Spring 5-2009

Influencing the Opinions and Beliefs of Teachers and Counselors Middle School Advisory

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Influencing the Opinion and Beliefs of

Teachers and Counselors: Middle School Advisory

by

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May 2009

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of

Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.
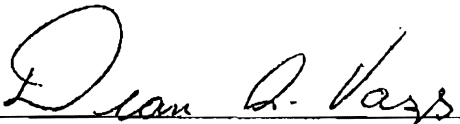
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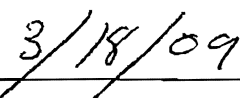
INFLUENCING THE OPINIONS AND BELIEFS OF TEACHERS AND
COUNSELORS ABOUT MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY

Chelsea Coleman Watson

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Abstract

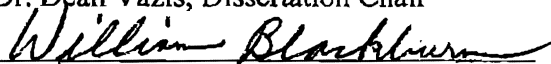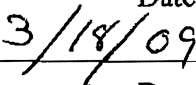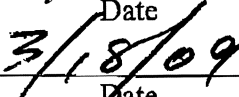Developmentally responsive middle schools provide young adolescents with a culture of caring that translates into action when the adults are attentive to the needs of the students. It is necessary for teachers and counselors to address the academic, social, and emotional well being of students. A philosophy held in middle schools with advisory programs is that every child should be known well by at least one adult, and a relationship facilitated with an adult advisor and a small group of peers is noteworthy.

This research included a mixed methods experimental one-group pretest-posttest formulated to answer the following question: How do teachers and counselors react to a professional development course designed to influence opinions and beliefs? A course was created by the researcher after a thorough review of the literature in the areas of middle school advisory, adult teaching methodologies, and professional development practices for educators.

Adult teaching methodologies and professional development practices were utilized during the four month course on middle school advisory. Participants were involved in many research based adult learning activities such as reflecting on current practice and beliefs, engaging in dialogue by means of a protocol, providing feedback through questionnaires and an exit slip, collaborating, and reading current structures and practices.

The participants in the study were teachers and counselors from one middle school. The group of learners encompassed a broad range of ages, years of experience in education, and educational levels. The participants were selected by the convenience method due to the researcher being the principal of the school. Sixty-one participants

returned the prequestionnaire and sixty-three teachers and counselors returned the postquestionnaire.

Through the analytical process of interpreting the data, the findings indicated that teachers and counselors changed their beliefs. The data suggested that participants wanted to implement a middle school advisory, believed that middle school students need an advisor, and wanted to be advisors. As the data was further examined, it became apparent that some groups did not embrace advisory as much as the others. Principals and other facilitators could learn from this study, specifically by utilizing solid research based practices for school staff development.

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Key to Abbreviations

CASEL   Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

NASSP   National Association of Secondary School Principals

NMSA   National Middle School Association

NSDC   National Staff Development Council

SPSS   Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter I – Introduction

Background of the Study

For many years national attention has focused on the need for the reformation of

middle schools (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; National

Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2006; National Middle School

Association [NMSA], 1995). According to George and Alexander (1993), human

development research found that middle school aged students were unique in their

developmental phase of maturation, and the success of young adolescents was in direct

correlation with the students' developmental needs. The NMSA (2003) noted that for

middle level schools to be successful, the school's organization, curriculum, pedagogy,

and programs should be based on the developmental readiness, needs, and interests of

young adolescents. George and Alexander further noted that middle schools flourished

when the students who were being served succeeded. The Carnegie Council on

Adolescent Development (1989) noted, "This is a time of immense importance in the

development of the young person" (p. 21).

Spurgeon (2004) and George and Alexander (1993) concurred that between 10

and 15 years of age early adolescents begin to experience puberty, stronger family and

peer relationships, doubt, confusion, and countless other physiological and physical

changes. Dyrfoos (as cited in Mertens, 2006) reported that 10% of 14 year-olds

experiment with alcohol, tobacco, drug use, and unprotected sex during this phase. Nolle,

Guerino, and Dinkes (2007) noted that the rate of violent incidents in middle schools was

52 per 1,000 students. The reported violence for all public schools was 31 per 1000

students, which made the reported violence in middle schools significantly higher. Forty-

three percent of middle schools reported occurrences of student bullying on a daily or weekly bases and 30.6% of students were reported being disrespectful toward teachers (Nolle et al., 2007).

NMSA (2003) reported that academic success and personal growth of all students seemed to have soared when the affective needs of students were met. In defense of this report, Klem and Connell (2004) found that developmentally responsive middle schools included an advisory program. The relationship that was facilitated with an adult advisor and a small group of supportive peers aided in meeting the needs of the students. Furthermore, student experiences of engagement were strongly influenced by positive and encouraging teacher relationships. NMSA noted that when developmentally responsive middle schools provided young adolescents with a culture of caring, it translated into action when the adults were attentive to the varying needs of the students.

In a comprehensive analysis of middle level education, Jackson and Davis (2000) recommended the following:

> Every student should be well known by at least one adult. Students should be able
> to rely on that adult to help them learn from their experiences, comprehend
> physical changes and changing relationships with family and peers, act on their
> behalf to marshal every school and community resource needed for the student to
> succeed, and help fashion a promising vision of the future. (p. 142)

Jackson and Davis (2000) argued that advisory programs were essential to the success of young adolescents. Middle school reformers claimed that having a lasting meaningful connection with a single adult in school improved academics and personal outcomes. This feat could be accomplished with the implementation of advisories which

provided middle school students with a connection to a peer group. In peer groups, students developed a sense of belonging (Anfara, 2006b; Blum, 2005; Cushman, 1990; Jackson & Davis, 2000; NASSP, 2006; NMSA, 2003; Stevenson, 1998; Washer & Mojkowski, 2003). For teachers and counselors to implement middle school advisory, a program that provided an adult advocate for every middle school student, solid understandings of advisory and its benefits was essential.

With adult learners as the targeted participants, the characteristics of adult learners, essential elements needed for teaching adults, teaching methodologies, and motivational strategies were explored. Andragogy teaching and learning methods were researched for the purpose of delivering effective professional development for the participants. In teaching adult learners, attention was focused on the facilitator's design of the presentation.

Professional development sessions designed for teachers and counselors regarding the benefits of middle school advisory can influence opinions and beliefs. Andragogy learning strategies opposed to pedagogy strategies for the dependent learners were found to be beneficial in the transformation of opinions and beliefs. Therefore, the transformative learning theory was employed in creating the professional development learning sessions.

Mertens and Flowers (2004) synthesized numerous experts' literature and research on effective professional development. Of the points examined, they recommended the following characteristics when planning for the development of educators:

- Enhances teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge

- Based on the best available research evidence

- Incorporates principles of adult learners

- Relevant and focused (i.e. results-driven)

- Standards based

- Ongoing and continuous

- Embedded in day-to-day responsibilities

- Aligned with school-wide improvement goals

- Collaborative and collegial

- Provides opportunities for discussion, reflection, and follow-up. (p. 2)

Smith, Hofer, Gillespie, Solomon, and Rowe's (2003) research on how teachers change as a result of participation in various types of professional development provided the following recommendations: (a) development should be of high quality; (b) a variety of activities should be presented; (c) facilitators should be clear as to the form(s) of developmental activities in which participants engage, communicating "why a specific technique should be used, not just how to use it" (p. 33). To best integrate information with the facilitator's thinking and practices, it would be helpful if facilitators were familiar with techniques of presenting new learning (Smith et al.). Smith et al. wrote, "A key finding of this study is that teachers change in different amounts and ways as a result of participating in professional development, and individual, professional development, program, and system factors interact to affect this change" (p. 35). Smith et al. acknowledged that professional development is both a valued and significant element that affects the growth of educators and a support for change that is needed to occur to sustain students.

Guskey (2000) explained professional development as intentional, ongoing, and systematic. The development was intentional because facilitators designed sessions to bring about positive change and improvement. Professional development was ongoing because teachers were informed of new practices and information on a continual basis. If teachers were to perfect their craft, professional development is a necessity. Guskey recognized that development is systematic due to the time necessary for change to occur.

According to Joyce and Showers (2003) the design of a professional development course was closely related to the intended result - implementation of middle school advisory. A professional development course designed and developed for the school's teachers and counselors to explore the process of middle school advisory and why it is important included various components and activities to match the complexity of new learning for the purpose of attaining the desired outcomes. A professional development program incorporating approaches to learning that met the needs of adult learners was created. According to Piggot-Irvine (2006), when professional development for adult learners "focused on practical and relevant issues, draws on participant's prior experience, links theory and practice, [and] is experiential" (p. 2), the learners were more likely to engage and participate.

Problem Statement

The NMSA (2003) recommended that middle schools embrace the following eight research-based elements in support of providing successful schools for young adolescents:

- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so

- Courageous, collaborative leadership

- A shared vision that guides decisions

- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment

- High expectations for every member of the learning community

- Students and teachers engaged in active learning

- An adult advocate for every student

- School-initiated family community partnerships. (p. 7)

CCW Middle School opened in August 1995. The middle school philosophy guided the architectural plans for the building. In 2001, NASSP selected CCW as one of the top middle schools in the nation (J. Valentine, personal communication, May 7, 2001). In 2007, NMSA recognized CCW for making great strides in advancing middle level education and selected CCW as a site visit for the Middle Level Essentials Conference (Swaim, n.d.).

For seven years prior to this study, the principal at CCW Middle reminded the teachers and counselors of the NMSA's research-based recommendations for successful middle schools. In 2008, the CCW staff began a more in-depth look at the NMSA research-based elements for successful schools. The teachers and counselors engaged in dialogue and shared readings on middle level education. The year prior to this research study, the concept of " an adult advocate for every student" (NMSA, 2003, p. 7) peaked the interest of teachers and counselors Blum (2005), Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), Jackson and Davis (2000), NASSP (2006), Shulkind (2008), and Stevenson (1998) agreed that the middle school advisory's goal was to improve student success.

Rationale for Study

Dana and Hoppey (2008) agreed that for change to occur, teachers and counselors should be presented detailed information on new initiatives, using research-based methodologies that provide opportunities for engagement and input. It is important for teachers and counselors to have shared beliefs before embarking on a new initiative that impacts them and their students. If teachers and counselors did not have common beliefs and were not working toward the same outcome, the initiative would not be successful. The following questions will be investigated:

1. What are the characteristics of young adolescents?

2. What is middle school advisory?

3. What are the benefits of a middle school advisory program?

4. What instructional methodologies are effective in engaging teachers and counselors in a professional development course to influence opinions and beliefs?

Research Question

How do teachers and counselors react to a professional development course designed to influence opinions and beliefs?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the research was to create an adult education course that influenced the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors toward embracing middle school advisory to create stakeholder buy-in.

Independent Variable

The participants in the course were the independent variable.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variables in this research were the teachers' and counselors' opinions and beliefs toward middle school advisory as measured by the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will not want to implement a middle school advisory program after participating in a professional development course designed to influence their opinions and beliefs.

Alternative Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will want to implement a middle school advisory program after participating in a professional development course designed to influence their opinions and beliefs.

Limitations of Study

Location

The study was limited to the CCW Middle School site, the school where the participants and researcher worked.

Sample Size

The information in the study was limited to the responses of the counseling and teaching participants at CCW Middle School.

Data Collector Bias

The researcher was convinced that a middle school advisory program should be implemented at the research site.

Data Collector Characteristics

The documents collected, presentations prepared, and research communicated were solely done by this researcher.

Definitions of Terms

Advisor

An adult who meets with a small group of students on a regular basis to support the students' academic, social, emotional, and physical well being.

Advisory Program

A school organizational structure in which a small group of students identifies with and belongs to one counselor or teacher who nurtures, advocates for, and shepherds the individuals in the group on a regular basis (Cole, 1992).

Advocacy

"A particular role that middle school educators play as active supporters of and intercessors for young adolescents" (Lounsbury & Brazee, 2004, p. 11).

Faculty Development

Monthly structure in place at CCW Middle School where all teachers and counselors gather for professional development and announcements.

Gallery Walk

"A collaborative problem-solving tool. It is an excellent means for communication that acknowledges the creativity and power of the group" (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007, p. 68).

Jigsaw

"A way of facilitating professional reading and initiating a dialogue about

important aspects of research and educational innovations. Each person

will read or watch a part of the article or video and then share his or her

information with the table or group" (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007, p. 68).

Middle School

An educational facility that houses a culture consisting of grades six through

eight.

Protocol

"Agreed upon guidelines for a conversation. This type of structure permits very

focused conversations to occur" (National School Reform Faculty, n.d.).

Think-Pair-Share

A structure for learners to participate in cooperative learning by privately

reflecting on a concept, pairing with someone else, and sharing their thoughts (Aronson

& Patnoe, 1997; Kagan, 1994).

<center>*Assumptions*</center>

There will be an underlying assumption in this study that professional

development is equivalent to Andragogy and transformative theories.

<center>*Summary*</center>

During the middle school years, students begin to experience unique physical,

emotional, psychological, and social change. As a result the responsibility to understand

the developmental needs of middle school students has been focused upon the schools. It

was found that middle schools that provided an adult advocate for their adolescent

learners created an environment for success. Literature and research on middle school

advisory should be provided to teachers and counselors in a format that is conducive to

adult teaching methodologies. In Chapter II relevant literature in the following areas will

be reviewed: (a) national reports and research, (b) developmental characteristics of

middle school students, (c) history of middle school. (d) history of middle school

advisory and purpose, (e) definitions of middle school advisory, (f) advisory and

academic success, (g) school connectedness, (h) methodologies, and (i) professional

development components.

Chapter II -- Review of Literature

The intent of this study was to expand the professional development process to

identify influences in the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors toward

embracing middle school advisory following the completion of a series of professional

development sessions. The review of literature noted when developing professional

development sessions for adult learners there were specific factors that the facilitator

should take into account or implement. The literature reviews focused on the utilization

of the constructivist theory, andragogy theory, and transformative theory for teaching

adult learners. Suggestions for planning and presenting professional developments for

adult learners along with strategies for the transformation of preconceived ideas of adult

learners were also explored through literature reviews.

Middle School Years

A goal of middle school advocates has been and continues to be for each middle

school student to have a meaningful, sustaining relationship with an adult in school.

Johnston (1997) found that over the past decade, society has experienced an increase in

youth becoming more unruly. Incidences of the mayhem caused by young adolescents

who were not carefully supervised by adults have been reported in daily newspapers,

Internet headlines, and local news. Johnston noted that this has caused concern for the

future of our nation. In many instances, young adolescents were no longer being raised by

the "village," which was evidenced by children becoming increasingly disconnected from

the positive influences of adults.

Whitney and Hoffman (1998) reported that during the middle school years, early

adolescents often tried new, challenging behaviors as they pushed the limits. In the

limelight of many school districts was the middle school, which was targeted for various

reasons: discipline, character education, and academics. Educators of middle school

students were placed in a vital position due to the prime opportunity middle school

teachers have to influence adolescent students who will affect the society at large.

According to Rubinstein (1994), "The most crucial need for any person is to find

meaning, purpose, and significance. In order to do this, that person must feel understood,

accepted, and affirmed" (p. 26).

Middle School Reform

Middle School advocates have argued for years that schools must be responsive to

the developmental needs of adolescents. The middle school movement emphasized the

need for student connectedness, a concept that references school culture in which

students had meaningful relationships with adults in the school, were engaged in school,

and felt a sense of belonging. Alder (2002), McNeely and Falci (2004), and R. Spear,

(personal communication, February 17, 2009) acknowledged that when adolescents had a

connection to school, they often found success. Jackson and Davis (2000) reported that

reformers of middle school have been constant in advocating for advisory programs.

Jackson and Davis and Scales, Benson, Leffert, and Blyth (2000) noted that academicians

advocated that allowing adolescents to have a lasting, meaningful relationship with at

least one adult at school demonstrated care and was the cornerstone of connectedness and

advisory.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) presented eight

recommendations for the transformation of the education of early adolescents and the

middle level grades. The first recommendation endorsed the creation of smaller learning

communities and called for an adult adviser for each student. The report released by a

task force of The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development emphasized that the

middle level grades have nearly been disregarded. The report stated, "Most young

adolescents attend massive, impersonal schools, learn from unconnected curricula, know

well and trust few adults in school and lack access to health care and counseling" (p. 13).

Myrick et al. (1990) contended that too many adolescents felt lost and vulnerable in an

already complex time in their lives, which was made more difficult by the structure of

schools.

NASSP (2006) outlined nine cornerstone strategies as a vision for improvement.

The fourth Cornerstone Strategy advocated to "implement a comprehensive advisory or

other program that ensures that each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to

meet with an adult to plan and assess the student's academic, personal, and social

development" (NASSP, p. 12). NASSP also identified five recommendations to support

the fourth Cornerstone Strategy and two recommendations that directly correlated with

advisory.

> Each student will have a Personal Plan for Progress that will be reviewed often to
>
> ensure that the school takes individual needs into consideration and to allow
>
> students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning
>
> in an effort to meet high standards. Each student will have a Personal Adult
>
> advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience. (p. 12)

NASSP (2006) provided positions and rationales from the NMSA, supported by

burgeoning research about young adolescents. Fourteen characteristics were detailed for

successful middle schools. One facet of school culture included in the characteristics was

"an adult advocate for every student" (NMSA, 2003, p. 7). This position communicated

that all adults in "developmentally responsive middle level schools are advocates,

advisors, and mentors…each student must have one adult to support that student's

academic and personal development" (NMSA, 2003, p. 16). The opportunity to discuss

matters outside the parameters of the academic curriculum is crucial and young

adolescents must have a trusted adult at school (NMSA, 2003).

Developmental Characteristics of Middle School Students

Caskey and Anfara (2007) and Jackson and Davis (2000) agreed that young

adolescents, 10 - 15 year-olds, encountered many unique developmental changes. During

this age range early adolescents experienced developmental changes while they faced

new and varied challenging opportunities and risks. Caskey and Anfara delineated the

developmental characteristics of young adolescence as physical, intellectual,

moral/ethical, emotional/psychological, and social with the admittance that there were no

clear divisions between the characteristics defined. Caskey and Anfara reported

> Eichhorn (1966), considered a founding father of the middle school movement,
>
> called upon educators to consider young adolescents' developmental
>
> characteristics when planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment and when
>
> structuring the environment of the middle school. Professional organizations
>
> (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1975; National
>
> Association of Secondary School Principals, 1989; National Middle School
>
> Association, 1982, 1995, 2003) articulated position statements and
>
> recommendations about educational programs and practices to address young
>
> adolescents' developmental needs. (p. 1)

According to Caskey and Anfara (2007), the essence of middle school education was to recognize and understand the distinctive development traits of young adolescents. When developing a middle school structure to address the unique developmental traits of the students, the advisory program was considered essential. Another important component for consideration by educators was the middle school student's relationship to the educational program.

Jackson and Davis (2000) noted that an in-depth study on how to improve the education in the middle grades focused attention on early adolescence as a period of rapid physical, intellectual, and social change. Lounsbury (2003) concluded that

> As a result, a seventh grade class is likely to include men, women, and children. It is virtually impossible for young adolescents to keep their chronological age in conformity with their social age, physical age, intellectual age, and/or social/sexual age. The priorities of young adolescents tend to be on their social and physical development, a fact many teachers unwisely ignore. (p. 1)

Lounsbury (2003) further noted

> No other age level is of more importance to the future of individuals, and literally, to that of society; because these are the years when youngsters crystallize their beliefs about themselves and firm up their self-concepts, their philosophies of life and their values -- the things that are the ultimate determinants of their behaviors. (p. 1)

Manning (2002) referred to the developmental characteristics of the middle school student as physical, psychosocial, and cognitive. Scales and Kellough and Kellough's research (as cited in Caskey & Anfara, 2007) agreed that the developmental

characteristics of the early adolescent were interconnected generalities. The NMSA (2003) explained that it was important to recognize that the developmental characteristics were intertwined. It has been noted that physical developmental changes are the most recognized upon immediate observance.

After the developmental period from birth to age two years, the early adolescence stage was the next physical developmental period when intense changes occurred, which included the onset of puberty. Scales (2003) noted that during the early adolescent developmental period, the young adolescent experienced biological and reproductive maturity and physiological changes. Caskey and Anfara (2007) reported that physical developmental changes could affect the emotional, psychological, and social development of the young adolescent. Jackson and Davis (2000) articulated that significant physical changes led to the young adolescent's capacity to engage in sexual relations and reproduce.

Significant changes in the brain also occurred during the young adolescent's developmental period. Keating's research (as cited in Lutz, Wagner, & Wigfield, 2005) revealed that changes occurred in areas of the brain, specifically in the limbic system. It was also reported that the limbic system controls emotional functioning which may be the cause of emotional swings displayed by many adolescents. Further information revealed that the logic area of the brain, the prefrontal cortex that controls the executive functioning, did not mature until late adolescence. Feinstein (2004) reported that the underdevelopment of the prefrontal cortex area of the brain may have explained the adolescent's emotional state of confusion and/or the adolescent's misread of another person's feeling, for example, confusing sadness with anger and surprise with fear.

According to the NMSA (2003), self-perception was affected by early or late physical

maturation, and hormonal changes sparked physical transformation, for example,

redistribution of body fat, increases in weight and height, bone and muscle growth, and

changes in the voice, hair and complexion.

According to Manning (2002), intellectual development, often termed cognitive

development in young adolescents, was not as pronounced as their physical development.

Stevenson, Van Hoose, and Strahan and L'Esperance (as cited in Caskey & Anfara,

2007) noted that intellectual development was just as intense as the physical. Manning's

(2002) research yielded the following:

> Cognitively, many young adolescents begin to develop the ability to make
>
> reasoned moral and ethical choices. Similarly, depending on their developmental
>
> rate, they begin to think hypothetically, abstractly, reflectively, and critically-what
>
> Piaget termed as a progression from the concrete operations stage to the formal
>
> operations stage. Still, middle level educators, in their efforts to address
>
> adolescents' cognitive development, should understand (and plan accordingly) for
>
> considerable cognitive diversity. (p. 226)

Schurr, Thomason, and Thompson (1995) found that intellectual development

was exemplified in changes in the patterns of thinking evidenced in the understanding

and reasoning of young adolescents. A wide range of intellectual abilities, from concrete

to abstract, were recognized in early adolescents. In addition, their metacognition was on

the rise. Scales (2003) noted that adolescence was a time of discovery, when this age

group had a greater aptitude for complex thinking. During this stage of maturation,

middle school students were interested in subjects of their choice, preferred learning

activities that were engaging and interactive, and sought approval from their peers. Young adolescents were intellectually curious, began to develop higher levels of humor, and challenged authority.

Scales (2003) also noted that moral/ethical developmental characteristics pertained to the young adolescent's increased ability to make right choices. During this developmental stage, the young adolescent moved from total acceptance of the moral judgment of the significant and dominant adults in their lives to the development of their own personal values, while they continued to hold on to the values of their parents and important adults in their lives. Lutz, Wagner, and Wigfield (2005) concluded that during this stage, young adolescents were sensitive to the true feelings of people toward them. This was especially true with adults, including counselors, teachers, and school administrators. The teachers and counselors needed to be conscious of and careful in their interactions with middle school students. Adolescents' radar informed them as to whom the caring people were in their school, no matter how much the person said and tried to exhibit a warm feeling toward the student.

Alder (2002) reported that data collected from interviews, focus groups, and observations revealed that urban students felt that it was important for teachers to exemplify a caring attitude. Alder (2002), Klem and Connell (2004), McNeely and Falci (2004), and Rubenstein (1994) contended that middle school students felt their teachers cared when they knew who they were, offered them personalized guidance, and helped them with their studies. According to Kellough and Kellough (as cited in Caskey & Anfara, 2007) middle school level was the stage when young adolescents were "at risk

when it comes to making sound moral and ethical choices" (p. 3) and were not prepared to handle complex moral and ethical questions.

Paterson (2007) noted that emotional and psychological developments were characterized by the early adolescent's need to be independent, although adult affirmation and assistance in finding areas where they could succeed was still important. Self-worth and self-esteem were important traits of this developmental stage that could be bolstered and/or crushed by adults as well as their peers. Along with the pressures and anxieties of early adolescence, Jackson and Davis (2000) observed that young adolescents experienced a decrease in their self-esteem when they transitioned from elementary school to middle school. During this unique phase, it has been noted that adolescents could be unrealistically self-critical. Schurr et al. (1995) concluded that young adolescents were generally dissatisfied with themselves and had difficulty explaining their feelings.

Scales (2003) stated that adolescents were "psychologically vulnerable, because at no other stage in development were they more likely to encounter and be aware of so many differences between themselves and others" (p. 49). Scales also mentioned that the desire for peer acceptance, the need to belong to social groups, the overreaction to mockery and embarrassment, the experimentation with new behaviors in the search for a position within a group, and the transfer of loyalty from adults to peers were emotional and psychological developmental characteristics. Kellough and Kellough (as cited in Caskey & Anfara, 2007) asserted that young adolescents preferred to make their own choices and may have emulated revered peers or non-parent adults, although the family still remained a critical factor in final decision making. According to the NMSA (2003),

All in all, the several developmental processes associated with adolescence, while natural and necessary, present challenges to those entrusted with the responsibility for the healthy development and education of young adolescents, and it is very clear that the schools of yesterday are ill-suited for meeting the challenges of today. (p. 5)

History of Middle School

According to Lounsbury and Vars (2003), Eliot, a former president of Harvard University, began the movement to reorganize secondary education. Twenty-one years later, in 1909, the first junior high school, Indianola Junior High, was established in Columbus, Ohio. In 1918, the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education recommended the 6-3-3 organizational form. Additional reform evolved in 1961 when Alexander, Grantes, Noyce, Patterson, and Robertson called for a new school to address the unique needs of early adolescents as they progressed through their stages of physical and organic development. Weller (2004) noted that the reformers envisioned a structure housing grades six through eight, not grades seven through nine like the typical junior high school. In the early 1980s, new paradigms for reforming middle level education began to loom.

George and Alexander (1993) presented a new philosophy of how middle schools should work and a new middle school concept:

The concept of the transitional school is sufficient, however, because middle school learners have unique characteristics and needs which must not be simply an extension of the program of the elementary school or an earlier introduction to the demands of high school. An effective middle school must not only build upon

the program on earlier childhood and anticipate the program of secondary

education to follow, but it must be directly concerned with the here—and—now

problems and interests of its own students. Furthermore, the middle school should

not be envisioned as a passive link in the chain of education below the college and

university, but rather as a dynamic force in improving education. (p. 43)

The organizational success of restructuring secondary education began in the last

decade of the nineteenth century and changed the way educating children was viewed.

Later changes in structures were suggested to create schools specifically designed to meet

the needs of the students who were being served. First the junior high replaced the

traditional 8 - 4 pattern with the 6 – 3 - 3 plan. Middle schools were created specifically

to meet the developmental needs of early adolescents. According to Lounsbury and Vars

(2003), the 5 – 3 - 4 arrangement with middle schools in the center became the most

common organizational structure.

Middle School Advisory

History of Middle School Advisory

The structures that comprised many of the current advisory models were taken

from earlier guidance programs. According to Galassi, Gulledge, and Cox (1998), in the

1880s educators began to push for vocational and moral guidance in schools, and as early

as 1920, the first teacher advisory concept was implemented in junior highs. Myrick et al.

(1990) noted that during the 1960s the teacher advisor program was first described as a

homebase or homeroom. Caswell (2004) ascertained that throughout the middle school

movement, advisory was created as a support for guidance counseling programs in an

effort to reach all students. James and Spradling (2002) articulated that "leaders of the

middle school movement cited an extended guidance program among the essential

elements of an exemplary middle school" (p. 13). Advisory was not the time for the

advisor to provide individualized counseling. Jackson and Davis (2000) acknowledged

that guidance fell under the expertise and job description of the school counselors.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) was devoted

exclusively to the education and well-being of young adolescents. Although educators

and groups had focused attention on early adolescents, this was the first inclusive report

by a nationally renowned group. The challenge was given to become advocates for

adolescents, ages 10 to 15. The report revealed that "a volatile mismatch exists between

the organization and the curriculum of middle grade schools and the intellectual and

emotional needs of young adolescents" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development,

p. 8). The report stated the following:

> Finally, we call upon all those deeply concerned about young adolescents' future,
>
> and the future of this nation, to begin not to create the nation-wide constituency
>
> required to give American young adolescents the preparation they need for life in
>
> the 21st century. The work of all these sectors will be necessary to transform
>
> middle grade schools. Through their efforts, a community of learning can be
>
> created that engages those young adolescents for whom life already holds high
>
> promise, and welcomes into the mainstream of society those who might otherwise
>
> be left behind. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, p. 11)

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) captured the attention

of the nation when it offered support for the middle school movement. This provoked a

groundswell of introspection by middle level educators who began to reculture schools to

be more in line with the developmental characteristics of those from 10 to 15 years of

age. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development recommended

> Every student needs at least one thoughtful adult who has the time and takes the
>
> trouble to talk with the student about academic matters, personal problems, and
>
> the importance of performing well in middle grade schools. The student who feels
>
> overwhelmed by course work, worried about a health problem, intimidated by
>
> classmates, or accused of misbehaving needs to be able to confide in someone
>
> with experience. (1989, p. 37)

> Prior to The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's (1989) landmark

release, the NMSA's (1982) first position paper stated the following:

> Every learner needs an adult who knows him or her well and is in a position to
>
> give individual attention. Therefore, the middle school should be organized so
>
> that every youngster has such an adult, one who has a special responsibility for
>
> the individual's academic and personal welfare. (pp. 12-13)

Similar suggestions were made in later NMSA publications (1995; 2003).

Defining Middle School Advisory

> Advisory programs, also known as advocacy programs, homebase, teacher-

guidance, and advisor-advisee, were predicated on the belief that every young adolescent

should have at least one adult at school to act as the student's advocate (Mertens &

Flowers, 2004). The primary purpose of an advisory program was to promote

involvement between the teacher and student in the advisory group. According to George

and Alexander (1993), every student needed to have a positive relationship with at least

one adult in the school who was "characterized by warmth, concern, openness, and understanding" (p. 201).

Juvonen, Le, Kaganoff, Augustine, and Constant (2004) agreed that middle level advisory programs consisted of an adult meeting regularly with a group of students to provide mentorship, support, personalization, and guidance. The advisory program was to provide the opportunity for an adult advocate to be initiated into the life of every student in the school. This would address the issue of many early adolescents who endured feelings of isolation and loneliness. NASSP (2006) advocated that advisory activities allowed students to connect with caring adults and peers to assist them through the rough spots during their middle level years.

Beane and Lipka (as cited in Anfara, 2006b) presented the following description of advisory programs in 1987:

Advisory programs are designed to deal directly with the affective needs of transescents. Activities may range from nonformal interactions to the use of systematically developed units whose organizing centers are drawn from the common problems, needs, interests, or concerns of transescents, such as "getting along with peers," "living in the school," or "developing self-concept." In the best of these programs, transescents have an opportunity to get to know one adult really well, to find a point of security in the institution, and to learn about what it means to be a healthy human being. (p. 40)

Jackson and Davis (2000) concluded, "Advisory enables educators to provide responsible adult guidance and extra support as middle grades students undergo normal, yet often turbulent, developmental changes that directly and indirectly affect learning" (p.

144). Galassi et al. (1998) agreed that the primary goal of advisory programs was to develop a relationship in which a community of learners cared for one another. Adults who served as advisors should know their advisees well enough to be the trusted adult that students could talk to when they had a need.

Advisory and Academic Success

Advisory programs stemmed from the understanding that academic success was disillusioned if the developmental needs of young adolescents were not met. According to The Carnegie Institute (1995), young adolescents needed the following fundamental requirements to grow into successful adults: (a) earned respect, (b) membership in valued groups, (c) meaningful relationships with peers and adults, and (c) a sense of self-worth based on achievement. The Carnegie Institute determined that the risks associated with drug use, social alienation, and poor school performance left one in four adolescents vulnerable to high-risk behavior and school failure. Based on these findings, advisory programs were a logical intervention to address the needs of early adolescent learners and their quest for high academic achievement.

The research on young adolescents included convincing evidence that middle schools needed to respond to the developmental needs of their students. According to Jackson and Davis (2000) and NASSP (2006), research on 10 - 14 year olds documented that the power of a meaningful relationship with an adult sustained and improved student achievement. Viadero (2007) reported that a research analysis of 207 studies of school based programs, created to cultivate the social and emotional skills of students, was shared by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The report revealed that students who participated in programs that focused on social and

emotional skills achieved greater academic success, as measured by their grades and test scores when compared to students who did not participate in such a program.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) advocated that schools were organized to support personalization and to establish a community of learners. In order for learning to occur, middle school students first needed to feel they belonged, and they needed adult guidance in navigating their social, personal, and academic development. In Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering's (2003) meta-analysis of classroom management research, the importance of student-teacher relationships was recorded. Fitting student-teacher relationships were recognized as a reason for the reduction in classroom disruptions and were correlated to gains in achievement and engagement in the classroom.

Goodenow's research (as cited in Jackson & Davis, 2000) examined the relationship of belonging beliefs with academic motivation and noted, "Students try harder and achieve at a higher level if they feel that their teacher is interested and supportive and that they belong to a group of peers and adults that encourages them to succeed and provides help when it is needed" (p. 122). Jackson and Davis (2000) observed that when students cared about the opinions of others toward them, they were often compelled to rise to the challenge of the high expectations set for student achievement and behavior. Research concluded that advisory addressed the developmental needs of early adolescents and was correlated to academic success (Blum, 2005; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000; National Middle School Association, 2003: Stevenson, 1998). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) acknowledged that the climate of middle schools

promotes students' personal growth and intellectual development and provides an

environment for close, trusting relations with adults and peers.

Shulkind (2008) examined the characteristics of advisors and advisory programs

that promoted connections and belonging and how students and advisors perceived the

impact of advisory on academic achievement. Shulkind found that advisories directly

improved students' academic achievement. Specifically, students and advisors perceived

that the following components of advisory led to improved academic performance: goal

setting, academic strategizing, and forming a supportive community of learners. In

addition, advisors reviewed their advisees' work and progress and conferenced with them

one-on-one. Shulkind's research also determined that "advisors and students assert that

the advisory program improves academic outcomes" (p. 151).

Adolescents' Connection to School

Advisory programs created the structure and climate to support learning for

adolescents and to connect students to school; this improved academic achievement.

According to R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009), "Eighty percent of

students who set goals achieve them" when advisors work with students on goal setting

during advisory. Foote (2008) investigated teacher perceptions of advisory programs as

they related to student motivation and achievement. Teachers involved in the study found

success when they examined and monitored student work from their classes, developed

trusting relationships with students, and connected with the student.

Maslow (1970) declared that belonging is a basic human need and is a foundation

for instituting middle school advisory programs. Belonging, the third rung on Maslow's

hierarchy of human needs, preceded self-esteem and self-actualization. Maslow claimed

that one can only progress on the hierarchy if and when the needs of the preceding levels

have been met. Sergiovanni (1994) expanded on Maslow's theory of belonging and

explored Durkheim's assertion that a basic human need to belong existed because

meaning is constructed by the connection to other people and identification with the

values of others. Sergiovanni concluded that community is a fundamental human need;

without it we become alienated from ourselves, others, and society.

Hirschi (as cited in Wong, 2005) suggested that individuals who developed a

strong bond to society, in terms of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief,

were more likely to conform. The closer the relationship between a person and his/her

significant others such as parents, peers, and teachers, the more sensitive he/she was to

their opinions and the less likely to make poor choices. According to Catalano, Haggerty,

Oesterle, Fleming, and Hawkins (2004), bonding to adults in school has shown an

increase in the development of good choices. Thus, healthy behaviors were promoted,

reducing risks and problems.

Jackson and Davis (2000) wrote, "For young adolescents, relationships with

adults form critical pathways for their learning; education 'happens' through

relationships" (p. 121). According to Galassi et al. (1998), middle school advisory

programs focused on "the fourth R," (p. 7) relationships, which was vital to a middle

school environment. When students had a close relationship to school, advisory programs

provided the structure for creating a school of belonging and connectedness that

supported early adolescents. Csikszentmihalyi (as cited in Armstrong, 2006) concluded

the following from his research on adolescents:

Most of the time, adolescents are either alone (26%) or with friends (34%) and classmates (19%). Very little time is spent in the company of adults. The typical American adolescent spends only about five minutes a day alone with his or her father-not nearly enough to transmit the wisdom and values that are necessary for the continuation of a civil society (p. 124).

Meier (2002) discussed the lack of meaningful time adults spent with adolescents. Too often students were disengaged from the adults in their community, "Including, absurdly the adults they encounter in school" (p 12). Students and teachers needed to be provided with the opportunity to interact with each other on a personal level. Meier (2002) argued that students do not know their teachers, and this has resulted in students not having the positive influence in their lives that an educator could be provide. One person serving as an advisor could be the resource needed to build a child's confidence, provide a feeling of safety, and give purpose to learning and achievement. "Exemplary middle schools assign students to homeroom teachers or advisor teachers" (Armstrong, 2006, p. 124).

Nichols (2008) explored students' belonging beliefs in a middle school and found when students felt a sense of belonging in school, they had higher expectations, efficacy, valuation for school, and goal setting. Literature addressing students' belonging and their connection to school suggested that positive perceptions were directly related to affirmative social and psychological orientations. Andrews, Caskey, and Anfara (2007) articulated that "relationships make or break the quality of education and the quality of everyday life in a school" (p. 2).

According to Jackson and Davis (2000), when students made a lasting connection with at least one adult, personal outcomes improved. Nichols' (2008) research on belonging beliefs in a middle school suggested that students attributed positive credence to the quality of their relationships with their teachers and peers. In addition, a significant adult who provided support and direction during difficult times in the student's life became an important link in helping the student avoid a variety of problems. These relationships connected students to teachers, students to students, and teachers to teachers.

The Carnegie Institute (1995) noted that advisories generated a controlled, structured group in a warm, caring, friendly environment, where teachers related to students on a variety of levels. Cole (1992) declared that advisory provided a structure when unexpected topics of significance needed to be addressed. The conversation can take place in small intimate groups where students have a high level of trust.

Middle school experts, Cole (1992), Cushman (1990), Jackson and Davis (2000), and James and Spradling (2002), indicated that advisory programs were the most commonly promoted structure for addressing the problem of school connectedness and supporting the development of positive student-teacher relationships. Advisory, strongly recommended by Jackson and Davis and more recently by NASSP (2006), provided a structure whereby every student was assigned to a teacher who was responsible for his or her academic, social, and emotional well-being over a long period of time. Cole, Cushman, Jackson and Davis, NASSP, and Stevenson, (1998) recognized this relationship as paramount because adolescents who achieved academically spent significant time in conversation with their parents and other adults. According to Esposito

and Curcio (2002), adolescents had an intense need to be part of a peer group. Advisory

programs provided a structure in which every student could participate in group activities

facilitated by an adult.

Advisory provided a place and structure for positive relationships to occur

between adolescents and a teacher. Galassi et al. (1998) agreed that the relationship

between advisees and advisors was enriched by the emotional involvement that occurred

during advisory. Shulkind (2008) acknowledged that advisory programs fostered

connectedness when advisors cared about their advisees, closely monitored their

advisees' academic progress, helped solve problems, and gave advice.

The Wingspread Declaration (2004) research concluded that students who felt

connected to school were more apt to do well academically. The declaration stated,

"School connection is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their

learning as well as about them as individuals" (p. 233). The interdisciplinary group of

education leaders involved with the Wingspread Declaration reported critical

requirements that should be instituted for students to feel connected. Students need to

have experienced positive relationships with adults, and schools should ensure that every

student has a close relationship with at least one supportive adult.

The Wingspread Declaration (2004) cited strong scientific evidence that revealed

educational motivation, classroom engagement, and improved school attendance were

direct results of students feeling connected to school. Thus, these factors increased

student achievement. Students who excelled and were connected to school were less

likely to disrupt the educational process, engage in school violence, exhibit emotional

distress, or use alcohol and tobacco. If a crisis affected a school, the advisory group

provided a safe place where students already belonged and were with an adult they

trusted. Knowles and Brown (2000) determined

> Advisory groups can provide more than a safe haven in a crisis. The presence of
>
> an advisory program can in fact, help to stem such violence. We will see violence
>
> decrease when all children feel a part of a group and feel valued and wanted. (p.
>
> 155)

Alder (2002), Klem and Connell (2004), McNeely and Falci (2004), and

Rubenstein (1994) noted that supportive and caring relationships at school promoted

academic motivation among adolescents. Adolescents, who perceived that their teachers

cared about them personally and cared about their learning, were more likely to be

engaged in school and to do better academically. According to NMSA (1995), the

obligation of a developmentally responsive middle level school is to provide "a

continuity of caring that extends over the student's entire middle level experience so that

no student is neglected" (p. 17). An advisory program facilitated the permanence of

caring.

Advisors

George and Alexander (1993), NASSP (2006), NMSA (2003), Spear (2005), and

R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) recognized that all teachers

should be assigned to small groups of students. This allowed for advisory groups to have

a more reasonable advisor-advisee ratio. Cole (1992) identified advisors as teachers,

counselors, administrators, librarians, special education teachers, part-time staff, and

occasionally non-professional staff. R. Spear (personal communication, February 17,

2009) encouraged as many employees as possible to serve as advisors. Members of the

custodial staff served as advisors and had just as much impact on the adolescent as a

certified teacher. Poliner and Lieber (2004) contended that advisors can be "faculty,

administrators, counselors, librarians, coaches, aides, coordinators, secretaries, and

custodians" (p. 45). Cole noted in order for part-time staff to serve in an advisory role,

they were partnered will full-time staff members and shared an advisory group. This

allowed students to have access to one of the adults all day.

According to Poliner and Lieber (2004) and R. Spear (personal communication,

February 17, 2009) all adults involved in the school who served as advisors provided the

opportunity for relationships to be developed, which enhanced the other roles in which

the adults served. Counselors, in particular, had many options during advisory time.

Counselors could have had an advisory group or served in the following capacities:

teaching specific lessons to advisory groups, helping with extenuating circumstances

such as death or illness, or helping advisors with group dynamics when the advisor did

not feel at ease with an issue. Myrick et al. (1990) and R. Spear (personal

communication, February 17, 2009) were in agreement not to involve the building

principal and one counselor; they were expected to be available to attend to needs that

arose. Administrators were charged to select advisors based on personal characteristics,

availability during the school day on a regular basis, and a person's willingness to serve

in the role of advisor.

According to McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins (as cited in Galassi et al., 1998),

results from a random sampling conducted in 1993 from 1,798 middle schools on

advisory revealed that all professional staff served as advisors in 56% of the schools. The

same data indicated, "With respect to staff other than classroom teachers, resource

teachers (56%), counselors (39%), media specialists (36%), and administrators (27%)

most commonly served as advisors in all schools surveyed with similar percentages as

evidenced for 6 - 8 schools" (p. 42). NMSA (2003) portrayed the advisor as "the primary

liaison between the school and family [who] often initiates contact with parents,

providing pertinent information about the student's program and progress, as well as

being ready to receive calls from any parent with a concern" (p. 17).

Five characteristics of effective advisors noted by George and Bushnell (as cited

in Galassi et al., 1998) are listed below:

1. They care about the students in their advisory group and demonstrate that

   care in a variety of ways;

2. they are able to relate to the individuality of various advisees;

3. they are available to their advisees;

4. they have a positive attitude toward advisement, and

5. they have their own unique styles of advisement (p. 42).

Hoversten, Doda, and Lounsbury (1991) acknowledged, "The more the advisor

can become a regular member of the group sharing appropriate activities, the better. The

advisor must not, of course, overdo involvement and dominate, but establishing an

atmosphere of relative intimacy is essential" (p.7). Cole (1992) noted that the advisor

became involved as a participant, versus a person in charge of the class.

Cole (1992) acknowledged that a teacher serving as an advisor did not perform

the same role as the classroom teacher. Those adults who best served young adolescents

as advisors extended themselves and were willing to be available to students when they

needed an advocate, a friend, and/or a compassionate listener. Poliner and Lieber (2004)

found that the role of the advisor was less formal versus that of the teacher, who served in

a professional role as an educator of academic content.

Shulkind's (2008) research suggested three common attributes of strong advisors:

emphasis on academic supervision, academic problem solving, and personal problem

solving. Petritz (2004) examined middle school advisory programs by studying the

teachers' experience when implementing an advisory program. Petritz also found that the

"best teacher-advisors perceive themselves as effective, develop positive relationships

with their advisees, care about their advisees, communicate with their advisees, and are

involved with each of their advisees" (p. 8).

Niska (2008) and Spear (2005) recommended that advisors view their role as a

facilitator of learning, not as one who disseminated knowledge as if performing in the

role of the classroom teacher. According to Spear (2005) advisors should be a role

models who provide guidance, not play the role of a parent or a traditional teacher.

Advisees needed a place to feel welcomed and risk-free, where their ideas and concepts

could be explored. Advisors needed to keep students on track and facilitate discussions or

activities that enhanced the growth of everyone. It was important that the advisor, serving

as a facilitator, could model group rules and procedures as well as monitor them.

According to Petritz (2004), teachers reported that students rose to the level of high

expectations when advisors positively impacted their lives.

Focus and Characteristics of Advisories

Niska (2008) observed that the time students spent in advisory promoted a

student's feeling of belonging to a group. The intent of advisory was to be purposeful and

individualized. Galassi et al. (1998) and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17,

2009) agreed that academic advisory focused on meeting the cognitive educational needs

that improve student achievement such as study skills, goal setting, and self-observation.

Another program type was administrative, which consisted of taking attendance, reading

the daily school announcements, and passing out papers (Galassi, et al.).

Although the primary focus of advisory was the relationship between the advisees

and advisor, specific themes with activities served as approaches to obtain the desired

relationship. Kellough and Kellough (2008) and Spear (2005) noted nine themes that

should be addressed during advisory: (a) social relationships, (b) transitions, (c) health

education, (d) emotional development, (e) organizational skills, (f) study skills, (g)

problem solving, (h) decision making, and (i) violence prevention.

Clark and Clark (1994) and Cole (1992) affirmed that time spent in an advisory

program could focus on community service projects, special interest courses, and

assemblies. Clark and Clark and R. Spear, (personal communication, February 17, 2009)

and Spear (2007) agreed that advisory provided a small group setting which allowed

young adolescents to build positive self-esteem, develop social skills, embrace diversity,

build self- awareness, and become active in school community activities. Healy and Flint-

Ferguson (2006) and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) agreed that

character education themes such as respect, friendship, citizenship, and compassion could

be discussed during advisory.

Healy and Flint-Ferguson (2006) noted the focus of two schools that had

established advisory programs. Gilmanton School in Gilmanton, New Hampshire,

focused on helping students with organizational skills. The advisors conducted frequent

locker searches and helped students maintain a clean backpack. Epping Middle School in

Epping, Ohio, concentrated on helping students understand themselves as learners. The advisors utilized multiple intelligence inventories, learning styles surveys, and assessments to help students recognize their abilities. Advisors then guided students in thinking of careers that met their talents.

Knowles and Brown (2000) noted that advisors and administrators who worked in tandem with students developed the effective advisory program for the school, making changes as necessary to meet the needs of those involved. NMSA (2002) noted that the best advisory programs were constructed by teachers and students with the most successful advisories being student driven. Allowing students to set guidelines and expectations and lead some of the activities made a positive impact on their leadership and communication skills. NMSA (2002) formulated ten objectives of an advisory period:

- Provide an environment and activities that will foster bonding within an advisory group so that students feel accepted and valued by teachers and peers.

- Help students cope with academic concerns and set goals to facilitate positive school experiences

- Give students avenues to discover their uniqueness so that they can come to appreciate the many differences among people.

- Help students develop positive relationships through experiences that explore group dynamics.

- Promote critical thinking skills through discussion and problem solving activities so that students can learn to make responsible choices.

- Develop listening skills and an understanding of the road blocks that hinder effective communication.

- Build self esteem in students so that they can become confident, capable, young people who accept responsibility for their actions.

- Heighten student awareness of good citizenship through providing opportunities for meaningful contributions to their school community.

- Provide opportunities for extensive student involvement through shared decision making.

- Improve home/school communication and relationships (p. 2).

Through a case study approach, Cook (2005) studied the practices, strategies, and approaches of middle school teachers who were experienced at implementing eight functions of advisory everyday in all their classes. The eight functions identified by Cook are listed below:

A. Promote a safe, nurturing classroom environment

B. Help develop student self-awareness, self-respect, and self-discipline

C. Facilitate positive interaction between students and teachers

D. Establish a learning community that emphasizes communication

E. Provide an adult advocate for every child

F. Engage students in moral development opportunities

G. Foster interpersonal competence among students

H. Help students develop pertinent life skills—critical thinking, problem solving, decision making (p. 7-8).

Cook's (2005) study also determined how students responded to the practices and how climate and demographics impacted the implementation of advisory. The data was collected by the following means: classroom observations, teacher interviews, student interviews, and archival data. The data revealed that the different functions of advisory were implemented through four components of teaching which included relationships, teaching strategies and activities, classroom resources, and classroom democracy.

In addition, the research concluded that students were positively impacted when adults developed relationships with them in the following ways: (a) engaged in personal conversation; (b) took time to learn about individual students; (c) shared personal information with students; (d) emphasized that they were always willing to help students, which allowed the infusion of promoting a safe, nurturing classroom environment; and (e) emphasized a learning community, which focused on communication. Specific teaching strategies and activities that helped incorporate the functions of advisory were team building activities, group discussions, group projects and presentations, current event activities, role playing, and journal writing. According to Cook (2005), the activities related to self-awareness, self-respect, self-discipline, moral development, building community, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making.

Cole (1992) identified four characteristics essential to an advisory program. First, the advisors and advisees needed to be aware of the time scheduled. Second, the activities were to be well planned, reflecting the needs of middle school students. Third, the program was appropriate and feasible within the context of the school, and the goals were reflective of the community in which the advisors served. Fourth, a supportive administration and faculty was critical. This signified a team effort among everyone.

Galassi et al. (1998) developed an advisory typology that included six types of programs: (a) advocacy, (b) community, (c) skills, (d) invigoration, (e) academic, and (f) administrative. Advocacy, community, and invigoration addressed the affective needs of middle school students. The managerial needs were addressed by administrative advisory and the skills program addressed both the affective and the cognitive. Advocacy advisories emphasized the adult and individual student relationships. It was important that advisors got to know each student well and served as the student's advocate. The community advisory program focused on social or belonging needs. This advisory emphasized relationship building within a small peer group that fostered a sense of family. Prominence was placed on an advisory name, song, logo, and service project. The skills based advisory program provided developmental guidance, focusing on life skills and the relationship between academics and future success. Invigoration programs provided time for informal communication among the group of students and between the advisor and advisees.

Galassi et al. (1998) noted that planning for advisory was as important as preparing for any content specific class. The advisors must facilitate the activities with enthusiasm and conviction. It was important that advisory sessions were well planned with activities that provided the advisor and advisees with increased knowledge and awareness. Advocacy articulated the profound relationship between middle level educators and the early adolescents they influenced. Knowles and Brown (2000) noted that "advisors must be willing to develop a relationship with students different from the ones they experience as a regular classroom teacher—one characterized by caring, not authoritarianism" (p. 153).

Advisory Themes and Activities

Jackson and Davis (2000) ascertained that the array of middle school advisory

topics should include (a) interpersonal issues, (b) health concerns, (c) academics, (d)

personal development, (e) social relationships, (f) emotional strength, (g) social skills, (h)

personal acceptance, and (i) affirmation. Cole (1992) articulated that the focus of an

advisory program should encompass the developmental characteristics of middle school

students. George and Alexander (1993), Spear (2005), and Weller (2004) concluded that

the school's overall theme should be the focus of an advisory program. Cole suggested

advisory topics should coincide with the physical, moral, social, and emotional

development of young adolescents. Cole further advised that each day of the week should

have a specific focus such as relationship building (twice a week), intramurals, silent

reading, tutorial, or independent study.

Spear (2005) suggested the following advisory themes. (a) getting better at

learning, (b) getting acquainted with the schools, (c) learning strategies and study skills,

(d) learning styles and multiple intelligences, (e) self-esteem, (f) responsibility, (g)

problem solving, (h) decision making, (i) goal setting, (j) career planning, and (k) service

learning. Spear further recommended advisory category topics: (a) goal setting, (b)

orientation for students, (c) parent involvement, (d) advisory conferences regarding

grades, (e) organizational skills, (f) study and skill reinforcement, (g) build group

identity, and (h) belonging. In addition, R. Spear (personal communication, February 17,

2009) specified that advisory topics for each grade level should be identified.

Myrick et al. (as cited in, Galassi et al., 1998) identified unit topics for a middle

school advisory program:

1. understanding the school environment.

2. understanding self and others,

3. understanding attitudes and behaviors.

4. decision making and problem solving,

5. interpersonal skills and communication skills,

6. school success skills,

7. career awareness and educational planning, and

8. community pride and involvement. (p. 22-23)

Galassi et al. (1998) noted that most advisory programs were developed to engage adults and students in meaningful relationships. However, advisory could be designated for other reasons based on the needs of the individual school. Possible emphases for advisory programs were advocacy emphasis, community focus, study skills, invigoration type, academic advisory, and administrative emphasis. Successful advisory programs included planned and varied group activities for the advisees and advisor to build relationships and discuss topics of importance to them.

Weller (2004) suggested the following topics for students in grades six through eight: (a) study and research skills; (b) time management; (c) resolving conflict; (d) responsibilities of a being a team member; (e) career opportunities; (f) academic responsibility; (g) parenting and child care responsibilities; and (h) middle school goals and citizenship.

Cole (1992) noted that middle school advisory programs often addressed the personal concerns of students. The young adolescents' societal concerns have included topics that highly interested middle school students. Issues such as divorce, remarriage,

blended families, substance abuse, peer influence, cultural diversity, and handicapping conditions have been noted as topics that can be integrated into advisory time. Cole further recognized that appreciating differences in people and accepting individuals for who they are through a structured conversation such as a protocol can be led through the guidance of an advisor.

Fun at school without a connection to instruction has been considered a need for middle school students. Glasser (as cited in Galassi et al., 1998) maintained that students worked harder and were happier when their basic needs were satisfied, such as "survival, belonging, power (sense of importance, of stature, of being considered by others), freedom, and fun" (p. 51). Jackson and Davis (2000) noted that when students had the opportunity to be part of the advisory planning session, the time was often more meaningful and beneficial. While the middle school advisory groups addressed the belonging and power needs of adolescents, specific activities attended to adolescents' needs for fun and freedom. These activities could be determined by the advisees and the advisor collectively. George and Bushnell's research (as cited in Galassi et al., 1998) concluded that advisees enjoyed an invigorative advisory that included fun activities that were advocated by advisors. Examples of fun activities included birthday celebrations, holiday recognition, discussions surrounding everyday problems and concerns, service learning, and games.

Spear (2005) recommended that the teacher, counselor, or advisory leadership team could coordinate the advisory curriculum, horizontally and vertically. Advisors should have the flexibility to adjust plans to meet the needs of the advisees even with a recommended curriculum. Healy (2005), Spear 2005, R. Spear (personal communication,

February 17, 2009), and Weller (2004) agreed that a fundamental point to advisory was to allow teachers to utilize their talents, creativity, and judgment for the well being of their advisory groups.

Scheduling

The scheduling of students into advisory programs has been approached in a variety of ways. Myrick et al. (1990) noted that one method employed when assigning students to advisory was to give students independence by allowing them to meet with their advisors during registration and have input in their schedules. Healy and Flint-Ferguson (2006) suggested that students be assigned by administrators or by teachers to those teachers in the grade assigned to advisors by school staff, a specific process was to be implemented and followed by all personnel involved.

James and Spradling (2002) and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) noted the importance of looking at the academic abilities, personalities, special interests, and gender of the students who were assigned to each advisor. This has aided in the success of the targeted group. According to R. Spear (2009) sixth grade teachers should be allowed to create the advisory lists for the seventh grade teachers and the seventh grade teachers should carefully match students with teachers for eighth grade. This process has been successful when teachers have agreed to norms for placement. The lists were completed after each advisor was pleased with each list and in favor of facilitating any group.

Poliner and Lieber (2004) supported that schools with a specified and strong content focus for the advisory period were more successful scheduling students from the same grade level in advisory groups. R. Spear (personal communication, February 17,

2009) recommended that advisors remain within the same grade level until they were

comfortable with the program. Atkins and DeBoard, (2003) recommended that advisors

with single grade advisory groups plan events with another grade level advisory group.

Throughout the year, the two advisory groups would plan activities such as breakfast,

games, and special surprises for the other. This type of interaction has resulted in stronger

relationships, fostered friendships, and decreased harassment between the grade levels.

Poliner and Lieber (2004) noted that schools with a strong focus in school-wide

community building found value and success in assigning students across grade levels to

an advisory. Spear (2005) and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009)

acknowledged that multiage groups have cultivated opportunities for closer relationships

among the students and between the advisor and advisees. In the multiage model, sixth

graders replaced the eighth graders, joining a group that had been intact. Spear (2005)

and R. Spear (2009) acknowledged that this structure stimulated peer counseling and

mentoring.

Middle school students who participated in Ziegler and Mulhall's research (as

cited in Galassi et al., 1998) reported positive attributes after being assigned to advisors

in multiage groups. Participants enjoyed getting to know other peers not in their grade

level and felt an increase in their sense of belonging to the entire school community

rather than a connection to one grade level. Poliner and Lieber (2004) contended that

combining the grade levels created an opportunity for older students to give advice to

younger students, advice that students may not accept from an adult such as passing on

the culture of the school and modeling what to expect in the future years.

James and Spradling (2002) and Myrick et al. (1990) determined that some schools reassigned students to advisors each school year in hopes that students developed trusting relationships with more students and adults during their tenure in middle school. Healy and Flint-Ferguson (2006) recognized that to make this structure simplistic, the assignments were done randomly, via a computer program. Gill and Read (as cited in Galassi et al., 1998) noted that fifteen nationally recognized experts in middle level education promoted the configuration that advisors remained with their advisees for the students' tenure at the school. Myrick et al. (1990) ascertained that advisees assigned to the same advisor during the three years of middle school resulted in the group developing a more trusting relationship. According to Armstrong (2006), advisors at Abraham Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida, worked with their advisees for the entire three years of middle school. The adults mentored the students, served as their adult advocates, and started each day with rituals such as sharing.

Student Benefits

According to The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), advisories provided middle level students with guidance and monitoring. An important aspect of learning communities was that "small groups of advisories…ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, p. 9). Clark and Clark (1994) ascertained that advisory gave students a better sense of self-worth and a feeling of control and self-directedness over decisions. "One of the strengths of advisory has been its flexibility as a forum where the perceived needs of young adolescents and the social issues affecting them could be addressed" (Galassi et al., 1998, p. 62).

Connors (as cited in Anfara, 2006b) identified six benefits to an advisory program as it pertained to students: (a) helped students grow emotionally and socially, (b) contributed to a positive school climate, (c) helped students learn about school and getting along with their peers, (d) helped students develop a sense of positive self worth, (e) helped acquire and improve the habits and attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship, and (f) enhanced teacher-student relationships.

MacLaury and Gatz (2002) examined the impact advisories had when led by staff members who were trained in group facilitation. It was found that students who participated in an advisory group with an advisor who was trained were more likely to talk with their advisor to receive emotional support. The data also suggested that an improvement in students' behavior was recognized, as compared to the control group. Such a perception not only addressed current behavior, but reflected help to establish future expectations.

Putbrese (1989) reported results from 3,400 returned surveys from seventh graders around the United States. According to these students, advisory programs

- Improve student-teacher relationships
- Give students a feeling of more control over decisions
- Promote an atmosphere of equality
- Improve the sharing of feelings among students
- Reduce the incidence of smoking and alcohol use (as cited in Spear, 2005, p. 15).

In an inclusive study, Feiner, Kasak, Mulhall, and Floweres (as cited in Spear, 2005) reported the impact of advisory when advisors and advisees met at least five times

a week for 20 minutes or more, compared to adolescents who were not a part of an advisory program. The following results were noted:

- Students had lower ratings of school and academic daily stresses and social and peer daily stress.

- Students had lower reports of depression, anxiety, and behavior problems.

- Students had higher reports of academic efficacy, using distraction and refocusing coping practices, and using problem-solving coping practices (p. 15).

Neilson (as cited in Anfara, 2006a) researched the impact of the Caring, Learning, Understanding, Exploring (CLUE) program on sixth and seventh grade students. The sixth grade CLUE program focused on study skills, organization, and decision making. The sixth graders expressed that the program helped them set goals and be more responsible. The seventh grade CLUE program highlighted relationship building skills and career choices. The students indicated that CLUE helped them resolve conflicts with others (Anfara, 2006a).

McKenzie (2005) implemented and evaluated the effect of an advisory program. The participants in the research were seventh and eighth grade students and teachers. McKenzie (2005) concluded that the students had a more positive attitude and better attendance after being part of an advisory. Student improvement was also noted in the areas of grades and behavior but not enough to be considered statistically significant.

Galassi et al. (1998) reported, "Students are more likely to feel comfortable discussing such matters of personal concern with a teacher and peers they see frequently in a forum like that provided in advisory time" (p. 11). According to Galassi et al., early

adolescents benefited from being a part of a small group of peers with an adult who developed a positive rapport with them and genuinely cared for their personal, social, academic, and emotional well being. Anfara and Brown (2001) researched six middle schools to understand the nature of advisory programs and how they contributed to a sense of community. Their research resulted in positive comments from students. One student reported the following:

> I think it's a really good program just because it's not like [*sic*] a stressful
>
> subject. You got to just sort [*sic*] let go and just be yourself during the day
>
> and just talk to your teachers and get to know them better and have them
>
> get to know you. (p. 19)

Another student responded, "I like it cause [*sic*] she would talk to me about doing better. I got better in [*sic*], like my behavior and uhm...yeah [*sic*], I am much better now" (p. 21).

Advisor Benefits

It was found that advisory programs were beneficial to teachers and counselors as well as students. Clark and Clark (1994) and Weller (2004) noted that advisors had the opportunity to know students and parents on a more personal level, which helped to establish a better rapport between the home and school. The established relationship encouraged advisors to participate in more social and intramural activities. It was determined that advisory permitted teachers to build closer relationships with students, creating a more personal connection. Working as an advisor also provided the opportunity to work with a small group of students that could impact their academic and personal growth and help them to mature socially and emotionally. Another benefit as

posited by Weller (2004) was "getting personal satisfaction from students looking to them as a friend, confidant, and advocate" (p. 238).

Ziegler and Mulhall's research on advisory (as cited in Spear, 2005) found that after a school's first year of implementation, the teachers who served as advisors were pleased with the outcomes. The teachers reported that the students were better behaved, more cooperative, and felt a better sense of community. In addition, tardiness and absences decreased, and the advisors guided their advisees in more academic conversations due to frequent requests from students. Felner et al.'s research on advisory (as cited in Spear, 2005) determined that teachers rated the following as very positive:

- Overall positive school work climate

- Staff commitment as part of the school work climate

- A personal commitment to the middle school concept

- Higher satisfaction ratings with overall satisfaction, intrinsic rewards, student behavior, and parent and community support and involvement. (p. 15)

Healy and Flint-Ferguson's (2006) evaluation of advisory indicated that teachers felt positively about the following: getting to know students, hearing their issues and perspectives, engaging in non curricular topics, and providing support. It was reported that teachers needed advisory as much as students to satisfy their need to make noteworthy differences in the lives of their students. George and Alexander (1993) mentioned that often the routines of the classroom made it difficult for teachers to form meaningful relationships with students; therefore, advisory was the means to getting to know a group of students in a consequential manner.

Petritz (2004) examined the experiences of middle school teacher advisors after implementing an effective advisory program. The teacher advisors perceived themselves as completing the following actions: developed positive relationships with their advisees, communicated with their advisees, involved with each advisee, and cared about each advisee. The testimonies of the advisors in Petritz's study supported the belief that advisees would work to attain their greatest potential when they had advisors who made an effort to positively impact their lives.

Anfara and Brown's research (2001) of six middle schools to understand and describe the nature of advisory programs and how they contribute to a sense of community resulted in the following positive comments from advisors:

It is an opportunity for us to get to know the children so that if there are problems somewhere along the line, we can help them. Our role is to make school easier for the children. I'd like to think that it makes a difference. I'd like to hope that it does- that we are helping them to be kinder and gentler to each other. I see it more as just a family-like type of atmosphere where there's somebody that you can go to if you're having a problem and you're struggling (p. 15).

Poliner and Lieber (2004) recorded that advisory created the time and structure to help students develop communication and organizational skills which positively impact all teachers during academic time. In addition, being an advisor could have had indirect benefits for teachers. "It is not uncommon for teachers to develop new skills for facilitating discussions, increase their commitment to and skills for personalizing learning, and even change their understanding of their own authority" (Poliner & Lieber, p. 19).

Frequency, Size, Length, and Time of Day

Knowles and Brown (2000) noted that the frequency of advisory, the size of the ckass, the length of advisory, and the time of day of the advisory had a direct impact on the overall effectiveness of a school's advisory program and in meeting students' needs. The school's goals, time needed, and the frequency of the advisory meetings should be considered when planning for advisory groups. In some schools, advisory time has been incorporated into the daily schedule with a specified amount of time allotted. Myrick et al. (1990) determined that scheduled time for advisory each day was ideal; this would permit the teacher and students more opportunities to build relationships. Weller (2004) advocated that daily sessions provided the opportunity for students to interact in a safe setting where thoughts, opinions, and solutions could be explored. McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins (as citied in Galassi et al., 1998) reported survey results from 1,798 schools which concluded that the most prevalent practice for advisory was scheduling daily meeting time; 63% of the schools reported this structure. Fourteen percent of the schools reported meeting once a week.

Burkhardt and Kane, (2005) found that 10 to 12 students is the ideal number of advisees for an advisory group to be effective. Anfara (2006b), Poliner and Lieber (2004), Spear (2005), and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) recommended 10 to 20 students per advisory, which would allow the advisor time to provide more personalized support. Galassi et al. (1998) recommended that an advisory program that emphasizing individualized relationships with advisees be limited to 12 to 18 students, which allowed small groups of students to work together.

McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins's report (as cited in Galassi et al., 1998) indicated that the most common advisory length was 16 - 30 minutes, which was reported by 65% of the schools. George and Alexander (1993) noted

> For programs that meet daily with the same group of students, thirty minutes
>
> seems about right. Three quarters of an hour is too long for most of the activities
>
> that one would expect to be conducted during advisor-advisee programs, and less
>
> than twenty minutes seems too short and is likely to turn into a homeroom where
>
> little else than attendance is taken and announcements are accomplished. (p. 227)

James (as cited in MacLaury, 2002) advised that the time scheduled for advisory sessions should be twice the number of students in the class. Spear (2007) and R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) noted that advisory sessions that met the needs of the advisees were held 20 - 30 minutes daily. Anfara (2006b) recommended that the length of advisory meetings be an uninterrupted 20 – 40 minutes. Knowles and Brown (2000) posited that "periods of less than 15 minutes may not provide adequate opportunity to engage in conversations that address students' social and emotional needs" (p. 152).

Weller (2004) supported another format for advisory, which was a ten minute period at the beginning of each day which would be used for administrative purposes, and an extended period twice a week for thirty or forty minutes. Cole (1992) noted that the longer sessions allowed for relationship building and other goals of the school's advisory program. It has been noted that the time of day for advisory varied. Advisory scheduled at the beginning of the day helped students prepare for the day with peers and an adult who cared for them. R. Spear (personal communication, February 17, 2009) noted that advisory held at the beginning of the day set the tone for the day and allowed advisees to

begin in a safe environment by addressing any evening or morning issues that could

possibly be disruptive to the school day. Poliner and Lieber (2004) contended that

advisory scheduled at the end of the day provided students a structure to ensure that they

had their homework and were prepared for the next day. "Special all-day advisory groups

once per term for service projects or off-campus community building" (Poliner & Lieber,

p. 51) is another way to facilitate time in advisory groups.

Learning Theories for Teaching Adult Learners

    To provide information on advisory for staff members during professional

development, theories for teaching adult learners were explored. Leonard (2002),

McGonigal (2005), and Ozuah (2005) concurred that the constructivist theory was the

learning theory to employ when teaching adult learners. The andragogy learning theory

and the transformative learning theory both were under the umbrella of constructivism.

Ozuah noted that the implementation of the andragogy and transformative theories

employed elements of other learning theories: behavioral theory, cognitive theory,

humanistic theory, and developmental theory.

    The constructivist theory addressed the adult learners' purpose for acquiring new

knowledge. Ozuah (2005) noted that constructivism focused on a shared learning

environment and knowledge gained with the adult learner having an impact on what and

how they learn. Ozuah defined the constructivist theory as, "The facilitator develops the

objectives along with the learners and grounds the learning in practical experiences.

Usually the instructor would probe for hypotheses to facilitate the learning process" (p.

85).

Andragogy Learning Theory

Defining andragogy. Andragogy, a paradigm for teaching adults, was defined as "the art and science of helping adult learners" (Merriam, 2001, p. 5). Carlson (as cited in Bash, 2003) noted that Knowles, the pioneer of andragogy in the United States, defined andragogy as "an emerging technology for adult learning" (p. 27). Bash (2003) wrote "From a learning prospective, research has confirmed that proper andragogy (reaching principles for the adult learner) is one way to optimize instruction for adults" (p. 137).

Andragogy has been described as a set of guidelines (Merriam, 2001), a philosophy (Pratt, 1988), a set of assumptions (Brookfield. 1986), and a theory (Knowles & Associates, 1984). "The disparity of these positions is indicative of the perplexing nature of the field of adult learning, but regardless of what it is called, it is an honest attempt to focus on the learner" (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 2005, p. 1). Andragogy has been referred to as a constructivist theory in that it is focused on the learners' experiences, self-directedness, and prior knowledge with the learners taking ownership and initiative in constructing purposeful knowledge for their learning (Knowles & Associates, 1984; Leonard, 2002). Although the term *andragogik* originated in 1833 when Alexander Kapp coined the term to describe the educational teachings of Plato and other ancient historical personalities (Knowles et al.), Ozuah (2005) noted that the term *andragogy* did not become rooted in the educational terminology until Lindeman began to write extensively about adult learners in 1926.

Knowles and Associates (1984) and Knowles et al. (2005) acknowledged that in 1967, Savicevic, an adult educator from Yugoslavia, was the first to introduce the term andragogy and its concept to the United States. Knowles and Associates credited

Savicevic with the explanation that andragogy, a term paralleling pedagogy, was a "label for the growing body of knowledge and technology in regard to adult learners" (p. 6). Knowles and Associates visualized andragogy as being on a continuum with pedagogy ranging from the facilitator directing instruction to the learner's self-directedness learning.

History of andragogy. Leonard (2002) noted that Lindeman believed that the adult learners' life experiences and the collaboration between the facilitator and the adult learners were valued criteria in the education process The National Staff Development Council's [NSDC; n.d.] belief statement concurred with Lindeman (as cited in Mizell, 2008) that the "schools' most complex problems are best solved by educators collaborating and learning together" (p. 2). In the late 1960s, Knowles and Associates (1984) expanded on Lindeman's belief and began extensive work in the development of a new perception about adult learners.

Fogarty and Pete (2007) noted that Knowles's belief that adult learning differed from pedagogy, the theory of teaching children, has had a great effect in the field of professional learning. Houle and Tough (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) paralleled andragogy to the cognitive, social, and developmental aspects of the adult learner. Houle's 1961 investigation that focused on the reasons adult learners engaged in continuing education found that adult learners' focus was on the teaching-learning conditions (as cited in Knowles et al.). As a result of Houle's findings, adult learners were categorized into three groups: (a) goal-oriented learners, the cognitive factor of the learners' need or interest; (b) activity-oriented learners, the learners' social and human relationships; and (c) learning-oriented learners, the educational desire of the learners.

Andragogical assumptions. Knowles's continued study of adult learning led to a transformation in his thinking, which resulted in six andragogical assumptions (Knowles et al., 2005). By the 1980s, Knowles and Associates (1984) had organized the adult learners and their learning into a "systematic framework of assumptions, principles, and strategies" (p. 7). First, Knowles et al. presented four assumptions then later expanded their list to six definitive assumptions: (a) need to know, (b) learner's self-concept, (c) learner's experience, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learn, and (f) motivation. Motivation was added to the end of the list in 1984 then later the need to know assumption was added and placed at the beginning of the list. No explicit reason was given for the order of the six assumptions (Knowles et al.).

Knowles (1980) asserted that "the primary mission of education is to help individuals satisfy their needs and achieve their goals" (p. 27). Knowles and Brown (2000) noted that adult learners need to know the why, what, and how of learning before adventuring into the learning process. Ozuah (2005) supported the thinking that adults have an inner desire to understand the use and value of information they are given before accepting the learning. Fogarty and Pete (2007) noted that the adult learner expended lots of energy and time seeking to understand the personal value of the new learning and the benefits from learning and/or the consequence of not learning. Knowles (1980) noted that one of the functions of a professional development facilitator was to create an environment that supported the learners in discovering their need to know.

Knowles et al. (2005), Leonard (2002), and Merriam (2001) agreed that the adult learner's maturation development and self-concept caused the adult learner to become autonomous or self-directed, which produced a need for responsible and active

involvement in decisions that affected their lives. Mazurkiewicz (2003) ascertained that when learners attached their own meaning to new knowledge, true learning occurred. Merriam and Clark (2006) noted that "learning connected to development is likely to be embedded in the life experiences of adults and intricately related to the context of adult life" (p. 30). Knowles and Associates (1984) and Vella (2002) expressed that the educational environment conducive to learning for adults encouraged dialogue. Knowles and Associates also noted that when the climate was physically and psychologically fitting, adult learners gained a feeling of acceptance, respect, and support along with a spirit of joint learning between the learner and facilitator.

Knowles and Associates (1984) further acknowledged that if facilitators supported the adult learner in becoming open-minded to the experiences of others and solicited sharing of positive experiences of learners from different cultures, it would be beneficial to all. Fogarty and Pete (2007) recognized that when adult learners saw their need of self-direction unfilled, they would often withdraw from the learning program. Knowles et al. (2005) suggested that to avoid high drop out rates, it was critical that the facilitator help adult learners transition from the role of the dependent learners to self-directing learners.

Knowles and Associates (1984) recognized that the learner's experience was the most valued resource. Knowles and Associates, Knowles et al. (2005), Merriam (2001), and Ozuah (2005) agreed that adult learners brought to the educational setting a multitude of varied learning styles, needs, interests, goals and a reservoir of diverse and heterogeneous individual experiences that were valued learning resources. Bash (2003) concurred that facilitators should be responsive to the learners' personal histories and

both common and diverse cultures. Knowles and Associates, Knowles et al., Merriam, Ozuah, and Vella (2002) agreed that engagement in group discussions encouraged adult learners to share their life experiences and perspectives in the learning process. Knowles and Knowles et al. further noted that collaborative assignments that incorporated heterogeneity and the expertise of peer learners were needed. Knowles et al. stated that when an adult's "experiences are ignored or devalued, adults will perceive this as rejecting not only their experiences, but rejecting themselves as persons" (p. 67). Andragogy proposed that reality circumstances connected to life tasks were the most significant, contextual experiences.

Fogarty and Pete (2007) wrote, "Readiness to learn is a matter of adults having more psychic energy around goals that were present-focused and satisfy current needs than goals that are future-focused and based on acquiring knowledge" (p. 94). Merriam (2001) found that learning needs were closely connected to changing social roles. Merriam and Clark (2006) noted that "learning in adulthood is shaped in part by the social context of the learner" (p. 31). Knowles and Brown (2000) and Ozuah (2005) agreed that when topics were relevant to the adult learners' life situations, they were more interested in acquiring the knowledge. Knowles et al. (2005) indicated that timing was essential to a learner's readiness to learn. Timing of the learning experiences was in direct correlation with the developmental task, although the facilitator may need to stimulate readiness through various techniques such as simulation exercises.

Knowles and Associates (1984), Knowles et al. (2005), and Ozuah (2005) affirmed that adult learners were self-centered in their point of reference or orientation to learning, generally engaging in learning when it was applicable to their personal

situations. Knowles (1980) also acknowledged that adult learners are more interested in problem-centered learning as opposed to subjects. When planning a curriculum for adult learners, subjects or topics narrowed to specifics was what the adult learner wanted. Generalized subjects were considered too broad, containing unneeded information for their repertoire of knowledge. Fogarty and Pete (2007) noted that adults approached new learning with a sense of urgency with the expectation of using the new knowledge in the near future, if not immediately.

Knowles et al.'s (2005) research revealed that motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic, was one of the key assumptions. While adult learners were stimulated by extrinsic motivators such as salaries and better jobs, internal pressures such as job satisfaction, self-esteem, and the quality of life were the primary motivators. Reflection on the need to enhance their own skills activated more participation and sharing than extrinsic motivation. A need for the information drove adult learners' interest (Knowles & Associates, 1984). Knowles's study (as cited in Blondy, 2007) indicated that when adult learners were recognized and appreciated for their individual contributions in class, they were more successful in their educational goals.

Bash (2003) and Knowles et al. (2005) believed that a set of assumptions or characteristics were necessary components of a reputable andragogical approach to adult learning. Bash noted that "andragogy is the only adult learning theory that draws extensively from active application rather than abstract conceptualization" (p. 36). Leonard (2002) noted that the basic components of andragogy guided adult learners to autonomy and self-directedness.

Implementation of andragogical assumptions. To implement the andragogical

assumptions, Knowles et al. (2005) designed an instructional process model to assist the

facilitator in procedures needed to prepare for the engagement of adult learners in the

learning process. Knowles et al. asserted that a process model was procedural and

provided resources, differing from a content process, which was designed to transmit

knowledge or skills. Knowles' andragogical model consisted of eight guidelines for

instructing self-directed independent adult learners and stimulating participation in their

own learning: (a) prepare the learner, (b) establish a cooperative learning environment;

(c) involve learners in planning of goals, (d) identify and analyze the learners' needs and

interests, (e) help learners to articulate learning objectives that are based on their needs

and individual interests, (f) design activities for achieving the objectives, (g) organize

methods and resources needed to meet the objectives, and (h) evaluate the quality of the

learning experience and reassess the learners' needs (Knowles et al.). Merriam (2001)

noted that andragogy "remains as the most learner-centered of all patterns of adult

educational programming" and that "andragogy is being defined more by the learning

situation than by the learner" (p. 5).

Transformative Learning Theory

Defining transformative theory. According to McGonigal (2005) Mezirow was

credited with the development of the transformative learning theory, a constructivism

theory and a social and solitary process. Mezirow defined transformative learning as "the

process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the

meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (as cited in Taylor, 2008, p.

5). Leonard (as cited in Merriam and Clark, 2006) noted that "Mezirow first

conceptualized his theory when he studied women's reentry programs in community

colleges" (p. 35). Merriam and Clark (2006) noted that in adult education, transformative

learning was personal change that incorporated change in the learner and within the

learner as well. Theoretically based, transformative learning intended to change attitudes,

beliefs, and perceptions of the learner and change each learner's learning process. A

relevant factor of transformative learning was that the learners had to recognize their own

limitations in order to make the transformation as they reflected on their experiences and

dialogued with others.

Change was intended to be an individual personal experience that promotes

learning and developmental growth. Taylor (2008) noted that frames of references

influenced the learners' "tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and

actions" (p. 5). Adult learners who were consciously transformed from the ideals and

actions that shaped who they were and their way of thinking became decisively astute to

the assumptions that aided in the formation of their decisions and understandings. A

transformation of the learners' current knowledge must have occurred; simply imparting

knowledge to the learners would not transform learners.

> Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-
>
> for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets)
>
> to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of
>
> change, and reflective so that they may generate opinions and beliefs that will
>
> prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8)

Mezirow (1991) noted that perspective transformation, a paradigm shift, was the

process that led to transformative learning. McGonigal (2005) noted that perspective

transformative was the "most significant kind of knowledge transformation" (p. 1). According to Merriam and Clark (2006), perspective transformation was a process that took place when adults understood themselves and when their stance on beliefs in the world was changing. Giles (as cited in Malone, Jones, & Stallings, 2002) defined perceptive transformation as "seeing issues in a new way" (p. 62). Laird, Naquin, and Holton (2003) noted that Mezirow defined perspective transformation as

> (1) the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions
> have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our
> world; (2) changing the structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more
> inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective, and finally, (2) making
> choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. (2003, p. 147)

Duffy (2003) declared, "Change requires that we unlearn negative mental models and learn new ones, and staff developers play a critical role in designing and delivering the kind of professional learning that can help educators do so" (p. 1). Duffy further noted that mental models blocked new information. McGonigal (2005) acknowledged that opposition to making a perspective transformation is not uncommon, and new information that may cause or even force adult learners to "consider, evaluate, and revise underlying assumptions can be an emotionally charged experience" (p. 2). According to McAdamis (2008)

> Brain researchers tell us that learning occurs when the learner creates new neutral
> networks or strengthens those that already exist. They say this change in structure
> of the brain causes the learner to practice new habits of mind and behaviors to the
> point they become habitual. (p. 9)

In Tips for Facilitators (2005) it was noted that the transfer of surface knowledge

to profound understanding was essential for a true transformation to occur. According to

Duffy (2003), when adult learners were presented with new information that may have

changed their way of thinking, they scanned their mental models, noting if the

information being received was consistent with their knowledge base. If the new

information was consistent with the learner's existing mental model, the information was

accepted, if not the learner had to construct a new mental model to accept or reject the

new information. Taylor (as cited in McGonigal. 2005) noted that facilitators who used

the transformative learning process created a learning environment that promoted

intellectual openness. This was to counter the opposition to change that may have

occurred.

  Strategies for transformation. McGonigal (2005) determined for a facilitator to

move adult learners from perspective transformation to the acceptance of new learning,

various strategies needed to be employed to stimulate the learner. Cranton (as cited in

McGonigal, 2005) stated that "when these processes occur, learners are more likely to

revise their underlying assumptions, adopt a new paradigm, and apply their new

paradigm" (p. 2). To aid in perspective transformation, McGonigal detailed five factors:

(a) create an arousing event or disorientating dilemma that exposed and activated the

limitations and beliefs of the learners; (b) provide opportunities for the adult learners to

identify and communicate their assumptions by employing such strategies as critical

questioning, predicting, and challenging dialogue; (c) guide the learners into self-

reflection through activities such as private journaling and small group discussions to

bring out where beliefs developed and how the beliefs influence their understanding; (d)

dialogue through discussion and debate with others as the group examined alternative ideas and methods; and (e) provide opportunities that enabled transformative learning to move from a passive mode of thinking into action as the learner applied the new knowledge. Assignments that required learners to approach the current thinking and role-playing activities often stimulated learners to try new perspectives. McGonigal and National School Reform Faculty (n.d.) suggested extending dialogue beyond the walls of the classroom setting. Online discussion via blogs, wikis, twittering, and email enable discourse outside of the classroom.

While all five of McGonigal's (2005) factors contributed to the transformation of the learner's thinking and ideas, two were more challenging for adult learners: dialogue and reflection. McAdamis (2008), Mezirow (1991), Mizell (2008), and Vella (2002) concurred that dialogue was the most critical to promote change. Adult learners must feel safe when they share their beliefs. Self-reflection is the most private of transformative learning. The adult learners must admit the reasons for the beliefs that were being questioned.

Merizow (1991) listed ten phases adult learners experienced when transforming their learning:

1. A disorienting dilemma

2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame

3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions

4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change

5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions

6. Planning a course of action

7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans

8. Provisional trying of new roles

9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and

10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (p. 168-169)

Clark, Courtenay, Merriam, and Reeves (as cited in Merriam and Clark, 2006) posited that "The transformation process can be incremental, with small transformation leading to a more all encompassing perspective transformation" (p. 35). Mezirow (1991) hypothesized that transformative learning was not complete until learners had changed their complete perspective on the new learning. All phases of transformative learning must have been completed for a true transformation to have taken place. The learners' engagement with some of the transformation phases that led the learners to think critically and question their assumptions would eventually lead to transformation. New information could not simply be layered onto prior knowledge. The facilitator had the challenge of helping learners unlearn or revise existing knowledge. Mezirow noted that transformation of a thought, belief, or understanding usually occurred when the adult learner was energized to take action by a disturbing or disconcerting experience.

Mezirow (1991) viewed reflection as the most important factor in the transformation process. To address this factor, Mezirow outlined three types of reflection that should be included: (a) content reflection that addressed the description of the problem, (b) process reflection that required thought to be given to the strategies needed

to resolve the problem, and (c) premise reflection that questioned assumptions, beliefs, or values, which were essential to the problem. Mezirow (1991) declared that "transformation has occurred when the evolution of reflection has resulted in an awareness of an invalid, undeveloped, or distorted perspective; the perspective has been revised; and the learner has acted on the revised belief" (p. 113).

According to Leonard (2002), McGonigal (2005), and Ozuah (2005), adult learning theories have guided facilitators in designing and tailoring professional development programs to align with the adult learners' needs, readiness, and point of reference. The six assumptions for adult learning identified by Knowles at al. (2005) were (a) need to know, (b) learner's self-concept, (c) learner's experience, (d) readiness to learn, (e) orientation to learn, and (f) motivation. Knowles at al. noted that when planning an adult learning course, the six assumptions should be components incorporated into teacher development. McGonigal and Mezirow (1991) concurred that learners used prior experiences to guide new learning. Adults can be guided toward embracing new information through engagement in activities such as (a) critical questioning, (b) dialogue, (c) self-reflection, and (d) role playing. Multiple factors have influenced the learning experiences of adults, and facilitators needed to be cognizant when providing development opportunities that impact adult learners.

Professional Development to Influence Beliefs

Effective Professional Development Strategies and Concepts

Brookfield (1986) noted that professional development was an educational delivery mode that engaged adult learners in the learning process. Aronson and Patnoe (1997), Fogarty and Pete (2007), and Kagan (1994) concurred that effective professional

development for teachers and counselors included participation in independent activities, cooperative learning, and whole group activities such as responding to an agree-disagree list of statements, reflections, assessment and feedback, and think-pair-share. Fogarty and Pete further noted that during professional development, various intelligences were incorporated into the learning process to address the learning styles of adult learners. According to Jensen (1998) active learning strategies accelerated understanding, recall, and meaning. Jensen supported the need for short, meaningful learning activities, opportunities for learners to actively engage in the process, clear and concise directions, scheduling for the learning, and an array of types of activities during the development process. These strategies served to actively engage adult learners.

The relevance of the content engaged educators in the learning process with dialogue as a major factor. McAdamis (2008) noted that for habitual change in the learner's mind-set to take place, content included "deep meaning, emotion, and/or reflection" (p. 9) experiences. Norman and Breidenstein (2006) noted that facilitating adult learners in "a collaborative investigation of practice requires participants to enter into a new discourse" (p. 2) Communication with others, talking through the problem, and meditation were approaches to changing beliefs.

Dialogue was an element needed for inquiry, analyzing, and weighing various understandings. Protocol, a structured professional conversation, was used to guide conversation. Specific features and purposes were outlined in each protocol that allowed facilitators to determine which conversation met the needs of the participants. Allen and Blythe (2004) noted that protocols visibly outlined the role each participant played during the process.

Effective professional development has been based on various criteria by researchers and academicians. Fogarty and Pete (2007) contended that when development was job-embedded and teachers' and counselors' knowledge had been heightened, a higher level of instruction and student achievement was more likely to occur. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (as cited in Vella, 2002) and Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Croned, and Garet (2008) concurred that active learning, coherence, and collaboration during the development were successful practices of professional development. Brookfield and Mackie (as cited in Bash, 2003), McAdamis (2008), and Vella (2002) agreed that when adult learners were actively engaged in the learning, training was more effective. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) reported that "professional development activities are considered effective if they lead to changes in practice of adults and the performance of students" (p. 41).

Active Engagement

Vella (2002) used quantum concepts, thinking and learning, in her study on adult learning. She defined quantum thinking as "looking at the world in a new way" (p. 29) and advocated for dialogue to be the key pathway for change. Fullan (2007) noted that dialogue was essential when providing adults in the educational setting with new information and skills. Various forms of professional development provided opportunities to discuss experiences with colleagues and increase the repertoire of teachers and counselors. McAdamis (2008), Mezirow (1991), Mizell (2003), and Vella agreed that discourse was a critical piece in the adult learning environment to promote the transformation process.

To foster dialogue between the facilitator and learner and among the learners and to ensure that effective learning has occurred, Vella (2002) developed twelve interconnecting educational principles and practices that were based on dialogue. She alleged that none of the principles could be eliminated in the process. Bash (2003) noted that dialogue and interaction were essential in the application of Vella's twelve principles.

The twelve principles created by Vella (2002) were based on the premise that dialogue was essential in the teaching of adult learners. The principles established were (a) access the needs of the adult learner by including the learner in planning the curriculum; (b) create a safe environment for open discussion; (c) encourage sound relationships through open communication with emphases on listening and humility; (d) present the content sequentially to guide the learner from the simple to the complex and from group support to individual ownership, then reinforce in an engaging way; (e) incorporate praxis, "action with reflection" (p. 14) to transfer information into new skills or knowledge, then reflect on the results; (f) acknowledge and respect the learners' knowledge and their opinions by giving them choices and accepting their suggestions; (h) recognize the shift in the ideas, feelings, and action of the learner; (i) realize that immediacy of the learning is key to adult learners remaining motivated, attentive, and present; (j) incorporate equity for adult learners between them and the facilitator; (k) provide opportunities for teamwork which reflect the adult learners' real world; (l) incorporate active engagement; and (m) make all stakeholders accountable for what the learner has learned.

McAdamis (2008) noted that learners must be active engagers in their own learning. Related to Vella's principles, Bash (2003) acclaimed that (a) effective learning affected the learner's thinking, attitudes, values, perceptions and behavioral patterns; (b) adult learners value the knowledge they experience opposed to knowledge gained from lecture or read from a book; (c) active learning was more effective; (d) the learner's cognitive, affective, and behavioral system must have changed for a true transformation to evolve; (e) information acquired does not change the learner's cognitive, affective, and behavior patterns; (f) direct experience did not produce valid knowledge; (g) basic attitudes and ideas must have changed if there was a permanent change in behavioral patterns; (h) perception transformation of the learner's self and social environment was needed before transformation occurs; (i) a safe, supportive environment allowed the learner to take chances and display new behaviors, attitudes, and ideas; (j) changes were more likely to have occurred in a supportive group; and (k) acceptance of new ideas, behaviors, and attitudes transpired when the person accepted association with a new group.

Adult Learning Presentation Design

Jensen (1998) suggested that when designing a presentation for adult learners, an exciting, positive, and productive physiological learning environment should be created before formal teaching begins. To facilitate a positive opening the following techniques were employed: playing inspiring music, telling a brief personal story, sharing an unusual bit of factual trivia, sharing a relative quote, and using humor. In addition, the facilitator must have developed a method to connect the topic to each participant's initial thought for a positive outcome for the participants. Jensen further noted that in order for adult

learners to have learned new material, they had to be curious and had to have understood

the relevance and big picture of the content. Mizell (2008) noted that facilitators had to

take the lead for the adult learners to convert from "problem-shifters to problems-solvers"

(p. 2).

Knowles' (1980) research on adult learners identified teaching methods and

correlated them to desired behavioral outcomes. Lecture, television, debate, interview,

book discussion, and reading were recommended teaching methods when the desired

outcome was to provide learners with knowledge. Audience participation, problem-

solving discussion, case discussion, and demonstration were employed for adult learners

to gain an understanding of the material. Role playing, nonverbal exercises and games

were methods used to communicate specific skills. If the outcome were to impact

attitude, Knowles suggested group-centered discussion, nonverbal exercises, experience

sharing discussion, and participative cases. To produce a desired behavioral outcome of

changed values, teaching methods such as lecture, debate, dialogue, guided discussion,

experience sharing discussion, and television were incorporated into the lesson. Knowles

suggested that if the goal were to generate interest, teaching methods should have

included exhibits, trips, television or film, experience sharing discussion, and

demonstration.

Knowles (1980) recommended that the learning take place in a group setting, so

all participants were involved. As a result, Knowles outlined a variety of functions to be

employed in small group settings:

-     Topical discussion groups: groups organized for the purpose of reacting to, testing

      the meaning of, or sharing ideas about informal inputs from reading or speakers

on given topics; special-interest groups: groups organized according to categories

of interests of participants for the purpose of sharing experiences and exploring

common concerns; inquiry groups: groups organized to search out information

and report their findings to the total assembly; learning teaching teams: groups

which take responsibility for learning all they can about a content unit and sharing

what they have learned with the total assembly. (p. 236-237)

To keep the facilitator focused on the adult learners when designing a learning

presentation, Garmston (2005) and Lipton and Wellman (2003) put into place some

guidelines. Garmston's guidelines were in the format of four fundamental questions.

"What do I want participants to learn? How will I know they are learning it? What

strategies or approaches will I use? What can I learn by designing and delivering the

content and how can that inform refinements" (p. 36). Lipton and Wellman theorized

three phases of learning: (a) activate and engage, (b) explore and discover, and (c)

organize and integrate.

Bash (2003), Brookfield (1986), and Knowles (1980) recognized that facilitators

needed to be flexible, encourage authenticity, and capable of adapting or improvising

during development activities. The ability to adjust theory based development was crucial

to successful practice when working with adult learners. The multiplicity of methods and

techniques utilized during the planning of the professional development was pertinent. It

was determined that adjustments to planned presentations often became more meaningful

and relevant to the learners. Brookfield noted, "There is no single mode of program

development suitable for the heterogeneous universe of adult learners" (p. 259).

Adult Learner's Engagement in Professional Development

Although learning assumptions may differ between adult learners and dependent learners, the NSDC (n.d.) standard related to staff development stated, "Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change" (Process Standards section, ¶ 1). NSDC's rationale was that the learning methods used to teach adults should closely resemble the methods used with students, even though they recognized that adult learners brought to the learning environment a multitude of life experiences and had predetermined ideas of what they wanted to learn and the reasons for their desire to learn. In the rationale NSDC named three dimensions that promoted change within the adult learner: clearer understanding of the issue, feelings, and life stage differences.

NSDC (n.d.) wrote six principles for effective professional development:

- Begin with the professional learning community.

- Use multiple sources of concrete data to determine professional learning priorities, evaluate professional progress, and sustain improvement.

- Employ research and strategies conducive to practical application.

- Mandate continuous professional learning in a collaborative, mutually supportive, and interactive learning environment.

- Model a safe learning environment with high expectations for achievement and gives [*sic*] educators the tools to assist students in meeting academic standards.

- Be aligned with the goals of the school and district. (pp. 5 - 6)

Fogarty and Pete (2007) recommended seven criteria for professional development:

1. Sustained: Training is implemented over time.

2. Job embedded: Training occurs and/or continues at the work site.

3. Collegial: Training builds and supports a community of learners.

4. Interactive: Training invites, involves, and engages participants.

5. Integrated: Training is electric (Web-bases, online, text, face-to-face).

6. Results oriented: Training meets a need, is goal driven is data driven.

7. Practical, hands on: Training is relevant with real-world problems. (p. 41)

Handouts

Participants in learning environments valued having something tangible to refer to at a later time. The written information should be clear, visually appealing, and follow the presentation format. Jensen (1998) detailed points that should be adhered to when preparing handouts:

- Use fewer, rather than more pages.

- Include references for your work.

- Provide handouts at the start of the session or as participants register or enter the room.

- Make them interactive-leave blanks for participants to fill with information covered in the presentation.

- Print on only one side of the page-leave the other side for notes.

- Do not provide too much detail-include only key ideas.

- Don't overuse graphics; use enough to provide visual interest.

- Number the pages for easy reference.

- Tell the audience whether or not the pages are reproducible.

- Give additional resources for follow up.

- Print 10 to 30 percent more handout than you think you'll need. (p. 43).

Timing

Jensen (1998) noted that the time frame allotted for the teaching was an important factor that facilitators must recognize. To start on time and to emphasize opening and closing were major feats in maintaining the adult-learners' interest and participation. A planned and prepared strong opening and closing resonated with audiences. After the opening, an overview of what would be presented and a plan in case the allotted time ran out were also important factors to be mindful of when planning professional development. Brookfield (1986) and Jensen agreed that if a scheduled break would be needed during the professional development session, it should be communicated to the adult learners at the beginning. Adult learners like to be informed. Brookfield noted that at the conclusion of the learning activity, an evaluation instrument or feedback form was needed.

Jensen (1998) further noted that the facilitator should lecture no more than 20 minutes in order to avoid saturation. He suggested that after the lecture, have participants should stand, stretch, reflect, and share their learning with others. Another important element to include after lecture was to engage the participants by asking questions related to the presentation.

Maintaining the Learner's Attention

Maintaining the adult learner's attention, can be challenging for the facilitator. Wlodkowski (2008) found that engaging the learner during a presentation and utilizing techniques to refocus the learner on the event helped to keep the learner focused on the

presentation and the facilitator. Wlodkowski developed five strategies for sustaining the

learner's attention:

- Provide frequent response opportunities to all learners on an equitable basis

- Help learners realize their accountability for what they are learning

- Provide variety in personal presentation style, modes of instruction, and

  learning materials

- Introduce, connect, and end learning activities attractively and clearly

- Selectively use breaks, seatling time, and physical exercises. (pp. 235-248)

Fogarty and Pete (2007) developed three essential fundamentals they determined

were required for the facilitator of adult learners: (a) capture the attention of the learners;

(b) maintain a captured audience; (c) recap important points at the end of the session.

Fogarty and Pete agreed that visuals greatly enhanced the presentation at the beginning,

middle, or closing. The researchers shared the following techniques for capturing the

adult learners' attention: include a formal introduction of the facilitator that included the

facilitator's credentials, have an energized opening, and offer a printed or displayed

agenda. It was important to adult learners that they knew the who, what, and why of the

presentation. The learners wanted a big picture of what they would be encountering in the

learning process. Some suggested pointers for the facilitator to use are storytelling;

stating facts, data, and information; intertwining humor into the presentation; moving

from one position to another to keep the audience focused on the facilitator; interacting

with the audience; and having the ability to read the audience so the facilitator knows

when to switch gears. The researchers determined that the closing was as vital as the

opening of the session and recapping was eszssential. Some tips for effective closings

were to leave the audience thinking, summarize key points with a visual, have a closing

activity, and distribute evaluation forms.

Rogers (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) identified three attitudinal qualities of a

facilitator that are needed in the development of the personal relationship between the

facilitator and the learner: "(a) realness or genuineness; (b) non-possessive caring,

prizing, trust, and respect; and (c) empathetic understanding and sensitive and accurate

listening" (p. 85). Rogers also delineated ten guidelines for facilitators: (a) set climate of

the group or class experience; (b) clarify purposes of class for the individual learners as

well as for the entire class; (c) identify the learners' motivation for attending; (d) have

quick reference resources readily available to the learner; (e) avail themselves to the

learners as needed; (f) respond to the intellectual content and emotional attitudes of the

learners; (g) establish a community of learners and become a participant of the group; (h)

take the initiative to participate in the sharing of feelings, personal satisfactions and

disappointments without the learners' fear of being judged; (i) be cognizant of the

participants' feelings and help the learners bring their discomforts or tensions to the open

for understanding and use by the group; and (j) be conscious of the learners' own

limitations to avoid conflict and to welcome interchange with the learners.

Evaluation

According to Brookfield (1986), professional development included "frequent,

but informal, formative evaluation" (p. 255). Evaluation of the development was a

component of adult learners' needs.

Evaluation is commonly conceived as a final checking of the outcomes or results

of a program. It happens after the training activity and assessment of whether or

not the activity has been successful in terms of the original statement of aims. For

effective staff development such an approach is of little use. What is much more

useful is a regular checking of progress by encouraging participants to voice

thoughts, feelings, impressions, and concerns. (Brookfield, 1986, pp. 255-256)

Brookfield (1986) determined that feedback was a valued and necessary

component of a professional development session. He suggested developing a simple

sheet for feedback that would be given to the participants at the end of the session and/or

having a collaborative discussion with the group participants. The feedback obtained

would provide the facilitator with the learners' perception of the purpose of the session,

new learning acquired, and future learning needed. The feedback sheet should be

designed to be take no more than five minutes to complete. A collaborative discussion

was a method to be conducted at the end of a session for 10 – 15 minutes. The

participants would discuss the purposes, accomplishments, and the additional information

they would like to have during future sessions.

Both approaches of evaluation allowed the adult learners to share their perception

of the learning. The evaluations were not to allow participants to measure the success of

the sessions and determine the extent of success for the learning objectives. The

evaluation tools allowed the participants to self-assess. Irvine (2006) noted that it was

important to know if the attitudes and practices of participants changed during the

development. Brookfield (1986) noted that "this goal-free method of evaluation allows

participants to feel in control of evaluation and assessment of the exercise" (p. 257).

Summary

A professional development multisession course to influence teachers' and counselors' opinions and beliefs about middle school advisory was developed. Literature on characteristics of middle school students, middle school reform, and middle school advisory were researched, as well as learning theories that pertained to adult learners. Pitton, as cited in Dickinson (2001) stated, "Advisory is a foreign experience for many teachers and McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins' work identifies that teachers are often opposed to this role" (p. 30). Therefore, an investigation on effective professional development strategies and concepts was also incorporated in the literature reviews.

It was found that middle school students were young adolescents, who experienced a unique and challenging period of maturation. For middle schools to address the needs of their students, some middle school educators have strongly suggested advisory. To promote advisory, the staff must have embraced the idea and been trained through professional development sessions, and the facilitator should be cognizant that teaching or training of adult learners was different from teaching students. For the purpose of using the best techniques and strategies for teaching adult learners and to challenge the participants' opinions and beliefs related to middle school advisory, the andragogy and transformative learning theories were explored.

To facilitate a successful professional development course, the facilitator had to process certain qualities. An effective facilitator was described as pragmatic, a planner, an accepter of input from learners, and an encourager of active participation. The facilitator considered the adult learners' experiences as great resources and included them in the development. The planning of instructional activities and the curriculum required

collaboration on the part of the facilitator and the adult learners to accomplish a mutual product. Handouts were created to encourage learners to reflect on the learning when away from the development setting. A timeline, prepared for the dissemination of information and shared with the learners, gave learners insight to the professional development expectations, goals, and objectives.

An exciting psychological environment motivated learners and built rapport within the group. Frequent evaluative input informed the facilitator and the learners of the progress made regarding the change in opinions and ideas. To quote Oliver Wendell Holmes: "A man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions" (as cited in McAdamis, 2008, p. 9).

Chapter III -- Method

Overview

Makkohen (2004) and Shulkind (2008) noted that when students had

opportunities for healthy, frequent, and meaningful dialogue with a caring adult at school,

they achieved greater success. To assist the middle school children in achieving their

maximum potential in life, middle schools had to be supportive of and responsive to all

needs of early adolescents, children 10 -15 years of age. Nationally recognized

organizations such as the NASSP, NMSA, and The Carnegie Corporation adamantly

promoted the implementation of an advisory program as a component to educating early

adolescents. An adult at school, who advocated for the overall well being of early

adolescents and with whom the adolescents had a positive relationship, was of

insurmountable benefit to the child.

While there have been numerous case studies about middle school advisory, the

body of literature has been void of a program that researched advisory, prepared and

presented professional development to teachers and counselors on the benefits of a

middle school advisory program using research based methodologies, and evaluated the

participants' opinions of advisory before and after the development. The purpose of this

research was to create an adult education course that influenced the opinions and beliefs

of teachers and counselors. The content of the course was middle school advisory. The

following questions were explored during this research study:

1. What are the characteristics of young adolescents?

2. What is middle school advisory?

3. What are the benefits of a middle school advisory program?

4. What instructional methodologies are effective in engaging teachers and

counselors in a professional development course to influence opinions and

beliefs?

Research Question

How do teachers and counselors react to a professional development course

designed to influence opinions and beliefs?

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will not want to implement a middle

school advisory program after participating in a professional development course

designed to influence their opinions and beliefs.

Alternative Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will want to implement a middle school

advisory program after participating in a professional development course designed to

influence their opinions and beliefs.

Subjects

The participants in the research were selected because they worked at CCW

Middle School, where the researcher was the principal of the school. All teachers and

counselors who participated in the Faculty Development sessions after school at CCW

Middle were given a letter explaining the research and a consent form (see Appendix D2)

to participate in the research and sent an email regarding the course (see Appendix D3).

The following demographics of participants are illustrated in Tables 1 - 5: role in the

school, educational level, experience in education, experience in an advisory program,

and age.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants' Roles

Position	Pre	Post
% Core	54.1	57.1
% Encore	36.1	30.2
% Other	1.6	6.3
% Counselor	4.9	4.8
% Literacy Coach	1.6	1.6

Note. Total may not add up to 100% due to missing values.
Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 2

Demographics of Participants' Educational Levels

Level	Pre	Post
% PhD	1.6	0
% MA+30	32.8	33.3
% MA+ 15	21.3	22.2
% MA	14.8	17.5
% BA + 15	11.5	14.3
% BA	18	12.7

Note. Total may not add up to 100% due to missing values.
Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 3

Demographics of Participants' Experience in Education

Years	Pre	Post
% 1-5	17.0	18.0
% 6-10	4.9	11.1
% 11-15	11.5	12.7
% 16-20	24.6	19.0
% 21-25	13.1	12.7
% >26	18.0	14.3

Note. Total may not add up to 100% due to missing values.
Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 4

Demographics of Participants' Experience in Advisory

Years	Pre	Post
0%	62.3	63.5
% 1-5	23	27
% 6-10	3.2	3.2
% 11-15	3.3	3.2
% 16-20	1.6	0
% 21 - 25	0	3.2

Note. Total may not add up to 100% due to missing values.
Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 5

Demographics of Participants' Age Range

Years	Pre	Post
% 20-30	24.6	28.6
% 31-40	18	14.3
% 41-50	26.2	23.8
% 51-60	29.5	23.8
% 61-70	1.6	4.8
% 71-80	0	1.6

Note. Total may not add up to 100% due to missing values.
Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Sampling Procedure

This research was conducted using the convenience sampling method. This

method was utilized because the researcher worked at the same school as the participants

and the group was readily available. During the summer of 2008, the researcher verbally

communicated the rationale, purpose, and timeline for the research with the participants.

The quantitative data collection began one month later, utilizing a teacher

prequestionnaire (see Appendix B1) to determine the opinions and beliefs of CCW

Middle School teachers and counselors on middle school advisory. After the four

professional development sessions on The Benefits of Middle School Advisory, a

postquestionnaire (see Appendix B2) was administered to the teachers and counselors to

determine if the course impacted the participants. All teachers and counselors who

attended Faculty Development meetings at CCW Middle School were included in the research.

Research Setting

CCW Middle School was one of five middle schools in the school district and the most recently built school in the district, opening in September 1995. The school was designed to meet the specific needs of a middle school student's instructional program. Grades six through eight were organized in houses with each house having its own identity through three distinct building segments. There were 108 individuals of whom 69 were full-time certified teachers and counselors. Three certified staff members were part-time and were not at CCW Middle in the afternoon; therefore, they did not participate in this research. Thirty-nine of the 108 staff members were noncertified staff; therefore, they were not participants in this research study.

External Validity

The external validity of this research was not strong. All participants worked in the same middle school; therefore, this research cannot be generalized. It was possible that others could have argued that the outcomes of this research were due to the composition of the teachers and counselors at CCW Middle School, the location of the school, the age of the building, and the time of the development sessions.

Research Design and Procedure

This research was a mixed method design using qualitative action research and quantitative data in the form of a questionnaire to answer the research question: How do teachers and counselors react to a professional development course that is designed to influence opinions and beliefs? Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) defined mixed method

research as, "The class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative

and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a

single study" (p. 17). A mixed methods study was required to obtain necessary

information through questionnaires in addition to the detailed research and analysis of

adult methodologies and professional development practices through qualitative methods.

Action researchers gathered information that allowed "them to change conditions in a

particular situation in which they are personally involved" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p.

13). The qualitative research was to identify research based instructional methods and

professional development strategies for educators that influenced beliefs and opinions.

The qualitative data collection deepened the researcher's knowledge base on how to

present the course to teachers and counselors.

The research design included an experimental one-group pretest-posttest design

(Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Mertler, 2008) in the form of a questionnaire, which was

causal comparative in nature. According to Fraenkel and Wallen, causal comparative

research was intended "to determine the cause or consequence of differences that already

exist between or among groups of individuals" (p. 370). The goal of the prequestionnaire

was to obtain information on the teachers' and counselors' opinions and beliefs on

middle school advisory and demographic data. The objective of administering the

postquestionnaire was to determine if the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors

were influenced after the treatment, The Benefits of Middle School Advisory course. A

confirming quantitative investigation was used to prove or disprove the hypothesis. The

independent variable did not differ because all participants involved in the research study

belonged to the same group. The dependent variable in this research was the

questionnaire. The researcher developed a professional development course on middle

school advisory based on the research completed on middle school advisory, adult

learning principles, and best practices for professional development for educators.

Before beginning the course, the participants were given a letter explaining the

research and a consent form. A prequestionnaire was also given by means of direct

administration by the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Sagor, 2000). Confidentiality

of the participants' responses was communicated by the researcher in writing and was

conveyed orally as well. The researcher explained that the investigative findings would

produce data on the opinions and beliefs of CCW Middle teachers and counselors as it

related to advisories. The research had the potential to make an impact on middle schools

within the school district and perhaps even in reform at the middle school level. The

strength of the methodology described was built on multiple areas of research. This

research can be used as a model for determining the impact of a professional

development course on the benefits of middle school advisory over a four-month period.

At the first Faculty Development meeting for the 2008-2009 school year, which

was held in August 2008, the researcher explained the rationale for the research and

responded to questions. In September prior to the first professional development session,

teachers and counselors completed a prequestionnaire by means of direct administration

by the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). After completion of the questionnaire, each

participant placed his or her questionnaire in a manila envelope that was located on a

specified table in the room.

The first professional development session was presented in a Microsoft

PowerPoint (Appendix C1) delivery format. Equipment used to facilitate the Microsoft

PowerPoint presentation was a laptop computer, presentation remote, data projector, and

projection screen. The participants sat at round tables and each had a copy of the

Microsoft PowerPoint, consisting of three slides per page. The presentation included the

following components: history of advisory, "How Much Advising Are You Already

Doing?" (Niska & Thompson, 2007a, p. 13); advisory definitions; "What Are Your

Beliefs?"; and references. The following adult learning activities were utilized: (a)

lecture, (b) writing, (c) reflection on current practice and beliefs, (d) think-pair-share, (e)

movement, (f) small group, and (g) large group sharing.

The researcher utilized the Microsoft PowerPoint, which began with quotes, and

gave a mini lecture on the history of advisory. Copies of "How Much Advising Are You

Already Doing?" (Niska & Thompson, 2007a, p. 13; see Appendix C2) were distributed

by the researcher with time provided for completion after which the participants formed

pairs and shared their findings. The researcher circulated the room and listened to the

conversations of the pairs. When most pairs were finished sharing, the researcher

facilitated group sharing, specifically comments and reflections.

The advisory definitions were then shared by the facilitator and participants

engaged in the activity, "What Are Your Beliefs?" which was included in the Microsoft

PowerPoint. Prior to this session, in preparation for "What Are Your Beliefs?" the

researcher prepared four pieces of chart paper and placed each one on a wall in the room

where the professional development was held. Each paper included one of the following

statements: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree. The

researcher read six belief statements. After each statement was read, teachers and

counselors moved to the area of the room where the chart paper was displayed that

coincided with their belief. Once participants moved to the specific area based on their

belief, they were instructed to discuss their thinking with those standing in the same area.

The researcher facilitated this process and circulated the room. On completion of the six

beliefs, participants returned to their seats and processed the activity with those at the

same table. The development concluded with a quote.

The second professional development session was presented in October 2008, one

month after the first session, during Faculty Development. The participants sat in rows

facing the projection screen when the development began. The researcher presented a

Microsoft PowerPoint (see Appendix C3), with the aid of the following tools: laptop

computer, presentation remote, data projector, and projection screen. Each teacher and

counselor had a copy of the Microsoft PowerPoint on colored paper with three slides per

page. The following components were included in the Microsoft PowerPoint

presentation: (a) review of the previous presentation, (b) concepts and activities to be

shared; (c) quotes from literature and research. (d) The Multiple Perspectives Protocol

and Feedback Focus Sheet (see Appendix C4; adapted from the National School Reform

Faculty, n.d.; Brown, n.d.), (e) conclusion, and (f) Exit Slip (see Appendix C5).

Participants engaged in the following adult learning methodologies: (a) access of prior

knowledge, (b) mini-lecture, (c) active engagement. (d) collaboration (e) reflection, and

(f) feedback.

Prior to the beginning of the professional development session, the researcher

approached sixteen participants and asked them to assist during the presentation by

standing and reading a quote once it appeared on the screen. Each person agreed to assist

and selected a quote to read from the Microsoft PowerPoint, which had been copied on

brightly colored paper. When a quote was projected on the screen, the participant with the corresponding quote stood and read it to the large group. After the participants heard all the Microsoft PowerPoint quotes that supported the rationale and purpose of middle school advisory, the facilitator distributed The Multiple Perspectives Protocol and Feedback Focus Sheet (National School Reform Faculty, n.d.), which was adapted by the researcher to include the specific question for The Benefits of Middle School Advisory professional development. The question participants addressed during the protocol was: "How does the literature and research align with your beliefs?"

Stapled to the written description of the protocol were three different focus sheets, one for each round of the protocol. After explaining the protocol, the researcher directed the participants to form groups of four participants with whom they do not work on a daily basis as they moved to the area where tables and chairs were set up. The researcher circulated the room, monitored the protocol, and listened to the conversations about middle school advisory. On completion of the protocol, all participants returned to their original seats and shared any thoughts about the process of the protocol and their learning. A conclusion was delivered by the researcher and Exit Slips were distributed. The Exit Slip included two questions that were copied on colored paper. The completed Exit Slips (Brookfield, 1986; Irvine, 2006) were placed on a designated table as participants exited.

The third professional development session was held in November 2008, one month after the second session, and was developed by the researcher primarily based on the feedback received on the Exit Slips (see Appendix C6). This session was held in a room where participants sat at round tables. A three-slides-per-page handout of the

Microsoft PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix C7) was given to each teacher and

counselor. For the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, the researcher used a laptop

computer, presentation remote, data projector, and projection screen.

The professional development included the following adult learning components:

(a) review of the previous sessions, (b) concepts and activities to be shared (c) Jigsaw

activity on specific middle school advisory programs, (d) gallery walk, and (e)

comments/reflections (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2007). After the researcher reviewed the first

and second professional development sessions, the teachers and counselors participated

in a Jigsaw activity. Prior to this development session, the researcher prepared

information on eight schools' middle school advisory programs for the Jigsaw activity

(see Appendix C8). Eight locations in close proximity to the meeting room were

identified and the researcher selected one location for each advisory program.

Information on one advisory program, a piece of paper with the number of people needed

to accomplish the Jigsaw, and pieces of chart paper were placed in each location. Each

school's advisory program was copied and placed in the location.

The designated number of teachers and counselors moved to the areas where the

literature was placed and began the Jigsaw. When all the groups completed the Jigsaw

and their learning was recorded on chart paper, the paper was hung on the walls in the

meeting room where the development began. Teachers and counselors then participated

in a gallery walk. After the gallery walk, the researcher facilitated whole group

observations, comments, and reflections with the participants.

Research and literature were included in the Microsoft PowerPoint; however, due

to time constraints, the researcher was unable to present them during the session. The

researcher concluded the professional development session and told the participants that

the next development day would encompass the literature and research on the key

learning documented in the schools' advisory programs.

The fourth and last professional development session, December 2008, was based

on the Exit Slips and remaining information from the third session. The information was

presented in the form of a Microsoft PowerPoint (see Appendix C9) as participants sat at

round tables. The researcher used the following tools during the session: laptop computer,

presentation remote, data projector, and projection screen. Each teacher and counselor

was given a three-slides-per-page handout of the Microsoft PowerPoint. The professional

development included the following: review of the previous sessions, literature and

research, sample activities (see Appendix C10), a DVD clip, and postquestionnaire. This

presentation was in the form of a lecture. The researcher entertained questions after the

conclusion of the presentation.

At the conclusion of the question and answer period and related conversation, the

postquestionnaire was distributed and completed by means of direct administration by the

researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The completed questionnaires were placed by

participants in a manila envelope on a specified table in the meeting room.

Instrumentation

A prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire were used during this research to obtain

the opinions and beliefs and demographic information of the participants. Both

questionnaires were presented on two pages. Three items focused on the opinions and

beliefs of middle school teachers: teachers and counselors responded to the items on a

Likert Scale (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In addition, five statements requesting

demographic information was obtained by participants circling the word or numbers that

represented them. Both questionnaires also included two short answer questions which

provided additional insight for analysis (Sagor, 2000). The postquestionnaire contained

one additional question that participants responded to by circling yes or no. Both

questionnaires were administered by means of direct administration by the researcher

(Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The questionnaires provided both quantitative and qualitative

responses.

The questionnaires, specifically designed for anonymity, were developed by the

researcher for this project. The middle school advisory questionnaire was tested for

clarity by ten educators for logical validity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The educators

who tested the questionnaire were given the opportunity to review a draft of the

questionnaire, ask the researcher clarifying questions, and offer suggestions about

questions to eliminate and add. Changes were incorporated based on the feedback and the

ten educators' contributions to the design substantiated the questions (Fraenkel & Wallen,

2006).

Reliability and Validity of Instrumentation

The instrument used in this research was a prequestionnaire and postquestionaire

crafted by the researcher. "Reliability refers to the consistency of the scores or answers

from one administration of an instrument to another" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 150).

In this research the prequestionnaire was administered to participants in August 2008 and

the postquestionnaires was given in December 2008, a relatively short time span. "For

most educational research, stability of scores over a two-to three- month period is usually

viewed as sufficient evidence of test-retest reliability" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 159).

"Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences a researcher makes" (Fraenkel & Wallen, p. 150). The data consisted of quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher's inferences were directly drawn from the questions obtained through the instrument.

Internal Validity

This research's largest credibility issue was the researcher's bias. The researcher believed that middle schools should implement advisory programs based on the social, emotional, and academic benefits they provide adolescent learners. The researcher mediated the impact of bias by developing the professional development segments exclusively on the literature review. Data collector bias could also be a factor due to the researcher being the only person working with the participants and analyzing the data. The attitude of the teachers and counselors could be considered a threat. If some of the participants were not open-minded and chose to rely on their prior knowledge or conversations with others, this may have manifested. Given the nature of this research and the inquisitiveness of educators, maturation may have occurred. Counselors and/or teachers may have completed their own research on advisory and increased their knowledge beyond the rest of the participants.

Mortality threat was another area of concern during this research. It is not unusual for some participants to be absent during a professional development. Another threat was the researcher's role as the facilitator of the professional development and also as the principal of the school. As such, participants may have provided socially desirable answers which may not have accurately reflected their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings.

Any or all threats may have influenced the results of the research. It is not known if the beliefs and attitudes of the participants would have changed with or without the professional development course. Therefore, the results of the study may not have been influenced by the treatment, the middle school advisory course.

Statistical Treatment of Data

To discover if the opinions and beliefs of the teachers and counselors at CCW Middle were influenced after participating in a professional development course, a mixed methods approach was also utilized. This study involved quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher used a number of procedures to analyze the information and compile the findings. The data from the questionnaires were utilized to determine if the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors were influenced after participating in a course on middle school advisory.

For the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher read research and literature on adult methodologies and professional development strategies and practices. The in-depth examination of documents was summarized in the literature review. The qualitative data was utilized to determine what teaching methodologies would be used during the course. The qualitative data became the researcher's rationale for developing the teaching methods and activities for participants in the middle school advisory course.

Participants responded to questionnaires as a part of this study, which allowed the researcher to obtain quantitative data for this study. The researcher assigned each prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire an identification number. Two Excel spreadsheets were created and the data was tabulated and coded. The questions on beliefs, opinions, and demographics were recorded on a computer. Each question's word or number choice

was assigned a number for the coding, which was consistent on every prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire.

To prepare the data for analysis, the demographic variables were organized into categories. The positions of the participants were classified as nominal data. Nominal data is classified into rank categories in which order can not be imposed (Bluman, 2008). The following categories were classified as ordinal data: experience in advisory program, educational level, year of experience in education, and age. In all sets of the data, the decimal equivalent, known as a relative frequency, was added (Bluman, 2008). The researcher determined the percentages for each category.

The three middle school advisory questions used to obtain the participants' opinions and beliefs were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] version 17.0 was utilized to derive the statistics. After analyzing the three questions on opinions and beliefs, the prequestionnaire results were compared with the postquestionnaire and the percentage of change data were noted. A comparison of means and cross tabulation analysis was also completed with each of the three questions relating to opinions and beliefs of middle school advisory and all demographic data. A test of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to examine if the mean responses statistically differed across the groups. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS.

Besides ANOVA, a test of significance was conducted between the pre and postquestionnaires using a Chi-Square. Data that are reported in categories can be analyzed using the Chi-Square test (Preacher, 2001). A significant difference is noted if there is considerable change between the expected and obtained frequencies. If a

considerable change was observed, a significant difference in attitude between the two

groups was noted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The Chi-Square test conducted did not

show any significant results (see Appendix A1). Next the association between the

individual demographic variable and the responses given during the prequestionnaire and

postquestionnaire was tested. In testing for association, a Chi-Square test was used for

demographic data indicating the participants' positions because of the nominal data. A

Spearman rho was used for the educational level, experience in education, experience in

advisory, and age demographic numbers due to the ordinal data. "If age is defined as

young, middle, and older, then it will be treated as an ordinal level of measurement"

(Abu-Bader, 2006, p.5). The nonparametric Spearman rho test was chosen over the

parametric Pearson correlation test because of the following reasons: (a) the sample size

was less than thirty which violates an assumption and (b) ordinal data (Abu-Bader, 2006).

After the Spearman rho test was conducted the prequestionnaire and

postquestionnaire correlation coefficient was compared. In interpreting the coefficient,

the guidelines by Bluman (2008) were used.

The Spearman rho coefficient ranges are the same as the Pearson r coefficient.

The *range of the correlation coefficient is* from -1 to +1. If there is a *strong*

positive linear relationship between the variables, the value of r will be close to

+1. If there is a *strong negative linear relationship* between the variables, the

value of r will be close to -1. When there is no linear relationship between the

variables or only a weak relationship, the value of r will be close to 0 (Bluman,

2008, p. 525).

In order to facilitate analysis of the two short answer questions, the responses were typed

into a spread sheet and sorted by reoccurring themes based on the researcher's

observations (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; see Appendix C2 – C5).

Summary

The researcher in this study investigated whether the opinions and beliefs of

teachers and counselors were influenced after participating in a professional development

course on middle school advisory. The participants were teachers and counselors at CCW

Middle School and were selected by the convenience sampling method. The study was a

mixed methods design, analyzing qualitative data obtained through questionnaires and

qualitative data by means of researching instructional teaching methodologies and

professional development best practices. The data gained through qualitative methods

were incorporated in the course on middle school advisory. After all questionnaires were

analyzed and recorded by the researcher, they were shredded. Chapter IV reports the

results of the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire and the analysis of the data.

Chapter IV - Results

Introduction

This study focused on the benefits of middle school advisory, highlighting an advocate for every student. The National Middle School Association recommended middle schools embrace the following elements to provide successful schools for young adolescents:

- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so

- Courageous, collaborative leadership

- A shared vision that guides decisions

- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment

- High expectations for every member of the learning community

- Students and teachers engaged in active learning

- An adult advocate for every student

- School-initiated family community partnerships. (National Middle School Association, 2003, p. 7)

In order for change to occur in schools, teachers and counselors must be presented detailed information on new initiatives using research based methodologies and proven professional development strategies. It is important that teachers and counselors have shared beliefs before embarking on programming or new structures that impact them and the students they serve. This study was conducted to analyze if a professional development course on middle school advisory influenced the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors. The course was developed after researching middle school advisory, instructional methodologies, and professional development strategies.

Research Question

How do teachers and counselors react to a professional development course designed to influence opinions and beliefs?

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will not want to implement a middle school advisory program after participating in a professional development course designed to influence their opinions and beliefs.

Alternative Hypothesis

The majority of teachers and counselors will want to implement a middle school advisory program after participating in a professional development course designed to influence their opinions and beliefs.

Study Site and Participants

The site selection, CCW Middle School, located in a suburb of Anytown, is one of five middle schools in the school district and is its most recently built school. The participants included all teachers and counselors who attended monthly Faculty Development. The participants, teachers and counselors, were the independent variables in this study. The dependent variables were the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire. The data were collected by the researcher prior to beginning the professional development course and after the conclusion. The course entailed four sessions over a four month period.

Results and Analysis of Data

To prepare the data for analysis, the demographic variables were organized into

categories and a percentage for each group was identified. The three middle school

advisory questions used to obtain participants' opinions and beliefs were analyzed using

descriptive statistics, specifically finding the mean, standard deviation, and percentage of

change (Table 6).

Table 6

Comparison of Pre and Post Data by Opinions and Belief Statements

SN	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)	% of Change
S1	3.20 (0.90)	3.47 (0.80)	+8.4% (-11.1%)
S2	3.64 (0.80)	3.81 (0.50)	+4.7% (-37.5%)
S3	3.39 (0.90)	3.52 (0.76)	+3.8% (-15.6%)

Note. S = Statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.
% of change is calculated using the following formula: (Postquestionnaire) − (Prequestionnaire)
divided by (Prequestionnaire) multiplied by 100.

In general, the responses for all three questions were more positive after the

professional development course on middle school advisory. There was an increase in the

mean score after the professional development sessions. This increase suggested that

participants reacted more positively to the questions. Participants were more in favor of

the school implementing a middle school advisory program (S1; +8.4%), each student

being provided an adult advocate (S2; +4.7%), and wanting to be an advisor (S3; +3.8%).

There was also a decrease in the standard deviation after the professional development course for all three questions. The standard deviation indicated how closely scores clustered around the mean. The smaller the standard deviation, the smaller the variability was around the mean. The smaller standard deviation suggested that participants generally agreed on the mean (average) response. In other words, respondents more commonly agreed on the school implementing a middle school advisory program (-11.1%), each student being provided an advocate (-17.5%), and wanting to be an advisor in the school (-15.6%). Therefore, most respondents answered around the range reported.

In order to further understand the effect of the professional development course on respondents, respondents' prequestionnaire mean responses were compared to their postquestionnaire mean responses, based on their demographic profiles. Tables 7, 8, and 9 summarize the disaggregation of respondents' prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire mean responses.

Table 7

Comparison Between Prequestionnaire and Postquestionnaire and ANOVA S1

Statement 1: I am in favor of this school implementing a middle school advisory program.

Demographic	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)
Role		
Encore	3.09 (0.921)	3.21 (0.855)
Core	3.13 (0.907)	3.51 (0.781)
Counselors & Others	4.00 (0.000)	3.87 (0.354)
Total	3.19 (0.900)	3.47 (0.783)
ANOVA	$F (2, 56) = 2.437, p = 1.05$	$F (2, 59) = 2.256, p = 0.114$
Educational Level		
BA	3.45 (0.934)	3.88 (0.354)
BA+15	3.14 (0.690)	3.38 (1.061)
MA	3.11 (0.954)	3.73 (0.647)
MA+15	2.92 (0.996)	3.36 (0.633)
MA+30	3.25 (0.851)	3.29 (0.902)
Total	3.19 (0.900)	3.47 (0.783)
ANOVA	$F (4, 54) = 0.54, p = 0.706$	$F (4, 57) = 1.243, p = 0.303$
Years of experience in advisory program		
0 Years	3.329 (0.835)	3.48 (0.816)
1 – 5 Years	3.00 (1.038)	3.37 (0.806)
More than 5 Years	3.00 (1.000)	3.67 (0.516)
Total	3.19 (0.900)	3.47 (0.783)
ANOVA	$F (2, 56) = 0.693, p = 0.504$	$F (2, 59) = 0.300, p = 0.742$
Age		
20-30 years	3.47 (0.834)	3.61 (0.608)
31-40 years	2.73 (1.104)	3.73 (0.441)
41-50 years	3.25 (0.775)	3.00 (1.038)
More than 51 years	3.22 (0.878)	3.47 (0.772)
Total	3.20 (0.898)	3.45 (0.790)
ANOVA	$F (3, 56) = 1.515, p = 0.221$	$F (3, 56) = 2.453, p = 0.73$
Years of experience in education		
1-10 years	3.50 (0.761)	3.56 (0.768)
11-20 years	3.14 (0.854)	3.63 (0.684)
More than 20 years	2.95 (1.026)	3.12 (0.857)
Total	3.20 (0.898)	3.46 (0.787)
ANOVA	$F (2,57) = 1.973, p = 0.148$	$F (2,58) = 2.366, p = 0.103$

Note. S1 = statement 1. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 8

Comparison Between Prequestionnaire and Postquestionnaire and ANOVA S2

Statement 2: Each student should be provided an adult advocate at this school.

Demographics	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)
Role		
Encore	3.59 (0.734)	3.47 (0.733)
Core	3.61 (0.899)	3.81 (0.401)
Counselors & Others	4.00 (0.000)	4.00 (0.000)
Total	3.63 (0.802)	3.81 (0.503)
ANOVA	F (2, 57) = 0.504, p = 0.527	F (2, 60) = 0.766, p = 0.469
Educational level		
BA	3.73 (0.905)	4.00 (0.000)
BA+15	3.86 (0.378)	4.00 (0.000)
MA	3.44 (1.014)	3.91 (0.302)
MA+15	3.23 (1.092)	3.64 (0.497)
MA+30	3.85 (0.366)	3.71 (0.717)
Total	3.63 (0.802)	3.81 (0.503)
ANOVA	F (4 ,55) = 1.537, p = 0.204	F (4, 58) = 1.313, p = 0.276
Years of experience in advisory program		
0 Years	3.71 (0.732)	3.85 (0.533)
1 – 5 Years	3.79 (0.426)	3.71 (0.470)
More than 5 Years	3.00 (1.309)	3.83 (0.408)
Total	3.63 (0.802)	3.81 (0.503)
ANOVA	F (2 ,57) = 3.136, p = 0.051	F (2, 60) = 0.488, p = 0.616
Age		
20-30 years	3.93 (0.258)	3.94 (0.236)
31-40 years	3.27 (1.191)	3.78 (0.441)
41-50 years	3.62 (0.806)	3.60 (0.828)
More than 51 years	3.63 (0.761)	3.84 (0.375)
Total	3.64 (0.797)	3.80 (0.511)
ANOVA	F (3,57) = 1.497, p = 0.225	F (3,57) = 1.316, p = 0.278
Years of experience in education		
1-10 years	3.90 (0.308)	3.92 (0.277)
11-20 years	3.36 (1.049)	3.75 (0.444)
More than 20 years	3.68 (0.749)	3.76 (0.753)
Total	3.64 (0.797)	3.82 (0.497)
ANOVA	F (2, 58) = 2.543, p = 0.087	F (2,59) = 0.805, p = 0.452

Note. S2 = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

Table 9

Comparison Between Prequestionnaire and Postquestionnaire and ANOVA S3

Statement 3: I want to be an advisor at this school.

Demographics	Pre M(SD)	Post M(SD)
Role		
Encore	3.36 (0.953)	3.47 (0.841)
Core	3.30 (0.918)	3.50 (0.775)
Counselors & Others	4.00 (0.000)	3.75 (0.463)
Total	3.38 (0.904)	3.52 (0.759)
ANOVA	F (2, 57) = 1.313, p = 0.277	F (2, 60) = 0.406, p = 0.668
Educational level		
BA	3.45 (0.934)	4.00 (0.000)
BA+15	3.43 (0.535)	3.67 (0.500)
MA	3.44 (1.130)	3.73 (0.647)
MA+15	3.00 (1.080)	3.36 (0.633)
MA+30	3.55 (0.759)	3.29 (1.007)
Total	3.38 (0.904)	3.52 (0.759)
ANOVA	F (4 ,55) = 0.775, p = 0.546	F (4, 58) = 1.846, p = 0.132
Years of experience in advisory program		
0 Years	3.47 (0.797)	3.63 (0.667)
1 – 5 Years	3.36 (1.082)	3.29 (0.985)
More than 5 Years	3.00 (1.069)	3.50 (0.548)
Total	3.38 (0.904)	3.52 (0.759)
ANOVA	F (2 ,57) = 0.913, p = 0.407	F (2, 60) = 1.142, p = 0.326
Age		
20-30 years	3.60 (0.632)	3.72 (0.752)
31-40 years	3.00 (1.183)	3.78 (0.441)
41-50 years	3.56 (0.814)	3.27 (0.884)
More than 51 years	3.32 (0.946)	3.37 (0.761)
Total	3.39 (0.900)	3.51 (0.766)
ANOVA	F (3,57) = 1.213, p = 0.313	F (3,57) = 1.592, p = 0.201
Years of experience in education		
1-10 years	3.65 (0.587)	3.72 (0.678)
11-20 years	3.23 (0.922)	3.50 (0.688)
More than 20 years	3.32 (1.108)	3.29 (0.920)
Total	3.39 (0.900)	3.53 (0.762)
ANOVA	F (2, 58) = 1.271, p = 0.288	F (2,59) = 1.640, p = 0.203

Note. S3 = statement 3. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

From the disaggregated data, an increase of mean response at postquestionnaire was noted for all subgroups. For example, the total postquestionnaire mean score for respondents' role increased in statement 1 (from 3.19 to 3.47), statement 2 (3.63 to 3.81), and statement 3 (3.38 to 3.52). A similar increase in the total postquestionnaire mean score was also noted for all subgroups. This suggested that there was an increase in the postquestionnaire mean score across the subgroup categories. Results from the analysis of variance (ANOVA) suggested no statistical significant difference of means within the subgroups. Hence these results suggested that the professional development was generally effective across all categorizes of subgroups.

However, despite seeing an increase in mean scores, Chi Square tests revealed no statistical difference in responses between the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire. For example, in comparing respondents' overall mean scores during the prequestionnaire with their postquestionnaire responses for question one, no statistical difference was noted ($\chi^2_{(3)} = 3.471$; p = 0.325). Similar results were also noted for questions two and three. The results of the Chi-Square tests are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Pearson Chi-Square for Prequestionnaire and Postquestionnaire

SN	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
S1: Pre V Post	3.471	3	0.325
S2: Pre V Post	2.181	2	0.336
S3: Pre V Post	2.363	3	0.501

Note. S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire

To further investigate if statistical differences existed within each demographic subgroup, the association between individual demographic variables and responses given during the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire were tested. The results of the various tests of association are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Comparison of Respondents' Demographic Association to their Questionnaires

Measure and Variable	Pre Correlation Coefficient	Post Correlation Coefficient
Role [a]		
S1: Support for advisory program	$\chi^2_{(12)}= 7.833$	$\chi^2_{(12)}= 6.975$
S2: Support for students to have advisor	$\chi^2_{(8)}= 4.081$	$\chi^2_{(8)}= 4.611$
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(12)}= 4.481$	$\chi^2_{(12)}= 6.010$
Educational Level [b]		
S1: Support for advisory program	$r = - 0.039$	$r = - 0.246$ *
S2: Support for students to have advisor	$r = - 0.010$	$r = - 0.232$
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$r = - 0.042$	$r = - 0.291$ *
Working Experience in Education [b]		
S1: Support for advisory program	$r = - 0.231$	$r = - 0.254$ *
S2: Support for students to have advisor	$r = - 0.088$	$r = - 0.117$
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$r = - 0.053$	$r = - 0.292$ *
Advisory Program Experience [b]		
S1: Support for advisory program	$r = - 0.147$	$r = - 0.023$
S2: Support for students to have advisor	$r = - 0.191$	$r = - 0.187$
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$r = - 0.122$	$r = - 0.166$
Age [b]		
S: Support for advisory program	$r = - 0.059$	$r = - 0.105$
S2: Support for students to have advisor	$r = - 0.141$	$r = - 0.120$
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$r = - 0.070$	$r = - 0.283$ *

Note. S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.
[a] Chi Square test of significance was conducted
[b] Spearman Rho test of significance was conducted
*** $p \leq 0.001$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ * $p \leq 0.05$

In reference to educational levels, question number one results suggested a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.246$, $p \leq 0.05$) at the postquestionnaire which

indicated that teachers with higher educational levels tended to be less supportive of an advisory program. The coefficient of -0.246 reflected a weak association, almost little or not association, between the educational level and support for an advisory program. Question number three, referencing the desire to volunteer to be an advisor, in the category of educational level also resulted in a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.291$, $p \leq 0.05$), but the coefficient reflected a stronger association than question one. After participating in the course, the years of experience in education indicated a significant negative association for being in favor of implementing an advisory program, question number one ($r = -0.234$, $p \leq 0.05$). As the years of experience increased, the support for implementing a middle school advisory program decreased, but it was a very weak relationship. When the relationship between years of experience in education and the desire to be an advisor was examined, the results illustrated a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.292$, $p \leq 0.05$). This was statistically significant because there was a 95% or more chance that the course made an impact. Age was also examined with question number three, "I want to be an advisor at this school." The results showed a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.283$, $p \leq 0.05$) on the postquestionnaires indicating that teachers who are older tend to be less supportive of volunteering to be an advisor. The coefficient of -0.283 reflected a weak association between age and the desire to be an advisor.

In terms of wanting to be an advisor, the following groups were more hesitant after the course: higher educational level, more years of experience, and older participant. Results from the correlation analysis also corresponded with the analysis (Table 11) where means were compared (Table 7 - 9). To illustrate, for teachers with a BA, their

prequestionnaire mean for volunteering to be an advisor was 3.45 (0.934) and their

postquestionnaire increased to a mean of 4.00 (0.000). Comparing this to those with a

MA+30, the means of the prequestionnaire responses were 3.55 (0.759) with the

postquestionnaire at 3.29 (1.007). The results all suggested that respondents with higher

educational levels were more hesitant after the course.

In addition, those participants with more years of working experience and higher

educational levels were less supportive of implementing an advisory program. The

Spearman rho found weak associations, almost little or no association. The power of the

relationships was also weak, due to the small sample size; therefore, the results were

weak based on the coefficients near zero.

Nonetheless, to enhance our understanding of which groups may have benefited

from the professional development course, a cross tabulation analysis of respondents'

opinions and beliefs was concluded. Demographic data and respondents who agreed and

strongly agreed to the three questions asked at prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire

were compiled. Cross tabulation results between respondents' answers to the three

questions asked at pre and postquestionnaires and their demographic profile were

summarized in Tables 12 to 16.

After the professional development course, more core teachers were supportive of

implementing a middle school advisory program (+10.30%). In addition, more core

teachers were supportive of each student being provided an adult advocate in school

(+9.1%). In terms of wanting to be an advisor, the course had the greatest impact on the

core teachers (+3.1%). The counselors, Literacy Coach, and others were consistently

supportive of the middle school advisory program. The results from Table 12 also

supported the increase in mean post-questionnaire responses which were noted in Tables 8 - 10.

Table 12

Cross Tabulation of Opinion and Belief Statements and Role in School

	Encore			Core			Counselor/Lit C/Other		
	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%
SN	(n = 22)	(n = 19)	Change	(n = 33)	(n = 36)	Change	(n = 5)	(n = 8)	Change
S1	18	16		25	31		5	8	
	(81.2%)	(84.2%)	3.00%	(75.8%)	(86.1%)	10.30%	(100%)	(100%)	0%
S2	21	18		30	36		5	8	
	(95.5%)	(94.7%)	-0.80%	(90.9%)	(100%)	9.10%	(100%)	(100%)	0%
S3	19	17		29	32		5	8	
	(86.4%)	(89.5%)	3.10%	(87.9%)	(88.9%)	1.00%	(100%)	(100%)	0%

Note. SN = Statement number. S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire. Counselors, Literacy Coach, and others are combined into one category due to their small numbers. This table summarizes and compares somewhat agree and strongly agree responses.

The data obtained from the cross tabulation on educational level signified that the professional development course had the greatest impact in all areas with staff who had a MA+15, followed by staff with a MA and BA (Table 13). Staff with MA+15 increased their support of the school implementing an advisory program (+31.4%), believed that students should be provided an advisor (+15.4%) and volunteered to be an advisor in the program (+16.0%). Increased support of the school implementing an advisory program increased across staff with MA (+13.1%) and staff with BA (+9.1%).

Although it was noted that a percentage of increase in support for staff with MA+15, MA, and BA, a trend of a negative association between educational level and support for the program and volunteering to be an advisor in the program was noted. For example, on the postquestionnaire, the percentage of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed to volunteer to be an advisor decreased from 100% for BA to 81% for MA+30. This trend of support was also similarly noted in Tables 8 - 10.

Table 13

Cross Tabulation of Opinion and Belief Statements and Educational Level

SN	BA Pre (n = 11)	BA Post (n = 8)	BA % Change	BA + 15 Pre (n = 7)	BA + 15 Post (n = 9)	BA + 15 % Change	MA Pre (n = 9)	MA Post (n = 11)	MA % Change
S1	10 (90.9%)	8 (100%)	+9.10%	6 (85.7%)	7 (77.8%)	-7.90%	7 (77.8%)	10 (90.9%)	+13.10%
S2	10 (90.9%)	8 (100%)	+9.10%	7 (100%)	9 (100%)	0%	8 (88.9%)	11 (100%)	+11.10%
S3	10 (90.9%)	8 (100%)	+9.10%	7 (100%)	9 (100%)	0%	8 (88.9%)	10 (90.9%)	+2.00%

SN	MA+15 Pre (n = 13)	MA+15 Post (n = 14)	MA+15 % Change	MA+30 Pre (n = 20)	MA+30 Post (n = 21)	MA+30 % Change
S1	8 (61.50%)	13 (92.90%)	31.40%	17 (85.00%)	17 (81.00%)	-4.00%
S2	11 (84.60%)	14 (100%)	15.40%	20 (100%)	20 (95.20%)	-4.80%
S3	10 (76.90%)	13 (92.90%)	16.00%	19 (95.00%)	17 (81.00%)	-14.00%

Note: S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.
The respondent with the PhD was removed from the analysis as there was no postquestionnaire response.
This table summarizes and compares somewhat agree and strongly agree responses.

The middle school advisory professional development course had the greatest

impact on staff with more than five years of experience in an advisory program (Table

14). Before the course, for staff with more than five years of experience, only 50.0% of

them supported implementing an advisory program and 75.0% agreed that students

should be provided an advisor and volunteered to be an advisor. After the intervention,

100% of the staff with more than 5 years of experience agreed and strongly agreed in all

three areas.

Table 14

Cross Tabulation of Opinions and Beliefs and Years of Experience in an Advisory Program

SN	0 Years			1-5 Years			More than 5 Years		
	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%
	(n = 38)	(n = 40)	Change	(n = 14)	(n = 17)	Change	(n = 8)	(n = 6)	Change
S1	33	36		11	13		4	6	
	(86.8%)	(90.0%)	+3.20%	(78.6%)	(76.5%)	-2.10%	(50%)	(100%)	+50.0%
S2	36	39		14	17		6	6	
	(94.7%)	(97.5%)	+2.80%	(100%)	(100%)	0%	(75%)	(100%)	+25%
S3	35	38		12	13		6	6	
	(92.1)%	(95.0%)	+2.90%	(85.7%)	(76.50%)	-9.20%	(75%)	(100%)	+25%

Note: The respondents with more than 5 years experience are combined due to their small numbers. This table summarizes and compares somewhat agree and strongly agree responses. S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire.

In looking at the opinions and beliefs with the demographic data that represented

the age of the participants, the course had the greatest impact on staff between the ages of

31 - 40 years. Before the intervention for staff between the ages of 31 - 40 years, 63.6%

of them supported having an advisory program, 81.8% agreed that students should have

an adult advocate, and 72.7% of them volunteered to be an advisor. After the intervention

100% of the staff between the ages of 31 - 40 years of age agreed and strongly agreed in

all three areas as noted in Table 15.

Table 15

Cross Tabulation of Opinions and Beliefs and Age Range

SN	20-30 years			31-40 years		
	Pre ($n = 15$)	Post ($n = 18$)	% Change	Pre ($n = 11$)	Post ($n = 9$)	% Change
S1	14 (93.3%)	17 (94.4%)	+1.1%	7 (63.6%)	9 (100%)	+36.4%
S2	15 (100%)	18 (100%)	0%	9 (81.8%)	9 (100%)	+18.2%
S3	14 (93.3%)	17 (94.4%)	+1.1%	8 (72.7%)	9 (100%)	+27.3%
SN	41-50 years			More than 51 years		
	Pre ($n = 16$)	Post ($n = 15$)	% Change	Pre ($n = 19$)	Post ($n = 19$)	% Change
S1	13 (81.3%)	11 (73.3%)	-8.0%	15 (78.9%)	16 (84.2%)	+5.3%
S2	15 (93.8%)	14 (93.3%)	-0.5%	18 (94.7%)	19 (100%)	+5.3%
S3	15 (93.8%)	13 (86.7%)	-7.1%	17 (89.5%)	16 (84.2%)	-5.3%

Note. SN = Statement number. S = statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire. The respondents who are more than 51 years are combined due to the small numbers. This table summarizes and compares somewhat agree and strongly agree responses.

Table 16 indicated that participants with 11 - 20 years of experience in education were most impacted by the professional development course. Before the course, 77.3% were in favor of implementing a middle school advisory program compared to 85.0% after the course. Only 86.4% of the participants with 11-20 years of experience believed that each student should be provided an adult advocate, compared to 100% of the postquestionnaire respondents, and 86.4% wanted to be an advisor during the prequestionnaire, compared to 90% after the course. In terms of being in favor of implementing an advisory program, the course had the greatest impact on those with 20 or more years of experience (+14.0%).

Table 16

Cross Tabulation of Opinions and Beliefs for Years of Experience in Education

SN	1 – 10 years			11 – 20 years			> 20 years		
	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%	Pre	Post	%
	(n = 20)	(n = 25)	Change	(n = 22)	(n = 20)	Change	(n = 19)	(n = 17)	Change
S1	19	23		17	17		13	14	
	(95%)	(92%)	-3.00%	(77.3%)	(85.0%)	+7.7%	(68.4%)	(82.40%)	+14.0%
S2	20	25		19	20		18	16	
	(100%)	(100%)	0%	(86.4%)	(100%)	+13.6%	(94.7%)	(94.10%)	-0.6%
S3	19	24		19	18		16	14	
	(95%)	(96%)	+1%	(86.4%)	(90.0%)	+3.6%	(84.2%)	(82.40%)	-1.8%

Note. SN = statement number. S = Statement. Pre = prequestionnaire. Post = postquestionnaire. The respondents who have 1 to 10, 11 to 20, and 21 or more years of experience are combined due to the small numbers. This table summarizes and compares somewhat agree and strongly agree responses.

The participants in this study also responded to two short answer questions during the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire. The results from question nine on the prequestionnaire have been displayed in Table 17.

Table 17

Frequency and Percentage of Total for Responses to Prequestionnaire #9

Response	Frequency	%
Time	15	88.2
Curriculum	97	52.7
Class	35	19.0
Teachers	15	8.2
Training	7	3.8
Class Size	6	3.3
Parents	4	2.2
Students	3	1.6
Relationships	2	1.1
Total	184	100

A majority (88.2%) of the participants believed that time should be a component of a middle school advisory program. Specifically, "Time to meet with groups," "Time set aside for meeting with students," "Consistent meeting time," and "Regular meeting time" were consistent comments. Curriculum received 52.7% of the comments.

Specifically, "Character Education," "Academics," "Social Skills," and "Team Building."

All responses can be found in Appendix B3.

The results from question nine on the postquestionnaire have been displayed in

Table 18.

Table 18

Frequency and Percentage of Total for Responses to Postquestionnaire #9

Response	Frequency	%
Curriculum	75	45.2
Class	37	22.3
Students	16	9.6
Time	9	5.4
Class Size	6	3.6
Teachers	6	3.6
Training	6	3.6
Schedule	5	3.0
Class Time	4	2.4
Parents	1	.6
Planning	1	.6
Total	166	100

As reflected in Table 18, the majority (45.2%) of the participants believed that

curriculum should be a component of an advisory program during the postquestionnaire.

The following comments were made regarding curriculum: "Goal setting and monitoring progress towards goals," "Materials- like videos, books," "Planned activities," "Different curriculum per grade level," "Social skills," and "Study Skills." This category class was mentioned 22.3% of the time. Participants shared the following components that should be included in a middle school advisory program: "Combined age groups," "Multi- age group," "Groups no more than 15," and "Have same students all 3 years, adding 6th grade to group as 8th graders leave." All responses can be found in Appendix B4.

In comparing the same question on the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire, approximately one-half of the percentage totals were classified into the curriculum category: 52% of the prequestionnaire and 45% of the postquestionnaire. Likewise, few participants believed that parents, 2.2% on prequestionnaire and .6% on the postquestionnaire, should be a component of advisory

The results from question 10 on the prequestionnaire have been displayed in Table 19.

Table 19

Frequency and Percentage of Total for Responses to Prequestionnaire #10

Response	Frequency	%
Teachers	56	48.3
Time	24	20.7
Schedule	10	8.6
Class	9	7.8
Training	6	5.2
Curriculum	5	4.3
Students	4	3.4
Class Size	1	0.9
Relationships	1	0.9
Total	116	100

The majority of the participants (48.3%) felt that teachers were the roadblocks to middle school advisory. Teachers and counselors reported concern of participation and lack of buy in. Some of the comments were "Lack of participation/commitment to make it successful," "Negative attitudes," "People who feel like it is another thing put on their plate," and "Teachers not believing in advisories benefits [*sic*]." Participants were also concerned about time (20.7%). Responses recorded by teachers related to time were "Everyone is swamped already doing their BEST 4 kids," "Our schedules are beyond overload as it is," and "Enough time to develop and carry out plan." All responses can be found in Appendix B5.

The most responses to the postquestionnaire (Table 20) reflected the same categories as the prequestionnaire: teachers (40.5%) and time (18%). Participants shared the following comments regarding teachers, "Negative teachers," "Getting everyone on board," "Teachers unwilling to participate," and "Teacher enthusiasm or lack of." In response to time, the comments from participants included, "Finding time in the day," "Finding enough time to successfully implement the program," "Time to ensure it is done correctly and effectively," and "Time to have and plan activities."

On the postquestionnaire, training received 1.8% of the responses whereas training was more of a concern on the prequestionnaire (5.2%). On both questionnaires, relationships received .9% of the total responses. All responses can be found in Appendix B6.

Table 20

Frequency and Percentage of Total of Responses to Postquestionnaire #10

Response	Frequency	%
Teachers	45	40.5
Time	20	18.0
Schedule	14	12.6
Students	13	11.7
Curriculum	7	6.3
Parents	3	2.7
Planning	2	1.8
Staffing	2	1.8
Training	2	1.8
Philosophy	1	0.9
Program	1	0.9
Relationships	1	0.9
Total	111	100

On the postquestionnaire, one additional question was asked of the participants, "After participating in The Benefits of Middle School Advisory professional development course, are you more in favor of implementing a middle school advisory program at this school?" The yes responses were 78%, and 19% of the teachers and counselors said no.

Summary

The comparison of the means across all subgroups, the cross tabulation of participants who responded strongly agree and somewhat agree, and the relationships found significant by the Spearman rho all indicate the same information. As educational level increases, the desire to be an advisor decreases. As years of experience increase, the desire to be an advisor decreases. In addition the older the age range of participants, the less willing they are to be an advisor. In comparing the mean for participants, the data suggested that the participants with higher educational levels were more hesitant after the course. Thus, the professional development course had varying effects on teachers and counselors after the course on middle school advisory. In comparing the open ended questions, there were 11 categories on the postquestionnaire compared to the nine themes on question number nine. On question 10, the responses were categorized into 10 themes on the prequestionnaire compared to twelve on the postquestionnaire.

Chapter V – Discussion

Discussion and Limitations

Influencing opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors through professional

development is an immense and complex field of study. This study was designed to

examine how teachers and counselors reacted to a professional development course

developed to influence opinions and beliefs on middle school advisory. The course was

developed by the researcher after an extensive examination of advisory and adult

learners. Authors and organizations that advocate middle level reform were cited

throughout this research. The literature and research on adult learning methodologies and

professional development were cited from past and present authors who captured the

essence of addressing the needs of adult learners.

CCW Middle School teachers and counselors were participants in the research

and the course was held at the school site. The location and participants were selected by

means of the convenience method. This method was utilized because the researcher was

the principal of the school. The participants in the course were used as the dependent

variable as the researcher could not directly manipulate them. The dependent variables

were the teachers' opinions and beliefs toward middle school advisory as measured by

the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire.

As a part of the quantitative research, adult learning theories was explored. The

course on middle school advisory was developed by employing Knowles' learning

assumptions (Knowles, 1980; Knowles & Associates, 1984, Knowles & Brown, 2000;

Knowles et al., 2005). Table 21 illustrates the six assumptions of learning as they were

applied to the middle school advisory course.

Table 21

Knowles Assumptions As Applied to the Middle School Advisory Course

Assumptions	Activities/Strategies/Techniques
Need to know	Communicate what
	Communicate why
	Communicate when
	Communicate goals
	State learning objectives
	Foster curiosity
	Create internal incentives
Learners self concept	Prepare a physical environment in which adults feel at ease
	Use adult sized furniture and equipment
	Establish a spirit of mutuality
	Review rules for respect, acceptance, and nonthreatening relationships that are used at all faculty development
	Establish environment where participants can express themselves without fear or ridicule
	Support collaboration
	Solicit input
Learner's experience	Link prior experiences
	Facilitate group discussion
	Facilitate problem solving
	Facilitate simulation exercises
	Facilitate analysis of information and generalizations
	Acknowledge values
Readiness to learn	Group participants for activities
	Provide life application activities
	Explain activities
	Provide sequence for activities
	Facilitate discussion on case studies
Orientation to learn	Create opportunities to apply learning
	Allow time for questions, comments, concerns
	Identify future course needs
	Promote dialogue
	Facilitate guided discussion
Motivation to learn	Utilize technology
	Lecture
	Encourage experience sharing discussions
	Highlight nonverbal exercises

The results of this study produced important findings. First, as predicted, more teachers and counselors wanted to implement a middle school advisory program after participating in the course. Furthermore the researcher concluded that teachers and counselors were more in favor of each student being provided an adult advocate and wanting to be an advisor. Hence, the professional development course influenced change in opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors. Ashton and Gill (2000) noted that emotion impacts change and to affect change, teachers and counselors need as much "informative conceptual framework" as possible (p. 100).

According to Irez (2007), the beliefs of those who work with children in school are "indicators of teachers' planning, decision making and subsequent classroom behavior" (p. 17). The results indicated that participants would think positively about the components of advisory when planning and making decisions that impact students. The results of this study suggested that the research on young adolescents and how to better meet their needs in middle school through advisory resonated with the participants. The results of this research aligned with Bellanca's (2009) findings on effective professional development for educators. According to Bellanca, well prepared professional development holds "significant meaning for...teachers" (p.11). The results demonstrated that teachers and counselors believe in the importance of middle school advisory and were willing to influence their opinions and beliefs when provided with the information in a manner that was conducive to learning.

Second, upon analyzing the demographic data by categories, the researcher's findings yielded that teachers and counselors with more education, more years of experience, and those in older age ranges were less willing to volunteer as advisor. There

were a number of possible reasons and limitations for these findings. The statistical

power of the research was low, due to the convenience sample used. In addition, some

categories were missing data because participants did not respond to the statement. This

impacted the data in some of the demographic categories. The number of participants

who completed the postquestionnaire was greater than those who returned the

prequestionnaire. If more subjects were utilized, the results would be more indicative of

the general population. The course was clear in defining the purpose, rationale, and

benefits of middle school advisory, but changing the paradigms of adults can be difficult.

Over 50% of the participants in this study had 21 years or more teaching

experience. Fifty-three percent of the teachers and counselors in the study were 41 years

old or older. Most of the participants who had 21 years or more experience in education

and were 41 years old or more did not attend a university that focused on middle level

philosophy and characteristics of effective middle schools. The focus for older teachers

and counselors and those who have been in the field of education for 21 years or more

was aligned with junior high school. Although certain demographics did not illustrate the

predicted findings, the data encompassing all participants resulted in a positive influence

in opinions and beliefs.

Another limitation of this study was the need for the development offered to be as

realistic as possible. The development was offered through the existing faculty

development day that was held each month. During this time, teachers expected to be

finished with the activities in approximately one hour. Being sensitive to the development

time and the longevity of the course, all activities planned during the third session were

not covered due to the time limitation. During the third session, the participants were

fully engaged, learning, collaborating, and working on the jigsaw activity. The facilitator made the decision to allow them the necessary time to complete the activity. This resulted in sharing the remaining information planned for the third session during the last gathering, which condensed the initial activities planned for the last class.

Adding a comparison group, which did not receive the course on middle school advisory, could have been implemented as a method to help remedy one of the limitations of the study. If no change occurred between the prequestionnaire and postquestionnaire of the comparison group, there would be more reason to believe that the change was caused by the course. Another limitation was the fact that the prequestionnaires and postquestionnaires were not tracked. This was not a component of the research study due to ethical considerations. The researcher was the facilitator and the principal of the school. It was determined not to track the questionnaires because there was no need to make teachers and counselors uncomfortable as they participated in the study.

Implications for Effective Schools

The review of literature strongly suggests that adult learners are different from children learners. Adults bring a vast variety of experience and knowledge when they engage in learning. The prior knowledge of adult learners must be valued, explored, and appreciated during learning opportunities. This study demonstrates the importance of using research based professional development techniques when trying to influence the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors. This study will contribute to the thinking of how a building principal can provide learning opportunities to teachers and counselors. The findings demonstrated a positive change of opinions and beliefs, although analyzing each demographic category did not.

This study could serve as the impetus for a middle school to begin exploring one or all characteristics of effective middle schools. It is the nature of educators to want to improve their practice and the schools in which they work. This research could lead to additional courses being developed to impact middle level reform.

Recommendations

Although the sample size was small and the design of the study limits the generalizability to all teachers and counselors, the implications of the results are applicable to other educators with similar demographics. The data concludes that on an average, all teachers and counselors will change their opinions and beliefs toward embracing middle school advisory.

Even though this course is not to give teachers and counselors the impression that they will immediately implement advisory, participants will benefit if they are able to brainstorm activities they would incorporate into an advisory program. This personal self-reflection allows time to review activities and lessons shared during the course and think about lessons they would like to generate. This process would alleviate some reluctance or unwillingness.

If this study is replicated, it would be advantageous to think of different development activities for the various demographic groups involved. There may be better teaching methodologies to use with adult learners who have more experience, education, and are in the age range of 41 years and older. Older teachers and counselors may not have performed well in the professional development course because

Various psychological changes occur in the process of aging, such as decline in visual activity, reduction in speed of reaction, and lowering energy levels, which

operates as barriers to learning unless compensated by such devises as louder

sound, larger printing, and slower pace. (Knowles, 1980, p.55)

It is the hope of this researcher that future research will provide professional development

that impacts specific demographic groups, which results in a significant change in their

opinions and beliefs.

The course should extend for more than a four month period, preferably five

months. This time allotment would provide enough sessions for the facilitator to share the

research and literature through research based strategies advantageous to adult learners.

Extending the course by one month would provide the opportunity for more self

reflection at the end of the research, which may change the data compiled from the

postquestionnaire. The extension of the program would also allow for conversation on the

few themes that appeared on the postquestionnaire short answer question regarding

roadblocks to implementing advisory. The frequencies of the additional categories are

very small, from 9% to 2.7% (from one frequency to three frequencies). Nevertheless, if

they were more clearly addressed, participants would have been exposed to the

information to better make decisions.

Professional development cannot eradicate all fears and barriers teachers and

counselors have when thinking about change of practice, but it can provide the time and

setting for the information to be discussed with colleagues it is clear that engaging

teachers and counselors in development surrounding the benefits of middle school

advisory does influence opinions and beliefs, which directly impacts the success of

adolescent learners. The reason for educating early adolescents is to make a significant

difference in their lives. Understanding the benefits of middle school advisory and having the desire to be an advisor can be a lifeline for a young adolescent.

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Appendix A

Statistical Table

Comparison of Respondents' Prequestionnaire and Postquestionnaire Responses

Demographics and Statements	Test Statistic
Role [a]	
S1: Support for Advisory program	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.276$; p=0.320
S2: Support for students to have an advisor	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.276$; p=0.320
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.472$; p=0.480
Educational Level [a]	
S1: Support for Advisory program	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 3.471$; p=0.325
S2: Support for students to have an advisor	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.181$; p=0.336
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.363$; p=0.501
Working Experience [a]	
S1: Support for Advisor program	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 3.195$; p=0.326
S2: Support for students to have an advisor	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.374$; p=0.305
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.542$; p=0.468
Advisory Program Experience [a]	
S1: Support for Advisory program	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 3.819$; p=0.282
S2: Support for students to have an advisor	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.276$; p=0.320
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.472$; p=0.480
Age [a]	
S1: Support for Advisory program	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.927$; p=0.403
S2: Support for students to have an advisor	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 2.016$; p=0.365
S3: Volunteer to be an advisor	$\chi^2_{(3)} = 2.190$; p=0.534

Note. [a] Chi Square test of significance was conducted. S = Statement

Appendix B

Instrumentation

Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor Prequestionnaire

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY
TEACHER AND COUNSELOR PREQUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each sentence and rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. I am in favor of this school implementing a middle school advisory program.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

2. Each student should be provided an adult advocate at this school.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

3. I want to be an advisor at this school.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the sentence and circle your answer to the demographic questions.

4. Indicate if you are an encore teacher, core teacher or counselor by circling the correct descriptor.

Encore   Core   Counselor

5. Circle the highest level of your education.

BA   BA+15   MA   MA+15   MA+30   Ph.D   Ed.D

6. Circle your years of experience in education.

1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

7. Circle your years of experience working in an advisory program.

     0   1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25

8. Circle the range that represents your age.

    20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-70   71-80

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the questions.

9. What components should be included in a middle school advisory program?

10. What do you see as roadblocks to implementing a middle school advisory program?

Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor Postquestionnaire

MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY
TEACHER AND COUNSELOR POSTQUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each sentence and rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. I am in favor of this school implementing a middle school advisory program.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

2. Each student should be provided an adult advocate at this school.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

3. I want to be an advisor at this school.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the sentence and circle your answer to the demographic questions.

4. Indicate if you are an encore teacher, core teacher or counselor by circling the correct descriptor.

Encore   Core   Counselor

5. Circle the highest level of your education.

BA   BA+15   MA   MA+15   MA+30   Ph.D   Ed.D

6. Circle your years of experience in education.

1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26 or more

7. Circle your years of experience working in an advisory program

0   1-5   5-10   11-15   16-20   21-25

8. Circle the range that represents your age.

    20-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61-70   71-80

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the questions.

9. What components should be included in a middle school advisory program?

10. What do you see as roadblocks to implementing a middle school advisory program?

11. After participating in *The Benefits of Middle School Advisory* professional development course, are you more in favor of implementing a middle school advisory program at this school?

       Yes   No

Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor
Prequestionnaire Results for Question 9

What components should be included in a middle school advisory program?

Responses		Themes
1	6-8 grade level participants	Class
2	Advocate for all three years	
3	Begin the advisory program in 6th grade and follow through to the 8th grade	
4	Certain days to meet	
5	Checking up on missing work	
6	Choice by teachers to include kids they may already have a strong connection with	
7	Class/elective selection	
8	Cohesive group	
9	Continuous for 2-3 years (same advisory)	
10	Divided by grade level/gender?	
11	Flexible (move students around)	
12	Good "match" between teacher and student	
13	Group of children need to fit together. The advisor has to fit the group of children	
14	Homogeneous gender grouping	
15	I would prefer on-team kids in my advisory	
16	I'm not sure. Probably a survey to match interests of adults and kids. Also, staff development will be necessary to help get it started. In addition, parents will need to be informed at PTO.	
17	Keep same group 3 yrs., add new 6th grade when 8th "graduates."	
18	Keep same student for entire 3 years.	
19	Maybe teachers / adults should "loop" with kids each year	
20	Mentoring	
21	Mix groups to include all age groups so that there is a buddy-type program	
22	Mixed or heterogeneous groupings	
23	Multi-grade level	
24	Not too many students per teacher	
25	Opportunity to loop with students- or not- depending on if the advisory relationship is a good one	
26	Same grade level students	
27	Same sex	
28	Same sex and grade level	
29	Scheduled one-on-one time w/students	

30	Stay with the same child, 6-8	
31	Students are fit with a faculty member - either by choice, some selection process - interest matchup, etc.	
32	Students need to be assigned to adults they trust or need to be given time to build trust with that adult	
33	Students paired with educated teachers	
34	Students should be assigned so that they are not grouped by team, but rather by a grade level and team mix (6, 7, 8 - different teams)	
35	Trust/friendship	
1	Small (10 students maximum) to really be effective	Class size
2	Small advisory group	
3	Small groups	
4	Small groups	
5	Small in numbers	
6	Very small groups	
1	A strong and defined curriculum and/or a monitoring system	Curriculum
2	Able to talk about anything	
3	Academic planning	
4	Academic review of grades/citizenship	
5	Academics	
6	Academics	
7	Academics, class meetings, parent contact	
8	Activities that promote group building	
9	All activities provided by school, not an extra prep	
10	Break down goals/objectives to see where we are on each	
11	Career education	
12	Career education/college info/high school electives resources available	
13	Character building and goal planning for high school and the future	
14	Character development	
15	Character education	
16	Character education	
17	Character education	
18	Character education	
19	Character education	
20	Character education	
21	Character education	
22	Character education	
23	Character themes	

24	Character traits
25	Collection of activities
26	Community awareness
27	Community awareness
28	Community service
29	Community service
30	Confidential
31	Conflict resolution
32	Consistent group of people to develop/revise/develop for a best practice program
33	Current events
34	Curriculum provided to teachers
35	Defined curriculum
36	Discussion of important current events and social issues
37	Diversity training
38	Diversity training
39	Emotional social and intellectual development
40	Format and materials provided to faculty members uncomfortable with being advisors
41	Friendship skills
42	Fun activities that students can take part in to unwind from their class schedule.
43	Goal planning
44	Goal setting
45	Goal setting
46	Grade specific activities/events so these are not repeated from year to year
47	Guidelines
48	Guidelines to be followed by all
49	Help w/activities that encourage a sense of community
50	I think middle school advisory should allow students to think about a variety of topics and be able to talk and voice their opinion freely
51	Identifying student strengths and weaknesses
52	Individualized in order or meet needs of students
53	Life skills (online banking, checkbooks, insurance... all the stuff you need to know how to do when you are on your own)
54	Looking at academics w/ students- giving advice
55	Mini lessons about the program perhaps each month (i.e., bullying)
56	Norms
57	Not as familiar with this but I think guidelines. All students want to be recognized/acknowledged
58	One-on-one sessions with each student.

59	Opportunities for activities outside of school to personalize
60	Possibly guest speakers or business mentors who could come twice/month before they go to work
61	Possibly study skills
62	Preparation for high school
63	Problem solving
64	Purposeful guidelines
65	Real life skills/etiquette
66	Resources for them
67	Same plan for all students
68	Self awareness
69	Self-esteem/character building
70	Service learning
71	Set curriculum
72	Social skills
73	Social skills
74	Social skills
75	Socialization
76	Some set objectives/guidelines for the meeting times.
77	Speakers from community
78	Specific items each teacher needs to implement but is given a choice on how to implement the items
79	Specific norms
80	Specific objectives fore ach grade level
81	Structure of the program
82	Structure, defined roles
83	Student interest inventory, learning styles inventory, MBTI, knew selves as a learner
84	Suggested/planned activities
85	Support / team building
86	System of observation/evaluation of various programming
87	Talk about non-academic middle school issues
88	Talking about social and behavioral concerns
89	Talking sessions similar to support groups
90	Team building
91	Team building
92	Team building
93	Team building activities

94	Teen issue discussions	
95	The advisory should be led by teacher, but not controlled	
96	Topics and issues that this age group faces	
97	Useful tools that can be utilized by the advisor and the advisee	
1	Contacting home when necessary	Parents
2	Parent advisors/volunteers to help lower number of kids in group or as an additional person with a group	
3	Parent involvement	
4	Volunteer opportunities	
1	Personal conversations	Relationship
2	Relationships	
1	Able to refer students for additional help	Student
2	Peer mentoring w/in advisory	
3	Peer relationships	
1	All adults should be involved - encore, core, counselors	Teachers
2	All members of school community to have representation	
3	All staff members included	
4	All staff participate	
5	Enthusiastic teachers who have been trained properly (on character education and advisory)	
6	Every faculty member participates	
7	Every needs to be supportive	
8	Everyone involved	
9	Everyone on board	
10	Include counselors, core, and encore teachers	
11	Inclusive of all teachers	
12	Making sure everyone is for it or it may not work	
13	Middle school advisory program should include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and administrators. I do believe all students should have advocates. This includes a mentor/buddy.	
14	Not imposed on staff - volunteers only	
15	Plans to get started	
1	At least 20-30 minutes daily to effectively implement	Time
2	Beginning of the day	
3	Consistent meeting times	
4	Consistent meeting times, weekly	
5	Have scheduled time to meet to keep structure	
6	If we meet too seldom, like once a week or less, and it is comprised of students not in our class, then we never really have a chance to get to know each other	

7	Need to be promoted everyday	
8	Not first thing in morning - mid morning or afternoon	
9	Regular meeting time	
10	Time for meeting	
11	Time set aside for meeting with students.	
12	Time to develop	
13	Time to get to know students	
14	Time to meet with groups	
15	Time to meet with teachers for additional help	
1	Definition of advocate - define role	Training
2	Expectations	
3	Training about advisory groups	
4	Training for staff	
5	Training for teachers	
6	Training for teachers	
7	What will it look like?	
1	I don't know	
2	I have no idea	

*Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor
Postquestionnaire Results for Question 9*

What components should be included in a middle school advisory program?

	Responses	Themes
1	Combined age groups	Class
2	Combined age groups	
3	Combined age groups	
4	Cross-age	
5	Crosses grades	
6	Different grade levels	
7	Groups of no more than 15	
8	Have same students all 3 years, adding 6th grade to group as 8th graders leave	
9	Mixed grade levels	
10	Mixed grades	
11	Multi-age group	
12	Multi-grade	
13	Multi-grade	
14	Multi-grade	
15	Multi-grade	
16	Multi-grade	
17	Multi-grade level	
18	Multiple grades	
19	No more than 10 kids	
20	One adult per child	
21	Selection process where students are placed based on their preference and teacher preference	
22	Separate the discipline problems	
23	Sizes 15 or below critical	
24	Small #s	
25	Small class	
26	Small class size	
27	Small class size	
28	Small class size (10-15 students)	
29	Small group size	
30	Small groups	

31	Small groups	
32	Small groups	
33	Small groups	
34	Small groups - ideal would be 10 in a group	
35	Small groups that meet daily	
36	Small intimate groups	
37	Small size	
1	10-12 students	Class size
2	10-15 students	
3	10-20 students	
4	Advisory classes are small (10 - 15 tops)	
5	Less than 10 students per group	
6	Very small groups of students	
7	20 minutes	
8	20 minutes per day minimum	
9	20-30 minutes	
10	30 minutes (not less, not more)	
1	Academic strategies	Curriculum
2	Academic, social, emotional, and physical activities need to focus on the whole child developmental concept	
3	Academic/study support	
4	Activities	
5	Activities that emphasize al aspects of adolescent growth. I feel that activities need to be set and drawn from pre-made activities. Everyone teaches the same values/skills. Then they can be reinforced in every class.	
6	Activities to help students become better citizens	
7	Activities to promote social/emotional welfare as well as academic. Also to perhaps do service activities	
8	Activities with movement	
9	Activity planning	
10	Carefully planned agendas	
11	Character building with real discussions	
12	Character education	
13	Character education	
14	Check-in	
15	Components should include resources (units, activities) for teachers	
16	Confidence building activities	
17	Conflict resolution	

18	Consistency
19	Consistent meeting times
20	Curriculum
21	Curriculum
22	Curriculum
23	Curriculum geared towards specific needs/goals of this school
24	Different curriculum per grade level
25	Discussing "pressing issues" that are relevant to a middle school student. Pressing issues- bullying, puberty, differences, family/environmental (home) issues, social issues, emotions, effective problem solving
26	Discussion time
27	Education
28	Follow through
29	Goal setting & monitoring progress towards goals
30	Goal setting activities and fun activities
31	Goal setting, problem solving
32	Goal setting/ reflecting opportunities
33	Interaction between all grade levels
34	It should not be curriculum based
35	Lessons from model guidance
36	Lessons that meet the needs of the students, if students are struggling with behavior, then there should be a group of lessons on positive/correct behavior
37	Materials - like videos, books
38	Meeting among advisors, regularly to share feelings, what's working/not working
39	Monthly meetings to start
40	Monthly scheduled activities - like silent read
41	Multi-level curriculum with specific planned activities. (6th, 7th, & 8th grade curriculum)
42	Open communication
43	Overall structure to what should occur w/ common objectives but flexibility in implementation
44	Packet of activities available maybe boys/girls separate
45	Planned activities
46	Planned curriculum/activities
47	Planned suggested activities
48	Planning and staff development
49	Pre-generated ideas/topics
50	Prepare & share activities

51	Programs (school-wide - are implemented to support advisory. assemblies, field trips, etc.	
52	Record keeping/ goals & progress	
53	Regular activities - uniform, so all or most groups are doing them	
54	Resources are available	
55	Service projects	
56	Service-learning	
57	Social interaction	
58	Social skills	
59	Social skills	
60	Some activates should be planned but be flexible	
61	SSR & readings in shared kit	
62	Strong proven activities	
63	Structured activities 90% of time	
64	Structured lessons	
65	Student assessment of their involvement and benefit	
66	Study skills	
67	Sufficient time allowed with students	
68	Suggested activities	
69	Suggested activities	
70	Suggested activities	
71	Suggested daily plan	
72	Support from administration	
73	Teachers that want to be in the program	
74	Team building	
75	There should be a curriculum that goes beyond cutesy games and activities or filling in sentence stems in a journal. How does it become real vs. contrived? The dynamics of groups vary so much - one group buys into the plan and another does not.	
76	These should address personal issues that students need to express in order to feel supported. Also, it should emphasize career development, self-esteem, etc.	
77	Treats	
78	Viable, evidence-based activities begun with end in mind	
1	Informing parents	Parents
1	Enough planning so that everyone is on the same page	Planning
1	Daily	Schedule
2	Daily	
3	Daily meeting	
4	Scheduled time should be totally uninterrupted (no pull-outs)	

5	Specific time set aside for advisory	
1	Allow for some choice in who we get	Students
2	Background information about each student you have	
3	Careful consideration of matching advisees to advisors	
4	Communication/confidentiality	
5	Community building	
6	Community service	
7	Decent selection process	
8	Flexible grouping if one/two kids are not working out with advisor	
9	Helping students feel connected to someone at school	
10	Keep kids year to year, if student opts	
11	Look at leadership ability	
12	Student choosing or being matched with an advisor that they are comfortable with	
13	Student/staff input on groups	
14	Students should have a say in choosing their advisor	
15	Students should keep the same advisor for 3 yrs.	
16	We need to remember- kids come first	
1	All staff	Teachers
2	All staff have an advisory group	
3	All staff members are advisors	
4	All teachers/staff should be part of advising	
5	Everyone included	
6	Everyone needs to be on board	
1	Meet daily	Time
2	Time	
3	Time - 20-30 minutes	
4	Time - 30 minutes	
5	Time - 30 minutes	
6	Time - daily sessions	
7	Time 30 minutes daily	
8	Time provided for private conversation between student and teacher	
9	Weekly (at least)	
1	Training	Training
2	Training	
3	Training	
4	Training courses	

| 5 | Training fro advisors - maybe a small group of advisors observing a program at another school to inform our teachers |
| 6 | Training ten advisors |

Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor
Prequestionnaire Results for Question 10

What do you see as roadblocks to implanting a middle school advisory program?

Responses		Themes
1	As I understand advisory can/should be made up of different age groups/grades. Could be a potential problem	Class
2	Distributing papers/information among all three grade levels	
3	Figuring out the correct mix for each group.	
4	How will students be assigned?	
5	Poor mixture of students	
6	Students being assigned to a teacher and it's not a good match	
7	Students paired with teacher that they don't trust/get along with	
8	Too many students assigned to each teacher	
9	Too many students assigned to each teacher	
1	Dividing student body into small enough groups to be worthwhile	Class size
1	Having to provide activities/curriculum for advisory time	Curriculum
2	Homeroom activities pertaining to grade levels	
3	No curriculum/guidelines of how to run the lack of structured program on activities	
4	Not a strong enough curriculum (dependent on teachers all creating their own - "another prep")	
5	Using the time in an effective way	
1	Parent participation (yes/no)	Parent
1	Privacy	Relationship
1	Schedule limitations, staff turnover/attrition	Schedule
2	Scheduling	
3	Scheduling	
4	Scheduling	
5	Scheduling	
6	Scheduling	
7	Scheduling is a nightmare	
8	Sporadic attendance and late arrivals	
9	Taking away instructional time (the above suggestion of 20-30 minutes must come from class time)	
10	Too much additional time that may take away from lesson planning	
1	All students getting the advisor they feel most comfortable with	Student
2	Difficulty in finding right matchup of students and faculty member with such a large student base	
3	Students who don't want to participate	
4	Students who see advisory as a waste of time	
1	Adding more requirements of teachers when we already have our plates full	Teachers

2	Additional plan time required by teacher
3	Another responsibility
4	Apathy
5	Attitudes
6	Attitudes in this building?
7	Change is always difficult, even if its is the right thing
8	Commitment to following up with students
9	Cooperation of all faculty
10	Coordinating all members involved
11	Eliminating meeting time for elective teachers
12	Encore teachers use homeroom time for planning so this may go against the contract
13	Encore teachers will lose teaming unless we restructure something (schedules?)
14	Everyone taking the role seriously
15	Everyone would need to be on the same page, change can be difficult for some
16	Faculty members who do not want to participate
17	Fear of change
18	Finding enough teachers who really care about it
19	First year is the hardest, but after everyone goes through the process, I think everyone will see the benefits
20	How will elective teachers be an advocate - communication with teams when not on a team
21	Inconsistent follow through by leaders
22	Interest from staff
23	Lack of participation/commitment to make it successful
24	Losing homeroom which we use for team building
25	Losing time for instruction - we already lose so much time to testing, etc.
26	Loss of homeroom team - used as field trips, assemblies, graduation, etc. etc.
27	Loss of instructional time
28	Loss of team time for elective teachers
29	Making sure every adult in the building has an advisory
30	Many teachers in this building are lazy and will not implement strategies
31	Negative attitudes
32	Not all will want to participate
33	Not everyone on board. Teachers lack in-depth counselory training. Teachers feel very uncomfortable about dealing with kids on this level of intimacy
34	Not having everyone on board
35	Opposition from staff members
36	Participation by all
37	People who feel like it is another thing put on their plate
38	People who have not experienced advisory or had negative experiences w/advisory
39	Personally I am uncomfortable having students who aren't part of my grading roster. I'm also uncomfortable having grades mixed.

40	Reluctance of teachers to try something new	
41	Some people may not buy-in to the idea of having this type of program at our school	
42	Staff actually following through on the activities, whatever they may be, during the advisory, and then following up with students	
43	Staff resistance	
44	Teacher "buy in"	
45	Teacher absences and subs taking over	
46	Teacher paired with students that they have no other contact with during the day	
47	Teachers not believing in advisory's benefits	
48	Teachers repeating activities/events from year to year resulting in boredom and inattentiveness.	
49	Teachers that aren't willing to cooperate	
50	Teachers who don't buy into it won't take it seriously	
51	Teachers who see advisory as a waste of time	
52	The day is already filled with too much. Stuff that has nothing to do with teaching. When would the program begin before/after school?	
53	There is so much to do already -people may be overwhelmed with "another thing to do."	
54	Total school commitment. I foresee a lot of people blowing it off as a study hall. Someone also needs to take the time to write an effective, cohesive curriculum. If it becomes another prep, some teachers will not do it.	
55	Traveling teachers	
56	Unwilling teachers	
1	#1 roadblock would probably include scheduling during the day	Time
2	Enough time to develop and carry out plan	
3	Our daily time frame	
4	Time	
5	Time	
6	Time	
7	Time	
8	Time	
9	Time	
10	Time	
11	Time - everyone is swamped already doing their BEST 4 kids!	
12	Time - when & how long	
13	Time - Will it take place of homeroom?	
14	Time can be a problem	
15	Time consuming	
16	Time in the school day	
17	Time issues	
18	Time - Our schedules are beyond overload as it is	
19	Time to meet	
20	Time to prepare	

21	Time to see these students on a regular basis	
22	Time well spent	
23	Time, logistics, good matches	
24	Time, scheduling	
1	Lack of training and "know how"	Training
2	Not enough in-service about advisory	
3	Proper training for all staff involved	
4	I am afraid that this might be one of those programs that sounds good on paper, but won't be fully implemented and then it will have little success	
5	It can come across as too contrived, not a natural thing	
6	Lack of information - can be overcome.	

Middle School Advisory Teacher and Counselor
Postquestionnaire Results for Question 10

What do you see as roadblocks to implementing a middle school advisory program?

	Responses	Themes
1	Activities	Curriculum
2	Activities not working	
3	Curriculum demands	
4	Deciding when/what activities to schedule in monthly	
5	Lack of structure	
6	Not getting through curriculum	
7	Not providing resources	
1	Educating parents of the changes or implementation	Parents
2	Parent buy in	
3	Parents not wanting their kids to discuss certain issues	
1	Philosophy	Philosophy
1	Enough planning time	Planning Time
2	Planning time	
1	Assessment of the program	Program
1	Personal conflict (student/student, teacher/student)	Relationships
1	Finding a block of time in the schedule	Scheduling
2	Interruptions	
3	New scheduling would be one roadblock	
4	Schedule adjustments	
5	Scheduling	
6	Scheduling	
7	Scheduling	
8	Scheduling	
9	Scheduling and logistics	
10	Scheduling conflicts	
11	Scheduling conflicts - if during homeroom- encore loses teaming time	
12	Too many students too few faculty	
13	Where will the time come from?	
14	Where will we put it?	
1	Arranging student to teacher ratios to keep groups small enough to develop the stronger bonds necessary where all students have a voice.	Staffing

2	Staffing (enough for small groups)	
1	Group of students placed together who really should not be (uncontrollable)	Students
2	Group selection- matching students with advisors	
3	Have any advisory groups been single-sex? Would students feel more comfortable and connected with those of the same gender?	
4	Holding their interest & making it valuable	
5	How to include the severely mod. Disabled with peers with enough support as there would be little chance to group	
6	Making sure the kids want to be there	
7	Matching kids to adults	
8	Negative students	
9	Number of students	
10	Students not wanting to be placed with several staff members in our building	
11	Successfully matching students with teachers and with other students	
12	What are you going to do with discipline problems?	
13	What do you do with a kid who refuses to participate?	
1	A strong teacher will get stuck with all the trouble makers & a weak teacher will get the creampuffs	Teachers
2	All teachers need to be on board and willing to implement the program the correct way. Teachers and other faculty need training and support materials to do this well	
3	Another prep. We are already loaded down	
4	Are special education teachers included	
5	Attitudes	
6	Biggest hurdle is staff readiness/education. I feel that homeroom could easily be an advisory period but is often a study hall/social time. If we had a few lessons that were "suggested" each week it would be great. I love to see interaction on these occasions.	
7	Buy in from all staff	
8	Cooperation of all advisors	
9	Everyone buying into the program	
10	Full-support of teachers	
11	Getting all advisors to actually do what they are suppose to do	
12	Getting all teachers enthusiastic and on board	
13	Getting all teachers on board or making them be positive about it even if they disagree	
14	Getting everyone on board	
15	Getting everyone on board	
16	Getting everyone on board	
17	It will end up being another prep - lots more work	
18	Losing time for elective teachers to meet	

19	Negative mindset of some of the seasoned teachers. Everyone has to be ready for advisory or else it won't work	
20	Negative staff members who don't like this kind of connection with kids. Mainly the encore teachers who feel they are "entitled" to a homeroom time teaming period.	
21	Negative teachers	
22	Negative teachers	
23	Negativity of some staff members - open	
24	Not everyone will follow what they are expected to do	
25	Participation by people who don't like this age group	
26	Quality of staff to implement	
27	Resources (having enough adult members to act as advisors)	
28	Some attitudes toward the program	
29	Some staff saying they are "on board," but not following through	
30	Staff agreeing with advisory programs	
31	Staff not wanting to participate and carry their load	
32	Staff resistance	
33	Staff that is not open-minded	
34	Teacher enthusiasm or lack of	
35	Teacher negatives	
36	Teachers buy in	
37	Teachers might resist	
38	Teachers unwilling to devote quality time and commitment	
39	Teachers unwilling to participate	
40	Teachers who do not buy into advisory	
41	Teachers who don't buy in	
42	Unwilling, negative staff	
43	What if you get a group of "duds" or "dead wood?" This could be an extraordinary experience or a dreaded 30 minutes everyday, and we won't know which it'll be until we're in the middle of it and that is kind of scary	
44	Willingness	
45	Worry about what we'd "lose" to do this	
1	Becomes additional lesson plan/record keeping	Time
2	Finding 30 minutes per month to use.	
3	Finding enough time to successfully implement the program	
4	Finding time	
5	Finding time in the day	
6	Time	

7	Time	
8	Time	
9	Time	
10	Time	
11	Time	
12	Time	
13	Time	
14	Time (will this make class shorter)?	
15	Time in daily schedule vs. pressures of MAP and AYP	
16	Time in the day	
17	Time logistics	
18	Time of day at first on day	
19	Time to ensure it is done correctly and effectively	
20	Time to have and time to plan activities	
1	Lack of training	Training
2	Untrained teachers/lack of experience	
1	Don't know	
2	Nothing new at this time	

APPENDIX C
Professional Development Course Materials
Professional Development Session 1

The Benefits of Middle School Advisory

Chelsea Watson
September 16, 2008

PREQUESTIONNAIRE

The early adolescent years are widely recognized as a critical period in human development. Middle school students experience profound mental, moral, social, sexual, emotional, and physical changes during the years from 10 to 15. They also face the potential for substantial change in the quality of stability of their families, homes, peer groups, and economic status. In some ways, the lives of many young adolescents can be described as a subject to constant change and continuing crisis, too often marked by shallowness and brevity in their relationships with others.

~George & Lounsbury. (2000. p.7)

Young adolescents deserve school environments that fully support them during this phase in their lives.

History of Advisory

- Early 1890s
- 1920s & 1930s role of guidance and education
- 1960s – homeroom
- Middle school movement

HOW MUCH ADVISING ARE YOU ARLEADY DOING?

- Rate statements
- Pair & share
- Comments

Advisory Definitions

Advisor- An adult who meets with a small group of students on a regular basis supporting their academic, social, emotional, and physical well being.

Advisory program- A school organizational structure in which a small group of students identifies with and belongs to one teacher or counselor who nurtures, advocates for, and shepherds the individuals in the group on a regular basis.

Advocacy- "A particular role that middle school educators play as active supporters of and intercessors for young adolescents" (Lounsbury & Brazee, 2004, p. 11).

Middle school- a building that houses grades six through eight.

What Are Your Beliefs?

Academic excellence is linked to a positive school climate.

All teachers and counselors should be advisors.

Professional development is not needed to be a successful advisor.

The size of the advisory group is not significant in achieving the outcomes of the program.

Advisory groups should meet before the fist academic class.

Advisors should work with advisees throughout their middle school experience.

Conclusion

In today's world, the need for middle schools to advocate for each student by means of a comprehensive advisory program is crucial.

Middle schools must provide opportunities for students to discuss issues in their immediate lives and the world they live in with peers and adults who can help them make sense of their feelings and concerns.

~Niska & Thompson, 2007, p. 6

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How Much Advising Are You Already Doing?

HOW MUCH ADVISING ARE YOU ALREADY DOING?
Rate these statements (Sometimes=1; Often=2; Frequently=3)

Have you ever talked to students about

1. ____being different from others
2. ____being made fun of
3. ____being picked on
4. ____being sent to the principal's office
5. ____changing clothes in front of others
6. ____drugs and/or alcohol
7. ____failure
8. ____getting along with other students
9. ____getting lost
10. ____having bus problems
11. ____getting to class on time
12. ____giving a presentation in front of classmates
13. ____hard work
14. ____homework assignments
15. ____getting along with another teacher
16. ____keeping up with assignments
17. ____knowing what is expected of them
18. ____lockers
19. ____lunchroom
20. ____making friends
21. ____moving from room to room
22. ____new rules and routines
23. ____school activities
24. ____rumors about the school
25. ____taking tests
26. ____unkind people
27. ____family problems
28. ____listening skills
29. ____school spirit
30. ____community awareness
31. ____community service
32. ____academic concerns
33. ____sharing fun (jokes, games)?

Total score _____

If you scored between 75-99, you are already talking to students about personal development issues as a regular part of your professional responsibilities. If you scored between 50-74, you are talking to students often about important concerns. If you scored less than 50, advising does not seem to be a part of your job.

Professional Development Session 2

The Benefits of Middle School Advisory

October 21, 2008

Recapture September

- History of advisory
- How much are you already doing?
- Definitions

Advisory Definitions

Advisor- An adult who meets with a small group of students on a regular basis, supporting their academic, social, emotional, and physical well being.

Advisory program- A school organizational structure in which a small group of students identifies with and belongs to one teacher or counselor who nurtures, advocates for, and shepherds the individuals in the group on a regular basis.

Advocacy- "A particular role that middle school educators play as active supporters of and intercessors for young adolescents" (Lounsbury & Brazee, 2004, p. 11).

Middle school- a building that houses grades six through eight.

Recapture September

- History of Advisory.
- How much are you already doing?
- Definitions
- What are your beliefs?

Today.

- What does the literature and research say about rationale and purpose of middle school advisory?
- Multiple Perspectives Protocol
- Exit Slip

Literature & Research

Every student should be well known by at least one adult. Students should be able to rely on that adult to help them learn from their experiences, comprehend physical changes and changing relationships with family and peers, act on their behalf to marshal every school and community resource needed for the student to succeed, and help fashion a promising vision of the future.

~Jackson & Davis, Turning Points, 2000, p. 142

No other age level is of more importance to the future of individuals, and literally, to that of society; because these are the years when youngsters crystallize their beliefs about themselves and firm up their self-concepts, their philosophies of life and their values — the things that are the ultimate determinants of their behaviors.

~Lounsbury, 2003, p.

Every student needs at least one thoughtful adult who has the time and takes the trouble to talk with the student about academic matters, personal problems, and the importance of performing well in middle grade schools. The student who feels overwhelmed by course work, worried about a health problem, intimidated by classmates, or accused of misbehaving needs to be able to confide in someone with experience.

~Carnegie Council on Adolescent
Development, Turning Points, 1989, p. 37

Every learner needs an adult who knows him or her well and is in a position to give individual attention. Therefore, the middle school should be organized so that every youngster has such an adult, one who has a special responsibility for the individual's academic and personal welfare.

~This We Believe, 1982, pp. 12-13

Advisory programs are predicated on the belief that every young adolescent should have at least one adult at school to act as the student's advocate.

~Knowles & Brown, 2000, p. 111

Leaders of the middle school reform movement cite an extended guidance program among the essential elements of an exemplary middle school.

~James & Spralding, 2001, p. 13

The fundamental purpose of an advisor-advisee program is to promote involvement between a teacher and the student in the advisory group. Every student needs to have a relationship with at least one adult in the school who is characterized by warmth, concern, openness, and credibility.

~George & Alexander, 2003, p. 373

The overarching purpose of advisory is to ensure that every student belongs to a small peer group attended by an adult mentor.

~Stevenson, 2002, p. 313

With an advisory program as a fundamental part of the schedule and curriculum of a middle school, its opportunities were made available to every student without regards to levels of achievement and without excluding anyone.

~ Galassi, Gulledge, & Cox, 1997, p. 12

Middle school educators have long recognized an essential truth about children's learning: relationships matter. For young adolescents, relationships with adults form the critical pathways for their learning: education 'happens' through relationships. Many middle grades teachers intuitively recognize the importance for students of being known by at least one adult within the school, and ideally by many.

~Jackson & Davis, 2000 p. 121 -122.

Advisory programs "Allow teachers to be actively involved in the affective development of students."

~Anafra, 2006, p.2.

Many principals perceive supportive advisory programs to also have a long-term, positive effect by helping to prevent students from dropping out of school. George and Olkdaker (1985) determined that 93% of such exemplary schools had advisory programs for all their students and that 62% of these children enjoyed 'consistent academic improvement' while schools reported an 80% reduction in referrals for behavioral problems.

~Mac Laury, 2002, as cited in This We
Believe in Action, 2005, p. 71

Student advisory programs provide an opportunity for middle level students to introduce an adult advocate into the life of every student in school. Many young adolescents suffer from feelings of isolation and loneliness, and advisory activities allow them to connect with caring adults and other students to help them through the rough spots during the middle level years.

~ National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006, p. 273

All advisory efforts, regardless of their prime focus and local distinctiveness, will ultimately assist students in becoming better and more effective learners and leaders. However, having a more specific focus will go a long way toward ensuring a program's success.

~Spear, 2005, p. 11

Many schools have developed advisory programs to serve the social, emotional, and intellectual needs of students. When well planned and executed, such programs will result in improved student achievement and behavior and will enrich students' lives.

~ Niska & Thompson, 2007, p. 6

Advisory programs "Provide opportunities for students to lead discussions about their own progress and their accomplishments in the advisory setting."

Advisory programs "Create a structured program that allows each student to address issues of self-awareness, interpersonal skills, decision-making abilities, and personal safety skills."

~National Association of Secondary
School Principals, 2006, p.13

Protocol

The Multiple Perspectives Protocol

– Adapted from the National School Reform Faculty, www.nsrfharmony.org

– Groups of 4

Conclusion

- Today's Society
  - Earlier maturation
  - Less stability
  - More academic pressure
  - Internet
  - Daily advertising
  - Messages in music and videos
  - Family structures

Therefore, schools must be systematic in their approach to "...cultivate responsible, moral decision makers and discriminating, enlightening consumers."

~National Middle School Association, 2003, p.6

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The Multiple Perspectives Protocol and Feedback Focus Sheets

The Multiple Perspectives Protocol

Rationale

Knowing that protocols help us to develop the habits we wish we had to begin with, this protocol was designed to help make the process of using multiple perspectives to enrich our conversations transparent and to make our learning more powerful. This means more than bringing various voices together. It also means purposefully seeing what each voice contributes to the whole.

Procedure

1. Introduction — name, point of view.
Your point of view can be broadly defined — "woman," "African American," "middle school student," or more narrowly, "first-year teacher," "second-year teacher," "Parkway teacher for over 20 years," "teacher who taught an advisory period." Everyone has multiple ways of describing themselves and, for the purposes of this protocol, settle on one point of view.

2. Facilitator presents a question.
How does the literature and research align with your beliefs?

3. Everyone must write their first thoughts.

4. Each participant, in turn, gives his/her preliminary thinking on the question, prefaced with his/her point of view:
"From the point of view of a seventh grade parent, I think…"

5. Then there is a second round, with each person giving his/her thinking based upon what they heard from the other participants:
"Having heard all of the other points of view, I now think…"

6. A final round to reflect on the quality of the responses:
"I noticed that my/our responses…"

~Adapted from the National School Reform Faculty, www.nsrfharmony.org

The Multiple Perspectives Protocol Feedback Focus Sheet
Created by Andie Brown
Round 1: preliminary thinking

Participant	Perspective	"I think that..."

The Multiple Perspectives Protocol Feedback Focus Sheet
Created by Andie Brown
Round 2: "Based on what I heard..."

Participant	Perspective	"Having heard all of the other points of view, I now think..."

The Multiple Perspectives Protocol Feedback Focus Sheet
Created by Andie Brown
Round 3: "I noticed..."

Participant	Perspective	"I noticed that my/our responses..."

Benefits of Middle School Advisory Exit Slip

THE BENEFITS OF
MIDDLE SCHOOL ADVISORY
OCTOBER 21, 2008
Exit Slip

What validated your thinking?

What further information would you like to know/learn about middle school advisory?

Exit Slip Responses

Exit Slip Question 1: What validated your thinking?

1. I enjoyed the activity. I am an advocate for advisory- it's what is best for MS students. I understand that the activities are clearly part of research and not a platform for SWM.

2. We Believe

3. Our building Goals (I think engagement is key in raising grades and scores.)

4. I learned that other teachers also think it is a good idea but that creating an advisory group will be difficult and will need to be carefully handled.

5. The research about one adult advocate for each student.

6. Reduction of discipline issues

7. My group agreed that advisory is a huge benefit. We also agreed that the logistics are overwhelming.

8. Research showing that children need advocates.

9. They need someone they can trust.

10. Kids need advisories.

11. Kids today have sooooo many influences, distractions, and stressors.

12. The quote from the Power point validated my thinking.

13. Everyone at my table is on board to be part of an advisory group.

14. The protocol conversation was helpful to me. Even though we took different roles, I know what people think.

15. The many quotes from various sources supported my thinking.

16. The protocol was neat. I liked hearing the perspectives people choice and how they shared their opinions.

17. Good quotes.

18. Also my group was very positive, which supported my hope that we might be able to implement this.

19. Wow- the quotes were powerful.

20. Everything!

21. More teachers than I thought really do care.

22. The quotes were very validating, as I am an advocate for advisory.

Exit Slip Question 2: What further information would you like to know/learn about middle school advisory?

1. I am interested to know information regarding successful topics or ways in which advisory has been utilized in other schools.

2. I am also interested to know how teachers are chosen and how students are matched with teachers and if the program works best w/ multi-grade or homogeneous grades.

3. Would a negative teacher who does not try to build relationships be given and advisory group?

4. How long do most school spend in advisory?

5. What happens if there is a major personality conflict?

6. What about traveling teachers? Do they have a group?

7. Do advisors stay with the same group for three years?

8. Does advisory do better in the morning or at the end of the day?

9. Is there data that link middle school advisory network to student achievement?

10. What works best- grade level specific or mixed grades?

11. How will students be placed?

12. Do students go to advisory everyday?

13. Do all teachers get advisories?

14. Can placement change due to conflicts?

15. Who decides what happens in advisory?

16. Will students remain with the same advisor for all 3 years?

17. How do the logistics of scheduling work?

18. Do the counselors have and advisory?

19. What do you do with negative teachers who don't want to focus on

relationships?

20. What happens with the negative teacher who will ruin the program?

21. What does research show about the most appropriate time of day for advisory?

22. How to possibly effectively implement it.

23. How can we implement and advisory for Southwest?

24. Activities for group meetings.

25. I'd like to hear from someone at a school where it works to find out:

26. Is there a set curriculum?

27. What does a typical session look and sound like?

28. What data do they have that validates the advisory program?

Professional Development Session 3

The Benefits of Middle School Advisory

November 24, 2008
Chelsea Watson

Recapture September & October

- History of advisory
- How much are you already doing?
- Definitions
- Rationale & purpose
- Protocol- How does the literature and research align with your beliefs?

Today

- Jigsaw
- Literature & Research
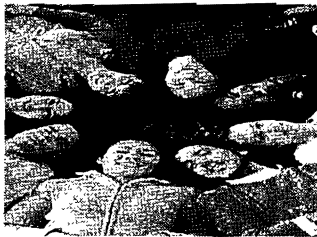
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Middle School Advisory Programs

- O'Leary Junior High School
- Cincinnati Country Day School
- Sacajawea Middle School
- Park Junior High School
- Sarasota County School System
- Green Bay Area Public Schools
- LaPorte Indiana Schools
- Collegiate Schools

Jigsaw

- Readings
- Divide up the reading. More than one member of the group will read the same section.
- Once everyone has read the assigned section do the following:
  - Share
  - Record key learnings

Key Learnings

- Frequency of advisory
- Length of advisory
- Number of advisees
- Advisory groups
- Matching of advisees and advisors
- Goals/objectives/themes
- Who advises students?
- Successes
- Obstacles
- Interesting information

Gallery Walk

- View key learnings
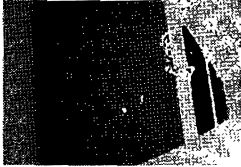
- Observations/Comments/Reflections

Research: Frequency & Length

- 1,798 middle schools surveyed
- Daily meetings, 63%
- Once per week, 14%
- 16-30 min., 65%
- 1-15 min., 15%
- 31-45 min., 15%

Research: Frequency & Length

- 181 middle schools surveyed
- Daily meetings, 77%
- Once per week, 10%
- 16-20 min., 21%
- 26-30 min., 14%

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Some important factors need to be considered in the realm of when the advisor-advisee time is scheduled. Practice seems to confirm the place of the advisory-advisee time at the beginning of the day as best. For programs that meet daily with the same group of students, 30 minutes seems about right. Three-quarters of an hour is too long for most of the activities that one would expect in advisor-advisee programs and less than 20 minutes seems too short and is likely to turn into a homeroom where little else than attendance is taken and announcements are made.

~George & Alexander, 2004, p. 263

Literature: Length

⊚ 20 to 40 minutes of uninterrupted time

Literature: Number of Advisees

⊚ 10-20 students per advisor

Advisory Groups

* Cross-grade advisory research study
  * Students favored and felt this provided an opportunity for meeting others and talking about topics that are not relevant during academic classes.
  * Students showed an increase in their sense of belonging.

Advisory Groups

* In multi-age advisories students feel a stronger sense of community and informal peer counseling and mentoring occur.
* If advisory is facilitated with single-grade level advisees, it is recommended to pair up with another grade level for activities.
* Allowing the students to remain as a group from year to year is advantageous.

Matching Advisees to Advisors

* Student preference
* Assign alphabetically
* Computer
* Intentionally assigned
* Random selection
* Leadership talent
* Discipline concerns
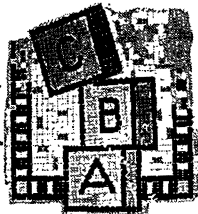
Who is an advisor?

"If you don't love 10- to 14- year-olds initially, nothing could help you become an advisor. If you think this age group is truly special, then you'll be a good advisor."

~Shoreham-Waring River Middle School, as cited in This we Believe in Action

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Who is an advisor?

- Teachers
  - All
  - Negative, unwilling to change attitude or learn new skills
  - New
- Counselors
  - Provide specific lessons
  - Individual students & needs
- Administrators
  - Co-advise

Who is an Advisor?

- Out of the 1,798 middle schools surveyed, 56% indicated that all professional staff serve as advisors.
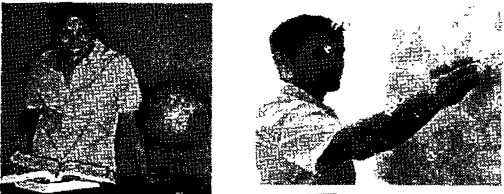
Conclusion

"An advocacy program is not a curriculum printed in a manual. It is a process developed through a set of experiences that establishes rapport between adults to students as well as students to adults and students to students, practices those students can internalize and use with others over a lifetime."

–James & Spralding,
as cited in This We Believe in Action, 2005

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Professional Development Session 4

The Benefits of Middle School Advisory

December 16, 2008
Chelsea Watson

Recapture September, October & November

- History of advisory
- How much are you already doing?
- Definitions
- Rationale & purpose
- Protocol- How does the literature and research align with your beliefs?
- Middle school advisory programs
- Gallery walk

Middle School Advisory Programs

- O'Leary Junior High School
- Cincinnati Country Day School
- Sacajawea Middle School
- Park Junior High School
- Sarasota County School System
- Green Bay Area Public Schools
- LaPorte Indiana Schools
- Collegiate Schools

Key Learnings

- Frequency of advisory
- Length of advisory
- Number of advisees
- Advisory groups
- Matching of advisees and advisors
- Goals/objectives/themes
- Who advises students?
- Successes
- Obstacles
- Interesting information

Today
Literature, Research & Video

- Frequency
- Length
- Number of Advisees
- Formation of Groups
- Who advises?

- Sample Activities
- Student Feedback
- Teacher Feedback
- Video (Advisory)
- Postquestionnaire

Research: Frequency & Length

- 1,798 middle schools surveyed
- Daily meetings, 63%
- Once per week, 14%
- 16-30 min., 65%
- 1-15 min., 15%
- 31-45 min., 15%

Research: Frequency & Length

- 181 middle schools survey
- Daily meetings, 77%
- Once per week, 10%
- 16-20 min., 21%
- 26-30 min., 14%

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

"Some important factors need to be considered in the realm of when the advisor-advisee time is scheduled. Practice seems to confirm the place of the advisory-advisee time at the beginning of the day as best. For programs that meet daily with the same group of students, 30 minutes seems about right. Three-quarters of an hour is too long for most of the activities that one would expect in advisor-advisee programs and less than 20 minutes seems too short and is likely to turn into a homeroom where little else than attendance is taken and announcements are made."
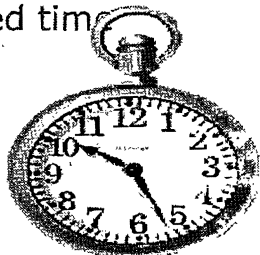
~George & Alexander, 2004, p. 143

Literature: Length

- 20 to 40 minutes of uninterrupted time

Literature: Number of Advisees

- 10-20 students per advisor

Advisory Groups

- Cross-grade advisory research study
  - Students favored and felt this provided an opportunity for meeting others and talking about topics that are not relevant during academic classes.
  - Students showed an increase in their sense of belonging.

Advisory Groups

- In multi-age advisories students feel a stronger sense of community and informal peer counseling and mentoring occur.
- If advisory is facilitated with single-grade level advisees, it is recommended to pair up with another grade level for activities.
- Allowing the students to remain as a group from year to year is
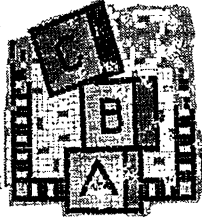
Matching Advisees to Advisors

- Student preference
- Assign alphabetically
- Computer
- Intentionally assigned
- Random selection
- Leadership talent
- Discipline concerns

Who is an Advisor?

"If you don't love 10- to 14-year-olds initially, nothing could help you become an advisor. If you think this age group is truly special, then you'll be a good advisor."

Who is an Advisor?

- Teachers
  - All
  - Negative, unwilling to change attitude or learn new skills
  - New
- Counselors
  - Provide specific lessons
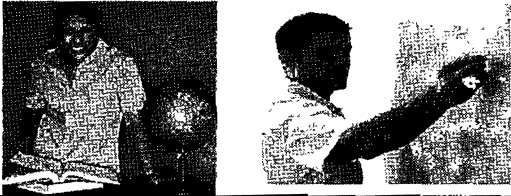 - Individual students & needs
- Administrators
  - Co-advise

Who is an Advisor?

- Out of the 1,798 middle schools surveyed, 56% indicated that all professional staff serve as advisors.

Academic Success

- Advisory positively impacts academic success
  - Test scores
  - Grades
  - Goal setting

Video Clip

Student Feedback

- Improved student-teacher relationships
- Increased comfort level
- Closer relationships with other students
- Reduce the incidence of smoking and alcohol use
- Closer contact between students & parents/guardians

Student Feedback

- More organized and ready to learn
- Increased self worth
- Social & emotional growth

Student Feedback

- Students had higher ratings of school.
- Students' reported less stress in the following areas: academic, social.
- Students had lower reports of depression, anxiety, and behavior problems.
- Students had higher reports of academic efficacy, using refocusing coping practices, and problem-

Teacher Feedback

- Students were better behaved, more cooperative
- Students felt a greater sense of community

Teacher Feedback

- Personal commitment to the middle school concept
- Increased parent support
- Student perspectives & issues in a non curricular-format
- Meaningful relationship with students
- Cared about each advisee
- Organization skills improved

Teacher Feedback

"It is not uncommon for teachers to develop new skills for facilitating discussions, increase their commitment to and skills for personalizing learning, and even change their understanding of their own authority."

Poliner & Heuer, 2004. p.19

Advisory

"An advocacy program is not a curriculum printed in a manual. It is a process developed through a set of experiences that establishes rapport between adults to students as well as students to adults and students to students, practices those students can internalize and use with others over a lifetime."

Conclusion

"Advocacy provides young adolescents with affirmative and acceptance at a critical time in their lives; it is an essential element of the successful middle level school. After all, middle level schools are in a particularly critical position because of the opportunity they have to influence, for better or worse, not only the students themselves but society at large. The future for our society hangs in the balance."

~ National Middle School Association, 2003.

p.36

Conclusion

•Postquestionnaire

•Thank You!

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Sample Activities

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Responsibility.

Appendix D
IRB

09-12

IRB Project Number

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

To: Chelsea Watson

CC: Drs. Dean Vazis and Susan Isenberg

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your proposal for research at our meeting on 9/3/08 and your subsequent revisions, and it has been accepted. The committee appreciates the hard work that has gone into this proposal and the promptness with which you responded to Dr. Isenberg's feedback. Good luck with your data collection.

Colleen Biri, Psy.D.   9/10/20
Institutional Review Board Chair   Date

Letter to Staff

Chelsea Watson
952 Bridgeport Drive
Ballwin, MO 63011
(636) 207-7041

Dear Colleague,

I am a student at Lindenwood University. As a partial fulfillment of my Doctorate

in Educational Administration, I am conducting research as to whether teachers

and counselors will be in favor of implementing a program after a professional

development course. You were selected for this study because you are a teacher or

counselor at CCW Middle School. The course will consist of teacher and

counselor development on middle school advisory during regularly scheduled

Faculty Development meetings. All participants will be given a questionnaire at

the beginning and end of the course. Each teacher and counselor will place his/her

questionnaire in a brown envelope upon completion to maintain confidentiality.

Please complete the attached consent form to participate in this research study.

Thank you,

Chelsea Watson

Teacher Consent to Participate in Research

Signature of Research Participant
I understand the research study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in the study.

_____   _____

Name of Research Participant   School Name

_____   _____

Signature of Research Participant   Date

Researcher's Email

Dear Staff,

On Tuesday, September 16, 2008, during the Faculty Development Meeting, I will begin the professional development course on middle school advisory. Participating in the course is completely voluntary. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank You,
Chelsea

Superintendent's Letter

Chelsea Watson
952 Bridgeport Dr.
Ballwin, MO 63011

July 30, 2008

Dr. Malito:

I am currently working on my Doctorate in Educational Administration at Lindenwood University. The problem, purpose, rationale, and questions to be investigated in the research study are detailed below.

Problem
The National Middle School Association recommends the following for successful schools for young adolescents:
- Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so.
- Courageous, collaborative leadership
- A shared vision that guides decisions
- An inviting, supportive, and safe environment
- High expectations for every member of the learning community
- Students and teachers engaged in active learning
- An adult advocate for every student
- School-initiated family community partnerships. (National Middle School Association, 2003, p. 7)

CCW Middle School has addressed all of the recommendations except providing every student an adult advocate.

Purpose
The purpose of this research is to develop a course that changes the opinions and beliefs of teachers and counselors.

Rationale
In order for change to occur, teachers and counselors must be presented detailed information on new initiatives and provided opportunities for input. It is imperative that teachers and counselors have shared beliefs before embarking on a new initiative that impacts them and students. If teachers and counselors do not have common beliefs and are not working toward the same outcome, the initiative will not be successful.

The following questions will be investigated:
What are the characteristics of young adolescents?
What is middle school advisory?
What are the benefits of a middle school advisory program?
What instructional methodologies are effective in engaging teachers and counselors in a professional development course to change opinions and beliefs?

I will begin the study in the summer of 2008, when the teachers return for the 2008- 2009 school year and complete the study during the winter of 2009.

I would appreciate your support in allowing this study to take place at Parkway Southwest Middle School.

Signatures:

Dr. Robert Malito _R.W.T. Malito_ Date: _7/31/08_

Chelsea Watson _Chelsea Watson_ Date: _7/31/08_

PLEASE POST

Notice of Final Oral Presentation

DATE: March 18, 2009
                     Spellman Center, Room 4185

TO: School of Education

This is to verify that Chelsea Coleman Watson has presented her Doctor of Education Dissertation to the Doctor of Education Degree Dissertation Committee:

Capstone Project Title:

Influencing the Opinions and Beliefs of Teachers and Counselors
About Middle School Advisory

Date Dissertation Completion: March 18, 2009

Grade (Pass/Fail): Pass

_____   _____
Dr. Dean Vazis, Dissertation Chair   Date

_____   _____
Dr. William Blackburn, Committee Member   Date

_____   _____
Dr. John Oldani, Committee Member   Date

VITAÉ

Chelsea C. Watson currently serves as a middle school principal. Administrative experiences have included serving as principal for 6 years, Assistant Principal for three years, and Administrative Intern for three years. For five years she taught third grade in a K-5 building.

Educational studies have resulted in a specialist certificate from Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri; Master of Education degree in teaching from Maryville University, St. Louis, Missouri; and a Bachelors of Arts degree from Drury University, Springfield, Missouri.

Chelsea's accomplishments include: "Soar Us to the Eagles," Leadership Recognition, MNEA; Excellence in Education Award, St. Louis American; Who's Who Among America's Teachers: and MNEA Fall Conference chair. Professional experiences include participation in the Leadership Center's Community Leadership Program for Teachers, St. Louis Principal Academy, Building Summer Learning Opportunities for All presentation, and Cognitive Coaching Training.