utilized as a resource during the planning and implementation stages of the IMAGESS Program. In the role of consultant, the Director of Guidance was able to: provide the technical expertise needed to place the IMAGESS Program into the master schedule; make suggestions to the instructional staff on how to alter the classroom environment so that it would provide a supportive environment which could nurture a student's self-esteem; suggest speakers and extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum; discuss alternative methods for evaluating student progress; serve as a liaison between parents and teachers; and assist administration in the evaluation of the

program. In order to address the issues of self-esteem and locus of control, group counseling became an integral component of the IMAGESS Program.

This study sought to examine the benefits of group counseling in improving the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control of low-achieving/underachieving ninth grade students in an alternative education program referred to as IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Social Studies, Science and Vocational Skills). IMAGESS incorporates inter-disciplinary planning, inter-disciplinary teaching, cooperative learning and increased parent and student involvement to improve academic achievement and decrease the number of student dropouts.

This research aimed to provide insight into how group counseling might be utilized by the teacher as an integral classroom resource for improving student self-esteem, addressing issues related to locus of control and providing academic support. Group counseling will be utilized as an integral component of the alternative educational program (IMAGESS) to provide students with a constructive setting for addressing issues related to academic performance, self-esteem, locus of control and other concerns when identified by group members.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine whether group counseling contributed to the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control of low achieving and/or underachieving ninth grade students participating in an alternative educational program.

Research Questions

In order to assess the effect of group counseling on the GPA, Self-Concept and Locus of Control of ninth grade students in the IMAGESS Program, the following questions were asked:

1. Will the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control (as measured by the Student Attitude Measure (SAM)) of ninth grade students participating in IMAGESS improve as a result of group counseling?

2. Is there a correlation among the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control of ninth grade students, participating in IMAGESS, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Student Attitude Measure (SAM)?

3. Can other independent variables be identified that effect the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control of ninth grade students participating in an alternative education program?

Significance of Study

An increase in the graduation requirements and changing social environment affecting traditional support systems have created a need to reevaluate our current educational delivery methods. This is evident by the rising incidence of student apathy and the increasing number of students who fail to complete a high school education (McDill, 1986).

Research suggested that low-achievers and/or underachievers have a negative self-image and that these students need a supportive learning environment (McMullen, 1973 & Morse, 1987). Current literature also indicated that group counseling has been utilized to improve self-esteem and achievement in secondary students (Benson & Blocher, 1967; Campbell & Myrick, 1990; Creanage, 1971; and DeEsch, 1979) and that there is a positive relationship between locus of control, self-esteem and achievement (Bricklin, 1967; Raffini, 1988; & Sartain, 1990). If group counseling within an alternative education program can address developmental deficiencies known to be related to academic achievement, this process could be utilized to improve academic performance and decrease the number of dropouts. In addition to this, the use of the counselor, not only to provide counseling activities, but as a resource or consultant to the classroom teacher for implementing changes in classroom activities and environment could be a valuable

ploy in improving curriculum, classroom communications and other areas such as self-esteem and locus of control, which according to the literature, have a strong influence on student progress in school.

Definition of Terms

Since words often take on different meanings for various individuals, it is necessary to clarify them so that the reader will be able to interpret them in terms of this study.

At-Risk - the term "at-risk student" has been used to make reference to a wide-variety of low-achieving and/or underachieving students in numerous publications and journals. For the purposes of this study, "at-risk" will be used to refer to potential dropouts.

Cooperative-learning refers to a variety of instructional methods in which students of various ability levels work together on a common goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

Grade Point Average is the numerical average of the letter grades assigned to multiple courses. This average is calculated by assigning points to each letter as follows: A (4); B+(3.4); B (3); C+ (2.4); C (2); D+ (1.4); D (1) and F (0). Grade Point Average (GPA) is utilized by most schools to rank students and is an important factor, in most college

selection formulas, based on current research which indicates that the GPA is a valid predictor of future academic success (Wilson, 1986). A review of the literature on counselor interventions with low-achieving and underachieving students, states that the GPA provides a "global assessment of performance and is usually the chief criterion for promotion" (Wilson, 1986, p. 628).

Heterogeneous Grouping is a procedure where students of multiple ability levels are grouped together in one learning environment, where as homogeneous grouping places students of equal ability levels in the same learning environment.

Low-achiever- The term "low-achiever" refers to students whose past academic record includes a combination of C's, D's and F's in middle school. These low grades place the student "at risk" of failing.

Site-based Management is a system by which the school funds, which are usually controlled centrally, are placed in the hands of the local school and community. The local school advisory board can then determine how the money will be spent to meet the needs of the school. Members of the school advisory board are appointed by the principal and include: teachers; students; parents; and administrators.

Underachiever- refers to a student who is currently achieving at a level one or two letter grades below their predicted ability (as measured by a combination of

standardized test results, counselor/teacher observations and/or Grade Point Average) or whose current academic record is inconsistent and/or includes at least one F in a required subject.

Organization of Study

In order to familiarize the reader with the scope of this study, a review of the remaining chapters is provided.

Chapter II includes a review and summary of the literature related to the underachieving student. This review is divided into the following categories: Adolescence; Self-Concept; Locus of Control; Interventions (Academic Teams/Cooperative Learning, Need for Counseling, and Counseling Strategies for Underachievers); and Summary.

Chapter III addresses the research methods utilized in this study. The contents of this chapter include: Population and Sample; Treatment; Instrumentation; Data Collection Procedure; and Data Analysis.

Chapter IV presents the findings of this study including statistical results and discussion.

Chapter V contains conclusions and recommendations for further research.

A complete list of references can be found at the end of the study so that the reader may utilize these resources to conduct further investigation into this topic.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic standards, the inadequacy of the American educational system, and educational reform have been common topics of research and discussion over the past twenty years. Numerous research articles and dissertations have addressed these topics utilizing a variety of conclusions and suggesting many practical applications for the findings. To facilitate this literature search, the literature review was restricted to those articles which discussed students at risk of underachievement, common characteristics of the underachiever, the role of the educator and parents, and positive interventions for addressing this problem.

In order to better organize this review it was determined that the literature would be discussed under the following headings: Adolescence; Self-Concept; Locus of Control; Interventions (Academic Teams/Cooperative Learning, Need for Counseling and Counseling Strategies for Under-achievers) and Summary.

Adolescence

A review of the literature presents conflicting opinions regarding the stability of the adolescent years. According to Erikson (1963), adolescence is a transitional

period from childhood to adulthood which is characterized by stress, conflict, and a need to belong. During this period, the adolescent's search for identity and acceptance governs his/her every action. He/she is moving further away from the comfortable and familiar surroundings of the home in order to experience the world of an adult. Peer-acceptance during this stage of development is extremely important as the adolescent continues to fluctuate between childhood and adulthood. Rapid physical changes are often a cause for fear, anxiety, embarrassment, and even guilt. (Erikson, 1963)

Jackson and Hornbeck (1989), describe adolescence as a time of "particular vulnerability". They feel that the biological, cognitive and psychological changes which accompany adolescence can be confusing causing adolescents to doubt their relationships with others. As a result, they report that these changes are often accompanied by alterations in school behavior, experimentation and the onset of sexual activity.

In contrast to Erikson, Jackson and Hornbeck, Savin-Williams and Demo (1984) define adolescence as "a time of stable or gradual growth in self-esteem levels and of stability in self-feelings from one moment to the next, and from one year to the next" (p. 1108). These authors completed a longitudinal study to test the stability of

self-concept during the early and middle adolescent years. Their results raise serious doubts regarding the validity of the more traditional view of adolescence characterized by crisis and instability. The authors cite three possible reasons for the misrepresentation of the adolescent years: the fact that clinical researchers have more access to abnormal populations, media misrepresentation of adolescence by focusing on sensationalism rather than the norm and the tendency for researchers to overestimate the degree to which adolescents are honest about their innermost feelings.

McCarthy and Hoge (1982) discussed several theoretical explanations for changes in self-esteem, during adolescence, in a longitudinal study which identified a direct relationship between self-esteem and maturity. According to the authors, levels of self-esteem can be influenced by recent experiences with significant others that are of an evaluative nature. Second, changes in how one selects significant others and how the individual perceives the evaluations of these individuals may effect one's self-esteem. Finally, changes in social environment appeared to alter the psychological processes that have a positive influence on self-esteem.

Children who have poor self-concepts have trouble solving everyday problems and usually experience difficulties with relationships in their lives. These

children are often pessimistic and compare themselves unfavorably with their peers. Often labeled by others as problem children, these children tend to achieve lower than their tested abilities. Since self-concept develops progressively throughout the school years, schools play a key role in developing an asset that will have lasting effects on an individual's life (Stenner and Katzenmeyer, 1976). According to Hamburg and Takanishi (1989), social support networks can help offset at-risk behavior in adolescents.

As a result, this stage of development presents many implications for counseling intervention. Since the adolescent is required by law to attend school, the counselor should be familiar with the normal stages of development so that appropriate preventive counseling can be provided. (Dinkmeyer and Caldwell, 1970)

Although a teenager may have the body of an adult, his/her brain does not reach full development until the end of adolescence. During pre-modern times, the extended family and community were able to provide guidance during this critical period. In today's society, extended families are often scattered geographically and divorce has increased the number of single-parent families limiting the resources available to the adolescent for coping in a modern world. Even though the adolescent is still immature in cognitive

ability, he/she is often pressured into making choices that will affect his/her entire life. U.S.A. Today (1991) reported that students' lives were affected by more than reading writing and arithmetic. This article indicated that the conditions affecting the school work of students is changing citing poverty, incarceration, out-of-wedlock births, and violent deaths as major factors influencing these changes. Statistics for this article were provided from two resources: "The Kids Count Data Book from The Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C. examining how eight measures of children's well-being changed in the 1980's and The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, with data on the lives of 24,600 eighth graders in 1,000 public and private schools" (p. 7A).

The above information supports the fact that adolescence is a critical period in the life of an individual who is beginning to acquire the skills that will take him/her through adulthood. Due to the limitations of today's society in providing appropriate guidance during this crucial period, educators are reevaluating their role in nurturing our youth. (Hamburg & Takanishi, 1989)

Self-Concept

The terms self-concept and self-esteem have been defined in a variety of ways in the literature. Silvernail's

(1987) definitions seem most appropriate for the purposes of this study. He describes self-concept as "the way we perceive ourselves and our actions, and our opinions regarding how others perceive us. The evaluative dimension of our self-concept is our self-esteem. Therefore, while self-concept describes our perceptions, self-esteem evaluates them" (Silvernail, 1987, p. 9).

An individual's self-concept development begins at birth and is greatly influenced by one's parents or primary caregiver. Coopersmith (1967), identified three key conditions that have a great influence on the development of self-esteem. These conditions include: total or nearly total acceptance of the child by his/her parents (p. 179); clearly defined and enforced limits (p. 196); and respect and latitude for an individual's actions (p. 213). Acceptance of the child is genuinely exhibited by interest, concern regarding companions, availability, and participation in joint activities. When limits are consistently enforced and reward rather than punishment is used to reinforce behavior, the second condition is usually met. The third condition identified by Coopersmith is met when clearly enforced limits provide enough latitude to recognize the individual differences in children. This latitude allows the child to have an opinion and to be able to express it to an accepting parent (Coopersmith, 1967).

What happens to one's self-concept when a child enters school? As educators, we would all like to believe that school only has positive effects on an individual's self-concept. Many researchers have found the opposite to be true (Bills, 1978; Morse, 1964 & Stenner & Katzenmeyer, 1976). In a study done by Stenner & Katzenmeyer (1976), thirty-seven hundred primary students in grades one through three were administered the Self Observation Scale, an instrument designed to measure self-concept in primary and intermediate students. The results of this study indicated that a child's self-concept decreased between the first and the third grades. Third graders in this study were less likely to respond positively to questions such as: "Are you good-looking?"; "Do teachers like you?"; and "Do your classmates like you?".

Self-concept has also been linked to school success, with low self-concept often viewed as a source of failure (Faust, 1980; McCarthy & Hoge, 1982 & Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984). In another study done by Brookover, Thomas and Patterson (1964), academic self-concept was found to be positively correlated with achievement even when the effects of intelligence and socioeconomic status are statistically eliminated. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that achievement and self-concept are related but this

relationship cannot be explained solely on the basis of intelligence (Silvernail, 1987).

According to Pringle and Pilling (1978), a child's progress in school is affected by teacher attitudes, values and beliefs. These may be communicated deliberately or in a subtle manner but the overall affect on the learner is the same. Because of this capacity to communicate attitudes, values and beliefs, a teacher has the unique opportunity to improve or rebuild a child's self-esteem and his/her attitude towards learning. Bloom (1981) indicated that school success was directly related to self-concept. This increased confidence then allows the individual to persevere in future learning experiences where otherwise he/she might give up. In contrast, Silvernail (1987), summarized other studies of attributes such as: teacher and student gender; effects of nonpromotion and socioeconomic status; and their relationship to self-esteem but the findings appeared to be inconclusive at that time.

Grouping patterns is a topic that has gained a lot of recent attention by the educational community. Homogeneous groups are usually assigned based on achievement and are currently receiving much scrutiny by the public who perceive these groupings as synonymous with tracking. Heterogeneous groups on the other hand have their share of criticism and support. When evaluating these two practices in terms of

self-concept, some researchers such as Junell (1971), report that heterogeneous groupings have a positive effect on self-concept while Livingston-White (1976), felt that self-esteem was related to achievement tracking. However in the same study Livingston-White reported high self-esteem scores for the highest achieving group and low self-esteem scores for the low achieving groups. It appeared from this study that the self-esteem of students may be more closely correlated with achievement than with the homogeneous grouping. Other research suggested "that all students regardless of ability, can achieve at least as well in heterogeneous settings as in homogeneous settings" (Lehr & Harris, 1988, p.24).

In summary, it appeared that an individual's self-concept begins at birth and is greatly effected by environmental circumstances including parents, significant others, teachers, and school practices while the effects of socioeconomic status, child's gender, and nonpromotion are inconclusive at this time and warrant further study. "Modern adolescence is a complex process taking place in a complex world" (Craig, 1976, p. 383). Since self-concept has to do with how the individual sees themselves and how they interpret the feedback they receive from their environment, the adolescent's self-concept is a critical component in his/her search for identity. Because self-concept has also been linked to school success, counselors have the

responsibility of assisting students in developing a positive self-concept.

Locus of Control

Zilli (1971) found that underachievers were characterized by low self-image, blaming bad luck for their failures and lacking the ability to set realistic goals and achieve them through self-discipline. Locus of control can be defined as the degree to which an individual attributes the cause for a behavior to be external or internal. Internal refers to those attributes that originate in the person such as ability and effort. External refers to those behaviors caused by outside factors such as task difficulty and luck (Raffini, 1988).

Motivation in school is related to self-concept and the degree to which students believe they are in control of their lives (Lefcourt, 1983). Students with an internal locus of control tend to perform well academically. These students have more self-confidence and do not perceive teacher demands as threatening to their need to be in control (Butler-Por, 1987).

Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) reviewed 36 studies which looked at the relationship between locus of control and achievement. Thirty-one of these studies reported a positive relationship while four reported some relationship and one

reported a negative relationship. The authors indicated that internal's had more persistence and effort in skill situations, better study habits, more positive educational attitudes and better use of task-relevant information which led to higher achievement.

Even though parents have a responsibility to strengthen a child's confidence in himself/herself and teach responsibility for actions (Butler-Por, 1987), students can learn skills related to school success. The key is to help them build self-confidence in their ability to succeed and teach them to take responsibility for their actions (Lefcourt, 1983). In order to improve intrinsic motivation, learning situations should provide students with the opportunity to explore individual interests. Mastery and competency in school improves motivation by overcoming fear of failure and helping students understand that self-effort can bring success.

Locus of control has received less attention in the literature than self-concept when addressing issues related to low-achievement. Although responsibility issues are common in underachievers, few studies were identified. It would appear to this researcher that this is an important issue if students are to set and achieve goals. The difficulty faced by schools is when parents protect students from the consequences of their behavior thus enabling them.

Interventions

Academic Teams/Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an old idea that is receiving new attention (Kormanski, 1990). It can be defined as an instructional method where heterogeneous groups of children work together to accomplish a common goal (Lehr & Harris, 1991). Cooperative learning combines fun with social interaction and develops a sense of belonging which improves an individual's self-esteem (Sartain, 1989).

Educational leaders have begun to promote strategies for learning in groups (Glasser, 1986 & Myrick, 1987). Johnson and Johnson (1987) stressed cooperative learning to promote high achievement, greater intrinsic motivation and increased self-esteem. Many theorists have supported the Tuckman stage model of group development in a classroom setting using academic projects (Runkel et al, 1971 & Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971). Other researchers have recognized the relationship between athletic teams and learning teams where the emphasis is on tasks that cannot be accomplished by an individual working alone (Gough, 1987). The premise that people can accomplish more working together toward a common goal than they can working alone is an established principle of social psychology (Lehr & Harris, 1991).

Slavin (1983), identified two conditions that are necessary if cooperative learning is to have an affect on student achievement. First, there must be a clearly defined group goal, and second, goal attainment must be the direct result of individual learning by all group members. Slavin's model uses groups of 4 to 5 students who utilize a team study approach to master learning objectives. Students then take independent quizzes on the material.

Cooperative learning experiences provide an alternative to traditional teaching strategies. Students of multiple ability levels work together toward a common goal. Cooperative learning encourages subject mastery while providing social interaction and raising self-esteem. The bonus is that it also improves achievement.

Other Interventions

Over the past twenty years, researchers have evaluated the effects of increasing academic standards. Although not the original intention, it appears that in our attempt to improve the American educational system, we have neglected a large number of our youth. This is evidenced by a review of the educational literature addressing underachievers, student apathy and dropouts. Based on the findings, it is our responsibility to identify interventions that will minimize the adverse effects of increased academic standards and social change.

How do we re-engage students into learning? An overview of the literature provided many suggestions begging to be tried. Lotto (1982) felt we must individualize instruction in order to provide successful learning experiences for students who already have deficits in achievement. Rules need to be clear and consistent and reward systems must be attainable and contingent on student effort and proficiency (McDill et al, 1986).

Another area that needs to be reevaluated is the practice of "tracking". Enrollment in low-track classes was found to increase a student's likelihood of dropping out prior to graduation. This practice had a stronger negative effect on the student's chances of completing school than did prior achievement. This practice was found to contribute to lower educational attainment for a significant number of students (Kitchen, 1990).

Considerable research has addressed teaching strategies that are consistent with academic achievement. Several techniques found to be effective include: use of praise; use of pupil ideas; frequent questioning; review exercises; clear presentations and questions; teacher enthusiasm; increased time on task (Silvernail, 1987); use of organizers; mnemonic devices; use of computers; use of newspaper and educational games and simulations (Lehr & Harris, 1988).

The role of the teacher is critical when working with underachieving students. "Teachers of low-achieving students need to be caring, concerned, empathetic, loving, respecting, humanistic, enthusiastic and energetic, humorous, patient, an effective communicator, creative and flexible"(Lehr & Harris, 1988). Cooperative learning has also been found to be helpful in raising student achievement and overcoming student apathy (Johnson and Johnson, 1987; Lehr & Harris, 1988; Raffini, 1988; Sartain, 1989; & Slavin, 1983).

In summary, no learning environment or teaching strategy will work for all students but research indicated that some techniques have a higher degree of success than others. Elias & Tobias (1990) suggested that one start small when implementing change. Set modest goals and monitor effectiveness. Be prepared to make changes. The full support of one's peers and the school administration is essential to have a significant effect on student achievement.

Need for Counseling

"Individual differences in learning is an observable phenomenon which can be predicted, explained, and altered in a great variety of ways" (Bloom, 1976, p. 8). According to Bloom, much of this variation can be attributed to differences in school and home environments. Therefore most of the differences are not fixed at conception but rather a

result of environmental occurrences after birth (p.9). Much of this variation can be predicted by three variables: knowledge and competence in basic prerequisites to learning; student motivational factors; and appropriateness of instruction for learner (p. 10).

While schools have been charged with the responsibility of providing all students with an equal opportunity to learn, educators have been challenged with meeting the needs of students who have less opportunity to learn "by virtue of social and economic position, race, religion, ethnic background, geographical location, and so on" (Bloom, 1976, p. 214).

Glasser (1969), felt too many students fail in school today. Since the number of individuals that fail is large, the impact on society is great. Placing blame on race, culture, homes, communities or poverty removes personal responsibility and "does not recognize that school success is potentially open to all" (p. 5). A child " will not succeed in general until he can in some way first experience success in one important aspect of his/her life" (p. 5).

According to Glasser (1969), children do not enter school as failures, "it is school and school alone that pins the label of failure on children" (p. 26). Chances in life are decreased when a child experiences failure in school regardless of the age. "Regardless of the reasons for

failure, any recommendations for change must fall within the existing framework of the schools" (p. 7). Glasser recommends that we keep children with educational problems in heterogeneous groups and in heterogeneous schools. Counselors should work cooperatively with the classroom teacher to improve classroom education. Glasser says that discipline is "when a child makes the commitment to change his behavior, no excuse is acceptable for not following through" (p. 23). School failure destroys one's self-confidence and motivation (p. 26). Students who fail tend to give up, are lonely and suffer from low self-esteem.

One way of addressing these problems is the use of Reality Therapy. According to Glasser (1965) principles of Reality Therapy can be learned. One must not be a therapist to put the principles into practice. As a result, Reality Therapy has been used successfully in schools by counselors, teachers and administrators to reduce disciplinary problems and increase performance. (Cornell, 1986; Glasser, 1965 and Glasser, 1972)

George (1980) discussed the application of the principles of Reality Therapy to school discipline. He said enforcement procedures that focus on logical consequences rather than punishment are viewed as fair by students in high school based on their average stage of moral development. According to George, high school students

should be in Kohlbergs fourth stage of moral development Societal Maintenance. In this stage right is referred to as whatever maintains social order. Contracts and plans worked out between people who are involved with each other assist students who have passed stage one (Power Stage) to advance towards stage four. Although George (1980) discussed the application of Reality Therapy to the classroom, these same procedures which focus on logical consequences and the use of contracts can be utilized by counselors during both individual and group counseling processes.

According to Cornell (1986) traditional discipline measures which focus on threats and punishment merely make adults responsible for the behavior of children. She felt that Reality Therapy was effective for teaching children to be responsible for their own behaviors. Cornell discussed how one school system successfully implemented the concepts of Reality Therapy. She suggests using a four step plan, adapted from Glasser's recommendations when addressing irresponsible behavior with students. The plan makes use of the following questions: What are you doing?, Is it helping you?, Is it against the rules? and What will you do to change that? A contract is then made between the adult and the student and time is set aside to meet with the student to see if the contract is working. Cornell felt that consistency was the key to success and advocated the

implementation of a school-wide approach to using Reality Therapy versus isolated applications. Again, these suggestions can be incorporated into a counseling model.

In Schools Without Failure, Glasser indicates that parents, administrators, counselors and teachers all agree that we do very little in our school environment to assist the students in the "middle" or students of average ability even though this group is quite sizeable in most schools. This group of students called "unspecial" by Powell, Farrar and Cohen (1985) have "no important allies or advocates" (p. 176). The parents of these students often do not know what courses they are taking, the requirements for graduation or the names of their counselors. They are often uncomfortable in an educational setting and, therefore, miss opportunities to learn more about the school environment and their child's needs. It is no wonder that "treaties for avoidance rather than engagement dominate classes attended by the unspecial. Little is usually expected of these students and little is done to change their lot." (p. 184)

Counseling Strategies for Underachievers

Predictors of future dropouts are helpful in identifying students at risk of failing and students who can benefit from group counseling techniques. These predictors include: retention in a previous grade; lack of parental involvement in school activities; socioeconomic status;

and/or membership in a minority group. Elliott et al (1966), says that lower-class students have difficulty conforming to middle-class standards and find themselves trapped at the bottom of the social ladder. As a result, these students not only have difficulty at school maintaining grades but also have difficulty competing with peer groups who value symbols such as clothes and money. This leads to low self-esteem and disengagement from school. Therefore, repeated encouragement and support are essential components of all group counseling sessions aimed at correcting underachievement (Larsen and Shertzer, 1987).

Integrated counseling programs which include both home and school have produced results that are promising in addressing student attitudes and achievement. Skills that can be addressed in group counseling sessions include the following: communications skills; self-monitoring skills; study skills; stress reduction skills; and test taking strategies. (Martin, Marx and Martin, 1980) "Group counseling can be characterized as remedial, problem centered, and oriented toward overt and covert behavior change" (Kahn, 1988, p. 343). Overt behaviors that might be addressed include: study skills; antisocial behavior; compulsions; self-defeating behavior; and time management. Covert behaviors include: problem solving; fears; and negative self-references.

Self-responsibility and internal locus of control are important areas of emphasis in a cognitive-behavioral group counseling approach. Typical stages of the group process occur (such as forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning) and "buddy" strategies are utilized to support members following group termination. (Kahn, 1988)

Several studies (DeEsch, 1979; Osborne, 1982; Rocks, Baker and Guerney, 1985 & Wilson, 1986) have demonstrated the effectiveness of group counseling in improving the self-esteem and achievement of underachieving adolescents. These studies have indicated that group counseling is most effective when membership is voluntary and counseling style is a directive behavioral approach. Counseling sessions when possible, should last at least twelve weeks and students should meet for approximately one class period (45-60 minutes). The counselor should encourage parental involvement since it will increase the chances of academic improvement. Counseling sessions should address the following areas: communications skills; self-monitoring skills; study skills; stress reduction skills; test taking strategies; social behavior enhancement; time management; problem solving; and positive self-references.

Summary

If academic standards are increased and students are not provided with appropriate assistance to attain them, they will be more likely than ever to experience frustration and failure. Low achievers may have academic difficulties but with altered teaching methods and counseling strategies, all students can learn.

Low-achievers usually have a negative self-image. These students need a supportive learning environment. When students feel they have a chance for success, the amount of effort put forth increases. Unobtainable goals lead to student apathy.

Teachers should have high expectations for all students. Almost all students enter school hoping to succeed. Characteristics of teachers, curriculum, and grouping patterns have been shown to effect student achievement. In addition to these, research indicated that students with an internal locus of control have a better self-image which has a positive effect on achievement.

Students are capable of learning skills related to school and life success. Many helpful interventions including group counseling are currently available in the literature. Educators should become actively involved in initiating changes in the school environment that have been demonstrated to improve student achievement.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Chapter III describes the procedures utilized in this study including: Problem Statement; Research Questions; Population; Sample; Treatment; Research Design; Sources of Data; and Data Analysis.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine if group counseling contributed to the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control of low-achieving and/or underachieving ninth grade students who participated in an alternative educational program.

Research Questions

In order to assess the effect of group counseling on the GPA, Self-Concept and Locus of Control of ninth grade students in the IMAGESS Program, the following questions were asked:

1. The primary research questions: Does grade point average, self-concept and locus of control (as measured by the Student Attitude Measure (SAM)) of ninth grade students

participating in IMAGESS, change as a result of group counseling?

2. Is there a correlation among achievement, self-concept and locus of control of ninth grade students, participating in IMAGESS, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Student Attitude Measure (SAM)?

3. A secondary research question of theoretical interest to the researcher is as follows: Does sex, parent participation, and whether or not the student was repeating the ninth grade, contribute significantly to adjusted changes in achievement, self-concept or locus of control of ninth grade students, independent of the amount of counseling received.

Population

The school utilized in this study was a comprehensive county high school in suburban Northern Virginia which served a population of approximately 1,500 students. In 1990, the total county population was estimated to be 230,000. During the last 10 years, the minority student population of the school consisting of Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and Asians increased from less than 10% to 23.8%, the highest in the county (County Profile, 1991).

The school served a highly diversified community with a wide range of income levels. During the 1990-91 school

year 7.8% of the students qualified for the free or reduced lunch program (Prince William County, 1991). A large number of these families are employed by the military and over half are employed by the federal government. Other employers vary greatly, with many of the parents in professional or managerial positions. The large number of military families in this community contributes to the transient nature of the school population which was 10.1% in 1991 (Prince William County , 1991). During the past 10 years, the number of families below the poverty level has steadily climbed. Recent attendance boundary changes are expected to result in an additional increase in the number of families with incomes below the poverty level.

A 1985 survey of the community revealed that between 60% and 70% of the parents completed some form of education beyond high school. In 1990, 73% of the seniors continued their education at either a four year college or the community college (Prince William County, 1990). The staff was concerned that these statistics could change significantly in light of the new boundary lines. Beginning with the 1991-1992 school year, this school will lose approximately 150 freshman students because of the new attendance boundaries. Over the next three years, an additional 450 students will be lost in this manner or approximately one third of its current population. The

current housing construction plans, within the school boundaries, indicated that much of the new housing is targeted for lower income families.

The school currently has a staff of approximately 100 educators committed to the school's philosophy of excellence in education. Faculty members strive to prepare students for the changing world through a flexible curriculum that provides students with the skills for continuing their education and/or employment. One of the major objectives of the school's annual plan, written by a committee of teachers, counselors, administrators, students and parents, is to develop a variety of teaching techniques and strategies which could be shared across the curriculum. The goal of the school staff is to improve the quality of education even with the changing demographics. The staff and administration are committed to this goal.

In the school, new requirements imposed by the local school board in response to state mandates, include a minimum of 22 credits to graduate and a seven period school day. School personnel are faced with a high percentage of unmotivated students failing one or more classes. For example, in February of 1991, approximately one third of the students received failure letters for the first semester (documented in the semester grade report). The drop-out rate

at the end of the 1991 school year was 5.3%, the highest in the county (School Profile, 1991).

School personnel are also reporting a rise in student apathy demonstrated by an increase in the number of students who neglect to bring books and writing instruments to class, refuse to participate in classroom activities and refuse to complete homework assignments.

Counseling and instructional staff members in this county, have noted that students who have multiple failures during their first year in high school appear to lose faith in the educational system and disengage. This was evidenced by the number of students who remained in the ninth grade for two to three years before dropping out of school.

It has also been noted that many students tend to drop an average of one letter grade in academic performance from middle school to high school. In reviewing student records for the past two years, the staff noted that students who had been low achievers or inconsistent achievers (earning a combination of C's, D's and F's) in middle school, frequently failed two or more required courses in the ninth grade. These failing students, who are required to remain in school until the age of 18, usually become disruptive to the educational process and require a disproportionate amount of the staffs' time. These concerns have compelled the administration and educational staff to look at new and

creative methods for addressing these issues for example: night school alternatives, a county level day school alternative for students who would normally have been expelled, a pregnancy program with an academic component, the addition of a substance abuse specialist and a school nurse to the high school staff, open-communications and agreements between private schools and the public school system in regard to accepting course credits and an option for seventeen year olds to continue their education in a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program. Other school based motivational programs that have been instituted include: Panther Excellence Program where students receive discount cards for grades and attendance; a staff mentoring program; peer tutoring; parent tutoring; peer mediation; peer counseling; mandatory interims; monthly attendance reviews; a seven-period attendance system; attendance contracts; and flexible scheduling to accommodate individual student needs. In addition to these, a cooperative interdisciplinary program called IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Social Studies, Science and Vocational Skills) was instituted in 1991 to ease the transition of low-achieving students from middle school to high school.

Sample

Participants in this study were 66 students selected for the IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Science, Social Studies and Vocational Skills) Program. These students were chosen to be participants in this study because they had been identified as "low-achieving or underachieving" students and the IMAGESS Program controlled for much of the variance students experience in the traditional classroom setting. This element of control was achieved because students in the IMAGESS Program had the same teachers for their four academic classes: English, math, science and social studies. This consistency over four subject areas would be rare for ninth grade students not in the IMAGESS Program because several teachers are assigned to teach these classes.

IMAGESS' students were selected from approximately 400 eighth grade students who entered high school in the fall of 1991 and included twelve students who were repeating the ninth grade. Students were computer assigned to classes of approximately 33 students for every two interdisciplinary teachers. The selection criteria included the following:

1. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills from eighth grade was utilized as a standardized achievement test when available. If this score was not available, the researcher utilized the next most recent standardized achievement score available.

Students were included when their Total Composite score indicated a national stanine score between four and six.

2. Final grades in mathematics, English and science for grade eight or grade nine for repeaters were used to make selections. Students who had received a combination of C's, D's and F's in these subjects were considered for IMAGESS.

3. Final grade point average for eighth grade(or ninth grade for repeaters) was utilized. Students with G.P.A.'s of less than 2.0 were considered for IMAGESS.

4. Teacher/counselor recommendations for students who had inconsistent classroom performance and/or inconsistent academic records were utilized in the selection process. Students were considered to have inconsistent performance when their grades and performance on similar tasks varied greatly from day to day. For example, a student demonstrates through verbal interaction the ability and thought processes necessary to master subject content but demonstrated a wide variance in performance on achievement tests getting an "A" one day a "C" another day and an "F" on a third day. Grades for each subsequent marking period may look similar varying from "A's" to "F's".

The students represented a variety of socioeconomic levels and various racial groups.

Students were computer assigned, by scheduling program, to either the control group or the treatment group. The

county utilized the Hewlett-Packard Student Assignment System (SAS/3000). According to the program Manual, each student was scheduled in the following manner:

1. Courses are looked at in order of number of section;
2. Sections are looked at by percentage of seats remaining;

3. All possible combinations are attempted until the student is either scheduled, it is not resolvable or the student times out;

4. If not resolvable balancing restrictions are lifted in the following order: the sex balancing, semester balancing, grade restriction, ability restriction, preferred sections and finally seat overload. (Hewlett Packard, 1978, pp. 8-9)

Since students in the ninth grade rarely have scheduling conflicts and students were given a list of possible electives that were made available fifth, sixth and seventh period, there was no reason to believe that students did not have equal opportunity to be placed in either the control group section or the treatment group section.

At the onset of the study, the treatment group and the control group both consisted of 33 students. At the end of this study, only 48 students were included in the final statistical analysis. (See Table 1 for the group composition at the onset and the end of the study.) The eighteen

students who did not complete the study left for the following reasons: incomplete information (1); lack of parental consent (6); withdrawal from school (2) and moved (9).

Table 1

Group Composition of Treatment Group and Control Group at Onset and End of Study

Category	Treatment Group		Control Group	
	Onset	End	Onset	End
Number	33	25	33	23
Male	22 (67%)	16 (64%)	22 (67%)	17 (74%)
Female	11 (33%)	9 (36%)	11 (33%)	6 (26%)
White	21 (64%)	19 (76%)	17 (52%)	13 (56.5%)
Amer. Ind.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1 (4.3%)
Black	11 (33%)	6 (24%)	13 (39%)	8 (34.7%)
Asian	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)	1 (4.3%)
Hispanic	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Treatment

Counseling

Since the research on counseling "low-achieving and/or underachieving" students indicated that group counseling was more effective than individual counseling, group counseling was designed as an integral part of the program. In order to provide equal treatment to each group, group counseling was provided for the control group following data collection but prior to the end of the current school year.

The treatment consisted of ten forty-five minute group counseling sessions. According to Corey and Corey (1982), group counseling " deals with conscious problems, and is generally oriented toward the resolution of specific and short-term issues, and is not concerned with treatment of neurotic or psychotic disorders" (p. 5). According to Gazda et al (1967) cited in Gazda (1989) group counseling is

a dynamic interpersonal process focusing on conscious thought and behavior and involving the therapy functions of permissiveness, orientation to reality, catharsis, and mutual trust, caring, understanding, acceptance, and support. The therapy functions are created and nurtured in a small group through the sharing of personal concerns with one's peers and the

counselor(s). The group counselees are basically normal individuals with various concerns which are not debilitating to the extent requiring extensive personality change. The group counselees may utilize the group interaction to increase understanding and acceptance of values and goals and to learn and/or unlearn certain attitudes and behaviors. (p. 10)

Students from the treatment group were placed in compatible groups for counseling based on teacher recommendation and counselor review. During the first group meeting, students were informed of the purpose of the group sessions and basic group rules such as confidentiality, responsibilities of participants and parent permission forms. Group sessions were directive utilizing a problem solving model and concepts of Reality Therapy.

According to Corey (1986), Reality Therapy "rests on the central idea that individuals are responsible for their behavior", it assists clients in "evaluating present behavior and if it does not meet their needs, to help them acquire more responsible behavior" (p. 243). Once an individual makes a commitment to change a behavior, the Reality Therapist accepts no excuses for not following through. "Instead of using punishment, the reality therapist

challenges the clients to see and to accept reasonable consequences that follow from their actions" (p.253).

A review of the principles of reality therapy indicated that the general aim of this approach was to assist individuals in evaluating their present behavior in terms of their needs and goals. "Reality Therapy rests on the central idea that individuals are responsible for their behavior" (Corey, 1986, p. 243). The process in Reality Therapy is divided into eight steps which include the following: establishing a therapeutic relationship; focusing on behavior of individual; having individual evaluate behaviors; identifying a plan to change; making a commitment; refusing to accept excuses; refusing to use punishment; and continuing to support the individual regardless of results.

The concepts of reality therapy were chosen for this study because of its focus on present behavior, client responsibility for actions and its usefulness in short term counseling settings. In order to prepare for the role of group leader, the counselor consulted with a practicing reality therapist. During this consultation period, the concepts of Reality Therapy including: the counseling environment; failure identity versus success identity and procedures that lead to changes in behavior were reviewed. The counselor's role was discussed as being an active one,

assisting students in identifying plans of action, guiding them in more appropriate ways to meet their needs while providing a warm and supportive environment. In addition to the above, the group sessions and their appropriateness for adolescents in a school setting were also discussed. As a result of this consultation, the researcher felt that she was comfortable utilizing these concepts in this study.

Chart 1

Outline of Group Sessions

Session	Activities
1	Discussion of group purpose, confidentiality and establishment of ground rules
2	Evaluating past school experiences to identify strengths and weaknesses, discussion of attitude and behavior
3	Identification of behaviors that may need to change
4	Use of affirmation and visualization activity to reprogram attitudes and behaviors
5	Discussion of limiting behavior and how to change it to controlled behavior, discussion of responsibility
6 & 7	Use of a discovery wheel to self-rate students present abilities related to motivation, planning, memory, reading, observation, creativity, test taking, relationships, health, money, resources, and purpose.
8	Brain storming activity to identify problems students have in school
9	Discussion of faulty assumptions we have about ourselves and others and how do these faulty assumptions effect how others treat us?
10	Set goals, discuss commitment and closure

See Appendix E for a more detailed outline.

Parent Participation

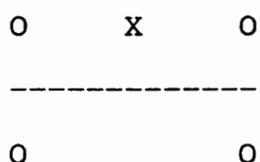
Parent participation was encouraged in two ways. First each of the four IMAGESS' teachers were responsible for maintaining close phone contact with the parents of the students in their homeroom. Teachers were able to keep up with each students progress during the regular meetings held during a common planning period. In addition to this, the teachers from the IMAGESS' Program made themselves available to the other teachers who had the same students. Therefore teachers were able to discuss academic concerns with parents for all subject areas. When more detail was needed the IMAGESS' teacher assisted the parent in making a contact with the appropriate teacher or a parent conference was arranged by the counseling department.

The second way that parent participation was encouraged was through monthly meetings. Meetings were informal in presentation with parents and teachers intermingled rather than sitting on separate teams. During these meetings, which were held in the school library, the IMAGESS team shared classroom activities with parents, presented special programs and ended each session with a rotating question answer session where teachers rotated between four groups of parents answering questions regarding the program. See Appendix G for a more detailed outline.

Research Design

This study followed the Pretest-Posttest Quasi-experimental Design which included the collection and analysis of qualitative data. With a quasi-experimental design, "the researcher does not have total control but he can control one or two of the following: when the observations are made, when the treatment or independent variable is applied, and which intact group receives the treatment" (Huck, Cormier & Bounds, p. 301). Since subjects in this sample were computer assigned rather than random assigned, it is considered a nonequivalent control-group design according to Huck Cormier and Bounds (p. 302).

Diagram:



The researcher was interested in studying the effects of group counseling on the grade point average, self-concept and locus of control of ninth graders participating in an alternative education program called IMAGESS. Group membership (control or treatment), parent participation, sex of participant, whether or not the participant was repeating the ninth grade and the pretest scores for grade point

average, self-concept and locus of control were utilized as predictors and covariates in order to provide a clean design and account for confounding variables.

Sources of Data

The GPA at the end of grade eight or the 1990-91 school year and the GPA at the end of first semester during grade nine or the 1991-92 school year will be obtained from each participant's school record.

The GPA is the numerical average of the letter grades assigned to multiple courses. This average is calculated by assigning points to each letter as follows: A (4); B+(3.4); B (3); C+ (2.4); C (2); D+ (1.4); D (1) and F (0). Grade Point Average (GPA) is utilized by most schools to rank students and is an important factor, in most college selection formulas, based on current research which indicates that the GPA is a valid predictor of future academic success. A review of the literature on counselor interventions with low-achieving and underachieving students, states that the GPA provides a "global assessment of performance and is usually the chief criterion for promotion" (Wilson, 1986, p. 628).

Instrumentation

The SAM was administered during the first week of ninth grade (September 5th) and before group counseling began and

at the end of the first semester of ninth grade (January 21) which followed the completion of ten group counseling sessions. Information obtained from the SAM will include: the Academic Self-Concept-Performance Based; the Academic Self-Concept-Referenced Based; and the Student's Sense of Control over Performance. The first two tests will be utilized to evaluate self-esteem and the third test will be utilized to evaluate locus of control. These scores will be recorded for both the pretest and the posttest.

The Student Attitude Measure (SAM) is designed to measure five aspects of student attitude: Motivation for Schooling; Academic Self-Concept-Performance Based; Academic Self-Concept-Reference Based; Student's Sense of Control over Performance and Student's Instructional Mastery. Motivation for schooling is based on how a student feels about their total school experience. Academic Self Concept-Performance Based looks at how the student feels about their school performance. Academic Self-Concept-Reference Based looks at how a student perceives the assessment of their academic performance by significant others in their lives. A fourth scale, Student's Sense of Control over Performance evaluates the student's degree of responsibility for actions related to school performance. The final scale Student's Instructional Mastery indicates the students perception of their school skills.

According to the authors of SAM, "the items were reviewed for ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, cultural, and regional bias" (Wick, 1990) utilizing the delta method and Rasch analysis.

The SAM was normed on a sample that was stratified, multi-stage (first districts were selected then schools within the districts were sampled) sample of kindergarten to twelfth-grade students in public schools and in parochial schools. Approximately 150,000 students participated in the standardization of this test. Test statistics were obtained for the grade above and the grade below the level for which the item was written as well as the target grade.

The Rasch latent-trait analysis was used to change weighted raw scores to the Equal Interval Score (EIS) scale. "The output from this analysis provided a scale in logits which ranged from -3.0 - +3.0. These logits were linearly transformed to have an average value of 500 for each level" (Wick, 1990, p. 11). National percentiles are reported for each of the five scales. These scores are an indication of the percentage of students with a less positive attitude on that scale than the individual student. Student results are usually fairly consistent across all five scales. Variations in results may indicate an area in need of counseling or further evaluation. (Wick, 1990)

A test is considered reliable if it is consistent in its output. That is, if the same person, tested twice with the same test or an alternate form covering the same content, obtains consistent scores. The reliability of the SAM for level K/L which is appropriate for 9th grade students varied from .84 to .90 across the five subscales that were measured. The intercorrelation information for the five levels of the SAM level K/L indicated a reliability of .96.

A test is considered valid if it measures what it is suppose to measure. The items in SAM were considered to have a consistently high face validity for each scale with questions covering a representative sample of the behavior domain for the item being measured.

Other Data

In addition to the above sources of data, the following information was collected during this study:

1. a record of parent participation
2. a record of group participation
3. during one of the group sessions, students were asked to identify the most common school problems they felt their peers faced every day
4. a post-group interview covering the following: opportunity to participate in group, effectiveness in helping student to identify self-defeating behaviors, what

they liked most about group and what they liked least about group

5. a parent survey (completed at the last parent meeting) covering the following: Did IMAGESS improve academic performance and attitude towards school?, Did ImageSS improve self-esteem?, and Did IMAGESS ease the transition from Middle School to High School?

6. Other observations and historical data occurring during the course of the study.

Data Analysis

The dependent variables in this study were: changes in grade point average, self-concept and locus of control. The independent variables are : group counseling (Group), parent participation, sex, and repeating factor (first or second year in ninth grade). In addition to these variables, the following interactions were observed: group and sex, group and pre locus of control, group and pre-self concept, group and parent, parent and sex, group and group attendance and parent and post grade point average. The following is a list of the abbreviated names utilized during this study:

1. PARENT - parent participation
2. PREGPA - pre grade point average
3. POSTGPA - post grade point average
4. PRELOC - pre locus of control

5. POSTLOC - post locus of control
6. PRESCOTOT - pre self-concept
7. POSTSCTOT - post self-concept
8. GROUP - group membership coded "1" indicating control and a "2" indicating treatment
9. SEX - male or female coded "1" indicating male and a "2" indicating female
10. REPEATER - coded "1" indicating non-repeater and a "2" indicating repeater.

Group means and standard deviation were calculated for each of the above variables. Descriptive statistics derive indices from raw data that summarize the entire data set (Huck, Cormier and Bounds, p.19).

Correlations were calculated for each of the predictors and each of the criterions. " A correlation is an indication of the predictability of one variable given another" (Tuckman, 1978, p. 259).

Analysis of covariance was utilized to evaluate whether or not there were any significant differences in the dependent variables when the means were adjusted using the corresponding pre-treatment variable as a covariate. This procedure removes the variance that can be attributed to the pre-test score (the covariate) allowing the researcher to have a clearer test of the hypothesis. The analysis of covariance then tests whether these adjusted means differ

significantly. (Howell, 1987, p. 531) Another function of this test is to reduce the error term and remove any bias in the dependent variables means caused by chance group differences on the covariate (p. 539).

Analysis of covariance makes the following assumptions:

1. normality, homogeneity
2. the relationship between "Y" and the covariate is linear
3. homogeneity of regression-regression coefficients are equal across treatments
4. the covariate can be a fixed variable or a random variable (p. 531)

Multiple regression was utilized to determine if group counseling accounted for a significant portion of the variance of change in grade point average from the student's transcript, locus of control (as measured by the student's Sense of Control Over Performance) and the student's self-concept (as measured by the Academic Self-Concept-Referenced Based and the Academic Self-Concept-Performance Based). The later scores will be taken from student results on the Student Attitude Measure (SAM).

Regression analysis was selected because the data collected in this study comes primarily from continuous variables since they can generally assume an infinite number of values. GROUP (group counseling), SEX (male or female),

and REPEATER (first or second year in ninth grade) which are categorical data were entered by utilizing a dummy variable. This procedure is appropriate with binary variables that can take on the values of 1 and 2 (for example, one meaning no group counseling and two meaning group counseling took place).

Multiple linear regression analysis was needed to answer this question since it allows the researcher to measure the effects of several factors concurrently (Schroeder, Sjoquist and Stephan, 1990, p. 29). "Multiple regression analysis is identical to that of simple regression except that two or more independent variables are used simultaneously to explain variations in the dependent variable (p. 30).

In multiple regression, a linear line ($Y' = a + bX$ where Y' is the predicted value of "Y", "a" is the intercept or value of Y' where "X" = 0 and "b" = the slope of the line or change in "Y" for every unit change in "X") is used to demonstrate the relationship between the dependent variable(s) "Y" and the independent variable(s) "X". Alpha (a) is the value of the "Y" intercept and beta (b or slope) measures the change in "Y" for each 1 unit change in X. (p. 32) In terms of this study, the researcher would like to know if group counseling adds anything to the model.

In multiple regression, the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) "measures the percentage of the variation in the dependent variable which is explained by variations in the independent variables taken together" (p. 33). It is the square of the coefficient of multiple correlation (R), "the degree to which variation in the dependent variable is associated with variations in the several independent variables taken simultaneously" (p. 33) which is used to measure the "goodness of fit". This " R^2 " or coefficient of determination represents the ratio of how much the model explained compared to the total. The larger the Sums of Square Model, the better the fit. The closer the " R^2 " is to 1, the better the fit. In order to test the overall significance of the model, the following formula is applied:

$$F \text{ (observed)} = \frac{\text{SS model/degrees of freedom (1)}}{\text{SS error/degrees of freedom (n-2)}}$$

As stated previously, a review of the literature indicates that achievement, self-concept and locus of control are probably involved in a circular relationship (Bricklin, 1967; Brookover, Thomas & Patterson, 1964; Faust, 1980; McCarthy & Hoge, 1982; Savin-Williams & Demo, 1984 and Zilli, 1971). This would indicate that interaction effects

will probably exist between the variables in this study.

The use of covariates allowed the researcher to adjust for differences between the treatment group and the control group that were not related to the treatment. This adjustment decreased the amount of measurement within error and made the statistical test more powerful in terms of being sensitive to the differences among the groups that are being compared (Huck, Cormier and Bounds, 1974).

The researcher set a significance level of .05 (since research indicated that there would probably be an improvement of some value) and set up a rejection region stating that the null hypothesis was rejected when the t-value was $>$ the established t-value at the .1 significance level. The null hypothesis was rejected (model did nothing to help explain or predict Y) when the "F observed" was significantly greater than the "F (1, n-2)."

The effects of multicollinearity were considered to be a factor in interpreting the results from this experiment. Multicollinearity occurs when two or more independent variables have high correlations with each other (p. 70).

Qualitative Data

Qualitative research refers to "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). The following information

was collected during this study to help explain the statistical results:

1. During a group meeting, students were asked to "brain storm" problems related to school, they felt their peers dealt with daily. The information was tabulated and categorized into groups to identify the most common problems.

2. At the conclusion of the group meetings, twenty-five group participants were interviewed to gain further knowledge regarding how they perceived the group activity. This information was tabulated and placed in categories.

3. At the March parent meeting, parents were asked to respond to a survey which was designed to evaluate the objectives of IMAGESS. This information was tabulated and placed into categories.

Qualitative data was then evaluated in addition to the statistical data to arrive at the conclusions and recommendations for this study.

Threats to Internal Validity

A study has internal validity if the results of the study are a function of the treatment rather than the result of other variables that were not controlled for in the study (Tuckman, 1978). The following threats to internal validity were identified:

1. History- other events that occur outside of the experimental setting that may effect the dependent variable (Huck, Cormier & Bounds, 1974, p. 234). The event could include something that occurred in the school setting or something that occurred outside of the school setting.

2. Maturation- results on the second administration of an attitude test might be more positive or more negative than the first time due to test exposure (p. 235).

3. Instrumentation-differences in grades may be due to grading practices of teachers rather than the treatment (p.236).

4. Statistical Regression-students were chosen for IMAGESS based on their low-achievement. Since there is always some degree of imperfection in measuring, it is likely that repeat scores will cause a shift towards the mean (p. 236).

5. Mortality- refers to the loss of subjects between the pretest and the posttest. If the subjects who drop out of the experiment are not like those who remain, this could effect the posttest scores (p. 237). In this study there were 66 participants at the onset of the study and 48 participants at the completion of the study. Statistical analysis was computated using the data from 48 students.

6. Selection of Subjects- occurs when subjects who are exposed to the treatment are different then those in the

control group (p. 240). At the onset of the study the group compositions for the Control Group and the Treatment Group were approximately equal. At the conclusion of the study, the group composition had changed due to students withdrawing from school. (see Table 1)

Threats to External Validity

A study has external validity to the extent which its results can be generalized to other populations (Tuckman, 1978). The following were identified as threats to external validity:

1. Use of an Experimentally Accessible Population (p.258)- students who were identified for the IMAGESS program were utilized in this study. These students were computer assigned to treatment and control groups.

2. Interaction Between the Treatment and Subject Characteristic a program may be more appropriate for one level of ability, one attitude bias, one level of education or one personality type than another (p. 262).

3. Inappropriate Choice of Measuring Instrument (p. 232)- The Student Attitude Measure (SAM) was utilized to measure self-concept/self-esteem and locus of control. Although this test was normed on a ninth grade population, the results may not have been valid for participants in this study.

4. Multiple Treatment Interference - it may be difficult to determine the effects of the group counseling from the effects of the IMAGESS Program since both treatments may have had effects on achievement, locus of control and self-concept/self esteem (p. 263).

5. Interaction of History and Treatment Effect- other events occurring at the same time as this study may have altered the results (p. 263).

6. Interaction of Time of Measurement and Treatment Effects- the measurements were taken immediately at the end of the treatment however, the actual effects of the treatment may not occur until much later. Experiments that measure the dependent variable at several intervals after the treatment, increase the validity of the results (p. 264).

7. Pretest-Posttest Sensitization- the measurement of the dependent variable can sensitive the subjects to the treatment. Attitude tests are particularly vulnerable to this effect (p. 264).

8. Hawthorne Effect- the individual's knowledge that he/she was participating in an experiment could influence the test results (p. 265).

9. Disruption Effect- the individual using an innovative program may feel uncomfortable or have difficulty adapting to the new program (p. 266).

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of the research methods described in Chapter III. Statistical results along with qualitative information are presented as they apply to each of the identified research questions. Computational procedures for this study were completed utilizing Number Cruncher (NCSS) and Systat statistical packages. Descriptive statistics and analysis of covariance were completed on NCSS. Multiple Regression results were tabulated using Systat statistical package since NCSS was limited in this area. A discussion of the results and their impacts are presented in Chapter V.

This study utilized a quasi-experimental Pretest-Posttest design to determine whether or not group counseling would improve the achievement (measured by grade point average), self-esteem and locus of control (both measured by SAM) of low-achieving and/or underachieving ninth grade students in an interdisciplinary alternative educational program. Participants in this study were 66 students in an alternative educational program called IMAGESS who were computer-assigned to either a treatment group or a control group. Students who were in the treatment group participated

in ten 45 minute group counseling sessions over a four month period of time. Concepts of reality therapy were utilized during the group sessions with an emphasis on goal setting, decision making and problem solving skills. The researcher served as leader during the group sessions and received outside assistance from a practicing reality therapist prior to the group counseling sessions.

The difference in the mean grade point average in eighth grade was compared to the mean grade point average for the first semester of ninth grade to measure achievement. Self-esteem and locus of control were measured with the SAM. All participants took the SAM in September during the first week of school and prior to group counseling sessions. The posttest was administered in January following the final group session. The mean score on the pretest was compared to the mean score on the posttest to measure self-esteem and locus of control.

In addition to these measures of achievement, self-esteem and locus of control, additional qualitative information was collected from the following sources: a list of problems facing adolescents from a "brain storming" activity during a group session, results of a student interview, a record of parent participation and a post treatment parent survey.

Descriptive statistics provided group means and standard deviations.(see Table 2). This information provided the location, spread and distribution for each variable. Correlations provided an indication of the predictability of one variable given another. (see Table 3)

Table 2

Variable Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Parent Participation	.28125	.3406229
Pre GPA	1.872992	.7270949
Post GPA	1.922708	.9544225
Pre self-concept	67.095834	50.07822
Post self-concept	65.085416	49.50564
Pre locus of control	36.4375	25.78298
Post locus of control	37.6875	23.42226
Sex	1.3125	.4684174
Group	1.520833	.5048524
Repeater	1.104167	.3087093
Group attendance	45.41667	45.52102

Table 3

Variable Correlations

VARIABLE	PARENT	PREGPA	PRELOC	PRESC	GRPATTEN	GROUP
PARENT	1.0000	0.3506	-0.0967	-0.1901	0.1878	0.1817
PREGPA		1.0000	0.1258	0.2714	0.1282	0.0619
PRELOC			1.0000	0.4306	0.0436	-0.0113
PRESC				1.0000	0.0294	-0.0656
GRPATTEN					1.0000	0.9671
GROUP						1.0000

VARIABLE	SEX	REPEATER	POSTSC	POSTGPA	POSTLOC
PARENT	0.0042	-0.1834	0.0911	0.5755	-0.0008
PREGPA	0.2837	-0.6139	0.3668	0.4653	0.1075
PRELOC	-0.2247	-0.2331	0.3509	0.1770	0.1830
PRESC	0.1031	-0.2034	0.6791	0.1557	0.2763
GRPATTEN	0.1584	0.0044	-0.0675	0.1888	-0.3047
GROUP	0.1068	0.0540	-0.1518	0.1114	-0.3242
SEX	1.0000	-0.0820	0.0717	0.2165	0.0362
REPEATER		1.0000	-0.1772	-0.2833	-0.1484
POSTSC			1.0000	0.3436	0.3126
POSTGPA				1.0000	0.0934
POSTLOC					1.0000

Research Questions

In order to improve the academic achievement of low-achieving and/or underachieving ninth grade students and to decrease the school dropout rate, the researcher sought the answers to the following questions:

Question 1. The primary research question wanted to know if the Grade Point Average, Self-Concept and Locus of Control (as measured by the GPA and Student Attitude Measure (SAM) of ninth graders participating in IMAGESS, improve as a result of group counseling? The null hypothesis for this question was : There is no difference in the Grade Point Average, Self-Concept and Locus of Control (as measured by the GPA and SAM) of ninth grade students participating in IMAGESS as a result of group counseling ($H_0 = p = 0$).

Means by group for the pretests and the posttests were helpful in identifying differences in performance. (See Table 4)

Table 4

Means by Group for Pretests and Posttests Utilizing Analysis of Variance

Group	GPA		S.C.		LOC	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Control	1.83	1.81	71.35	73.61	36.74	45.52
Treatment	1.92	2.02	64.84	58.72	36.16	30.48

The mean post- grade point average for the treatment group (2.02) was found to be higher than the mean post-grade point average for the control group (1.81). However, an analysis of covariance found no significant findings for the effects of group counseling on grade point average ($p=.53$). (See Table 5)

The mean post self-concept was found to be lower for the treatment group (58.72) than the control group (73.61). Analysis of Covariance found these results not significant for explaining the effects of group counseling ($p=.33$).

Although results were significant for the locus of control variable ($p=.02$), results for this variable were found to be psychometrically inconsistent. An example of this inconsistency was the correlation between the pre and

post locus of control where $r=.1830$, demonstrating an extremely low relationship. Based on these findings, no conclusions will be made utilizing the locus of control data.

Table 5

Group Means for Dependent Variables Utilizing Analysis of Covariance

Dependent Variable	Mean		P-Value
	Control	Treatment	
Post GPA	1.84	2.00	.53
Post LOC	45.47	30.52	*.02
Post Self-concept	71.36	60.79	.33

*Post Locus of Control for Group was significant at .02

In an effort to explain the inconsistency on the locus of control test, the researcher reviewed the reference material on the SAM. During this review, the researcher noted that test questions related to motivation, self-concept and instructional mastery were all coded in a positive direction from 1 to 4 with 4 indicating "always

agree". In contrast to this pattern of responding, the only subtest that utilized a reverse response mode, due to negative wording, was the locus of control. For the locus of control questions, a student response of 4 would indicate "never agree". Since many of the students in this study were poor readers (as many as 1/3 scored in the bottom quartile for reading on the eighth grade achievement tests) the researcher feels this may have been a contributing factor in producing the scoring inconsistencies on this subtest.

Since this study failed to produced any significant results to support a relationship between the counseling sessions and the post grade point average, post locus of control and post self-concept, the null hypothesis was accepted as stated. This study found no difference in the achievement, self-concept or locus of control that could be explained by the group counseling treatment. See Table 5 for these results.

Question 2. Is there any correlation among the achievement, self-concept and locus of control of ninth graders, participating in IMAGESS, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Student Attitude Measure (SAM)? The null hypothesis for this question was: There is no correlation among achievement, self-concept and locus of control ($H_0 = p = 0$).

Results of the correlations (see Table 3) indicated that forty-six percent ($r = .6791$) of the variation in the post self-concept was explained by the pre-self-concept and 13% ($r = .3668$) was explained by the pre-grade point average even though the pre-grade point average only explained 7% ($r = .2714$) of the pre-self-concept. Twelve per cent ($r = .3436$) of the post-self-concept was explained by the post-grade point average. These correlations indicated that the higher the pre-grade point average and pre-self-concept, the higher the post-self concept. Achievement (as measured by grade point average) and self-concept (as measured by the SAM) were related. An increase in one showed a corresponding increase in the other.

Twenty-two percent of the variation in the post-grade point average was explained by variation of the pre-grade point average ($r = .4653$). Thus pre-grade point average did a lot to explain what would happen on the post-grade point average.

In addition to these correlations, the analysis of covariance demonstrated that an interaction between parent participation and grade point average accounted for a significant portion of the adjusted post self-concept. See Table 10.

The results of this study support a relationship between achievement and self-concept based on a moderate

correlation between these variables. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis stating that there is no relationship between achievement and self-concept in favor of the alternative hypothesis which states that achievement increases as self-concept increases.

Results of this study for locus of control remain inconclusive due to the inconsistency of the testing data.

Question 3 Will any of the predictors including sex, parent participation, and whether or not the student was repeating the ninth grade, have an effect on the grade point average, self-concept or locus of control of ninth graders participating in an alternative educational program? The null hypothesis for this question is: There is no difference in achievement, self-concept and locus of control, for students in this study, based on the sex of the individual, parent participation or whether or not the student was repeating the ninth grade ($H_0 = p = 0$).

Correlations indicated that parent participation accounted for 33% ($r = .5755$) of the variation in the post-grade point average even though this variable only accounted for 12% ($r = .3506$) of the variation in the pre-grade point average .

Analysis of covariance (see Table 6) produced significant results with parent participation for both the

post-self-concept ($p=.08$) and the post-grade point average ($p=.006$) variables when the corresponding pretest was used as a covariate. These results indicated that parent participation contributed significantly to both the self-concept and the achievement scores for these students.

Table 6

Means of Dependent Variables with Parent Participation Utilizing Analysis of Covariance with Pretests as Covariate

Dependent Variables	Parent Participation					P-Value
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
POSTGPA	1.56	1.71	2.59	2.62	2.64	* .006
POSTSC	53.19	81.88	59.72	70.77	98.89	*.08
POSTLOC	38.39	33.00	38.84	44.04	34.35	.92

Analysis of covariance continued to produce significant results for post-self-concept and parent participation ($p=.06$) and post-self-concept and achievement ($p=.004$) even when pre-self-concept, group and sex were used as covariates. See Tables 7-8.

Table 7

Analysis of Covariance Report for Post-self-concept and Parent Participation

SOURCE	DF	SS	MEAN SQUARE	F-RATIO	PROB>F
X(GROUP)	1	2416.703	2416.703	1.98	0.1667
X(PRESC)	1	53656.17	53656.17	44.05	0.0000
X(SEX)	1	.1480023	.1480023	0.00	0.9913
A (PARENT)	4	11979.72	2994.931	2.46	0.0609
ERROR	40	48726.68	1218.167		
TOTAL (ADJ)	47	115188			

Table 8

Analysis of Covariance Report for Post-Grade Point Average
and Parent Participation

SOURCE	DF	SS	MEAN SQUARE	F-RATIO	PROB>F
X(GROUP)	1	5.052E-02	5.052E-02	0.09	0.7666
X(PREGPA)	1	2.034892	2.034892	3.60	0.0652
X(SEX)	1	1.356024	1.356024	2.40	0.1295
A (PARENT)	4	10.33344	2.583361	4.56	0.0039
ERROR	40	22.63868	.565967		
TOTAL (ADJ)	47	42.81335			

Analysis of covariance also produced a significant interaction between parent participation and post-grade point average ($p=.06$) . This result indicated that parent participation contributed significantly to self-concept depending on the student's grade point average. Students with low grade point averages were able to match the self-concept scores of their high achieving counterparts when parent participation was high. Parent participation had less effect on the self-concepts of high achieving students. See Tables 9-10.

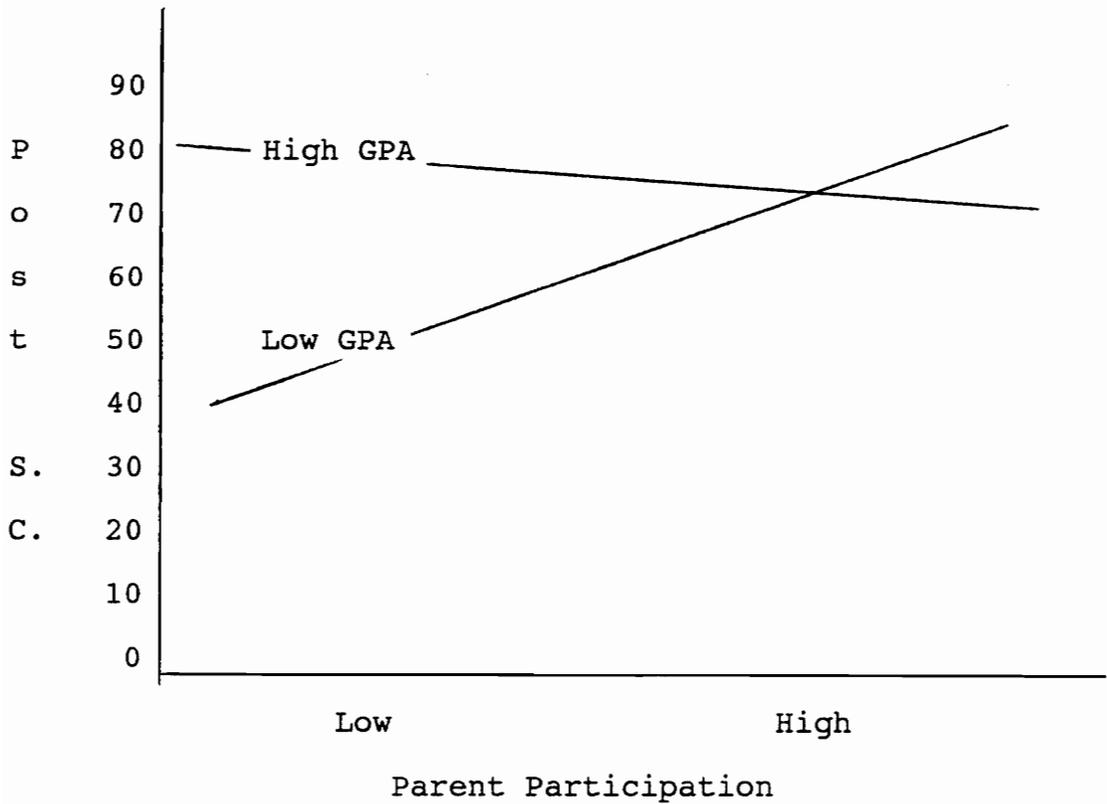
Table 9

Analysis of Covariance Report for Post-self-concept and the
Interaction of Parent Participation and Achievement

SOURCE	DF	SS	MEAN SQUARE	F-RATIO	PROB>F
X(POSTGPA)	1	1666.975	1666.975	1.96	0.1747
X(GROUP)	1	805.3072	805.3072	0.94	0.3407
X(PRESC)	1	22795.61	22795.61	26.75	0.0000
X(PARENT)	1	1183.415	1183.415	1.39	0.2502
A (INTERAC7)	19	31258.79	1645.199	1.93	0.0643
ERROR	24	20455.19	852.2997		
TOTAL (ADJ)	47	115188			

Table 10

The Effects of the Interaction of Post Grade Point Average and Parent Participation on Self-Concept



Although students who were repeating the ninth grade had a lower mean grade point average (1.14) than those who were in the ninth grade for the first time (2.01) analysis of covariance did not find this difference significant. When analysis of covariance was used the mean grade point average for repeaters was 1.93 and the mean grade point average for non-repeaters was 1.92 indicating that most of the difference could be linked to the pre-grade point average and not the repeating factor. See Table 11.

Table 11

Means for Repeaters versus Non-repeaters Utilizing Analysis of Covariance

	POSTLOC	POSTSC	POSTGPA
Repeater	30.09	60.00	1.93
Non-repeater	38.57	66.53	1.92

The fact that 58% (7/12) of the repeaters did not complete the year and were not included in the final data made this variable difficult to evaluate strictly from a quantitative approach.

Although analysis of variance demonstrated a difference in posttest scores between males and females, none of these differences were found to be significant utilizing analysis of covariance.

Table 12

Means by Sex Utilizing Analysis of Covariance

Dependent Variables	Sex		P-Value
	Males	Females	
Number	33	15	-
POSTGPA	1.86	2.05	.50
POSTSC	65.80	65.98	.98
POSTLOC	36.41	40.49	.59

Multiple regression techniques were utilized to identify variables that would be useful in a model to predict grade point average, self-concept and locus of control. Since the results for locus of control were inconclusive no model was attempted to predict this variable.

A model including pre-self concept, group membership (control or treatment), parent participation and sex (male

or female) as predictors was found to be significant ($p=.02$) in explaining 53% of the variance in the post self-concept. See Table 13.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Report for Post-self-concept

VARIABLE	COEFF	STD ERROR	STD COEF	T	P-VALUE
CONSTANT	28.243	22.026	0.000	1.282	0.207
PRESC	0.708	0.106	0.716	6.709	0.000
GROUP	-14.962	10.455	-0.153	-1.431	0.160
SEX	1.391	11.137	0.013	0.125	0.901
PARENT	37.059	15.650	0.255	2.368	0.022

Multiple R 0.731

Squared Multiple R 0.534

Adjusted Squared Multiple R .490

Standard Error of Estimate 35.340

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	Mean-Square	F-ratio	P
Regression	61484.267	4	15371.067	12.307	0.000
Residual	53703.712	43	1248.924		

A second model utilizing pre-grade point average, group membership (control or treatment), parent participation and sex (male or female) was significant ($p=.000$) in explaining 43% of the variance in the post grade point average. See Table 14.

Table 14

Multiple Regression Report for Post Grade Point Average

VARIABLE	COEFF	STD ERROR	STD COEF	T	P-VALUE
CONSTANT	0.533	0.486	0.000	1.136	0.262
PREGPA	0.334	0.170	0.254	1.969	0.055
GROUP	-0.016	0.223	-0.008	-0.070	0.945
SEX	0.292	0.248	0.143	1.177	0.246
PARENT	1.365	0.353	0.487	3.870	0.000

Multiple R 0.655

Squared Multiple R 0.429

Adjusted Squared Multiple R 0.376

Standard Error of Estimate 0.754

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	DF	Mean-Square	F-ratio	P
Regression	18.359	4	4.590	8.071	0.000
Residual	24.454	43	0.569		

The results of this study indicated significant findings for achievement and self-concept with parent participation. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that stated that these variables would not make any difference in the achievement and self-concept. Parent participation seemed to have a significant effect on both achievement and self-concept. A large number of repeaters withdrew from the study due to withdrawal from school, moving and lack of consent, it was difficult to evaluate the effects of this variable on achievement and self-concept. The sex of the student did not produce any significant findings. This may have been due to the smaller number of females in this study. Again the results for locus of control were psychometrically inconsistent and therefore no conclusions can be made using this data.

Group Problem Identification Activity

During one of the group sessions, students were asked to "brain storm" a list of problems that they felt students faced every day. This list was utilized to practice problem solving within the group process. A list, including the number of times the problem was identified follows:

1. Inappropriate behavior such as: talking back; destroying property; disrespect; use of profanity; stealing; lying; cheating and being inconsiderate. (19)

2. Relationships-communicating with others (17)
3. Fighting (10)
4. Skipping class and being tardy to class (10)
5. Problems communicating with teachers and administrators (9)
6. Smoking and other drug use (9)
7. Completing work for class, bringing equipment to class, and listening in class (9)
8. Grades in class (4)

Student Interviews

A post-interview was conducted by the researcher with each individual student who participated in the group counseling sessions. Students were told that the purpose of the interview was merely to collect information that would be utilized to improve the group experience in the future. Students were told that their individual responses would remain confidential and that the information would only be reported as a composite representing the opinions of all group members.

Twenty-five students participated in a post-group interview. Only two of these students had not participated in group on a regular basis due to absenteeism. Absenteeism for one student was due to illness. Absenteeism for the second student was due to lack of motivation. This student

was Mexican-American and the family placed very low priority on education thus supporting the students decision to stay at home.

During the interview, all students felt that the group members had an equal opportunity to participate in the group experience. When asked if they could identify why some students did not participate in group discussion they indicated the following:

1. Did not feel comfortable with students in their group
2. Chose not to share (not in the mood often due to events at home or relationships at school)
3. One felt that some members thought it was not "cool"
4. One felt that members did not participate when they were in a "bad mood"
5. Three girls felt they might participate more in an all girls group
6. Some students did not like being at school and had an "I don't care" attitude

During the interview, students were asked if the group experience was helpful to them in identifying "self-defeating" behaviors. In response to this question, 60% of the students indicated yes, 36% indicated no and 4% had no response. Of the students who indicated no or had no response, almost all of the students indicated that they

were aware of their "self-defeating" behaviors prior to the group experience.

The following is a list of the behaviors students reported becoming more aware of as a result of the group experience: (number of responses are indicated for each)

1. Poor study habits (7)
2. Inappropriate behavior (7)
3. Poor attitude (5)
4. Feelings and how he/she treated others (3)
5. Strengths and weaknesses (2)
6. Better ways to communicate (2)

The following is a list of what students indicated they liked most about the group experience: (number of responses are indicated for each)

1. Easier to discuss your problems (10)
2. Communicate with peers (9)
3. Find out how others feel (8)
4. Better relationship with classmates (3)
5. Improved classroom communications (3)
6. A chance to help each other (2)
7. Getting out of class (2)
8. A chance to meet students on a different level (1)
9. Time to express oneself in a safe environment (1)
10. Talk about things that bother them (1)

The following is a list of what students liked least about the group experience:

1. Indicated none (12)
2. Behavior of those who chose not to participate (4)
3. Writing activities (2)
4. Uncomfortable participating sometimes (2) (didn't want to express feelings in front of specific group members)
5. Being grouped with a person who annoys you (1)
6. Boring (1)
7. Having another student critique your behavior (1)
8. Would like to meet more often (1)
9. Discussing attitudes (1)

Only one of the 25 students interviewed indicated that he/she did not wish to continue with the group during second semester.

Parent Survey of IMAGESS Program

At the March meeting, parents were asked to respond to a survey regarding the IMAGESS Program (see Appendix F). Parents were told that their surveys would be kept anonymous unless they chose to sign them. Fifteen parents were present at this meeting and completed the parent surveys. An overwhelming majority (80%) indicated that the program had helped to improve their child's academic performance and attitude towards school. In the comment section, parents

frequently indicated that they had seen an improvement in self-esteem and motivation. Other statements included: the student was more interested in school, cared more about completing tasks, reduced test anxiety, less rebellion, broadened interest in subject areas and made learning fun.

One parent indicated that the IMAGESS program "dramatically built self-esteem and broadened interest in subject areas. This improved confidence resulted in better grades and better communications with us". Of the 12 parents who identified themselves on the survey, 10 were parents of students who had received group counseling as a treatment in addition to being in the IMAGESS program.

The survey indicated that only one parent felt the IMAGESS Program was not helpful in easing his/her child's transition from middle school to high school. All parents who responded found the parent meetings helpful and felt that the frequency, time and content were appropriate. Parents found it helpful to meet parents of other students in the program and share common concerns.

Surveys were to be mailed home for parents who were not in attendance but no additional responses were received by the completion of this paper.

Chapter V

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter includes the discussion, conclusions and recommendations for this study based on the information presented in the previous four chapters.

Discussion

At first glance, results suggest that group counseling had no significant effect on self-esteem for participants in this study. However, one must remember that each student was an individual and as such reacted in his/her own unique way to the counseling intervention. The inclusion of the researcher as part of the educational planning team for the IMAGESS program encouraged the use of group activities in the instructional setting. The use of these activities may have made it difficult to separate the effects on self-esteem that could be contributed to group counseling from the overall effects of the alternative program.

Although research in a school setting is needed to justify non-traditional approaches, student rights including access to treatments and programs for all students interfered with the researchers ability to control all variables.

In retrospect, findings in this study may have been the consequence of an inappropriate design. A comparison of the

measurement results versus the qualitative findings, suggested that the improvement in self-esteem was observable even though the measurements were not sensitive enough to show statistically significant results. Since the emphasis of this study was on collecting quantitative data, it was difficult to explain the statistical inconsistencies based solely on the data collected. Although qualitative data were helpful, they were not collected at the level of sophistication necessary to thoroughly explain the results.

The nature of the population studied may be another factor supporting a qualitative design. Low achievers and/or underachievers are often from dysfunctional homes and frequently involved with the court system. Since these are common variables and difficult to control, a qualitative design may be a more appropriate means for collecting data on these students.

In addition to the above, the fact that this study was not a true experimental design left it open for threats to internal and external validity any of which may have affected the outcomes. The following paragraphs present a summary of these threats to validity that may have altered the outcomes. Readers will want to consider this information when interpreting the findings. Hopefully, a review of these intervening variables will provide the

reader with a better understanding of the inconsistencies produced in this study.

Threats to Validity

During the course of the study, several events occurred that could have effected the outcomes of this study.

First, multiple treatment interference was one factor that may have affected the results of this study. It was difficult to partial out the effects that could be attributed to the group counseling versus the effects of the IMAGESS program. Situations occurred in the classroom that had an impact on the group counseling sessions. Since IMAGESS was a new program, it did not have a clear identity in the school system. At the onset of the study, students were concerned that they were in a "dummy class". Some students felt that they were in a special education class. Due to the efforts of the teachers and staff, most of these fears seemed to disappear. However, as the year progressed students continued to complain that they were not receiving as much homework as their friends and that they were ready for more challenging work. These feelings became topics of discussion during group sessions and were utilized for problem solving activities where students were asked "What are you going to do to change this?". It is possible that these unanticipated perceptions of the class may have had a negative effect on the self-esteem of some students.

Second, several of the students who had been chosen for the IMAGESS program became involved with the court systems during the course of this study. These students were often in and out of the program causing disruption in the classroom and limiting the effects of the bonding among students that had been a part of the program. In some cases it was necessary to remove these students from the program and they were placed in other facilities. One student was on house arrest during this study and it often became a topic during group discussions. Several other students were on probation and one student was waiting to be placed at a local boy's home. Group counseling sessions indicated that students found these activities disturbing. Because students were required to attend school until their trial date, students in this program were well aware of the court proceedings.

Many of the students who were in trouble with the court system were friends of students who managed to stay out of trouble. Even though they did not participate in the delinquent activities, they were emotionally traumatized by these events making it difficult to concentrate on school work. The group process provided an outlet for students to discuss their feelings regarding these events. At the same time, it is possible that these discussions sensitized group members to family issues they may not have been aware of

outside of the group process. Although similar situations occur in traditional classrooms, the IMAGESS program placed emphasis on team work and team support and as a result, the loss of a team member had a greater impact on these students. Again it was difficult to measure how these incidents affected the self-esteem and achievement of students in this program with a quantitative research design.

Halfway through the first semester, the third event occurred. A student teacher was introduced into the math class. During group sessions, students expressed a great deal of difficulty adjusting to this individual's teaching style and constantly compared the teacher to their former teacher. Although the original teacher remained in the room and taught two out of every five days, the bonding between students and teachers seemed to be effected by this occurrence. Most of the group members indicated that their grades had declined and they felt helpless to do anything about it. Again the group utilized a problem solving model to empower the students and to arrive at possible solutions to this dilemma.

Mortality was another factor that might have affected the results of this study. Eighteen students did not complete this study for various reasons. Nine of these students moved, two were withdrawn for lack of attendance,

one for incomplete data, and six for lack of proper consent. Ten of these students were members of the control group and eight were members of the treatment group. Data from these students may have facilitated the explanation of the results from this study.

A factor related to instrumentation was the inconsistent results on the Locus of Control test. Results indicated that there were unexplained factors other than treatment effects that were interfering with the findings. Some of these results included the lack of correlation between the pretest and the posttest and the significant finding for the control group. Normally one would expect the pretest to explain a significant portion of the posttest results. The findings in this study were not significant for this relationship. In addition to this, the control group showed an improvement in locus of control (more internal) while the treatment group results indicated a decline (more external). Although the self-esteem results did indicate the same trend (treatment group results decreased while control group results increased), the correlation between the pretest and the posttest were significant and the differences in the group means did not reach statistical significance. Results for achievement did not have the same inconsistencies. Since the literature review indicated that the achievement, self-esteem and locus of control would have

a direct relationship, the unusual results were difficult to explain based solely on data collected.

Measurement during this study may also have been affected by teacher grading practices. During this study, middle school grade point averages were compared to the first semester grade point averages for participants. Teacher grading may be different from middle school to high school thus affecting the results. Even within the same school teachers may vary in grading practices.

This study measured changes in achievement, self-concept and locus of control over a four month span of time. Since measurements were taken immediately at the end of the treatment, it is possible that time was insufficient for this study to respond to the potential of counseling. It is also possible that the students who participated in group were tested at a time when they were still trying to stabilize their images as a result of the group activities. Since a goal of the group process was to identify self-defeating behaviors and identify steps for eliminating them, participants were frequently encouraged to evaluate their inappropriate behaviors by both the group leader and the group members. Initially this confrontation forced students to evaluate their behaviors and picture themselves as the person they wanted to be. Since adolescents seek peer approval and are trying to form an identity, this was seen

as an unstable period for these students. However, once the student was able to demonstrate goal-attaining behaviors, he/she received positive feedback from group members which seemed to have a positive effect on the individual's self-concept. During this study, the short span of time prevented most students from achieving their goals thus few students had the opportunity to experience the positive support which might have been provided by fellow group members.

Events that occurred outside of school may have had an additional effect on the results of this study. A large number of these students were from single family homes with one breadwinner. During group sessions, many of the students expressed the need to assume adult responsibilities on a regular basis after school. It appears that this responsibility was given and taken based on the presence or absence of the primary caregiver. Students expressed difficulty in adjusting to this everchanging role where they were expected to act like an adult but were often treated like a child. They often expressed the feeling of being used and felt robbed of traditional parent-child relationships. Having experienced these inconsistencies for many years, they had become very versed at blaming these activities for all of life's problems and injustices. By the end of the group process, participants were able to

recognize when group members were not accepting responsibility for their own behavior and had begun the process of confronting one another.

Conclusions

Under the conditions of this study, the addition of group counseling to the IMAGESS program did not emerge as having a statistically significant role in changing the GPA and self-concept of students in this study. Although this study did not produce significant results for group counseling, it has produced valuable information that may be useful in future studies. Parent participation was consistently found to be a significant contributor to achievement and self-concept. A significant interaction indicated that parent participation contributed significantly to self-concept depending on a student's GPA. Students with low GPA's had significantly higher self-concepts when their parents were high participators. Students with high GPA's had high self-concepts even without high parent participation. In fact in this study the students with low GPA's were able to achieve the same mean post self-concept score as those with high GPA's when they had high parent participation. This seems to indicate that the self-concepts of students who are struggling to achieve academically can be improved through parent participation.

This also supports the theory that high parent participation can have the same effect on self-concept as a high GPA.

The above results raise the following questions: Does parent participation alone improve achievement or self-concept? What does parent participation represent to low achieving students? Do self-concepts rise because parents are conveying the nonverbal message that school is important? Do self-concepts rise because parent participation provides parents with a better understanding of their child's struggle thus they provide a more caring and supportive environment? Does parent participation help parents to see that other parents share their concerns thus removing the guilt many parents experience when their child is unsuccessful in school? Unfortunately the results of this study provided little information that could be helpful in answering these questions.

A second finding in this study indicated that participation in an alternative educational program and group counseling of this duration may not be enough to help students repeating the ninth grade demonstrated by the high number of repeaters who dropped out of the IMAGESS Program for various reasons. These students with multiple personal problems had a long history of school related failures. Even when parents seemed to be present and verbally caring, many students indicated difficulty communicating with their

parents. Many of these students were exhibiting delinquent behavior and some were already serving probations.

It is interesting to note that during group, repeating students often talked about improving their grades and verbally expressed a strong desire to graduate. Discussion of a general equivalency diploma or alternative programs such as Job Corp were generally unacceptable. If these students possessed a strong desire to complete their education, what factors were preventing them from achieving this goal? The researcher noted that most of these students smoked or exhibited some other form of addictive behavior. They often had a great deal of difficulty remaining in a classroom for a full period. Many of them indicated that they got up during the middle of the night to smoke a cigarette. Some of these students were well dressed, spoke respectfully to authority figures and came to school daily and yet they rarely attended class. It was obvious that the social aspect of school was very important for these students.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative research is often used by researchers in the social and behavioral sciences. Qualitative methods assist the researcher by helping to identify undisclosed variables which might lie behind the phenomenon which is being studied. When studying students in an educational

system qualitative research can be very helpful in understanding the behavior of students, teachers, and parents. For these reasons, the researcher chose to include qualitative information in this study. This information was collected utilizing the following strategies: a survey, interviewing techniques and note taking. The following paragraphs present this information.

During a "brain storming" activity, group members identified eight categories of problems they felt students dealt with daily. In reviewing this list, the researcher felt that all of these problems could be grouped under two major headings: behavior and communications. The problems dealing with behavior included: inappropriate behavior such as talking back, destroying property, and use of profanity, fighting, skipping class, being tardy to class, drug use and classroom behavior. Communication problems included communicating with peers as well as teachers and administrators. Grades were very low on the list for these students perhaps indicating that the problems related to behavior and communications were so overwhelming that little energy was left for school work. During group students often indicated that communications with significant others and behavior issues were also a major problem outside of school.

The post-group student interview also identified communications and behavior as the two major areas they as

individuals needed to improve. Here communications was defined by the students as better ways to communicate, and how to treat others. Behavior was defined as poor study habits, inappropriate behavior as above, and poor attitude affecting behaviors. In addition to these two areas, students felt they needed help in understanding feelings and indentifying their strengths and weaknesses. It is interesting to note that the behaviors students became more intuned with as a result of the group process were the same problems they had identified as a group during the "brain storming" activity.

When asked what they liked most about group during a post group interview, again most students identified some aspect of communications. Communications here was defined as: the ease of discussing problems, communicating with peers, finding out how others feel, relationships with classmates, classroom communications, helping others and a chance to express oneself in a safe environment. The responses indicate that students found the group process helpful in working on communications skills.

Almost one-half of the students (12/25) interviewed indicated that there was nothing they disliked about group. For those who did indicate dislikes, their concerns included behavior of students who chose not to participate, shyness, boring, being grouped with an annoying person, and having

other students critique your behavior. Although members could have chosen not to attend group, the fact that it was an integral part of the IMAGESS program may have made it more difficult to refuse. In addition to this the researcher felt that even students who rarely participated truly wanted to be a part of the group and would have chosen to come regardless. However, in future groups the leader may want to reinforce that membership in the group is strictly voluntary and this may improve the results that can be attributed to the group process. Some students will probably always find group activities boring, the voluntary aspect will probably address this complaint as well. Interviewing students prior to group, may help identify students who would not do well together and help place the shy student in a more comfortable environment. Although interviewing may improve these factors it would probably not totally eliminate them.

Even with these aspects, overall results seem to indicate strongly that students enjoyed the group process. The activities they enjoyed the most were those which allowed them to interact with one another. This seems ideal since it has been identified over and over as one of their major concerns and areas they feel a need to improve.

Even though the posttest scores did not demonstrate a major success for group counseling or the IMAGESS Program, the parent surveys, that were completed, demonstrated an

overwhelming support for the program. Parents particularly noted improvement in grades and self-esteem. They found the parent meetings to be very beneficial in helping them to monitor the school progress of their sons/daughters. In addition to these, parents felt that the IMAGESS Program was very successful in easing the transition from middle school to high school.

Although these responses were very positive, one can only wonder what the parents who were not present would have to say. It was also interesting to note that twelve out of the fifteen parents who completed the questionnaires were parents of students in the treatment group.

Recommendations

1. More than half of the repeaters (7/12) in this study withdrew from the program or were withdrawn due to absenteeism. Even with smaller classes, more emphasis on meaningful activities, the use of cooperative learning, group counseling and a supportive team of teachers, these students continued to fail in school. It would appear that some students need special attention if they are to become successful graduates. Repeating students who dropped out had multiple personal problems and had a history of failure in previous grades. At least three of these students were in serious trouble with the court system. These students appear

to fall through the cracks. They do not qualify for special education services and their home situation is not severe enough to warrant placement in foster care. In order to help these students, they must first be evaluated to identify reasons why they have been unsuccessful in school. Since it is not usually possible to correct the home environment in which these students live, the counselor must concentrate on the individual, teaching him/her to cope and helping him/her to see the benefits of education in their future. It may be necessary to develop individual plans within an alternative education program to meet their needs. Educators should continue to pursue alternative methods for addressing the needs of these students.

2. Although the statistical results of this study did not identify group counseling as significant in raising the achievement and self-esteem of ninth graders, interdisciplinary teams and group counseling have shown promise for addressing issues related to achievement and self-esteem. Data collected, during this study, indicated that students need assistance in developing better communication skills. This information also indicated that students are aware of behaviors that are nonproductive and need attention. Counselors have the skills and expertise necessary to address these issues. Much of the counselor's time was spent doing non-counseling functions. Counselors

should reevaluate their priorities and become actively involved in working cooperatively with classroom teachers to address issues related to goal-blocking behaviors and better communication skills. Better methods for evaluating the outcomes of such endeavors are needed.

3. This study indicated that parent participation was a very important factor in motivating students in school and having a positive influence on a student's self-esteem. Efforts on the part of school personnel to improve parent participation are needed if schools are to be successful in motivating students and decreasing the dropout rate.

4. Indicators of parent participation would be useful in selecting students who have the best chance of benefiting from alternative educational programs that seek to improve achievement and self-esteem. When resources are limited, educators need to match students to the most effective treatment.

5. Some students in this study had issues related to substance abuse and delinquency. Since these students are in need of more than the brief counseling that is available in the high school, counselors should work cooperatively with community based mental health services. School personnel should explore ways in which outside agencies and classroom curriculum can be utilized to supplement current guidance services.

6. Since self-esteem and habits related to positive school behavior are developed early, the importance of early intervention cannot be underestimated. High school counselors may want to share the burden of early intervention programs so that they can one day reap the benefits of such endeavors.

7. The quantitative design utilized in this study was not effective for collecting the type of information needed to explain changes in self-concept and locus of control over a four month period of time. The qualitative approach proved to be more helpful in demonstrating the value of both the interdisciplinary approach to instruction and the group counseling process however, this information was not collected at the appropriate level of sophistication necessary to produce reliable conclusions. Future researchers should consider using qualitative designs when studying self-esteem and achievement in high school students.

Research Recommendations

1. Since qualitative methods produced more valuable data than the quantitative methods, future researchers may want to consider the case study approach when evaluating programs that address self-esteem and achievement. School systems have restrictions making it difficult to control for all the variables necessary to produce a true research

design. More research is needed to determine how students perceive alternative programs, how parent participation affects student achievement and self-esteem, and how the social aspects of school can be utilized to improve student achievement.

2. It is possible that students in this study were retested at a time when they were unstable as a result of the counseling process. Since one of the goals of counseling was to force students to reevaluate current behaviors in terms of goals, it is possible that four months was not a sufficient amount of time for group members to feel comfortable with changes. Testing at a later time may have produced different results.

Since the quantitative methods did not produce significant results but qualitative data indicated at least moderate success, future researchers may want to increase the length of the treatment and consider longitudinal studies for evaluating the effects of group counseling on self-esteem and achievement.

3. Results from the locus of control construct were ineffective in evaluating the students in this study. There is a need to develop more sensitive instruments for measuring the results of counseling. These results are needed on a regular basis to justify budgetary issues.

Since the results in this study were inconsistent, future researchers may want to compare the individual scales on the SAM with other measurements to see if the results on the SAM correlate with results obtained with other instruments.

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APPENDIX A
PARENT LETTERS

April 17, 1991

Dear Parent(s) of Rising 9th Grade Students,

Potomac Senior High School has added a new option for rising 9th grade students called IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Science, Social Studies and Vocational Skills). IMAGESS is a "non-traditional" method of helping students to learn. Students are instructed in a large inter-disciplinary teaching experience that allows for more flexible time use than the traditional 45 minute class period. The time blocks provide flexibility in scheduling learning activities such as a science lab or a field trip.

IMAGESS is for students who are not achieving up to their full potential in the 8th grade and/or who could use some assistance in making the transition into high school. Students who can benefit from the IMAGESS Program are those students who would normally be placed in average or enriched classes in the 9th grade. Goals of the program include improving academic achievement and assisting students with high school transition.

Please take the time to look over the enclosed brochure on the IMAGESS Program. Interested parents should plan to attend a meeting at _____ High School on Thursday April 25th at 7:30 P.M. in the school library. Mrs. Kunze and the instructors for this program will be on hand to answer your questions.

If for some reason you can not attend this meeting but are interested in hearing more on the program, you may contact Mrs. Kunze at (phone number) between 8 A.M. to 3 P.M. Monday through Friday.

We will only be able to accept 66 students into this program therefore, if you are interested you must let us know by April 15th. We are very excited about this new program and hope that you will be interested in taking advantage of the IMAGESS Program to get your son/daughter off to a good start at _____ High School.

Name
Principal

Kathleen S. Kunze
Director of Guidance

May 21, 1991

Dear Parent(s) of _____,

_____ High School will be offering a new program called IMAGESS (Innovative Math and Growth in English, Science, Social Studies and Vocational Skills). next year. This program is aimed at easing the transition from 8th grade to high school and improving student achievement in the 9th grade.

In the IMAGESS program, students work in cooperative teams to achieve academic goals. Teacher-student ratio is approximately 1 to 16 compared to 1 to 25 or 30 in other classes. This low student to teacher ratio provides more individual assistance and close observation to meet individual student needs. In addition to this, student mentors have been carefully selected to provide positive role-models and additional one to one assistance as needed. The cooperative learning that takes place in the IMAGESS Program allows teachers to decrease their reliance on the traditional pencil-paper tests (that often provides students with negative feedback) and give each student the opportunity to succeed academically by implementing non-traditional methods of evaluation that emphasize the fact that "all children can learn".

In reviewing your son/daughter's records, I find that he/she is currently registered for courses that will be available in this program or is currently registered for courses that are not consistent with his/her past academic performance. Ninth grade is a very important year for high school students. It frequently sets the pace for the remaining high school years. Since the IMAGESS Program will increase your son/daughters chances of academic success, we have made arrangements to include him/her in this program.

I ask that you take the time to review the enclosed literature on IMAGESS. I feel that your son/daughter could benefit from this program. If you have any concerns feel free to contact me at (phone number).

Kathleen S. Kunze
Director of Guidance

May 21, 1991

Dear Parent(s) of _____,

Your son/daughter has been selected to participate in the IMAGESS Program during the 1991-92 school year. We are very excited about this program and are pleased with the parent/student response we have received. We look forward to working closely with you during the coming school year.

I will be in contact with those students who need to adjust their schedule to be consistent with this program. If you do not hear from me, feel certain that your son/daughter's schedule is complete. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at (phone number).

During the summer, your son/daughter will receive information with all freshman, concerning an orientation program in August. Freshman will have the opportunity to tour the building and locate their classrooms during this program.

Have a happy and restful summer. We look forward to working with you this fall.

Kathleen S. Kunze
Director of Guidance

APPENDIX B
IMAGES BROCHURE

APPLICATION

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Middle School Attending: _____
1st Elective Option _____
2nd Elective Option _____
Parent Signature _____
Counselor signature _____
Comments: _____

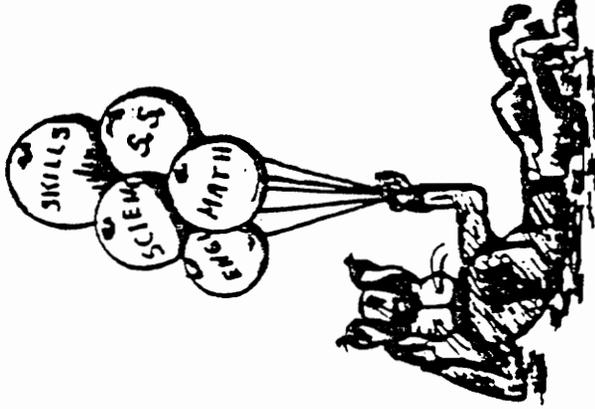
Return this application to the Guidance Department at the student's current school or mail it to

Potomac Senior High School
18708 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Dumfries, VA 22028

Inquiries can be directed to Kathy Kuntz, Director of Guidance at 221-1134

IMAGES

**INNOVATIVE MATH
AND GROWTH IN ENGLISH,
SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES
AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS**



**Potomac High Schools
Innovative Team Approach
To Improve Academic Achievement
And High School Transition**

"I AM" CREED by Mark Scharenbroich

- I am unique in the world;
- I am capable of learning and growing daily;
- I am a person who appreciates the differences in others;
- I am talented and I share my talents;
- I am unlike any other human being;
- I am a dreamer who pursues personal dreams;
- I am an active participant in life;
- I am committed to my values;
- I am the kind of person I enjoy being;
- I am a one-of-a-kind human being and a celebration of life.



PHS MOTTO:
**Building The Future
from
Out of the Blue**

SCHOOL MISSION

The mission of Challenge 2000 in Prince William County Schools is to ensure that all students are given entry level skills to prepare them for the career of their choice. Due to a rapidly changing technological society, students will be taught employability skills and improve their performance through an integration of academic and vocational skills.

WHAT IS IMAGES?

IMAGES is a "non-traditional" method of helping students to learn. Students are instructed in a large inter-disciplinary teaching experience that allows for more flexible time use than the traditional 45 minute class period. The time blocks provide flexibility in scheduling learning activities such as a science lab or a field trip.

The IMAGES Program recognizes the fact that children mature at different rates. Some students in middle school do not acquire the basic skills necessary to succeed in high school curriculum. IMAGES can ease the transition from middle school to high school by allowing students the opportunity to mature as they learn. Participants in IMAGES will be of mixed ability levels (heterogeneous grouping) and will have the opportunity to improve their basic skills in a supportive setting which decreases their risk of failure. Students will participate in creative instruction which meets curriculum requirements while it addresses individual student needs.

The focus of the IMAGES Program is to assist students in becoming more successful in school. IMAGES encourages cooperative learning that combines fun and lively interaction while it develops a sense of belonging. Groups work individually and cooperatively in solving a problem.

WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS ALTERNATIVE?

Students who can benefit from the IMAGES Program are those who would normally be placed in the average or enriched classes in the 8th grade. Priority will be given to those students who have received a D or F in two of the four required academic subjects (math, science, English or history).



WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF IMAGES?

- to improve academic achievement
- to improve attitudes and enhance self esteem by improving basic skills
- to provide an opportunity to gain the skills necessary for college or employment
- to increase critical thinking abilities and foster independent thought
- to assist the student in identifying relationships between required academic courses
- to provide an alternative for those students who might have difficulty making the transition to high school
- to increase parent awareness and involvement in school activities

WHAT IS THE CLASS SIZE/STRUCTURE?

Students will be placed in classes of approximately 22 students for every two interdisciplinary teachers. Students will receive instruction in math, science, English and social studies during the first four periods of the school day.

WHAT COURSES ARE AVAILABLE?

Students in the IMAGES Program will take the following classes:

English 9
World Studies I
Earth Science
Health/Physical Education 9
Algebra I Part I
Monitored Study Period

and a choice of 1 of the following electives (theoretical arts)

Band
Chorus
Art
Communications Technology
Manufacturing
Life Management II
Introduction to Business

These classes meet the six required credits necessary to be promoted to 10th grade. Students in the program will need to wait until their sophomore year to take a foreign language but will still be able to complete an Advanced Studies Diploma if interested. A monitored study hall is provided to allow students the opportunity to begin homework with teacher guidance and to give the students sufficient time to master the other required classes.

HOW ARE STUDENTS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN IMAGES?

Students can be recommended by parent, teacher or counselor for the IMAGES Program. As stated above, special consideration will be given to those students who have failed one or two of the four required courses (math, science, English, and social studies). Student selection requires parent/guardian support of the basic goals of the program. Parent/guardian must assure program coordinator that the student will make minimal school days. It is important that selected students be in attendance at Potomac Senior School for the entire 1991-92 school year.

Students will be notified of their acceptance some time before the end of June. Any necessary schedule adjustments will be made by the guidance department prior to the beginning of school. Students who are not accepted will follow the schedule they completed in middle school.

APPENDIX C
NEWS ARTICLE

Pilot plan aimed at failing students

By DENYSE TANNENBAUM
of the Potomac News

The jump from middle school to high school for many students is a leap into a maze of new faces, courses and teachers. Some inevitably fall short.

"There are so many different classes, children are overwhelmed," said Potomac High School English teacher Michael Keys.

To break their fall, four teachers and a guidance counselor at Potomac are spearheading a program to serve as a kind of trampoline and bounce these failing students back to the regular program by 10th grade.

"We're trying to meet them at the door," said Kathy Kunze, director of guidance at Potomac. "Hopefully we'll get them to like school again."

Using their own teaching experiences and methods proven effective by studies, the team plans to use a cooperative, hands-on learning approach to reach these children, who have become disenchanted with school.

"It's an ideal way to reach out to students who aren't performing," said English teacher Michael Eye. "It's a scheme to inspire them."

They plan to start school next year with a segment on the Persian Gulf War. Eye will teach the class about how to take notes. To make Eye's lesson relevant, the social studies teacher will give the class a note-taking assignment about the war. The science teacher will follow with a lesson about the map of the region and the math teacher will do a section on reading coordinates and grids.

"There's an immediacy that should help," Eye said.

The way the teachers will evaluate student performance will also differ. There will be fewer

written tests and more practical applications. Karen Spillman, Potomac science teacher, will test mapping skills by having students complete an orientation course.

Students eligible for the program, called Images, are those who would normally be placed in the average or enriched program in ninth grade. Priority will be given to those students who have received a D or F in two of the four required math, science, English or history courses.

The class limit will be 64 with 16 students per teacher. They will remain with Images teachers in the four core classes and intermingle with the rest of the students for their remaining three periods in the seven-period day. A half-dozen field trips are planned.

Parents, teachers or guidance counselors of Graham Park and Rippon middle schools can recommend children for the program. Kunze said she expects the program to attract students of varying abilities.

"If anything, we'll have other kids knocking down the doors," Spillman said.

APPENDIX D
PERMISSION FORM

Date

Dear Parent(s) of _____,

Enclosed you will find a permission form allowing your son/daughter to participate in group counseling sessions as part of the IMAGESS Program. The purpose of the group counseling sessions is to increase student awareness and responsibility for choices made. The group sessions allow group members to practice a problem-solving model in a safe environment. If you have any questions regarding these sessions please contact Mrs. Kunze at (phone number).

Students will be assigned to groups for this experience. Half of the students will participate in group counseling during the first semester and the other half of the students will participate in group counseling during the second semester.

Please sign the enclosed permission form and return it to me at the high school in the envelope provided. I would appreciate receiving these permission forms as soon as possible since I would like to begin meeting with students in the next two weeks. Thank you for your time and support.

Kathleen S. Kunze
Director of Guidance

Date

Dear Parent(s) of _____,

As part of the IMAGESS Program, Mrs. Kunze who is Director of Guidance and a doctoral student at Virginia Tech is conducting group counseling sessions with the students and serving as a resource to the IMAGESS instructional team.

Throughout the year, Mrs. Kunze will be conducting an evaluation of the IMAGESS Program from a counseling viewpoint. This information will be utilized to improve the program and to plan for a smooth transition into the 10th grade. If you have any suggestions or concerns please feel free to contact Mrs. Kunze at any time.

During the evaluation process, unidentifiable information will be collected to monitor the collective progress of students in the program. Information on individual children will be coded in such a way that no child can be identified by any information. Analyses will be done at the Group Level and will be reported in that manner. In addition to providing this information for the IMAGESS Program, this information will be summarized in Mrs. Kunze's Doctoral Dissertation and submitted to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Please be aware that specific information about a particular child will only be available to Mrs. Kunze and specific parents who request the information about their child.

Please sign and return this form in the enclosed envelope indicating that you understand the above information.

Thank you,

Kathleen S. Kunze
Director of Guidance

Parent Signature

APPENDIX E
COUNSELING SESSIONS OUTLINE

OUTLINE FOR GROUP SESSIONS

The following is an outline of the group sessions. These ideas served as a starting point allowing the leader the flexibility to focus on issues that emerged from the group members as needed.

Session # 1

Warm Up Activity- Students introduced themselves and discuss activities in which they participate in school.

Discussion of group purpose
Discussion of confidentiality
Commitment of members to honor confidentiality
Leader introduction
Establishment of ground rules
Summary

Session # 2

Warm Up Activity- Sentence Completions
The thing I like the best about school.....
The thing I like the least about school....

What previous school experiences do you remember most?
How do these experiences affect you now?

Will your present school behaviors help you achieve your long-term career goals? Why? Why not?

What does it mean to you when someone says "you have a bad attitude?"

How are attitudes related to behaviors?

Summary- Think about the behavior you would like to change for next week.

(Adapted from Corey, 1981, p. 107)

Session # 3

Review: Is present school behavior getting you where you want to go? Attitudes are powerful because they create behaviors.

Completion exercise: I like about myself, I would like to change....

Group sharing of activity

Summary: Behaviors are chosen. Only the individual has the power to change a behavior.
(Adapted from Corey, 1981, p. 107 & Master Student p. 314)

Session # 4

Warm up activity- I feel valuable when...., I feel good about myself when...., and When I do well in school I feel..... (Appendix I -author unknown)

Utilize affirmation and visualization exercise to reprogram attitudes and behaviors (Master Student p. 314).

Step 1- Write a brief description of what you would like to change

Step 2- Write how you would like this to change. Be detailed even outlandish as if you were about to be granted a wish by your fairy godmother.

Step 3- Write two affirmations that describe your dream wish. Outline a visualization that can be used to visualize your wish.

Step 4- Set up a schedule for practicing the visualization of your affirmation.

Session # 5

Warm up- We often limit ourselves by what we think we have to do or what we think we can't do. Use the following sentence completions orally (Becoming a Master Student, p. 315).

I have to...
I ought to..

I should...
I can't....
I really must..
I just couldn't..
I am not able to...
I have to....
I can't.....
I shouldn't...

Now reword your response above by crossing off the first 2-3 words and replacing them with one of the following:

I want to....
I don't want to...
I choose to...
I choose not to...

Discuss responsibility- How were you taught responsibility? How responsible are you right now? How do you avoid responsibility? (Adapted from Corey, 1981 p. 107)

Session # 6 and # 7 (Becoming a Master Student-pp 20-25)

Have students rate themselves (using on five-point system) in the following areas: motivation, planning, memory, reading, observation, creativity, test taking, relationships, health, money, resources, and purpose.

Have students total the number of points in each category.

Have students chart their results on a "discovery wheel"

At second session respond to statements about your "discovery wheel":

1. This wheel is an accurate picture of my ability as a student because.....
2. My self-evaluation surprises me because.....
3. The two areas in which I am strongest are related because.....
4. The two areas in which I am weakest are related because.....

5. The areas in which I want to improve are....
6. I want to concentrate on improving these areas because...

Session # 8 (Myrick, 1987, p. 261)

Have students identify problems that they are having in school or a problem they know someone else is having. Write these problems on 3" X 5" cards. Collect the cards when completed.

Have students apply the problem solving model to these real-life problems.

If you had a problem like this, how would you feel?

If you had these feelings, how might you act or behave?

What could an individual do in a situation like this?

Session # 9

How does what you say about yourself affect how others treat you? Do you set yourself up for success or failure? Is present behavior getting you what you want?

Is there a difference between the way you see yourself and the way others see you? What faulty assumptions do you have about yourself? others?

Describe yourself as the person you would like to be.
(Adapted from Corey, 1981, p. 107)

Session # 10

Reset goals. What do you want to accomplish? Brainstorm alternatives. Discuss commitment.

Summary and closure.

APPENDIX F
PARENT SURVEY

PARENT SURVEY

Parent Evaluation for Imagess 91-92

1. Do you feel that the IMAGESS Program helped to improve the academic achievement of your child?

___Yes

___No

In what way(s)?

2. Do you feel that the IMAGESS Program helped to improve your child's attitude towards school and school related activities?

___Yes

___No

In what way(s)?

3. Do you feel that participation in the IMAGESS Program helped your child understand the connections between various school subjects and the world of work?

___Yes

___No

In what way(s)?

4. Do you feel that the IMAGESS Program eased your child's transition from Middle School to High School?

___Yes

___No

In what way(s)?

5. Did you find the frequent parent-teacher contact helpful in monitoring your child's progress?

___Yes

___No

In what way(s)?

6. Did you find the parent meetings helpful?

____ Yes

____ No

Please comment with regards to frequency, content, and scheduled time.

What did you like the most about the Parent Meetings?

What did you like the least about the Parent Meetings?

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions to help us improve the program for next year?

8. Would you be willing to share your experiences about the IMAGESS Program with Middle School parents who are interested in the IMAGESS Program?

Signature Optional

APPENDIX G
PARENT MEETINGS

PARENT MEETINGS FOR IMAGESS

1991-2992

October- Back to School Night. Meet with teachers and become familiar with class requirements. Presentation of video demonstrating team-building experience at Hemlock Overlook.

November- Discussion on homework and how to arrange a counseling session with your son/daughter's assigned counselor. Presentation of video demonstrating students utilizing surveying techniques to practice skills learned during map reading. Vocational construction students serve as mentors for IMAGESS students.

December- A Christmas social planned by IMAGESS Students. A chance to see the many talents of the student mentors.

February- Career exploration activity. Parents will complete a career interest inventory and receive a printout of compatible careers. Career counselor will introduce parents to resources available in career center. Guidance director will discuss testing program. Results of Differential Aptitude Test will be returned and discussed.

March- Parent evaluation of IMAGESS. Student display of posters demonstrating interdisciplinary activity conducted during the olympics. Video presentatio of interdisciplinary activities in English and social studies.

VITA

Kathleen S. Kunze received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia; and the Master of Arts Degree in Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, off-campus location, Falls Church, Virginia. She is a Doctoral Candidate in Counseling and Student Personnel at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, off-campus location, Falls Church, Virginia.

Ms. Kunze worked as a clinical nurse for eight years most of them in the Northern Virginia area. She taught both clinical and preclinical nursing in Prince William County for an additional seven years actively participating on advisory committees for the Department of Education's Health Occupation curriculum. During her years as nursing instructor, Ms. Kunze taught continuing education classes for Nurses and Nursing Assistant Certification classes at the Northern Virginia Community College. She taught a pilot for the state in Introduction to Health Careers before accepting a position as Career Counselor in Prince William County.

Currently she is a Guidance Director of a secondary school in Prince William County, Virginia.

Kathleen S. Kunze