Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

4-1989

Teaching Intervention: "At Risk" Students Enabling Them to Succeed in School

Jeanie Harper
Lindenwood College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses

Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons

Recommended Citation

TEACHER INTERVENTION WITH "AT RISK" STUDENTS

ENABLING THEM TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

BY
JEANIE HARPER

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Education Degree
Lindenwood College
April, 1989

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Education,
Lindenwood College, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts in Education Degree.

Gene Henderson
Advisor

Diane Denney
Reader

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thanks is extended to those individuals who
helped with this project.

Thanks is extended to my husband, Bob, for always knowing
the right word that I needed and for giving up his mornings to
take care of our baby daughter, Gretchen, so I could work on my
project. Thank you for your patience with me when I became
frustrated with the demands of teaching, mothering, and still
finding time to devote to this project. Your support and love
made this project possible.

Thanks is also extended to Dr. J. Donovan, Dr. D. Denney,
and Dr. G. Henderson for being available to answer questions and
provide encouragement when needed.

ABSTRACT

During the 1988-1989 school year, a teacher intervention
program with "at risk" students was implemented at Wentzville
High School. The project involved ten "at risk" students who
were currently enrolled in a reading class. These subjects
were in grade nine through twelve and all had been labeled "at
risk" by the district. The criteria used was several failed
courses, excessive absences, repeated behavioral problems and a
general inability to get along with their educators as well as
their peers. An attempt was made to see if teacher intervention
could help these students succeed in school by improving their
grades, increasing their attendance at school, and decreasing
their behavioral referrals.

The results of this study indicated that the subjects'
grades were improved as a result of this intervention but that
their attendance did not improve a statistically significant
amount and that their office referrals increased by 4%. This
increase could be a result of the study taking place second
and third quarter and being compared to the students' behaviors
first quarter, when the students' behaviors are generally more
acceptable. The subjects during first quarter are not as
familiar with their surroundings and have not experienced as
much failure in school as the subjects experienced second and
third quarter. This could lead to inappropriate acting out

responses, increasing their number of office referrals.

A possible weakness in this study was not having a control group. The study also took place over a relatively short period of time and during a time when other events could have affected the results. The results indicated a need for further study in this area to help the students stay in school. Dropping out could no longer be an option, enhancing the students' lives, as well as their role in society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

viii

CHAPTER I

Introduction

It is Christy's first day of school. Just think, in 12 years, Christy will be graduating from high school. Or will she? According to the national dropout rate, approximately one out of four students leave school (Solomon, 1988). Several reasons have been cited for students dropping out. Studies in which dropouts have been asked directly, "Why did you drop out?" provided these answers: dissatisfaction with teachers, 19.3%; etc. dislike of school in general, 15.3%; lack of credits, 13.1%; dislike of a specific school, 13.1%; boredom/lack of interest (11.7%), pregnancy, 11.4% of females; and desire to attend an alternative education program or institute, 11.2%; (Duncan, 1980). The area this project will emphasize is student/teacher relationships.

The purpose of this project was to see if teacher involvement could help "at risk" students succeed in school. Specifically, the project was designed to answer the question, "Can teacher involvements show a statistically significant difference in "at risk" students' grades and attendance, helping them to succeed in school?" Several other questions were to be

answered as well. Will "at risk" students accept a teacher's help? Is help from one teacher enough for an "at risk" student to succeed in school? Will the teacher have enough time to provide the extra help these individuals need? Will educators involved resent a teacher giving them advice in regard to their "at risk" students? Why should we be concerned about the dropout rate? Perhaps the old adage, "School isn't for everyone," is true. The dropout rate has an effect on the economic status of this country which affects everyone living here. The dropout, therefore, has an effect on everyone. In a study titled "School Dropouts-Why Does the Problem Prevail?" Ruby (1987) stated that the social and economic consequences of dropping out show that 21% of all dropouts remain unemployed. Estimates from lost revenue were estimated at $200,000 per dropout over his/her lifetime (Chatterall, 1985).

Several alternative programs have been implemented to help "at risk" students succeed and to graduate from high school, thereby reducing the dropout rate and all the consequences dropping out brings with it, for the individual and society as well. One program called "Twelve Together" in Detroit, Michigan, organized groups of twelve ninth graders into peer counseling groups. Six successful students were placed with six "at risk" students for weekly peer-counseling sessions under the guidance of two adult volunteer advisors per group. The program was based on the theory that "positive peer pressure" can help teenagers deal with the problems they are facing in school. The

students pledge to study one and a half hours per day and attend peer-group sessions. The sessions focus on school, family, and personal problems. Overall, students have shown improvement in self-esteem development, motivation, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills.

In Dalton County, Georgia, the Stay-in-School Task Force targets potential dropouts. The program has worked to overcome a local obstacle to the completion of high school: ready availability of employment for high school dropouts. An agreement was made between employers and the students they employ to promote education as important by giving priority to high school graduates, by hiring high school students only as part-time and by encouraging them to attend school and maintain their grades, and by participating in an ongoing program to encourage students to complete their education. Today, approximately two-thirds of the local employers have signed the agreement and students as well as employers are benefiting from this program.

A program initiated by Steve Jacquin at Clear Lake Junior High School in Colorado used yet another approach. He worked on a one-to-one basis with a maximum of 15 students. He graded the students behaviors and academic successes twice each day and the students graded themselves as well, explaining why they deserved that grade. The focus was not only on the academics, but on behavior and habits that distracted from learning. The students learned to be responsible for their own actions.

Parents also played an integral role, discussing student's progress, problems, and solutions. A daily report was signed by their parents to keep them updated and involved. The results have been positive. The students demonstrated better attitudes toward classes and improved academic performances. A dramatic decrease in the number of out-of-school suspensions also resulted.

Based on research that has been shown in these studies, this study adds teacher intervention as a basis for remediation in aiding "at risk" students. Taking place over a period of two academic quarters, using ten "at risk" students currently enrolled in a reading class at Wentzville High School in Wentzville, Missouri, this study examined an alternative solution to the dropout rate. This solution focused on the problem most often cited for dropping out, poor relationships with teachers and peers (Digest of Education Statistics, 1985). These students exhibited the symptoms of potential dropouts (Solomon, 1988) which include:

1. High rate of absenteeism

2. High rate of truancy

3. Low academic skills

    a. low grades

    b. low reading skills

    c. low test scores and academic difficulties

4. Recurring discipline problems

5. Rebellious attitudes

6. Low level of self-esteem

7. Poor social adjustment and deviant social behavior

8. Disengagement with school

   a. apathy

   b. attitudes

   c. limited participation in extracurricular activities

   d. lack of identification with school

9. Working and attending school.

The teacher intervened with these students during the ten week period completing outlined intervention steps to see if this would increase "at risk" students grades and attendance, while decreasing the number of referrals due to behavioral problems.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Historical Background

The problem of students dropping out is not new in
education. It had been a problem since the 19th century
when school attendance became compulsory. During the 1900s,
90% of the male population did not graduate. By the 1920s,
80% dropped out, a reduction that reflected child labor laws
passed and increased automation in factories. Less manual
labor was now required. These factories continued to lower
the number of students leaving school until the late 1960s
and early 1970s when approximately 80% graduated from
high school (Wehlage and Rutter, 1986). For the past
decade, the national dropout rate has remained relatively
constant at approximately 20% (Digest of Education Statistics,
1985).

During the 1960s, dropping out meant turning on or
developing a new self-awareness. Today, dropping out has
reverted back to its traditional meaning. Students who drop
out are losers who suffer extreme disadvantages throughout their
life because they lack a high school diploma. Instead of flower

power, a drop out of the 1980s is faced with diminishing power as the sophisticated world leaves him farther and father behind (Strother, 1986).

Defining the Dropout

The term "dropout" does not have a standardized research definition. Each school system is responsible for keeping data on the number of students in attendance and must make a notation when a student is no longer attending that particular school. Each district uses the standardized code giving information on whether the student has transferred to another school, entered private school, moved, etc. The thoroughness of this record keeping often depends upon the office personnel responsible for keeping this data current and accurate (Hammond, 1986).

These records on dropouts are then reported to the two major sources of dropout data, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census or the National Center for Educational Statistics (N.C.E.S.). Both of these centers use different definitions to define the dropout. The United States Bureau (1986) defines a dropout as any person who has not graduated and who is not currently enrolled in regular school. The N.C.E.S. (1984) uses a comparison of the number of high school graduates with the number of students enrolled as freshman four years previous to identify the dropout (Law and Ruby, 1987).

The term dropout has come to incorporate a variety of early

school leavers. Morrow (1986) suggested that in the absence of a standardized definition, the term "dropout" has been defined individually to suit one's purpose. With these discrepancies in definitions and in data collecting the national dropout figures may very as much as 14% (Education, U.S.A., 1986).

Who Drops Out?

According to the High School and Beyond Survey, a national longitudinal survey of 30,000 randomly selected 1980 sophomores:

Fourteen percent of sophomores will drop out, including 12% of whites, 17% of blacks, and 19% of Hispanics (Peng, 1983).

Urban youth are 50% more likely to drop out than rural youth (Barro, 1984).

Youth who are least prepared economically and educationally are most likely to drop out (Barro, 1984).

Why Do Students Dropout?

Findings from the High School and Beyond Survey (Peng, 1983) showed the common reasons for dropping out are:

1. Twenty-two percent reported they could not get along with teachers or were suspended or expelled, 13%.

2. A common reason for young women to drop out was they

were getting married, 31% or were pregnant, 23%.

3. Twenty-seven percent of the young men and 11% of the young women reported leaving school early for work reasons.

4. Less than 7% gave illness as the reason for leaving school.

What are the Consequences of Dropping Out?

Dropouts find their lack of academic preparation limits their employments options and economic and social futures (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986).
For example:

Youth dropouts are less likely to be in the labor force. Sixty-eight percent of all dropouts and 87% of school graduates aged 16-24 were in the labor force. Even though they are in the labor force, they are much less likely to have jobs. Seventy five percent of dropouts in contrast to 90% of high school graduates were employed (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986).

If employed, the dropout had limited opportunities, 8% were employed in technical, administrative support, and sales occupations (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986).

The earnings of dropouts are about one-third less than those of high school graduates (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1986).

What Can Be Done?

Several dropout prevention programs have been implemented in an attempt to prevent students from dropping out and to help "at risk" students from ever becoming dropouts. Kaplan and Luck (1977) reviewed a variety of programs implemented between 1950 and 1970. Two of those programs were the New York City Work Experience Program, initiated in 1955 and the Saint Louis Project Stay, originated in 1970. The goal of these programs was to reduce the number of dropouts by improving attendance and grades of "at risk" students. To achieve this, additional personnel was hired, parental contact was increased, remedial and vocational components were added to the curriculum and communication with the community was expanded. Even with all of these efforts, results showed no significant decrease in the number of dropouts. One reason cited for their failure was the programs were designed as crash programs and they did not address the underlying factors behind students dropping out.

Today several alternative programs have been implemented, also reporting varied degrees of success. According to Hamilton (1986), the majority of successful programs incorporate four components:

1. They separate potential dropouts from other students.

2. They have a vocational education component.

3. They offer out-of-classroom learning opportunities with the possibility of paid employment.

4.   They maintain low student teacher ratio and have

strong and active counseling components.

Hodgkinson (1985) agreed with Hamilton's findings but

added:

1.   personal attention is addressed to student needs

2.   an emphasis is placed on the "immediate and practical"

3.   rewards are given for student achievement

4.   emphasis is on basic skill instruction

5.   follow-up is maintained after a student leaves school.

Several programs had been implemented using these

components, reporting varied degrees of success. One successful

program existed in Detroit, Michigan called Twelve-Together

(Orr, 1987). This program groups 12 high risk students and 12

low risk students in each of Detroit's 20 high schools. Each

week peer counseling sessions took place under the guidance of

two adult volunteer advisors per group. The program utilizes

the theory that positive peer pressure can help teenagers deal

effectively with their problems and provide them with the

support they need to stay in school. Peer group counseling is

believed to be effective in helping reduce the stresses that

teenagers experience in school. The group encourages students

to believe in themselves and provides positive reinforcement to

their desire to graduate. The students also pledge to study one

and a half hours per day together. The results have been

positive. The students showed improvement in self-esteem

development, motivation, problem solving abilities and

interpersonal skills.

Another program showing success in helping students remain in school was initiated in Atlanta, Georgia called Adopt-A-Student (George, 1987). This program pairs business volunteers as mentors with low-achieving high school juniors and seniors. Through monthly job preparation and a relationship with a volunteer, students are encouraged to stay in high school and develop post-high school career plans. Volunteers meet weekly with students to share an activity, anything from tutoring to going to a football game. Students and volunteers also attend the monthly job preparation workshop together. The volunteers provide work exposure by taking students to see their worksites and discussing their own careers. This program, which began in 1983, had been quite successful. In a study from 1985-1986 program, 75% rated the program highly. Ninety-two percent of seniors had graduated in contrast to 84% of non-participants. Another important factor, six months after graduation, 93% of the participants were employed or in a post-secondary educational program.

Project Coffee in Oxford, Massachusetts also utilizes the help of businesses and industries in their dropout prevention program (Fields, 1987). It provides instruction and educational training for about 120 eighth through twelfth graders at risk of dropping out. Each student is given an individual instruction plan and participates in three academic courses and two periods of occupational training programs: computer maintenance and

repair, word processing, horticulture and agriculture,
distributive education, or building and grounds maintenance.
Since 1979, 85% of participants have graduated. Students have
shown consistent improvements in their attendance rates and in
their test scores in reading, language, and math.

<div align="center">Teachers as Mentors</div>

Most dropout prevention programs utilize the help from
businesses and industries to integrate the importance of
learning in school to future jobs held after school. Some
programs also utilize the help of students to tutor potential
dropouts believing peers still hold importance in convincing
their peers that school is worth it and by following their
suggestions and using their help, they can succeed. However,
few programs use teachers as mentors to help potential
dropouts. One program does utilize a teacher as a mentor. This
program is operated by Steve Jacquin at Clear Lake Junior High
School in Westminister, Colorado (Char Gray-Shoffner, 1987).
There, Steve Jacquin, a certified teacher, worked on a one-to-
one basis with a maximum of 15 students. The student's day is
tightly structured in the center, with each student responsible
for completing all assignments on time. The students are
permitted to leave the center only to go to the restroom. Lunch
is brought to them. Jacquin grades the students twice daily on
behavior and academic success. The students also grade

themselves, explaining why they believe they deserve that grade. The purpose is to let the students see first hand the consequences for inappropriate behavior. The focus is not only on academics but on behavior that distract from the student's learning. Natural or logical consequences are issued for inappropriate behavior and appropriate behavior is reinforced. Parents also played an integral role in the program. Parents are notified by letter of all in-school suspensions, and school officials also discuss problems with parents by telephone or in person. Additional conferences are scheduled as needed. A daily report is sent home to the parents with the daily academic and behavior program of the students and any homework assignments. The parents are asked to sign them and the students are responsible for returning them the next day.

So far, the program results have been positive. A survey indicates that the students who had spent time in the center demonstrate better attitudes toward their classes and improved academic performance. The hope of getting students back on track in middle school appears to be coming true.

Summary

Dropout prevention programs are taking place throughout the United States. Even though these programs share common elements, each program offers unique components to aid dropouts. Some programs involve students helping students, other involve

businesses being involved with potential dropouts and now teachers are looking at ways they can develop programs to aid their "at risk" students. These programs are meeting a wide variety of success and failures but the increase of programs developed shows the need and desire to help prevent students from dropping out.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Purpose

Teacher intervention with "at risk" students would help
prevent dropping out, develop better student/teacher
relationships and enable the "at risk" students to have a
valuable source to turn to in school. This is the proposed
outcome of this project. The outcome will be assessed by
comparing the subjects' progress during the first quarter, when
no intervention took place, with progress second and third
quarters when teacher intervention occurred.

Characteristics of the Study Population

The common characteristics of the subjects in this study
were "at risk" factors defined as poor attendance, excessive
tardies, academic failures, and weak social skills. There were
ten subjects who participated in this study. They ranged
from grades nine through twelve and were enrolled in a remedial
reading class due to reading scores below the sixth grade
reading level. The subjects attended Wentzville High School,

and were enrolled in a reading class during first or second hour. Table One outlines the subjects' (represented by letters to assure anonymity) attendance record for 1987-1988 school year (a total of 180 days) and the number of classes failed during that same year. Also represented were the days present first quarter (a total of 42 days) and the number of classes failed first quarter.

All of the subjects were absent ten days or more during the 1987-1988 school year and had already been absent at least one day during the first four weeks of the first quarter for 1988-1989 school year. All of the subjects failed at least two classes during the 1987-1988 school year and already had failed at least one class for the first quarter of the 1988-1989 school year. The subjects were referred to the counselor's office for behavioral problems several times throughout the 1987-1988 school year and had already been referred at least once the first quarter of the 1988-1989 school year. During discussions with the subjects' classroom teachers, weak social skills were mentioned in describing the subjects. The subjects preferred to work alone, seldom answered questions unless specifically called upon and had a low tolerance level, often became frustrated, angry, and refused to try once failure had been experienced.

Table 1

Summary of Attendance and Classes Failed

	1987-1988 Days Present	1987-1988 Classes Failed	1st Quarter Days Present	2nd Quarter Classes Failed
Subject A Grade 9	168	2	39	2
Subject B Grade 9	169	3	40	3
Subject C Grade 10	167	2	41	1
Subject D Grade 11	167	4	40	1
Subject E Grade 9	169	2	41	2
Subject F Grade 9	168	2	39	1
Subject G Grade 10	170	3	38	2
Subject H Grade 9	166	2	39	3
Subject I Grade 12	165	3	40	2
Subject J Grade 10	160	4	34	3

Intervention

Student/Teacher intervention took place according to the following schedule:

Week 1   Contact parents to express concern and availability to help the students using the script from Form A (See Appendix A).

Week 2   Meet with the classroom teachers and counselor of each subject, filling out the information provided on Form B (See Appendix B).

Week 3   Initial meeting with each subject separately for questioning format using the script from Form C (See Appendix C).

Week 4   Give each teacher a checklist, covering each student's progress, grade, and behavior, Form D (See Appendix D), to be completed and returned.

Week 5   Talk with the counselor of each subject and record any problems or progress reported using Form E (See Appendix E).

Week 6   Meet with the subjects as a group and complete Activity A (See Appendix F). The purpose of this activity is to build an awareness in the students that they make their own choices and therefore they are responsible for their consequences. The need for careful planning when making decisions will be stressed.

Week 7   Give each teacher a checklist, Form D (See
          Appendix D), to be completed.

Week 8   Have each counselor complete Form E (See Appendix
          E), following up any problems and providing
          positive feedback to students for their progress
          achieved.

Week 9   Follow up on any problems addressed on Form D
          (See Appendix D). End of first quarter. Record
          grades the subjects received during the first
          quarter.

Week 10   Meet with each classroom teacher (some subjects
          will have new teachers for the second semester)
          and explain Forms B and D (See Appendix B and D
          that the teachers will be receiving.

Week 11   Meet with the students as a group and discuss
          goal setting. The session will begin by reading
          an explanation of goal setting, Activity B (See
          Appendix H) to the subjects. The subjects will
          then complete the Goals checklist Setting Goals,
          materials included in Activity B (See Appendix H).
          Setting Goals will be discussed the following week.
          The purpose of this activity is to help the
          subjects write realistic, attainable goals for
          themselves so they can begin to experience success
          and begin to build self-esteem.

Week 12   Discuss Activity B (See Appendix H), Setting

Goals, with the subjects. Check to see if goals
are clear, attainable, and realistic. By using
the beginning initial of each word which spells
car, the students should be able to remember
this checklist. Generalize how students can
continue to achieve goals for themselves.

Week 13   Distribute Form B (See Appendix B), to the
teachers and counselor of each subject,
addressing problems.

Week 14   Call parents again to address progress or failure
experienced by the subjects using Form F (See
Appendix F).

Week 15   Complete a worksheet on your feelings using
Activity C (See Appendix I), as a group with the
subjects. Allow each student to discuss their
responses, building an awareness in subjects how
important "your" feelings are and how important
it is to express our feelings. Point out no
feelings are good or bad or better than another's.

Week 16   Provide checklists, Form D (See Appendix D),
for teachers to return. Address all problems and
praise subjects for all accomplishments.

Week 17   Have each counselor complete Form E (See
Appendix E), following up any problems and
providing positive feedback to subject for
progress achieved.

Week 18   Build a better self-awareness in the subjects by

identifying likes and dislikes of themselves

using Activity D (See Appendix J),

individually. When completed, discuss responses

as a group. Encourage subjects to elaborate on

their responses.

Week 19   Final session with the subjects, summarizing the

activities completed, geraralizing how they can

continue to use them in their lives and

encouraging each subject to ask for help from

teachers or counselors when they need it.

Stress availability to personally help them at

any time.

Week 20   Intervention has been completed. Record grades

for the third quarter.

Materials used in the student sessions, Activities A-D

(See Appendix H to J), were provided by the Saint Louis Public

Schools Career Education Office, 5057 Ridge Avenue, Saint Louis,

Missouri 63113. Permission has been granted by Mr. Ken Roberts,

member of the Career Educational Staff.

Measurement of Results

The measurements used for this project were the grades

received on the subjects' report card during the second and

third quarters when teachers intervention occurred, compared

with the grades received first quarter and during the previous
year when no intervention occurred. A statistical test was
performed to determine if there had been a statistically
significant change in grades. The project was based on a
statistically significant change that occurred in subjects'
grades, attendance, and number of office referrals.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to see if a teacher's
intervention program with "at risk" students would enable these
students to experience "success" in school, achieving better
grades, improving attendance and enhancing their attitude toward
school in general. This change of attitude was assessed by the
number of behavioral referrals to the counselor or principal.
Careful monitoring of these students was carried on throughout
the study, maintaining constant contact with the students and
frequent contact with the students' teachers, counselors, and
parents.

Restatement of Major Hypothesis

"At risk" students when given the support of a specific
teacher would be able to improve their grades and attendance,
while decreasing the number of referrals due to behavioral
problems. With these changes occurring within the "at risk"
population, dropping out of school would decrease, allowing
these students to reach their full potential and also reducing
the national dropout rate which eases the financial burden on

society.

Data Analysis

Examining the students' grades, attendance, and office referrals first quarter with the grades, attendance, and office referrals achieved during the final phase of the study, third quarter, was done through the use of t-test. Table Two looks at the student's grades.

Table 2

Grades

	N	X̄	S.D.	t	D.F.	P
One First Quarter	10	.873	.350	−1.95	9	.0405
Two Third Quarter	10	.976	.323			

One, consisting of the ten subjects during the first quarter when no intervention took place, appears on the first line of the table. The mean grade point average for the group was .873 with a standard deviation (S.D.) of .359. Two, the same ten subjects during third quarter after intervention took place, had a grade point average for the group of .976. This was an increase of .103, with a standard deviation of .323.

The results are significant at .0405, demonstrating that there
is only a 4% chance this increase was due to any outside,
uncontrollable factor. It is, therefore, statistically
significant at the .05 level of confidence.

Another t-test was used to see if attendance was affected
during this study. The results are illustrated in Table Three.

Table 3

Attendance

	N	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	t	D.F.	P
One First Quarter	10	39.1	2.02	-.537	9	.3045
Two Third Quarter	10	39.4	1.17			

Table Two represents the attendance of One during the
first quarter when no intervention took place. Out of a possible
42 days of attendance, the mean attendance was 39.1 with a
standard deviation of 2.02. Two, the same ten subjects
during third quarter after intervention took place, attended
39.4 days out of the total 42 days. The t-test shows there is
significant difference (.304) between the two time periods in
attendance. There is a 30% chance that the increase was due
to outside factors.

Table Three represents a percentage of time the subjects

did not receive an office referral. One represents first
quarter when no interventions took place and Two represents
third quarter when the intervention occurred.

Table 4

Number of Referrals

	N	X̄	S.D.	t	D.F.	P
One First Quarter	10	92.6	4.72	2.199	9	.0268
Two Third Quarter	10	88.2	2.83			

One, the ten subjects during first quarter, when no
intervention took place, has a mean of 92.6, representing the
percentage of time the subjects did not receive an office
referral. The standard deviation is 4.72. Two, the same
ten subjects during third quarter when intervention took place,
has a mean of 88.2, representing the percentage of time the
subjects did not receive an office referral. The standard
deviation is 2.82. The level of significance is .026 showing 2%
is due to outside factors. This is statistically significant at
the .05 level of confidence. This shows the number of office
referrals did significantly increase during third quarter.

CHAPTER V

Summary

It was hypothesized at the beginning of the study that teacher intervention with "at risk" students would enable these students to achieve "success" in school by improving their grades, attendance, and decreasing the number of office referrals. The results of the data indicated that this intervention program did significantly increase the subject's grades but the data indicated that attendance, even though slightly improved, was not statistically significant at the .05 level of confidence. The number of office referrals, as illustrated by the data, actually increased by 4.4%.

Limitations

To gain a clearer perspective on the results of this study and to provide direction for future research, it is important to review some of the possible reasons for these results. Some limitations of this study include:

1.   The study involved a limited number of students over a short period of time. There were only ten students involved during the two quarters when intervention

occurred.

2. No control group was used in the study.

3. Historical events could have affected the subjects since the problem of "at risk" students was being addressed by the school district and the Missouri Department of Education, and also in publications and on television. This could have heightened the awareness in the subjects and in others involved with them, making changes that could not be controlled.

Conclusion

The results of the data illustrated that teacher intervention did have a positive affect on the "at risk" students' grades. This factor is essential in preventing the students from dropping out. The data also showed the number of office referrals increased. This could be attributed to the study occurring during the second and third quarter, compared to first quarter when students generally receive less behavioral referrals. This increase may be due to the atmosphere becoming more familiar, frustration becoming more common, and failure having been experienced several times during the semester. The students' behaviors then reflect feelings of negativism, resulting in inappropriate conduct. The increase in attendance is not statistically relevant at the .05 level of confidence and could have been due to outside factors such as the weather,

parental pressure, and the desire to attend school to see peers.
Further study is suggested in this area before any concrete
conclusions can be drawn.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further research with teacher intervention programs to
prevent "at risk" students from dropping out is suggested. This
research could be repeated over an extended period of time and
with a larger population. Validity could be increased by
providing a control group during the time of the study.
Intervention could not only take place during the regular school
hours but may be expanded to include support groups after
school. Effectiveness of the intervention could be increased by
involving more than just one individual involved in the
educational process of these subjects. Peers could also be used
to help "at risk" students in school. As indicated in the
reviewed literature and also by this research project,
intervention is needed for "at risk" students so dropping out
will no longer be the selected option for students experiencing
difficulty in school. Hopefully, these students will be staying
in school enabling them to live richer lives and society will
then reap the benefits of their education.

APPENDIX A

Form A

Parental Contact Script

Hello, this is (student's name) reading teacher. I'm calling to let you know that (student's name) has been (briefly discuss student's progress in class) and I would like you to know that I'm available to help (student's name) not only with this class but also in any of his/her other classes. You can reach me at home or by calling me at school. I will be calling again in a few weeks to once again see if I can be of assistance in any way. Thanks for your time and I'll be keeping in touch.

APPENDIX B

Form B

Initial Contact Report

Student's Name _____

Counselor _____

Teacher's Name _____

Period _____

Grade _____   Grading Period _____

No. of Tardies _____ No. of Absences _____

Positive Achievements:

Potential Problems:

Other:

APPENDIX C

Form C

Individual Interview with Subjects

Hi (student's name)

1. How are your classes going?

2. Are you keeping up with your assignments?

3. Is the reading or assignments in any of your classes becoming too much for you?

4. What grade are most of the students in who are enrolled in that class?

5. Do you have any buddies in that class?

6. Do you find the teacher easy to talk with about questions you have regarding the subject matter?

7. Is it difficult for you to ask questions during class?

8. Are there any problems you would like to discuss regarding your classes, school in general, or any other topic?

APPENDIX D

Form D

Checklist for Teachers

Student's Name _____ Date _____

PROGRESS

# of Assignments Completed   _____

# of Assignments Missing   _____

GRADE   _____

Behavior   A   B   C   D   F

Would you like to discuss student's progress?   YES   NO

Date Available _____

APPENDIX E

Form E

Counselor Report

Student's Name _____

Counselor _____

Date _____

Problems Reported Regarding Students?   YES   NO

If yes, describe:

Positive Progress Reports?   YES   NO

If yes, describe:

APPENDIX F

Form F

Second Parental Contact Script

Hello, this is (student's name) reading teacher again. I
wanted to let you know (student's name), (Briefly discuss
progress, mentioning positive and negative) in reading class.
Has (student's name) been showing progress or experiencing
difficulty in any other classes or areas? (Encourage parents
to share school success and frustrations with you, offering
assistance when possible). Well thank you very much for your
time and once again feel free to contact me if you have any
questions regarding (student's name).

APPENDIX G

Activity A

Decision Making

PURPOSE: To provide students with an opportunity to become
            familiar with aspects that restrict our decisions.

ACTIVITY #1   Have students discuss which of the following
               decisions involve input or the agreement of
               other people. Answers will vary.

    1.   Giving a party
    2.   Purchasing an album
    3.   Mowing the lawn
    4.   Washing the car
    5.   Doing homework
    6.   Buying a car
    7.   Taking a shower
    8.   Watching T.V.
    9.   Choosing a college
    10.   Buying toothpaste
    11.   Buying a blouse or shirt
    12.   Getting a job
    13.   Going into the military
    14.   Breaking the law
    15.   Saving money

ACTIVITY #2   Have students discuss whether or not they could
               make the decision to do the following at this
               time based on their skills and knowledge.
               Answers may vary.

    1.   Fly an airplane
    2.   Get married
    3.   Care for a baby
    4.   Operate on a heart patient
    5.   Drive a car legally
    6.   Fill out an income tax form
    7.   Interview for a job as a secretary
    8.   Dance in a contest
    9.   Mow the lawn
    10.   Make a pizza
    11.   Change a flat tire
    12.   Read the gas meter
    13.   Purchase airline ticket

14. Write a business letter
15. Replumb the kitchen

ACTIVITY #3   Have the students discuss the fifteen above
statements expressing whether they have the
"interest" in doing them. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITY #4   Have students relate one important decision they
have made in the last several years. Have them
relate the effects these decisions had on other
people and whether the decision was a good one
based on their skills and knowledge.

ACTIVITY #5   Read the following statements to the students and
have them discuss their answers.

All decisions require some behavioral responses or
activity. Below are some statements. Indicate what
activity should occur because of the decision.

1. A burglar has entered your home. You
have decided to call the police.

2. Your car has stopped running. You
have decided to see if you can repair
it.

3. Your friend has angered you. You
decided to correct the problem.

4. You have decided a neighbor doesn't
like you.

5. You have decided to get a job in sales.

"Decisions.
decisions. What
else should go
in the stew??"

APPENDIX H

Activity B

Goal Setting

Have you ever seen a soccer game? Do you know what it is called when a player successfully kicks the ball into the net? It is called scoring a goal. Scoring the goal is the reward for the hours of practice, determination, and preparation for the game which included memorizing the plays, learning to cooperate with teammates, listening to the coach, and improving weak areas.

Setting goals in your own life can be very similar to scoring goals in sports. A goal is something you want - to do, to have, or to be. Some goals are easy to set and easy to achieve. If you set a goal of getting up early, you need to set the alarm, go to bed early, and get up when the alarm rings to achieve your goal of getting up early. This type of goal is called a short term goal because it only takes a short time to achieve. What are some of your short term goals?

Long term goals are goals that take a long time to achieve. Long term goals give you a direction or purpose for the actions you take. They give you a gauge to judge if you are moving toward your idea of success. By setting long term goals, you increase your chances of achieving your successes. Graduating from high school can be a long term goal. Selecting and training for a career can be a long term goal. What are some of your long term goals?

You have a right to set your goals as long as those goals do not hurt others. Your values (the things which are important to you) influence how you set your goals. As you grow older and as your values change, your goals may change. Sometimes things happen that may force you to change your goals. How would your plans for your future change if you were drafted into the army? If you were injured and lost your hand? If you were given $1,000,000? These may seem to be very unlikely occurrences. Some would be barriers or hindrances to achieve your goals. Some would be "dreams come true". You cannot count on "dream come true" or worry to extreme about barriers that could get in your way, but it helps to understand that as you set your goals now, you must be flexible to cope with the changes that may occur.

Set you goals now. Set them high. Always strive to be the

best you can be. But remember achieving your goals in life is even more difficult than scoring a goal in soccer. It takes practice, effort, persistence, and sometimes, teamwork.

A positive personality
brings sure success ...

"I AM A SUCCESS!"

"I WILL SUCCEED!"

"I CAN SUCCEED!"
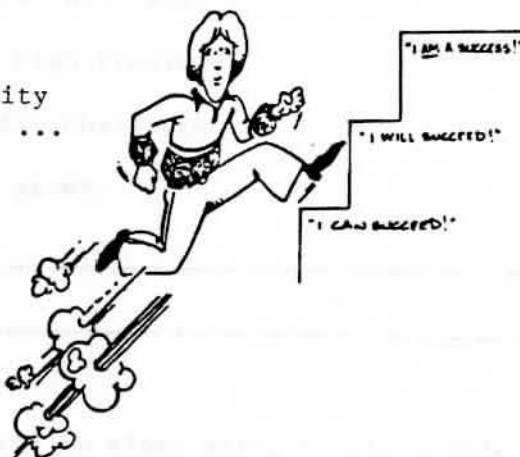
GOALS CHECKLIST

Check the five most important goals in each section. (Rank order, 1 = highest)

Section I: Goals which are desirable in the task, career, or major itself.

_____ A. to be creative

_____ B. to problem solve

_____ C. to help others

_____ D. to sell, persuade

_____ E. to instruct

_____ F. to be powerful

_____ G. to see a completed product

_____ H. to work with numbers

_____ I. to work with ideas

_____ J. to work with people

_____ K. to work with things

_____ L. to be physically active

_____ M. to avoid high pressure

_____ N. a realistic challenge

_____ O. personal growth

_____ P. Other _____

_____ Q. Other _____

Section II: Goals which go along with, or are a side effect

of, the task, career or major.

A chance to:

_____ A. have status

_____ B. make under $15,000

_____ C. make between $15,000 and $30,000

_____ D. make between $30,000 and $50,000

_____ E. have variety

	FOR TODAY	FOR THE END OF THE SEMESTER	FOR THREE YEARS FROM NOW	FOR TEN YEARS FROM NOW
GOAL				
TASK NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL				
BARRIERS WHICH MAY HINDER ME FROM ACHIEVING THIS GOAL				
STEPS I COULD TAKE TO IMPROVE MY CHANCES FOR SUCCESS				

APPENDIX I

Activity C

MY FEELINGS ARE ME!

Here is your chance to write how you feel. There can be no "right" or "wrong" feelings. Your feelings are very important because they are yours. Finish these sentences.

1. Today I feel _____

2. I get mad when _____

3. I feel bad when _____

4. To me school is _____

5. Most of my teachers are _____

6. My parents are really _____

7. I would rather _____

8. I know I will never _____

9. Most people think I _____

10. I get scared when _____

11. I am happiest when _____

12. I would like to _____

13. My future is _____

14. To me, a job is _____

15. I will finish school when _____

16. Working and going to school is _____

17. School without a job is _____

18. Money in my pocket is _____

19.   I like to get money from _____

20.   Looking for work sounds _____

21.   My friends are _____

22.   I am studying for _____

IF I COULD BE . . .

If I could be any animal, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a bird, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be an insect, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a flower, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a tree, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a piece of furniture, I'd Be a(n) _____
because _____

If I could be a musical instrument, I'd be a(n) _____
because _____.

If I could be a building, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a car, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a street, I'd be a(n) _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a state, I'd be _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a foreign country, I'd be _____ because ____
_____.

If I could be a game. I'd be _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a record, I'd be _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a TV show, I'd Be _____ because _____
_____.

If I could be a movie, I'd be _____ because _____
_____.

APPENDIX J

Activity D

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Here are the beginnings of some sentences. Simply complete each
one with whatever comes to mind. There are no right or wrong
answers. Just write down your first impression and go on. You
will find it easier if you work rapidly rather than deliberate
over each one.

I admire _____

Our family _____

I was happiest when _____

If people only knew that I _____

I get down in the dumps when _____

There are times when I _____

A leader is one who _____

I wish I _____

The best work I ever did _____

What people like most about me is _____

I can't understand what makes me _____

A person who always smiles _____

When I look at myself in the mirror _____

School dances _____

I questioned my father _____

I would consider myself successful if _____

The main driving force in my life is _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barro, S. (1984). The incidence of dropping out: A descriptive analysis. SMB Economic Research, Washington, D.C.

Beck, & Miria, J.A. (1980, Nov.). A portrait of tragedy: Research finding on the dropout. The High School Journal, 65-72.

Char Gray-Shoffner (1987, Nov.). A rescue program for potential dropouts. Principal, 53-54.

Chatterall, J. (1985). Dropping out of school. Paper presented at U.C.L.A.

Digest of Educational Statistics 1983-84 (1985). Reason for dropping out. Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office.

Duncan V. (1980). Oregon early school leavers study. Salem, Oregon: Department of Education

Education U.S.A. (1986, Jan.). Dropouts: Who and Why? National School Public Relation Association, Washington, D.C.

Fields, M. (1987). Director, Project Coffee, Oxford High School Annex. Oxford, Massachusetts 011540

George, C. (1987). Director. Office of Job Development. Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta, Georgia 30312

Hamilton, S.F. (1986). Raising standards and reducing dropout rates. Teacher College Press, 87(3). 410-429.

Hammond, F. (1986). Large school systems' dropout reports: An analysis of definitions, procedures, and findings. Teacher College Press, 87(3) 324-340.

Hodgkinson, H. (1985, June). All one system: Demographics of education, kindergarten through graduate school. Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C.

Kaplan, J., & Luck, E. (1977). The dropout phenomenon as a social problem. The Educational Forum, 42, 47-48.

Law, R., & Ruby T. (1987). School dropouts-Why does the problem prevail? Presented in 1987 at NASP Convention, New Orleans, LA.

Morrow, G. (1986). Standardizing practice with analysis of school dropouts. Teacher College Press, 87(3), 342-355.

National Center for Education Statistics (1984). High school and beyond: The condition of education. Washington, D.C.

Orr, T. (1987). What to do about youth dropouts? A summary of solutions. Structured Employment/Economic Development Corporation, New York, New York.

Peng, S. (1983). High school dropouts: Descriptive information from high school and beyond, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Ruby, T. (1987). School dropout--Why does the problem prevail? NASP Convention, New Orleans, LA.

Solomon, J. (1988). Interview with Director of Urban Education, Jefferson City, MO.

Strother, D. (1986). Dropping Out. Phi Delta Kappan, 68 (4), 325-328.

U.S. Bureau of Census (1986). Statistical Abstract of the United States: (106th edition) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. General Accounting Office 1986. School dropouts: The extent and nature of the problem, Washington, D.C.

Wehlage, G.G. & Rutter, R.A. (1986). Dropping out: How much do schools contribute to the problem. Teachers College Press, 87(3) 374-392.