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## Does intensive reading interventions cause alienation in ninth grade high school students?

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DOES INTENSIVE READING INTERVENTIONS CAUSE ALIENATION  
IN NINTH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

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A Thesis  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Curriculum and Instruction

---

by  
Allan Lee Aab  
December 2007

DOES INTENSIVE READING INTERVENTIONS CAUSE ALIENATION  
IN NINTH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

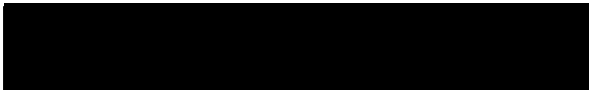
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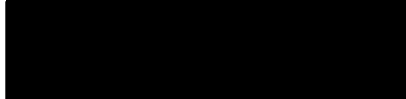
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by  
Allan Lee Aab  
December 2007

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Nov 20, '07  
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Date

## ABSTRACT

To reach the goal of improving reading and comprehension, state mandated interventions are required for every student in stanine one and two. Enrollment in an intensive reading program results in reading or support classes for three or four of a student's six classes and results in only limited exposure to normal core school curriculum. This study examines the question, "is the level of alienation higher in students enrolled in intensive remedial reading classes versus students enrolled in regular reading classes?" Students in both intensive and non-intensive reading programs completed surveys and were interviewed. In addition, data on academics, attendance and discipline was examined. The results of this small study indicate that levels of alienation actually decreased for students enrolled in the intensive reading program.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No man is an island, and as such, I would like to acknowledge a number of individuals that have helped me in this endeavor. First and foremost, I wish to thank my first reader, Dr. Wright for his thoughtful and motivating comments on the direction and content of my thesis. You always kept me focused and out of "rabbit holes." Dr. Gehring, my second reader, reviewed the finished product and helped put the icing on the cake. Dr. Mendoza, you have no idea how often you kept me going. Dr. Pelsar, your impact was huge. Dr Mahoney, thanks for the input about my data.

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Lastly, I want to thank all of the students at March Valley School, who put up with me and answered my endless questions. High school students have a unique and interesting outlook on life and I am grateful that everyday is an opportunity to interact with them and hopefully impact their lives. I know they impact mine.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Understanding and Combating Alienation  
in all High School Students

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The Moreno Valley Unified School District uses the program *Read 180* for their high school intervention program. It is a combination of computer-based reading, small-group and whole class direct instruction, modeled reading and independent reading. This program involves 90 minutes of remedial reading daily: 30 minutes of computer-based reading, vocabulary acquisition and comprehension, 30 minutes of silent reading and 30 minutes of small group (5-7 students) direct instruction.

The *Read 180* software provides differentiated and continually adjusted practice in word analysis, reading comprehension, fluency and vocabulary acquisition. The software also provides comprehensive and immediate feedback to student and teacher. It is used for diagnosis and placement, affords continuous and ongoing monitoring and then provides periodic progress evaluation to measure student improvement over time.

In addition to the intensive reading program, State mandates require that students in stanine one and two be enrolled in a reading support class. A stanine is a

nine-point scaled score used in some standardized tests It represents the percentage of people who will receive any given score. Eleven percent of students will be below average: four percent in stanine one and seven percent in stanine two. This mandate results in restricted options or choices for elective classes. Consequently, these students are enrolled in an intensive reading program with support classes and have only limited exposure to usual core school curriculum.

#### Statement of Problem

Students in stanine one and two have limited reading and comprehension skills. Consequently, interventions are mandated to correct these deficiencies. However, the end result is very limited exposure to normal core curriculum. These students are separated from others and subject to a very limited curriculum. This leads us to the question: Do these mandated interventions lead to higher levels of alienation experienced by students in intervention classes as compared to students not enrolled in the mandated interventions? Alienation is characterized by feelings of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation and meaninglessness. Powerlessness is the feeling of not being able to control one's situation. Normlessness is the

experience that accepted social standards no longer apply. Social isolation is being a "loner." Meaninglessness is not seeing a connection between effort today and what will happen in the future.

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to determine if students enrolled in intensive reading intervention classes experience greater alienation than students enrolled in non-intensive reading intervention classes.

#### Delimitations of the Study

Survey participants are ninth and tenth grade students that are enrolled in intensive and non-intensive reading programs at March Valley School (MVS), an alternative high school in the Moreno Valley Unified School District. MVS is a small school, only one-hundred-seventy-two students and eight teachers. Each class can have a total of twenty-two students enrolled.

#### Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations of this study included loss of participants due to expulsion and enrollment in or exit from the intensive and non-intensive reading programs. As such, the number of participants was limited in nature for

both the intensive (pre survey n = 19 and post survey n = 14) and the non-intensive (pre survey n = 31 and post survey n = 13) reading development. This study was limited by data collected from a single site. The small sample size limited external validity or the ability of the author to generalize beyond the limited sample, though the results suggest future research into student alienation.

Lack of longitudinal information on students prior to attending MVS resulted in limited academic, attendance or discipline histories to determine pre-existing conditions. There was only limited access to socio-economic data. The researcher's ability to collect academic, attendance and discipline data was limited by available time. Only two semesters' academic (grades, credit completion), attendance and discipline data was available for comparison and analysis.

Selection of participants for interviews was a limiting factor. The choice of students to be interviewed was based on a convenience sample--their ability to stay after school for the interview. A final limitation was as a beginning researcher, trial and error was a common method.



CHAPTER TWO  
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction-Alienation

High school is something students look forward to and dread at the same time. It is a critical time in a student's life. Academic demands are much greater and rapid social, emotional, physical and cognitive development associated with adolescence is occurring. Children in their early teens are striving for independence and at the same time have an overwhelming need to belong. The transition from a smaller middle school environment to a large bureaucratic high school may amplify students' feelings of confusion, meaninglessness, powerlessness, isolation, or alienation. This can be especially true for students that have been socially promoted and therefore lack the proper academic preparation. Is it possible these students become intensely alienated and dropout because of the programs they must attend, such as intense reading programs?

The term alienate means "make estranged" in feelings or affections, from L. alienatus, pp. of alienare "to make another's estrange," from alienus "of or belonging to another person or place (etymonline.com). The etymology of

alienation, as it relates to education, can be traced to Marx's, Theory of Alienation (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia) and Durheim's, Suicide (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia).

Dewey, in Democracy and Education (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia), modeled an educational philosophy that involved parents, students and teachers in the school decision-making process to increase student engagement and achievement. Although there is no consensus among various disciplines as to the meaning of alienation (Winters-Glasgow, 1993), Mau (1992) examined the theoretical constructs of alienation as compared to the empirical reality of students and helped validate the multi-dimensionality of student alienation within the school context. Mann (2001) described how a student's loss of ownership in the learning process could lead to alienation from the learning environment. Mills-Nova (1999) explained how discrepancies between an institution's stated value of diversity and a student's learning style, values and beliefs could foster alienation from the school community. Osterman (1998) reviewed available literature on student belongingness and how this belongingness or lack of belongingness can impact student behavior and achievement.

Alienation in the contemporary literature is generally associated with four different dimensions: powerlessness, meaningless, normlessness, and social isolation (Dean, 1961; Mau, 1992). Powerlessness is the feeling that there is no control over one's personal destiny. A student who feels powerlessness might have set a goal they value highly, yet, have low expectations of achieving that goal (Mau, 1992). The consequence of powerlessness can be an increase in non-attendance, acting out, or rebelling.

Meaning refers to the connections we make between present and future. Thus, meaninglessness "indicates a lack of connectedness between the present and the future" (Mannheim, 1954, as cited in Mau, 1992, p. 732). Therefore, meaninglessness would imply that a student does not see a connection between current school activities and what he is going to be doing in the future. The result is students who do not study something they do not feel they would use in the future.

Normlessness refers to the "belief that socially disapproved behavior is required to achieve goals" (Seeman, 1984; Merton & Barber 1968, as cited in Mau, 1992, p. 732). It can also be described as the experience of having no purpose or the absence of values that can

provide a compass in a person's life. Another way normlessness can be described is a "conflict of norms" (Dean, 1961, p. 755). A student who has a high degree of normlessness might believe that socially disapproved behavior from peers is expected or might feel conflict with school norms. The end result in this case, is a student who does not believe in the authority of teachers or administrators and therefore rebels against school rules and requirements.

Social isolation can be expressed as a detachment from a group or from group standards. A student who illustrates this concept would be called a "loner and does not participate in school activities" (Bickford & Neal, 1969, as cited in Mau, 1992, p. 733).

In the article "There are aliens in our school" Oerlemans and Jenkins (1998) looked at different interventions implemented to address these constructs of alienation. The dimension of meaninglessness was addressed by using programs that emphasized remedial and vocational education, work experience and curriculum improvements that increased student interest and engagement. The construct of social estrangement was primarily addressed through counseling services. Normlessness was addressed using programs that dealt with attendance, truancy and

student drop out. The most successful programs were holistic in nature and involved all stakeholders: teachers, parents, administrators and community representatives. The least researched area of alienation deals with powerlessness. Unfortunately, few interventions offer any real sense of power to students. However, as students matured, their desire for power sharing was not as great when they felt they were being treated with respect and fairness. The significant conclusion of this article suggested educators should use the constructs of alienation as a checklist to evaluate new interventions before money was spent to implement them.

#### The Population: At-Risk Students

It seems appropriate to consider the implications of alienation for at-risk students, the sample of this study. The term "at-risk" has been applied for students that have a high probability of not attaining desired life outcomes (McCann & Austin, 1988). Desirable life outcomes would be participation in society in a meaningful way, both on a personal level (education and employment) as well as on a social level (absence of crime and longevity). Most people would agree that a high quality education for all students is a worthy goal. Yet, research has revealed a disturbing

fact: many at-risk students will drop out before graduating and the number appears to be growing; society will bear a heavy economic cost if this trend is not reversed. At-risk students have been shown to exhibit the following characteristics: alienation, anti-social behavior, history of high-risk behavior, family conflict, school failure, low commitment to education, and association with delinquent peers. Additionally, research has shown that low skill levels in vocabulary, reading and comprehension are characteristics of at-risk students.

Consequently, many interventions have been implemented to stop this trend of increased dropouts. One of these interventions is high doses of remedial vocabulary, reading and comprehension. The intervention of high doses of remedial vocabulary, reading and comprehension, three or four classes out of a total of six classes, leads us to our research question: Do intensive reading interventions cause alienation in ninth grade high school students?

#### Sources of Alienation

Understanding the sources of alienation and its four constructs- powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness and social isolation- can provide methods for reducing or

eliminating it. The literature has identified a number of contributing factors to student alienation. Social isolation, the result of outside influences, plays a role. If someone is excluded from a group, a form of isolation occurs. In the most damaging context, exclusion from a group involves behaviors that place individuals outside "normal" moral values and rules of fairness (Opatow, 1990). These behaviors can range from obvious and openly cruel comments to subtle tactics and behaviors that only the excluded person would notice. Young high school students reported that exclusion was common within their experience at school and had a detrimental effect on their academic and social development (Thorkildsen & Reese, 2002).

Student alienation may also result from the policies and practices of a school and influenced by socio-economic factors. Hyman and Perone (1998) reviewed the literature on student victimization by staff and concluded that all too often the frequency of emotional maltreatment, as permitted by school policies and practices, was a function of socio-economic status.

Curricula relevance is a factor. Resistance to learning frequently entails a curriculum that is unrelated to a student's life so the student will experience

meaninglessness. Resistance to learning is endemic in many educational settings. Alienation can be thought of as a process. Carlson's (1995) model included three constructs of alienation: Meaninglessness, powerlessness and social isolation. Her description of alienation was the "persistent negative feelings some students associate with actively aversive or insufficiently meaningful situations" (p. 467). An example of this would be students thinking that a class is "boring." Since adolescents need to find meaning in what they are doing, their inability to find meaning in curriculum could lead to normlessness. Carlson described this as lack of participation or faking (p. 468). This could lead to social isolation, increasing lack of success, feelings of powerlessness and consequently, alienation.

Factors that affect engagement or disengagement include relevance of instruction, instructional format and subject, the teacher, and individual and school issues (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif 2003; Bull, 1993; Lee & Burkam, 2001). Increased levels of engagement have been shown to increase student achievement and decrease levels of alienation (Klem & Connell, 2004).

Instructional formats and content can also affect a student's decision to rebel. Open task structures create



opportunities; informal networks can contribute to repeatedly defying teachers as students try to re-direct classroom activities.

Classroom disruptions and non-cooperation can also bring the learning process to an abrupt stop. McFarland's (2001) study revealed how the characteristics of classrooms can cause student defiance and resistance. Macfarland noted how students with a network of friends within a classroom, rebellious friends and social standing in a class are more likely to engage in disruptive activities and disputes with the teacher.

A possible source of alienation is the student's perception of teacher ethnic bias. Jeffrey Wayman (2002) studied Mexican-American and non-Latino white adolescents (grades 7-12) and their perceptions of teacher bias. The conclusion was that Mexican-American students were more likely to perceive bias than were the non-Latino white students.

Dropping out of school is thought to be a gradual process characterized by increasing levels of alienation and disengagement (Alexander & Entwisle, 2001), exemplified by tardiness, absenteeism, truancy (Henry, 2007), referrals and suspensions (Brock et al., 1998),

class failure (Wehlage, Fyfe, Campbell, & Goldkamp, 1986) and transition between schools (Engel, 2006).

### Alienation and School Climate

The school climate or environment can influence learning. Several factors in the climate contribute to a student's success: Communication styles, expectations, classroom structure and rules, counseling services, commitment to academic success, school and district policies and openness to parental and community involvement. Oerlemans and Jenkins (1998) cited effective programs to address one factor of alienation- social isolation- that involved counseling services for students. As learning is a social process, and because schools are social places, students learn not by themselves but in a collaborative method with teachers, peers and family (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). A learning environment needs to be crafted that is safe, caring, well-managed and student-engaging. Social and emotional instruction on self-awareness, social-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making and relationship building overcome social isolation and help students feel greater attachment to school (Welsh, Park, Widaman, & O'Neil, 2001).

The role that school environment has on academic success was reviewed in the article, "The Role of Supportive School Environments in Promoting Academic Success" (Schaps, 2005). The school's social environment is shaped by a number of factors, including the school's espoused goals and values, the principal's leadership style, teaching and discipline methods, policies in reference to tracking and grading, and the exclusion or inclusion of students and parents in the planning and decision-making process.

However, one of the more important determinants of the school's environment is the quality of the student's relationship with other students and staff. When a student's basic psychological needs (safety, belonging, autonomy and competence) are being met, the likelihood of engagement in school, following school rules, developing social skills and contributing to the community will occur. When these psychological needs are not being met, students are less likely to be motivated and more likely to demonstrate poor academic performance and become alienated. Oerlemans and Jenkins (1998) reviewed successful holistic programs that addressed the issues of social isolation and other factors.

McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum (2002) suggested school discipline policies influence student connectedness and inversely, social isolation. Harsh discipline results in lower levels of student connectedness. Additionally, students at schools with moderate discipline policies felt safer versus students at schools with zero-tolerance policies. (An interesting finding from this study was that 40 percent of schools gave out-of-school suspensions to first-time smoking offenders; yet, only four percent gave out-of-school suspensions for first-time cheaters.)

The effects of disability, gender and race on alienation was conducted by Brown et al. (2003). This study indicated that students with disabilities, male students in general and students with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, are more likely to become socially rejected and alienated from school life.

Classroom climate is also associated with how students feel about school. The starting point is the teacher. In their article "Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement" Klem and Connell (2004) reviewed the results of a program that had three goals: (1) improve relationships between students and adults, (2) improve teaching and learning, and (3) reallocate resources to achieve goals one and two.

The results indicated that students who perceive support from teachers are more likely to be engaged in schoolwork. Consequently, students that have higher levels of engagement are more likely to have higher attendance and increased standardized test scores. An interesting adjunct of perceived teacher support was that as students got older, from grade nine to grade eleven, their perceived support from teachers increased (Boston Plan for Excellence, 2005).

#### School Size

Some researchers suggest class size is related to how students feel about school: as school size increases, connectedness decreases. Disengagement and alienation from school can be experienced as feelings of not belonging. Connectedness is a feeling of being part of and cared for at school. Contrary to this opinion, McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum (2002) used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and provided an in-depth look at students' connectedness. They studied academic year 1994-95, represented by 71,515 students in 127 schools. They also included survey responses from administrators concerning school policies and procedures, and characteristics of teachers and students. Their study

suggested that class size and teachers' experience or advance degree completion were not related to a student's connection to school.

However, large schools bring large problems. Little schools have little problems. In "The Case for Small Schools," (Bailey, 2000) outlined the advantages that small schools have over large schools. Small schools were defined as having less than 300 students and large schools defined as having more than 1,000 students. Large schools experienced significantly more incidents than small schools in the areas of violent crime (+825%), vandalism (+270%), theft and larceny (+378%), physical fights (+394%), robberies (+3,200%) and weapon incidents (+1,000%). Graduation rates at small schools were higher and dropout rates were lower compared to large schools. In addition, a review of school participation and student achievement, and parental involvement and positive student-teacher relationships revealed that all were higher at small schools.

#### Parent and Student Involvement in School

In their article "Parental Involvement in the Classroom" Machen, Wilson, and Notar (2003) reviewed the literature concerning parental involvement with the

schools their children attended. The success of schools and the community were closely tied. Teachers and schools it seems must work together with parents so social isolation can be reduced and the difficult responsibility of student learning can be accomplished. This article reviewed one parent outreach program that involved low-income urban parents. If transportation and babysitting barriers were removed, parents were more likely to get involved and stay involved. The other studies cited in this article reported that reading scores were positively impacted by parental involvement and that parental aspirations influenced students' academic achievement.

Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, and Adelman (1992) found that non-white parents were less likely than white parents to be involved with their children's education, even though it has been shown that non-white parents have felt it was more important than white parents to be involved in their children's education (Stevevson, Chen, & Uttal 1990). Erickson, Rodriguez, Hoff, and Garcia (1996), on the other hand, found white and non-white parental involvement and their alienation toward school to be the same as compared to that reported by Klimes-Dougan et al. Caucasian parents, on the other hand, were likely to feel

that teachers were more understanding of their needs as parents.

Hill and Taylor (2004) reviewed how parent involvement made a difference in student achievement. Parent involvement increased the social capital of both parents and students.

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. (Coleman, 1988, p. S98)

Parent's involvement improved their skills and provided more information for helping their students in school-related activities. Students who are more involved with activities at school are more likely to feel a greater connection to school thereby reducing a student's feelings of social isolation. With parents and school working together, appropriate student behaviors are communicated and enforced and the messages received by students are consistent and uniform. This results in increased motivation to learn and engage in school, and hence reduces alienation.



## Curriculum and Instruction

Flow theory is the term used to describe the culmination of student concentration, interest and enjoyment. This concept has implications for meaningfulness. High levels of flow imply high levels of engagement (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, 2003). This article reported on the investigation of student engagement. The three research questions investigated were as follows: (1) "How do high school students spend their time?" (2) "What is the association between challenge, subject relevance and student engagement?" and (3) "How do classroom factors, such as instructional method and subject influence student engagement?" (Shernoff et al., p. 4)

Students were assigned an electronic pager and were randomly "beeped." They would record their feelings in response to survey questions that evaluated their concentration, interest and enjoyment. Four challenge/skill conditions were created based on the following flow theory assumptions: (a) apathy equaled low challenge/low skill; (b) relaxation equaled low challenge/high skill; (c) anxiety equaled high challenge/low skill; and (d) flow equaled high challenge/high skill. All subject areas (English, science,

mathematics, history, foreign language, social science, computer science and vocational education) were included as well as classroom activities (individual work, listening to a lecture, taking exams, watching a video/TV/film, and group work).

The results of this investigation showed that the major activities of students were individual work (23%) and listening to lecture (21%). Combined with taking notes (10%), and study or homework (7%), the majority of time was spent doing non-interactive seatwork. Only small amounts of time were spent in interactive activities, such as discussions (9%) and group work (6%).

When student engagement was examined, higher concentration and skills were connected with higher levels of engagement. The results of engagement and instructional methods were examined and high levels of attention were reported during examinations, individual and group work. Significantly lower levels of attention occurred during lectures and viewing videos. In addition, high levels of motivation and intensity were reported during individual and group work versus listening to lectures. High levels of intensity but low levels of motivation were recorded during examinations. High motivation and low intensity occurred during watching videos (Shernoff et al., 2003,

p. 11). Flow theory clearly has implications for student alienation- for meaninglessness and normlessness in particular.

Other factors, such as explicit instruction and rules, provide a clear and precise pathway so a student can understand information and delineate a task into a sequence of successful routines (McCleery & Tindal, 1999, p. 9) and have implications for alienation. Explicit instruction involves teaching in small steps, guiding students in initial skill practice and providing a high number of successful practices. In addition, rules-based instruction can minimize learner demands by focusing them on content and sequencing activities. The use of hands-on and constructive activities appears to support high levels of reasoning within students. This provides students with the opportunity to construct knowledge by doing so they can make sense of what they are experiencing- an important component of meaninglessness. Results of this study showed students who were taught from a conceptual, explicit, rule-based instruction method provided a more detail, richer explanation of the scientific problem and a higher level of student engagement than those not instructed in these ways (McCleery & Tindal, 1999, p. 15).

Subject matter influence on engagement and motivation showed that non-academic classes had higher engagement and motivation than academic classes. However, attention and intensity during academic classes was higher than in non-academic classes. The conclusion that can be drawn from this investigation is that interactive, high challenge, high skill activities will result in higher levels of student engagement (Shernoff et al., 2003, p. 13) and thus, counteracts alienation. Higher student engagement in any class activity also has implications for a student's feelings of powerlessness. This too, could lower a student's feelings of alienation.

#### Literacy Instruction and Alienation

As this research specifically examines the role of intensive reading programs on student alienation, it is important to consider literacy instruction and its importance on alienation. "The level of student engagement is the mediating factor, or avenue, through which classroom instruction influences student outcomes" (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, as cited in Alverman, 2001, p. 407). A student's feelings of disengagement and meaninglessness seem to increase as levels of understanding and comprehension of text decreases.

Oerlemans and Jenkins (1998) stated that holistic intervention approaches have been most successful. Guthrie and Wigfield 2000 (as cited in Alverman, 2001, p. 407) concluded that a holistic approach to literacy instruction was also the most effective. Literacy is the ability to understand oral language and read printed text. A students' perception of the self as a competent reader will generally affect the educational results in the content areas of literature, social studies, mathematics and science. Academic literacy requires that students have the ability to comprehend, discuss, study and write about specific content areas. In turn, this requires the skills to read a variety of printed texts and acquire appropriate background knowledge. Effective literacy instruction provides and nurtures these skills.

Effective literacy instruction is based on five factors: (1) self-efficacy and engagement, (2) building academic literacy, (3) needs of struggling readers, (4) critical literacy, and (5) participatory approaches to instruction (Alvermann, 2001). A student's belief (or lack of belief) in self, self-efficacy, and this ability to learn, have high impact on an outcome. The connection between self-efficacy and motivation is well documented (Margolis & McCabe, 2004). Providing readers with clear

goals and constant feedback can result in increasing self-efficacy and create meaning and sense of agency for the student.

We might wonder if intensive reading programs contribute to alienation, if they stick to skill and drill methods. Building academic literacy requires strategies that include comprehensive monitoring, cooperative learning, using graphic and semantic organizers, asking and answering questions, developing text structure awareness and summarizing. In addition, adequate background information and relevant hands-on projects as well as the integration of reading and writing within a content area all help to effectively build and retain academic literacy (Alvermann, 2001, p. 5).

We might wonder if separate, differentiated intensive reading programs increase alienation. The literature suggests that the needs of struggling readers must be embedded in regular class work. The abilities of these struggling readers, their ability to read, write and orally communicate must result in differentiated instruction. In addition, effective instruction taps into the culture of the struggling reader so that the home and community values support them as they learn the skills necessary to become literate (Alvermann, 2001, p. 6).

Furthermore, could intensive reading programs increase meaninglessness by silencing some viewpoints? Development of critical literacy is the ability to see an issue or topic from multiple points of view. Students must develop this skill so they can understand that promotion of a particular viewpoint results in the silencing of another point of view. This generation of students, sometimes called the "Net Generation," is comfortable with and utilizes electronic methods of communication (internet, video, instant messaging and interactive). Providing students and teachers the opportunity to "develop a different view of how people may act, provisionally, at a particular time and within particular conditions" (Morgan, 1997, p. 26, as cited by Alvermann, 2001, p. 8) can foster a new form of digital literacy. Therefore, educating students on how to view issues from different perspectives is very important form of literacy (Alvermann, 2001, p.8). Teaching with these multiple perspectives in mind may help overcome meaninglessness on the part of the student.

Finally, participatory approaches to instruction result in the development of student generated monitoring of educational improvement and development of peer-to-peer interactions. The primary difference between participatory

instruction and transmission instruction is the instructor's use of the text. In participatory instruction, the textbook is a tool for learning and constructing knowledge. In transmission instruction, the textbook is the dispenser of knowledge (Alvermann, 2001, p. 9). When the text is considered the dispenser of knowledge, students who are unable to understand and comprehend that text could experience meaninglessness, thereby increasing their feelings of alienation.

#### Countering Alienation in Literacy Programs

Literacy, broadly defined to include scientific and mathematical literacy may affect alienation. Successful problem-solving involves more than memorization of scientific facts. Specific and important content information can be constructed to guide and organize both instruction and assessment. Concepts and principles are both needed in order for students to manipulate information and problem-solve. Since facts, concepts and principles are related enclosing content around knowledge forms can help guide instruction and promote student thinking and problem solving. Word association or mnemonic strategies and graphic organizers- visual representations of knowledge, ideas or concepts- are examples of



enhancements to content. The purpose of these enhancements is to point out critical information, provide clarity of subject matter and to help alleviate poor reading skills (McCleery & Tindal, 1999, p. 8).

Students who experience meaninglessness can hopefully reduce alienation with an increased understanding and comprehension of text and its applications. Oerlemans and Jenkins' (1998) article cited successful interventions that reduced levels of meaninglessness. An important application of literacy is an awareness and application of scientific knowledge, a cornerstone of everyday life. However, only sixty-one percent of thirteen-year-olds could apply general scientific information, only twelve percent could analyze scientific procedure and none demonstrated the ability to incorporate specialized scientific information into novel settings (McCleery & Tindal, 1999, p. 7). The science community has identified content focus and instructional practices as the two areas that need the most change. There are three components of broad-based science literacy: (1) knowledge of concepts within content discipline areas, (2) application of science process skills, and (3) use of high-level reasoning within instruction. McCleery and Tindal (1999) examined how science instruction can be improved by

reviewing the effects of explicit, rule-based instruction anchored around conceptual knowledge.

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000) recommended that teachers move toward a student-centered classroom; deemphasize rote memory, and emphasizing problem-solving skills. Draper (2002) proposed the use of constructivist learning theory as the method of teaching and learning. This theory of learning offers a way for educators to understand how students think and come to know something. Mathematics poses, analyzes and solves problems. However, many of these problems come in the form of text. The role of a constructivist teacher is to guide students as they create constructions. When a student learns how to make meaning (construct knowledge) within the mathematics content field, engagement increases.

#### Intensive Reading Programs

We would suspect that intensive reading programs increase alienation. Since reading programs are often comprised of development of phonemic awareness/analysis and decoding, reading fluency and reading comprehension, strategies to improve comprehension may need to be included (Manset-Williamson & Nelson, 2005).

Students often have very little choice or variety in the curriculum in which they are being instructed. Singer and Shagoury (2005) detailed how high school students used literacy to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities and peer-support activities that helped them advocate for positive social change. The result was that students were engaged in a learning process that helped them see they were capable of influencing real and effective changes in their own lives or in the lives of others.

Hasselbring et al. (1997) explored small classes, sound literacy instruction and computer technology. These three components allowed students with low reading skills to develop the confidence that is needed to be successful in content area classes.

Many alienated students disengage from the learning process because they do not connect with the curriculum being taught. This disengagement can be the result of not seeing a connection between the content and their vision of their future. An alternative explanation for this disengagement is the feeling of powerlessness to change or modify what curriculum is being taught. Oerlemans and Jenkins (1998) listed a variety of successful interventions that addressed the constructs of

meaningless, normlessness and social isolation. However, the interventions that are required by state mandate highlight the lack of choice on the part of students and clearly seem to disempower them.

A student who is disengaged and alienated often looks and acts very different from the perceived "normal" student, in fact, quite "alien." Most teachers would agree that there are aliens listed on their roll sheets. Many have just come from middle school and some will leave high school without graduating. Some degree of alienation during adolescence is normal and most students overcome this alienation. On the other hand, some students may require interventions to hopefully lessen their feelings of alienation. As this literature review illustrates, understanding the various factors- school size and climate, involvement of parents and students, curriculum, instruction and literacy- strategies can contribute to alienation or provide a pathway towards decreasing student's feelings of alienation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DESIGN and METHODOLOGY

#### Study Design

This study is a mixed method explanatory design to determine the level of alienation experienced by students in intensive as compared to non-intensive reading development classes. Quantitative information will include pre and post surveys, academic, attendance and discipline data. Qualitatively, students were interviewed and issues and themes were constructed which were foreshadowed by the attributes of alienation described earlier.

#### Population

Moreno Valley Unified School District is a K-12 district located in Southern California. March Valley School (MVS) is an alternative high school within that district. Participants are ninth and tenth grade students enrolled in intensive and non-intensive reading programs at MVS.

The number of students in the intensive reading class, over the period of inquiry, ranged from seventeen to twenty-two. A total of fourteen students were considered over two semesters ( $n = 14$ ).

During the first semester, there were two classes of non-intensive reading; the total number of students in these two classes was forty-four. However, during the second semester, there was only one class of non-intensive reading with a total of twenty-two students. Thirteen students common to both classes were considered for two semesters (n = 13).

#### Qualitative Mode of Inquiry

Seven students were interviewed: five from the intensive reading program and two from the non-intensive reading program. The interviews were conducted after school, taped and lasted about twenty minutes each. The tapes were reviewed, transcribed and coded for themes.

#### Quantitative Mode of Inquiry

The data collection method used was a pre and post, forty-five question survey that assessed powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness and social isolation. The survey questions were adapted from Chicago Public School Survey (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2005) and questions devised from two small test pilot surveys that were administered to classes of non-target students prior to surveying target groups. In addition, attendance, credit completion, grades and discipline information

(referrals and suspensions) were collected from the school data collection system.

#### Procedure

The initial survey was administered to all participants in August, 2006 and the same survey was administered in March, 2007. These students were asked to rate response statements using a four item Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree and each item was assigned a numeric value of 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The surveys were administered, completed and collected at the same time.

#### Variables

The dependent variable is the level of alienation that a student experiences. The independent variable is enrollment in either the intensive reading program or the non-intensive reading program. A threat to internal validity was contamination: Would the responses of one student affect the responses of another? This was addressed by separating and watching students, to insure that their responses were their own. In addition, the majority of surveys were administered in one sitting to help control contamination between groups of students who shared classes. If students was absent they were

administered the survey on the first day of their return before they had a chance to discuss anything with their classmates.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Quantitative Methodology Development

##### Face Validity

The survey consisted of forty-five questions and was devised by combining twenty-one questions from the Chicago Public School Survey (2003) and twenty-four questions that were compiled from two small test pilot surveys administered to two classes of non-target students prior to surveying target groups. The survey is provided in Appendix A. Seven colleagues were given the definitions of powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation and meaninglessness and asked to determine which category each question on the Chicago survey applied. Four of seven teachers needed to agree that each question from the survey addressed one of the definitions of these terms.

##### Assignment of Likert Value

The responses on the surveys were tabulated and assigned a value: strongly agree equaled four; agree equaled three; disagree equaled two; and a strongly disagree equaled one. The responses for each question for each student on both the pre and post survey were totaled and an average response was tabulated. The average

response is the *Likert Score*. A mean difference (D) for each construct of alienation (i.e. powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness and social isolation) was also calculated for target and control groups. The student responses and mean difference calculations are provided in appendix B and appendix C.

#### Statistical Value of Data

The statistical significance of the data within each group was computed using the dependent t-test. This test determined that, at the confidence interval of 99 percent, the differences within the target group were not significant. In addition, the statistical significance of the data between the two sample groups was computed using the independent t-test. This test also showed that, at the confidence interval of 99 percent, the differences between the two groups were not significant. The reason for this could be the limited sample size of both the target group (intensive reading development: n = 14) and the control group (non-intensive reading development: n = 13).

#### Presentation of Data

The level of alienation experienced by the students enrolled in the intensive reading development program showed varying levels of changes in attributes of the

construct over the pre and post survey time period, as illustrated in Figure 1.

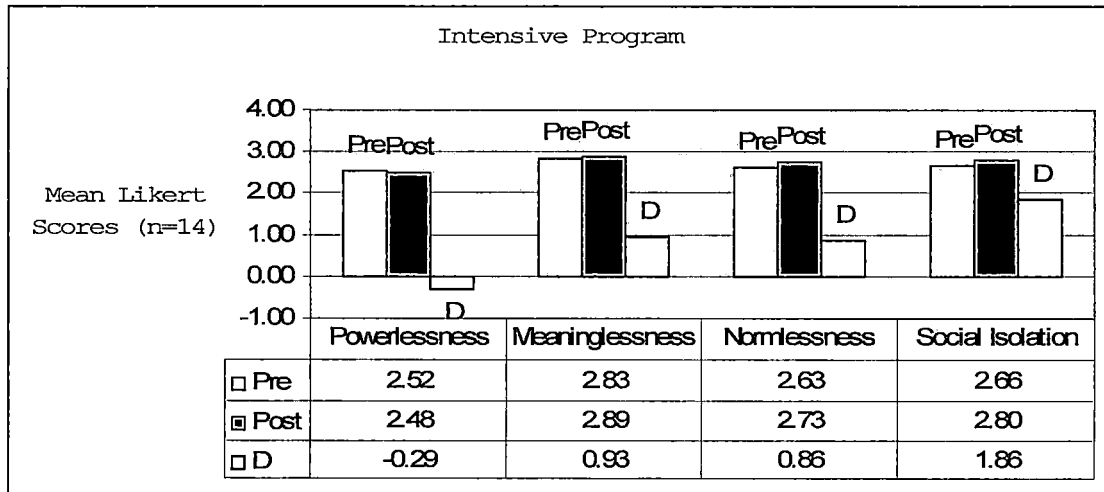


Figure 1. Intensive Program

### Powerlessness

There were a total of eight questions pertaining to powerlessness. There were only minor differences between the pre and post survey responses by all students. Table 1 illustrates sample questions from the intensive reading program and their pre and post Likert mean scores.

Table 1. Intensive Program and Powerlessness

	Pre	Post
My teachers always listen to a student's idea	2.64	2.93
Teachers pay attention to all students	2.86	2.57
My teachers can be trusted	2.64	2.57
Students don't have much say in what is taught	2.21	2.21
A student doesn't know if a teacher can be trusted	1.86	1.64
Teachers take their time when I ask a question	2.57	2.43

Powerlessness experienced by students in the intensive reading program showed that the level of powerlessness on both the pre and post survey increased slightly and this is exemplified by a grand mean difference of -0.29.

The control group experienced slightly higher levels of variance and this is exemplified by a grand mean difference of -0.69. Table 2 has illustrated sample questions and their pre and post Likert mean scores from the control group.

Table 2. Non-intensive Program and Powerlessness

	Pre	Post
My teachers always listen to student's ideas	2.77	3.00
Teachers pay attention to all students	3.23	3.23
My teachers can be trusted	2.69	2.62
Students don't have much say in what is taught	2.00	2.00
A student doesn't know if a teacher can be trusted	2.23	1.92
Teachers take their time when I ask a question	2.92	2.77

Comparison of the intensive reading program to the control group shows only minor differences between the intensive reading (I) and non-intensive reading group (N) and the trends on the student's experience of powerlessness.

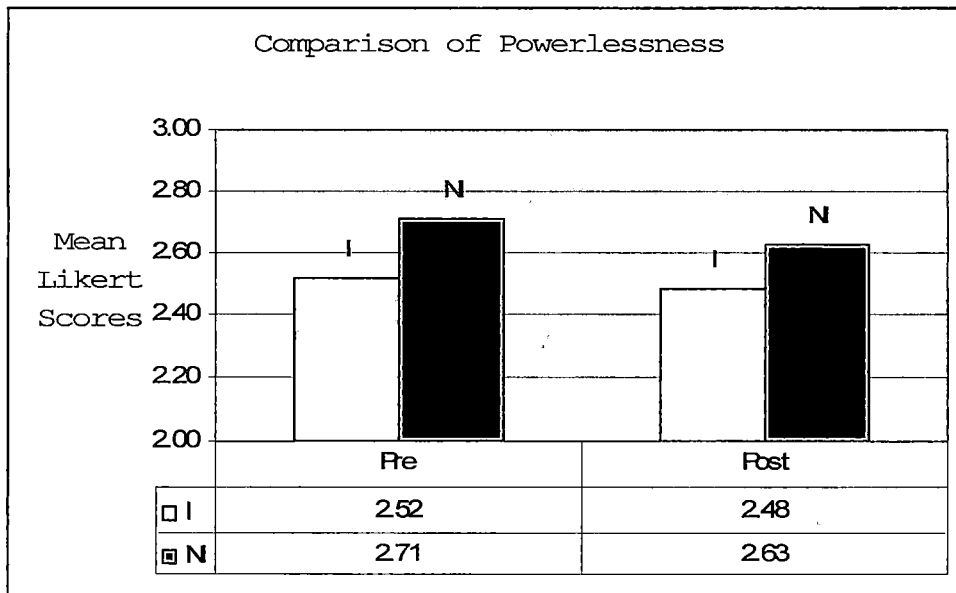


Figure 2. Comparison of Powerlessness

### Meaninglessness

There were a total of fifteen questions addressing the attribute of meaninglessness. Table 3 has illustrated sample questions from the intensive reading program and their pre and post Likert mean scores.

Table 3. Intensive Program and Meaninglessness

	Pre	Post
Teachers care about how I am doing in school	2.44	2.28
My friends think it is important to attend every class	1.83	2.11
I am getting a good education at this school	2.33	2.50
My friends think it is important to do well in school	2.06	2.22
I always try my best in school	2.39	2.39
I get bored in class	1.39	1.17

Wider variances were experienced by students within the intensive reading program and this is shown by a grand mean difference of 0.93. Table 4 illustrates sample questions and pre and post Likert mean scores for the control group.

Table 4. Non-intensive Program and Meaninglessness

	Pre	Post
Teachers care about how I am doing in school	3.31	3.08
My friends think it is important to attend every class	2.38	2.62
I am getting a good education at this school	3.31	3.38
My friends think it is important to do well in school	2.85	2.69
I always try my best in school	3.23	3.00
I get bored in class	1.85	1.92

Comparison between the target and control group shows high variances within the target group. The variance for meaningfulness for the control group had no grand mean difference.

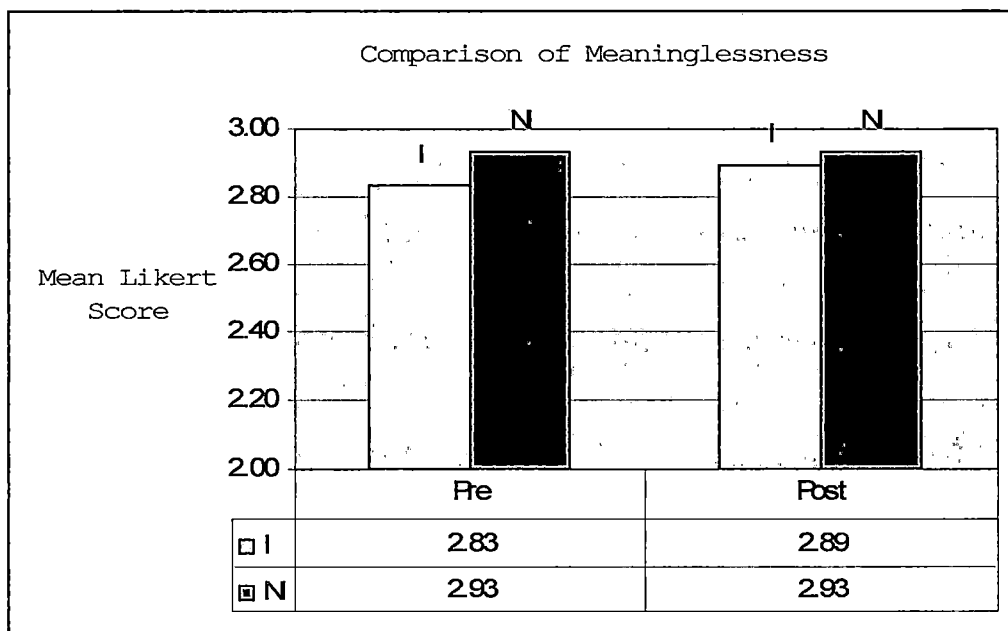


Figure 3. Comparison of Meaninglessness

### Normlessness

There were a total of nine questions addressing the attribute of normlessness. Table 5 has illustrated sample questions and pre and post Likert mean scores for the target group.

Table 5. Intensive Program and Normlessness

	Pre	Post
My teachers always try to be fair	2.22	2.33
My teachers always treat me with respect	2.50	2.06
Our school community is a safe place	2.11	1.83
The rules are enforced consistently and fairly	1.89	2.09
I like being at school	1.78	1.89
I am treated the same way as all my classmates	2.00	2.39

There was also a wide degree of variance within the target population concerning the attribute of normlessness as shown by the grand mean difference of 0.86. The control group exhibited an even wider degree of variance. The grand mean difference for the control group was 1.92. Table 6 illustrates sample questions and pre and post Likert mean scores for the control group.



Table 6. Non-intensive Program and Normlessness

	Pre	Post
My teachers always try to be fair	2.46	2.77
My teachers always treat me with respect	3.15	3.00
Our school community is a safe place	2.08	2.54
The rules are enforced consistently and fairly	2.69	2.54
I like being at school	2.62	2.85
I am treated the same way as all my classmates	2.77	3.15

Social Isolation

There were a total of thirteen questions that addressed the construct of social isolation. Table 7 illustrates sample questions and pre and post Likert mean scores for students in the intensive reading program.

Table 7. Intensive Program and Social Isolation

	Pre	Post
My teachers really care about me	2.39	2.50
My teachers always keep their promises	1.83	2.17
People at this school are like family to me	1.56	1.89
People care if I am not at school	2.22	2.28
I like most of the students here at school	2.22	2.40
I feel like I belong in my class	1.89	2.28

Table 8 illustrates sample questions and pre and post Likert mean scores for the control group.

Table 8. Non-Intensive Program and Social Isolation

	Pre	Post
My teachers really care about me	2.77	3.08
My teachers always keep their promises	2.31	2.31
People at this school are like family to me	1.92	2.00
People care if I am not at school	2.77	2.69
I like most of the students here at school	2.62	2.38
I feel like I belong in my class	2.62	2.92

The variance of social isolation within the target group was quite high as revealed by a grand mean difference of 1.86. This contrasted sharply with the control group which had a grand mean difference of -0.31.

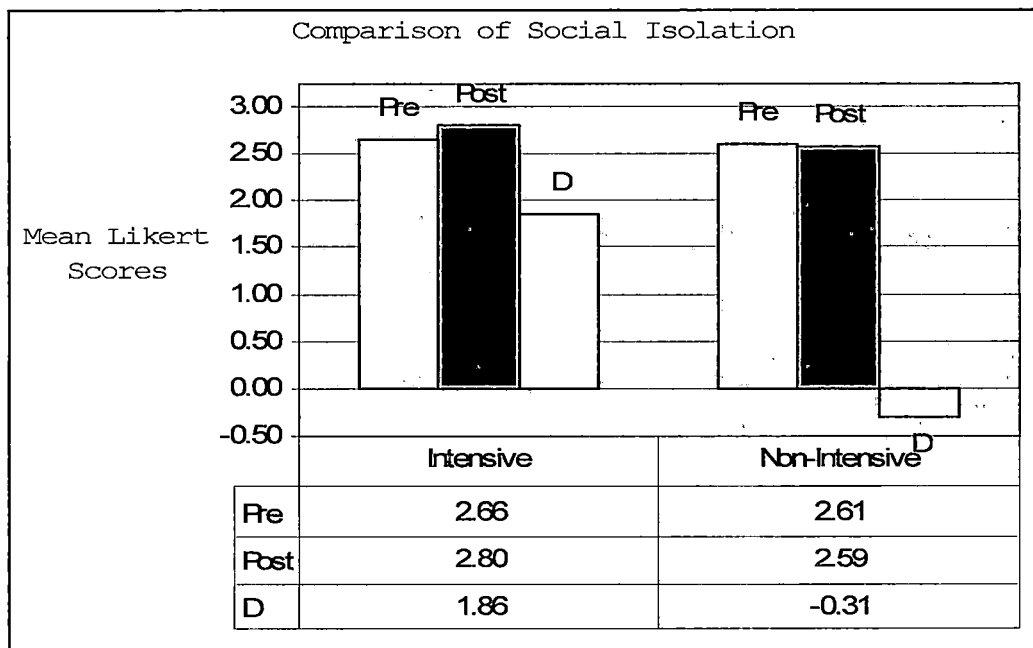


Figure 4. Comparison of Social Isolation

Academic Achievement, Attendance and Discipline-Confounding Variables

Additional information useful in identifying the target and control population characteristics and which may be considered confounding factors pertain to student's academic information (Grade point average and credit completion), attendance data (attendance, tardy and absent) and discipline information (referrals and days suspended).

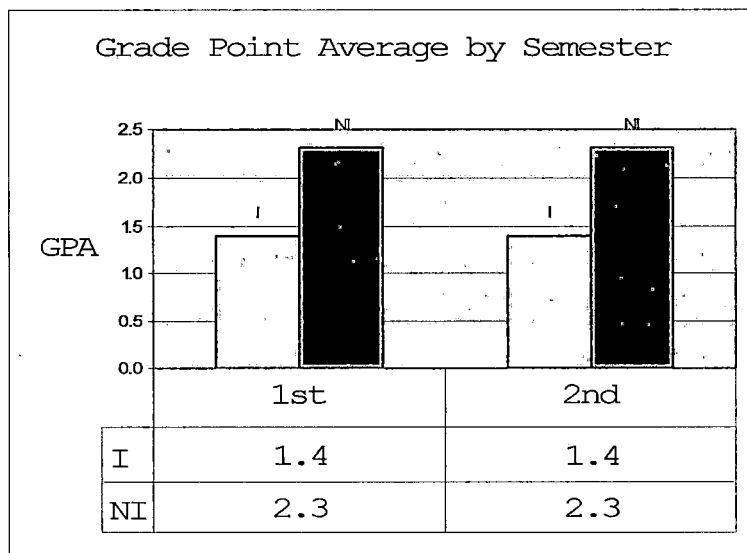


Figure 5. Grade Point Average by Semester

Grade point average (GPA) and credit completion reflect how students understand and comprehend content and curriculum. Interesting, both the target group and control group's GPA from the first semester to the second semester

remained constant. On the other hand, the target group slightly increased credit completion over two semesters, while the control group show a slight drop in credits completed.

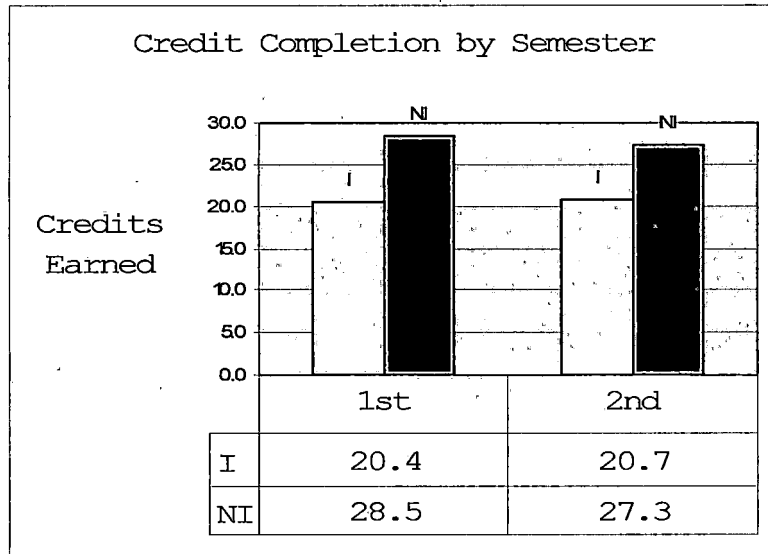


Figure 6. Credit Completion by Semester

A student cannot learn if they are not attending school. Therefore attendance data can shed light on what a student thinks about school. Both the target group and the control group had a slight decrease in total attendance over two semesters.

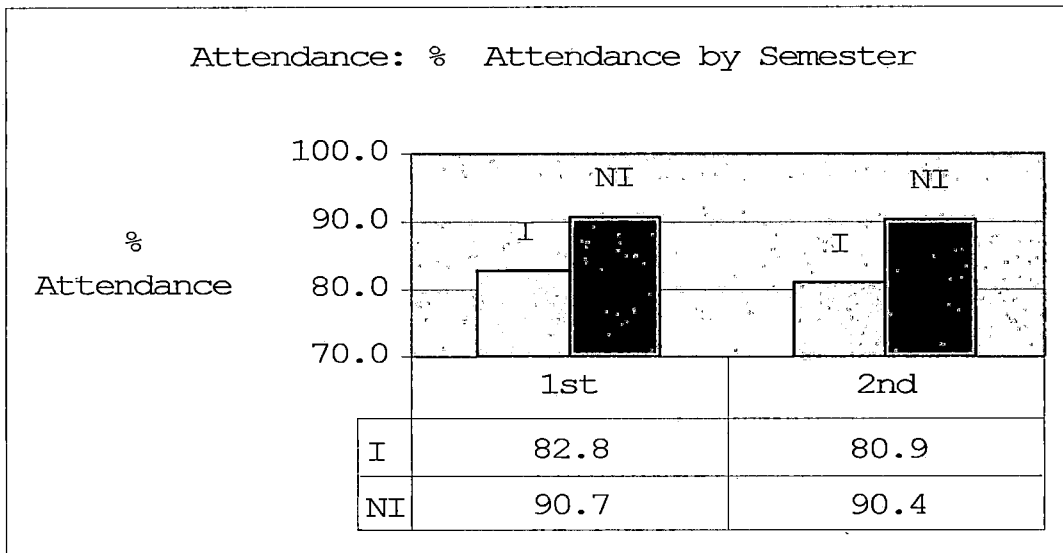


Figure 7. Attendance: Percent Attendance by Semester

Total attendance is calculated as the combination of a student being present and on time plus tardy less than thirty minutes.

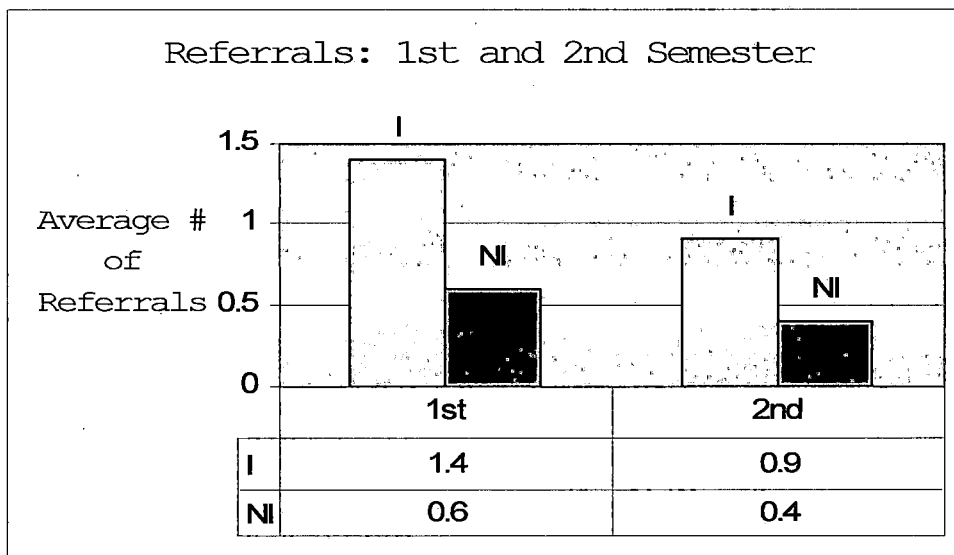


Figure 8. Referrals: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

Referrals and number of days suspended may reflect on normlessness, or may be circular in causality. Both group reduced the number of referrals that were issued from the first semester to the second semester. In addition, the number of suspension days for both the target group and the control group also decreased from the first semester compared to the second semester.

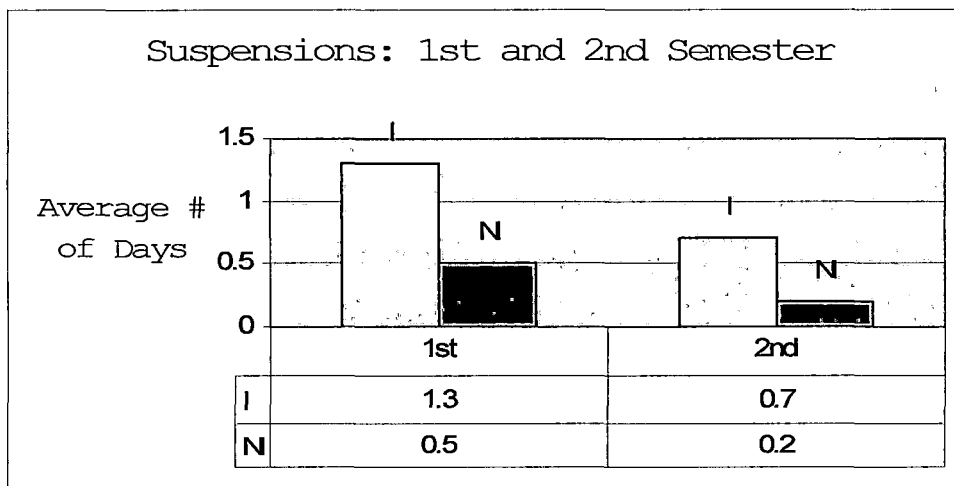


Figure 9. Suspensions: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

Survey results, academic, attendance and discipline data indicate that levels of alienation and its four constructs- powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness and social isolation- experienced by students in both the target and control groups showed an overall slight decrease. Consequently, specific feelings of alienation needed to be elicited from members of both groups.

Therefore, students from both target and control groups were selected and interviewed.

Seven students were interviewed. Listed below are these students with their first (1<sup>st</sup> GPA) and second (2<sup>nd</sup> GPA) semester grade point average, first (1<sup>st</sup> Crd) and second (2<sup>nd</sup> Crd) semester credit completion, first (1<sup>st</sup> Atd) and second (2<sup>nd</sup> Atd) semester total attendance and pre and post grand mean Likert scores.

Table 9. Participants Data

	1st GPA	2nd GPA	1st Crd	2nd Crd	1st Atd	2nd Atd	Pre	Post
I-1	0.83	0.83	20	20	86%	67%	2.8	2.7
I-3	1.67	1.67	20	20	81%	87%	2.0	2.8
I-7	0.50	0.67	10	20	74%	85%	2.9	2.9
I-10	2.83	3.50	30	30	86%	95%	2.8	3.2
I-11	2.33	2.00	25	30	85%	91%	2.5	3.5
NI-1	2.67	3.00	30	30	85%	86%	3.5	3.4
NI-27	2.83	3.00	30	30	86%	95%	2.9	2.6

## Qualitative Methodology Development

### Data Collection

A total of seven students were interviewed. Five of the students were from the intensive reading development class and two were from the control group. These students were selected because they were able to stay after school

and their pre and post survey results showed a wide degree of variance (more positive means) which suggested the intensive program may actually reduce alienation (a rival hypothesis).

Strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the data. Ethical concerns (relating to the teacher's power and authority over students) were considered; the students were assured that their participation was completely voluntary and they could refuse to answer any question they felt made them uncomfortable. Each interview lasted approximately ten to fifteen minutes and was recorded with portions transcribed for further analysis. In addition to interviews, field notes and a structured questionnaire were used to triangulate the data. Students were provided by the researcher paraphrased interviews and asked to review them so that their opinions, feelings and answers were still their own, thereby enhancing the credibility of the data.

In addition, since some of the students are taught by the researcher, maintaining ethical conduct at all a time was the first and foremost concern for this researcher. This was accomplished in part by providing reassurance to the participants that their discussion during the interview would be held in complete confidence and would



have no effect on their academic performance. A copy of questions (Appendix D) and a sample of a transcribed interview (Appendix E) are provided to enhance the credibility of the interview process as a means of gathering data.

A pilot project was conducted prior to the interview process with the control group to authenticate the research questions used later. In the pilot, students were interviewed and over the course of those interviews, the following set of sub-questions emerged to help shape future interviews: (1) What was your perception of this school when you first started here? (2) What were your feelings about coming to this school? (3) Why do you think you were asked to come to this school? (4) What has been the biggest change for you since you first started high school and now? (5) How has the reading development class helped you? (6) What would you say to a new student about coming to this school?

### Participants

The five students interviewed from the intensive reading program were either fifteen or sixteen years of age; all were Mexican-American; two were male and three were female. All have been students in the Moreno Valley Unified School District at least three years. The control

group interviews were conducted with a sixteen year-old female Mexican-American and a sixteen year-old male African-American.

### Data Analysis

The interviews were conducted and recorded in the researcher's classroom with the student, who also had a close friend present. The presence of a friend seemed to make the student more comfortable and willing to talk and answer questions (though it may have impacted the responses). Students appeared to clearly understand the questions and did not appear to be uncomfortable with them; however, some of the students did appear to struggle with articulating answers due to a limited vocabulary. The interviews were conducted in a free-flowing manner: the sequence in which the questions were asked was based on what seemed to fit each student and the responses they provided. The questions helped elicit contextual feelings pertaining to the school environment as well as specific feelings concerning the intensive reading curriculum.

All of the students clearly understood the purpose of the reading development program, the curriculum they were provided and why they were enrolled. When the interview with I-10 was conducted, California Standards testing had

just been completed. I-10 stated that "Read 180 has helped me understand words and it made the tests easy."

Upon completion of the interviews, interpretational analysis was used to uncover constructs, themes and patterns. The attributes of alienation (meaninglessness, normlessness and others) foreshadowed the emergence of the themes uncovered. The three major themes that emerged from the student interviews were: Trust, Environment and Curriculum. Trust can pertain to the construct of powerlessness and normlessness. The school environment seemed connected with the attribute of normlessness and social isolation; the students' comments on curriculum could be understood according to the attribute of meaninglessness. This data is displayed below using a qualitative flow chart.

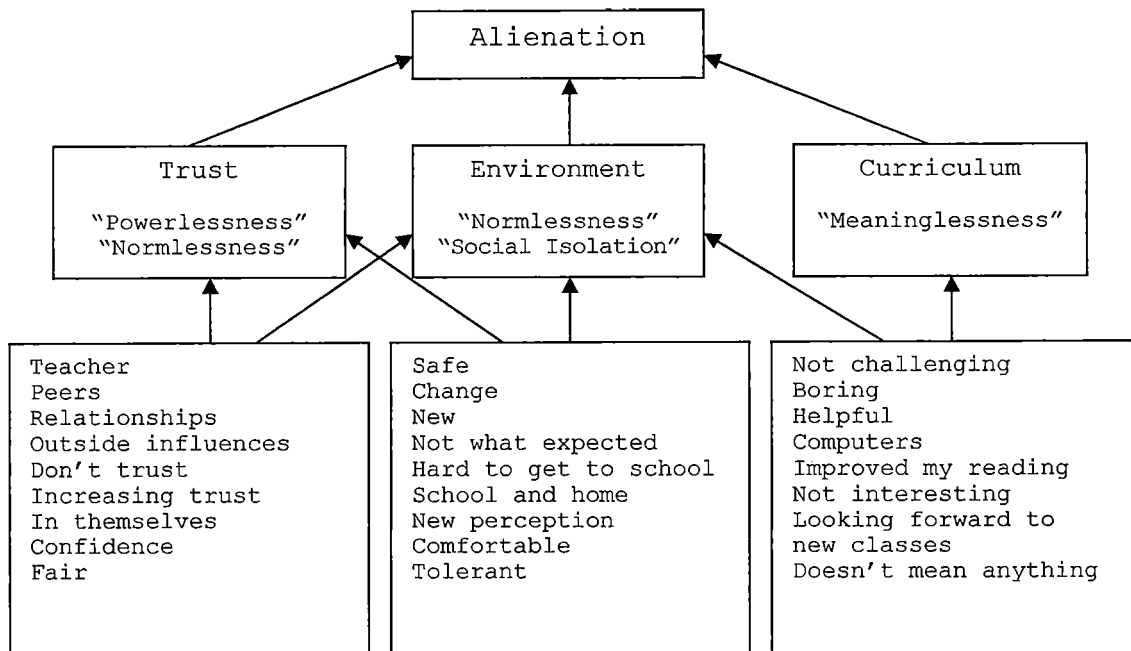


Figure 10. Qualitative Flow Chart

The themes of trust and environment appeared to be closely connected. Contrary to my expectations, the intensive reading program seemed to create an atmosphere of trust, a positive school environment; the curriculum seemed to enhance the meaningfulness of the program. The feelings of trust (or lack of trust) relate to the alienation attributes of powerlessness and normlessness. The comments on the (positive) environment countered feelings of normlessness and social isolation. It appears if a student has trust in teachers, they feel empowered and have confidence in dealing with issues that can arise. This is exemplified on the positive side by I-10 when she

says "I can talk to my teacher about any problem I have." Outside influences impact the attribute of powerlessness as when I-7 says "I don't talk to teachers about my brother. I-10 currently lives with her sister due to a family situation. She states that "I spend a lot of time watching my nephew. I have to make a lot of decisions for him and as a result my sister trusts me. This has given me a lot of confidence in myself. I don't have any problem talking to my teachers about anything." The brother that I-7 was talking about also attended March Valley School and was taught by this researcher and three of the other seven teachers. His brother is currently serving time in Pelican Bay prison for second degree murder. At the time of the interview, the prison was in lock-down and his brother in solitary confinement. I-7 also has family members who have the reputation of being members of a local gang.

Peer and outside influences appeared to impact both student trust of school and perception of their environment. Peer influence has seemed to have been helpful for I-10 as she states "my friends are good students and they have helped me in my classes" and "my sister has me watch my nephew all the time and that makes feel very grown-up. I-11 says "my older friends give me

advice." I-11 currently lives at home where both parents reside. She is also involved in outside activities- dance and volunteering at the local hospital. I-1 stated that "my girlfriend is a good student and that has helped me." I-1 also lives at home with both parents, has an older looking appearance and a girlfriend who is two years older than him. Unfortunately, outside influences that reduce student alienation also cause students to worry about issues unrelated to academics, as shown by I-7 statement "I worry about my brother all the time" and I-10 statement "students don't come to school because there is just too much drama."

Typical classroom interactions between a student and a teacher help create the atmosphere within the classroom. Generally there appeared to be favorable feelings about the classroom environment and this impacts student experience of social isolation. All students said that they are comfortable with their peers and teachers within the classroom setting. However, I-11 stated that teachers are sometimes in a bad mood and this can partly be caused "by the annoying students that don't want to do any work" and I-10 statement that "the kids that go here are a distraction."

All the students made statements to the effect that the classes are "boring." However, they also indicated that they are better students now than at the start of the school year and that the reading program has helped them in their other classes. I-1 stated that "I have learned to focus myself." I-7 said, "In middle school, I didn't care, I was all about fun and games, but when I got to ninth grade I got to change." I-10 said "I felt stupid, now I feel normal" and I-11 stated that "I am trying harder than at any other time." The curriculum of the reading program appears to have helped these students and had a positive impact on their experience of meaninglessness.

#### Discussion

For this researcher, the journey through this research project has been one of growth and increased reflection. Having taught at-risk students for five years, an intuitive feeling of increasing student alienation began to develop. In addition, state mandated interventions appeared to reduce a student's level of choice and variation within the curriculum. Consequently, establishing a qualitative and quantitative project that looked at student alienation was a natural progression.

Development of the survey instrument was one of the first steps in this project. Initially having forty-five questions seemed to be a good idea. In retrospect, twenty or twenty-five questions on one side of a paper would have been a better option. However, the majority of students appeared to take answering the survey questions seriously and a baseline of target population alienation was established.

The data from the pre and post survey showed varying levels of change pertaining to the four attributes of alienation. Powerlessness showed the least amount of difference and this is also supported by the literature. Meaninglessness, on the other hand, showed a wider degree of variance. The overall grand mean for this construct showed that over the course of the study period, students were more likely to see more meaning (less meaninglessness) for the curriculum that they were studying. This also was supported by the student interviews. I-3 stated that "I have never really liked to read. Now I am starting to understand some of the stuff in my other classes." I-1 reported that "I am getting ready to get my driver's license and it is easier to understand the driver's handbook."



Likewise, normlessness had similar variance and grand mean. Students experienced less normlessness during the course of the school year. This indicates that students were more likely to adhere to school rules, an interpretation supported by referral and suspension data comparison. Eight of the fourteen students within the target population had no referrals and only two of the fourteen students had any suspension days. In addition, student interviews also provided support for this positive change towards less normlessness. I-1 stated that "I am giving them (teachers) a try and not get on their nerves." I-11 said "I want my grades to be the best ever."

The biggest change occurred within the construct of social isolation. Over the course of the school year, students appeared to accept and function within this school setting. Although attendance data seemed to indicate a lack of importance to being at school, this can partly be explained by the "lack of consequences" for tardy and absences. The grand mean difference for this construct was 1.86. This suggests that the majority of target population became more comfortable within this educational setting. Student interviews also provided support of this observation. Most of the students indicated that they felt "secure" at school and described

the interactions with other students and teachers as normal and "ok". I-3 said "in middle school some of the kids were mean to me. Here those same kids don't treat me that way. That makes me feel better." I-11 said "at first I wasn't sure about the class (reading development) but now I like being in the class."

The overall review of this data indicates that at this educational setting and in this small target population, the intensive reading interventions seem to help the students. In addition, interactions with the teachers, administrator and other school personnel, both inside and outside of the classroom have helped reduce these student's feelings of alienation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

A high quality education for all students is a worthy goal. Extensive research has shown that the number of at-risk students is increasing and the result is an increasing number of drop-outs. Some characteristics that are exhibited by at-risk students include anti-social behavior, history of high-risk behavior, family conflict, association with delinquent peers, alienation and school failure.

A contributing factor to school failure is lack of engagement in school. One reason for this lack of engagement is the inability to read and comprehend the material that is required within the content areas. Therefore, interventions have been implemented that will help students improve their reading and comprehension. Most of the intensive interventions require that students be enrolled in primarily reading and reading support classes thereby eliminating options and choices these students might have. Students in this situation might feel a lack of control or choices in their school lives. This could lead to higher levels of alienation. Consequently,

the purpose of this project was to compare levels of alienation exhibited by student enrolled in intensive reading programs versus those students who are not enrolled in intensive reading programs.

### Conclusions

The original hypothesis- that higher levels of alienation would be experienced by students enrolled in intensive reading program as compared to students enrolled in traditional, non-intensive reading programs- was not supported. On the contrary, the overall result of this research supports a different hypothesis- student alienation may be reduced or overcome through intensive reading programs.

This limited study shows that students enrolled in intensive interventions can both improve their academic performance and at the same time reduce their feelings of alienation. The implications of these results need to be explored further. Intensive interventions are mandated by the State of California. Consequently, many students are required to be enrolled in the intensive interventions. Therefore, many new questions can be raised. Does the small class size (limited to twenty-two) impact feelings of alienation? Does the small school size (limited to

one-hundred seventy-two students) and consequently the small number of teachers (eight) impact feelings of alienation? Does this "smallness" create a sense of "community" and can it be replicated at a larger school? These are only a few of the questions that need to be asked and researched so that feelings of alienation can be addressed and understood.

APPENDIX A  
STUDENT SURVEY

## This is Not a Test

We would like to know what you think. There here are no right or wrong answers

### No One Will Know What You Have Answered

Your answers will be added together with other students so that we can know what you think

### Please Help Us Improve Your School

Do not Put You Name on This Questionnaire

#### Demographics (circle the one that applies)

Age 14 15 16

Gender M F

Ethnicity Hispanic African-American White Asian Other

Check only one box that you feel applies

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 My teachers really care about me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 My teachers always keep their promises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 My teachers always try to be fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 My teachers always treat me with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 My teachers always listen to student's ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Teachers will listen to my problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 My friends and I talk about what we did in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Teachers cares about how I am doing in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Teachers would recommend me for a job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 I can talk to a teacher about a problem in a class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Teachers pay attention to all students not just the smart students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 I fit in with the students at this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 People at this school are like family to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 People care if I am not at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 There are people at this school who well help me if I need it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 My friends try hard at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17 My friends think it is important to attend every class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 I am getting a good education at this school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19 What we learn in school is necessary for success in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 High school teachers teach me valuable skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 My friends think it is important to do well in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 Education is important to my family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23 My teachers can be trusted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24 I am good at using a computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 Students don't have much say in what is taught	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 Our school community is an easy and pleasant place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27 The interests of students is always the primary focus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 Most teachers are not interested in the problems of students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29 Our school community is a safe place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 The rules are enforced consistently and fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 The campus supervisors are fair to all students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32 I like being at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33 I can do the school work easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 I pass most of my classes in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 I can control my anger when something makes me angry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 I always try my best in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37 I like most of the students here at school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38 I feel like I belong in my class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39 I can get to and from school every day easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 I am treated the same way as all my classmates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41 A student doesn't really know if a teacher can be trusted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42 I get bored in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43 Teachers take their time with me when I ask a question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44 I like to talk to teachers outside the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45 I like to ask questions in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions 1-21 from Chicago Public School Survey 2003



APPENDIX B  
SURVEY DATA

Powerlessness Questions

Student	#5T1	#5T2	#6T1	#6T2	#11T1	#11T2	#23T1	#23T2	#25T1	#25T2	#39T1	#39T2	#41T1	#41T2	#43T1	#43T2	Toft1	Toft2	D
I-1	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	20	16	-4
I-2	4	3	2	4	2	1	4	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	18	19	1
I-3	2	3	1	1	4	3	2	1	2	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	14	17	3
I-6	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	26	25	-1
I-7	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	21	22	1
I-9	2	2	4	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	21	17	-4
I-10	2	3	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	2	4	4	1	2	4	4	19	24	5
I-11	3	3	1	4	3	4	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	19	24	5
I-12	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	19	19	0
I-13	2	3	3	2	3	1	3	1	2	1	3	3	1	1	3	1	20	13	-7
I-15	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	1	2	3	3	22	23	1
I-16	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	1	3	3	2	3	15	18	3
I-17	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	3	3	26	19	-7
I-18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	22	22	0
Totals	37	41	39	39	40	36	37	36	31	31	36	38	26	23	36	34	282	278	-4
	2.64	2.93	2.79	2.79	2.86	2.57	2.64	2.57	2.21	2.21	2.57	2.71	1.86	1.64	2.57	2.43			

Average Pre Survey: Powerlessness 2.52

Total Pre: Powerlessness 282

Average Post Survey: Powerlessness 2.48

Total Post: Powerlessness 278

Mean of D -0.29

Powerlessness Questions (Cont)

Student	#5T1	#5T2	#6T1	#6T2	#11T1	#11T2	#23T1	#23T2	#25T1	#25T2	#39T1	#39T2	#41T1	#41T2	#43T1	#43T2	ToT1	ToT2	D
NI-1	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	3	2	2	4	3	27	25	-2
NI-2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	20	20	0
NI-3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	20	23	3
NI-12	2	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	21	21	0
NI-15	3	3	1	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	4	2	3	3	20	21	1
NI-18	2	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	2	3	3	25	24	-1
NI-19	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	19	16	-3
NI-20	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	22	20	-2
NI-23	2	3	3	1	3	3	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	16	16	0
NI-25	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	4	2	2	3	2	23	22	-1
NI-27	4	2	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	2	4	2	27	19	-8
NI-28	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	3	15	19	4
NI-31	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	2	1	4	4	3	2	4	4	27	27	0
Totals	36	39	41	34	42	42	35	34	26	26	35	37	29	25	38	36	282	273	-9
	2.77	3.00	3.15	2.62	3.23	3.23	2.69	2.62	2.00	2.00	2.69	2.85	2.23	1.92	2.92	2.77			

Average Pre Survey: Powerlessness 2.71

Total Pre: Powerlessness 282

Average Post Survey: Powerlessness 2.63

Total Post: Powerlessness 273

Mean of D -0.69

Meaninglessness Questions

Student	#8T1	#8T2	#10T1	#10T2	#16T1	#16T2	#17T1	#17T2	#18T1	#18T2	#19T1	#19T2	#20T1	#20T2	#21T1	#21T2	#22T1	#22T2
I-1	4	3	1	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	4	2	3	3	3	3	4	4
I-2	2	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	2	4	3	1	2	1	2	4	4
I-3	3	2	1	2	1	4	2	4	3	3	4	4	2	4	2	3	4	4
I-6	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
I-7	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
I-9	4	3	4	2	3	1	2	2	1	3	3	3	4	3	4	1	4	4
I-10	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	3
I-11	2	4	2	4	2	3	2	2	3	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	4
I-12	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
I-13	4	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	4	4	4	2	4	1	1	2	4	4
I-15	2	3	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
I-16	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
I-17	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
I-18	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4
Totals	44	41	34	39	36	35	33	38	42	45	48	46	43	45	37	40	52	55
	2.44	2.28	1.89	2.17	2.00	1.94	1.83	2.11	2.33	2.50	2.67	2.56	2.39	2.5	2.06	2.22	2.89	3.06

Meaninglessness Questions (Cont)

Student	#24T1	#24T2	#28T1	#28T2	#33T1	#33T2	#34T1	#34T2	#36T1	#36T2	#42T1	#42T2	Toft1	Toft2	D
I-1	4	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	4	4	2	3	47	44	-3
I-2	4	3	1	3	4	2	1	1	3	2	2	1	31	37	6
I-3	3	4	1	1	1	4	2	4	3	4	1	1	33	48	15
I-6	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	51	54	3
I-7	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	2	43	44	1
I-9	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	1	42	34	-8
I-10	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	1	1	47	43	-4
I-11	4	4	2	3	2	3	3	4	2	4	1	1	35	52	17
I-12	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	38	42	4
I-13	3	4	3	1	3	2	3	4	2	2	1	2	43	32	-11
I-15	4	4	3	2	3	2	4	4	4	3	4	1	52	44	-8
I-16	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	1	1	42	46	4
I-17	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	1	47	43	-4
I-18	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	43	44	1
Totals	47	47	33	32	38	39	39	41	43	43	25	21	594	607	13
	2.61	2.61	1.83	1.78	2.11	2.17	2.17	2.28	2.39	2.39	1.39	1.17			

Average Pre Survey: Meaninglessness 2.83

Total Pre: Meaninglessness 594

Average Post Survey: Meaninglessness 2.89

Total Post: Meaninglessness 607

Difference of D 0.93

Meaninglessness Questions (Cont)

Student	#8T1	#8T2	#10T1	#10T2	#16T1	#16T2	#17T1	#17T2	#18T1	#18T2	#19T1	#19T2	#20T1	#20T2	#21T1	#21T2	#22T1	#22T2
NI-1	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
NI-2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	4
NI-3	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	4	3	2	4	2	3	4	4
NI-12	4	2	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4
NI-15	4	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3
NI-18	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	4
NI-19	3	3	4	3	2	3	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	4
NI-20	3	4	4	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
NI-23	3	3	1	1	2	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	4	4
NI-25	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	1	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	1	4	4
NI-27	4	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3
NI-28	2	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3
NI-31	4	4	4	4	1	2	1	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Totals	43	40	37	33	32	34	31	34	43	44	45	45	41	41	37	35	47	47
	3.31	3.08	2.85	2.54	2.46	2.62	2.38	2.62	3.31	3.38	3.462	3.46	3.15	3.15	2.85	2.69	3.62	3.62

Meaninglessness Questions (Cont)

Student	#8T1	#24T1	#24T2	#28T1	#28T2	#33T1	#33T2	#34T1	#34T2	#36T1	#36T2	#42T1	#42T2	ToFT1	ToFT2	D
NI-1	4	4	3	2	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	52	54	2
NI-2	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	1	1	36	38	2
NI-3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	4	2	3	2	1	1	40	40	0
NI-12	4	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	1	1	46	47	1
NI-15	4	3	4	1	2	1	2	3	4	4	3	4	2	46	44	-2
NI-18	3	4	3	4	1	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	1	55	45	-10
NI-19	3	2	1	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	1	2	45	47	2
NI-20	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	39	39	0
NI-23	3	3	4	2	4	3	4	1	4	2	3	1	4	35	45	10
NI-25	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	48	41	-7
NI-27	4	4	4	3	1	3	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	51	42	-9
NI-28	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	34	37	3
NI-31	4	4	3	4	3	2	4	3	4	2	3	1	1	44	52	8
Totals	43	40	37	33	30	37	43	39	44	42	39	24	25	571	571	0
	3.31	3.08	2.85	2.54	2.31	2.85	3.31	3.00	3.38	3.23	3.00	1.85	1.92			

Average Pre Survey: Meaninglessness 2.93

Total Pre: Meaninglessness 571

Average Post Survey: Meaninglessness 2.93

Total Post: Meaninglessness 571

Normlessness Questions

Student	#3T1	#3T2	#4T1	#4T2	#27T1	#27T2	#29T1	#29T2	#30T1	#30T2	#31T1	#31T2	#32T1	#32T2	#35T1	#35T2	#40T1	#40T2	ToT1	ToT2	D
I-1	2	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	24	26	2
I-2	3	2	2	4	1	1	4	2	1	3	4	2	2	1	2	4	1	2	20	21	1
I-3	2	4	1	4	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	4	4	1	4	15	24	9
I-6	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	35	33	-2
I-7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	1	3	4	27	27	0
I-9	4	3	4	3	3	2	4	3	2	4	3	4	1	1	2	1	3	3	26	24	-2
I-10	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	24	30	6
I-11	2	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	4	21	26	5
I-12	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	21	21	0
I-13	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	24	20	-4
I-15	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	1	3	20	24	4
I-16	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	17	21	4
I-17	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	4	2	30	20	-10
I-18	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	28	27	-1
Totals	40	42	40	45	37	37	38	33	34	36	39	40	32	34	36	34	36	43	332	344	12
	2.22	2.33	2.22	2.50	2.06	2.06	2.11	1.83	1.89	2.00	2.17	2.22	1.78	1.89	2.00	1.89	2.00	2.39			

Average Pre Survey: Normlessness 2.63

Average Post Survey: Normlessness 2.73

Total Pre: Normlessness 332

Total Post: Normlessness 344

Mean of D 0.86



Normlessness Questions (Cont)

Student	#3T1	#3T2	#4T1	#4T2	#27T1	#27T2	#29T1	#29T2	#30T1	#30T2	#31T1	#31T2	#32T1	#32T2	#35T1	#35T2	#40T1	#40T2	ToFT1	ToFT2	D
NI-1	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	33	33	0
NI-2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	23	26	3
NI-3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	26	29	3
NI-12	2	3	3	4	2	2	2	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	4	3	3	22	28	6
NI-15	3	3	4	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	3	3	20	23	3
NI-18	2	1	4	3	2	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	4	3	2	1	3	3	25	23	-2
NI-19	3	3	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	4	20	21	1
NI-20	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	23	23	0
NI-23	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	4	1	3	16	20	4
NI-25	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	29	26	-3
NI-27	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	4	1	4	1	1	3	2	23	23	0
NI-28	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	23	23	0
NI-31	3	4	3	4	1	3	1	2	4	3	1	4	1	2	1	1	2	4	17	27	10
Totals	32	36	41	39	31	34	27	33	35	33	34	37	34	37	30	35	36	41	300	325	25
	2.46	2.77	3.15	3.00	2.38	2.62	2.08	2.54	2.69	2.54	2.615	2.85	2.62	2.85	2.31	2.69	2.77	3.15			

Average Pre Survey: Normlessness 2.56

Total Pre: Normlessness 300

Average Post Survey: Normlessness 2.78

Total Post: Normlessness 325

Mean of D 1.92

Social Isolation Questions

Student	#1T1	#1T2	#2T1	#2T2	#7T1	#7T2	#9T1	#9T2	#12T1	#12T2	#13T1	#13T2	#14T1	#14T2	#15T1	#15T2	#26T1	#26T2
I-1	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
I-2	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	4	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
I-3	3	4	1	3	3	1	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	4	2	4	1	4
I-6	4	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	4	3
I-7	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
I-9	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	2	4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	2	3
I-10	3	4	2	4	2	3	3	3	4	4	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	4
I-11	2	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	3	3
I-12	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	4	2	3	2	1	3
I-13	3	2	2	2	3	1	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	3
I-15	3	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	1	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	2	1
I-16	3	3	1	1	3	3	4	4	4	4	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	1
I-17	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	1
I-18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Totals	43	45	33	39	40	37	40	44	44	44	28	34	40	41	42	42	37	38
	2.39	2.50	1.83	2.17	2.22	2.06	2.22	2.44	2.44	2.44	1.56	1.89	2.22	2.28	2.33	2.33	2.06	2.11

Social Isolation Questions (Cont)

Student	#37T1	#37T2	#38T1	#38T2	#44T1	#44T2	#45T1	#45T2	Toft1	Toft2	D
I-1	3	3	4	2	3	2	2	3	36	35	-1
I-2	3	3	1	2	1	1	3	1	31	33	2
I-3	2	3	1	3	2	1	1	2	26	39	13
I-6	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	38	38	0
I-7	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	40	38	-2
I-9	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	34	23	-11
I-10	4	4	2	3	2	3	3	3	37	45	8
I-11	3	4	3	4	2	4	3	4	36	49	13
I-12	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	31	27	-4
I-13	3	4	2	3	1	1	2	1	34	35	1
I-15	1	3	1	3	1	1	3	2	23	34	11
I-16	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	39	37	-2
I-17	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	41	38	-3
I-18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	38	39	1
Totals	40	44	34	41	29	27	34	34	484	510	26
	2.22	2.44	1.89	2.28	1.61	1.50	1.89	1.89			

Average Pre Survey: Social Isolation 2.66

Total Pre: Social Isolation 484

Average Post Survey: Social Isolation 2.80

Total Post: Social Isolation 510

Mean of D 1.86

Social Isolation Questions (Cont)

Student	#1T1	#1T2	#2T1	#2T2	#7T1	#7T2	#9T1	#9T2	#12T1	#12T2	#13T1	#13T2	#14T1	#14T2	#15T1	#15T2	#26T1	#26T2
NI-1	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	4	4	4	3	3	3
NI-2	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2
NI-3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	1	3	3	2	4	4
NI-12	3	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	3	4	4	4	4
NI-15	4	3	2	2	4	2	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	3	4	3	2	3
NI-18	3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	1	2	2	4	3	3	3
NI-19	3	3	2	2	3	3	4	3	2	2	4	4	2	3	3	3	2	2
NI-20	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
NI-23	2	4	2	3	2	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	1
NI-25	3	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	4	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	3	2
NI-27	3	3	2	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	2	2	1	3	3	3	1	2
NI-28	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
NI-31	1	3	2	3	4	1	4	4	3	3	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	3
Totals	36	40	30	30	34	30	39	39	40	38	25	26	36	35	38	36	32	34
	2.77	3.08	2.31	2.31	2.62	2.31	3.00	3.00	3.08	2.92	1.92	2.00	2.77	2.69	2.92	2.77	2.46	2.62

Social Isolation Questions (Cont)

Student	#37T1	#37T2	#38T1	#38T2	#44T1	#44T2	#45T1	#45T2	Toft1	Toft2	D
NI-1	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	46	43	-3
NI-2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	31	28	-3
NI-3	4	3	3	3	1	4	2	3	37	41	4
NI-12	1	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	35	33	-2
NI-15	4	3	3	3	1	2	4	2	38	36	-2
NI-18	2	1	3	3	4	3	3	2	43	34	-9
NI-19	3	3	2	2	2	4	4	2	36	36	0
NI-20	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	32	36	4
NI-23	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	23	27	4
NI-25	2	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	28	24	-4
NI-27	2	2	1	3	1	2	4	2	29	32	3
NI-28	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	2	31	31	0
NI-31	2	2	3	4	1	2	4	4	32	36	4
Totals	34	31	34	38	25	31	38	29	441	437	-4
	2.62	2.38	2.62	2.92	1.92	2.38	2.92	2.23			

Average Pre Survey: Social Isolation 2.61

Total Pre: Social Isolation 441

Average Post Survey: Social Isolation 2.59

Total Post: Social Isolation 437

**Grand Mean: calculation**

Powerlessness	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
	282	278	282	273
			NI	
Meaninglessness	594	607	571	571
			NI	
Normlessness	332	344	300	325
			NI	
Social Isolation	484	510	441	437
	1692	1739	1594	1606
Grand mean	2.69	2.76	2.72	2.75
Mean of difference	3.36		0.92	

APPENDIX C  
ACADEMIC, ATTENDANCE AND DISCIPLINE DATA

### Intensive Reading Development

Possible	1st Semester							2nd Semester						
	4.00 GPA	30 Credit	261 T-Attn*	261 Absent**	261 Tardy***	# Refer	Days Susp	4.00 GPA	30 Credit	279 T-Attn*	279 Absent**	279 Tardy***	# Refer	Days Susp
I-1	0.83	20	210	34	17	1	5	0.83	20	152	93	34	1	0
I-2	0.00	0	141	115	5	1	0	0.00	0	99	179	1	0	0
I-3	1.67	20	211	49	1	1	0	1.67	20	236	36	7	0	0
I-6	2.33	30	201	45	15	0	0	2.83	30	208	36	35	0	0
I-7	0.50	10	182	69	10	3	5	0.67	20	202	42	35	5	4
I-9	0.67	10	182	51	28	1	0	0.67	15	160	82	37	0	0
I-10	2.83	30	224	35	2	3	5	3.50	30	261	15	3	1	0
I-11	2.33	25	185	37	39	4	0	2.00	30	226	24	29	0	0
I-12	1.33	20	238	11	12	1	0	0.83	20	262	11	6	0	0
I-13	1.83	25	204	52	5	2	0	1.17	20	188	74	17	3	6
I-15	2.50	30	233	17	11	1	3	2.00	30	237	29	13	0	0
I-16	1.50	30	232	21	8	1	0	1.33	20	254	23	2	1	0
I-17	0.67	20	226	27	8	0	0	1.83	30	243	29	7	0	0
I-18	0.67	15	168	66	27	0	0	0.33	5	166	75	38	1	0
	19.7	285	2837	629	188	19.0	18.0	19.7	290	2894	748	264	12.0	10.0

Average | 1.4    20.4    202.6    44.9    13.4    1.4    1.3    1.4    20.7    206.7    53.4    18.9    0.9    0.7

\* = total number of class periods student was present and on-time

\*\* = total number of class periods absent

\*\*\* = total number of class periods tardy < 30 min



### Non-Intensive Reading Development

Possible	1st Semester								2nd Semester							
	4.00 GPA	30 Credit	261 T-Attn*	261 Absent**	261 Tardy***	# Refer	Days Susp	4.00 GPA	30 Credit	279 T-Attn*	279 Absent**	279 Tardy***	# Refer	Days Susp		
NI-1	2.67	30	197	39	25	1	0	3.00	30	229	40	10	0	0		
NI-2	1.33	25	171	68	22	1	0	2.30	30	217	22	40	0	0		
NI-3	1.33	20	199	47	15	0	0	0.83	20	261	7	11	1	0		
NI-12	3.50	30	210	13	38	1	0	3.17	30	243	16	20	0	0		
NI-15	2.83	30	248	4	1	0	0	3.33	30	252	3	24	0	0		
NI-18	2.00	30	207	33	21	0	0	2.00	30	216	52	11	1	0		
NI-19	2.67	30	236	6	19	1	0	2.00	25	213	26	40	1	0		
NI-20	1.33	25	238	16	7	0	0	1.17	20	255	23	1	1	3		
NI-23	2.83	30	232	23	6	0	0	2.50	30	198	55	26	0	0		
NI-25	2.50	30	250	8	3	0	0	3.17	30	267	12	0	0	0		
NI-27	2.83	30	214	35	12	2	6	3.00	30	256	15	8	1	0		
NI-28	1.71	30	245	7	9	0	0	1.17	20	270	3	6	0	0		
NI-31	2.17	30	220	8	33	2	0	1.67	30	196	73	10	0	0		
	29.7	370	2867	307	211	8.0	6.0	29.3	355	3073	347	207	5.0	3.0		

Average | 2.3    28.5    220.5    23.6    16.2    0.6    0.5    2.3    27.3    236.4    26.7    15.9    0.4    0.2

\* = total number of class periods student was present and on-time

\*\* = total number of class periods absent

\*\*\* = total number of class periods tardy < 30 min

APPENDIX D  
STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINE QUESTIONS

## Student Interview: Questions

- 1 Tell me a little about yourself
  - a age
  - b # of brothers and sisters
  - c what grade did you start in this district
  - d what middle school did you attend
  - e were you held back any time during grades 1-8
- 2 What did you think of this school when you first started here?
- 3 What were your feelings about coming to this school?
- 4 Why do you think you were asked to come to this school?
- 5 How do you feel about being in the reading development class?
- 6 What would you change about the course work?
- 7 How does the course work help you?
- 8 How has the reading development class helped you?
- 9 How would you describe your interactions with the teachers at March Valley?
- 10 Outside of class, do you hang out with other students that are in the reading development class?
- 11 What has been the biggest change for you between when you first started at March Valley and now?
- 12 What would you say to a new student about coming to this school?
- 13 How would you describe your interactions with the campus supervisors?
- 14 What is your biggest obstacle you face in school?
- 15 What do you think you can do to overcome this obstacle?
- 16 If you could change anything here at school, what would it be?
- 17 How would you describe the support (or lack of) here at school?
- 18 How would you describe the environment here at school?

APPENDIX E  
STUDENT INTERVIEW

Interview with I-7 on May 31, 2007

Q: How old are you

A: 15 years

Q: How many brothers

A: Four

Q: Any sisters

A: No

Q: When you started in this district, what grade did you start?

A: I'm not sure

Q: Is this the only district you have been in?

A: I went to another one, I think

Q: When you came to MoVal, when did you start?

A: I think it was my middle school, sixth grade

Q: Now at any time were you ever held back?

A: Never

Q: When you first came to March Valley, before you got here, what did you think of the school, what had you heard about it, what were your thoughts, do you remember?

A: I thought it was going to be cool, like, I heard good things, I heard it was easy and you could get your grades up good.

Q: When you heard that you would be coming here you thought it would be ok?

A: Yes

Q: Now about the reading development class. Do you think it helps you, do you think it hurts you. What do you think about that class?

A: Yes, it do help me, if I really try, it really helps me, I really learn a lot.

Q: What parts of the reading class do you like best, computers, the small groups?

A: Probably the computers

Q: What is it about working on the computers that you like versus say reading a book or what ever?

A: I don't know, just, on the computer are just more fun.

Q: You are comfortable working on the computer?

A: Ya

Q: Think of all the students here. How would you say your interactions, interactions meaning how do you feel when you deal with people around here? Do you understand what I am asking?

A: Yes, I feel like everybody, I don't have a problem with nobody

Q: Ok, what about your interactions with teachers? Just in general, for example, I don't deal with them, when I do its ok, or I stay away from them?

A: I get along with them, but some I don't.

Q: The teachers that you get along with, I don't want names, what is it about them that you feel comfortable with, what is it about them that allows you, I'm cool with them?

A: They listen to me and stuff. They help me and the other teachers just ignore me.

Q: If the teacher will listen to you, is it only in the classroom or they will listen anytime?

A: Anytime

Q: What is it about them that make you comfortable?

A: I don't know. That is what I want to know.

Q: So you don't know why. Have you every thought, young or old. I am trying to think of a younger teacher, like say Mr. Acala who is young and myself who is older teacher or someone athletic.

A: I don't know, it is I guess I think the older teacher because they seem to know more. They can tell me, this is bad because they probably went through it, but a younger teacher wouldn't.

Q: Ok, what about male verses female?

A: No

Q: Think about school. What is your biggest obstacle, do you know what obstacle means, like you need to get here, but there is something stopping you. That is an obstacle. What is the biggest obstacle for you when you think of school?

A: I don't know

Q: What are some of the obstacles you think you have?

A: You mean stop me from school?

Q: Yes, something that stops you from being successful, or makes it a little bit harder or causes you problems?

A: Oh, I don't know, maybe my brothers.

Q: Which one, your older brothers, not Adrian?

A: No

Q: You mean Adrian?

A: Ya

Q: How does he cause you problems?

A: I worry about him too much. I think about him all the time, not about school.

Q: You know I had Adrian for one year. Do you write him letters, talk to him?

A: Ya

Q: Does he have access to email?

A: No

Q: So you just write letters

A: Ya

Q: Do you get to talk to him on the phone?

A: Sometimes

Q: So that really weighs on you?

A: Ya

Q: So if you were having a bad day because of this situation, would you talk to your teacher?

A: I don't talk to teachers about my brother

Q: You are the boss here you are the principal at March Valley. What would you change? You can do anything you want as long as it is legal. Wow, if I could do this, what would it be?

A: Make the teachers easier on the kids more.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: Like, I don't know, like some teachers be on the kids head, like it just, I don't know, get them in trouble too much. I know sometimes the kids get in trouble, but sometimes it's not the kids fault.

Q: Give me an example, and I don't mean use the teacher's name, that's not what I am talking about. Give me an example of where a student maybe does something that causes a teacher to say I'm on them verses they do something where the teacher isn't on them?

A: I don't know

Q: Are you saying that maybe the teacher should look the other way if something happens?

A: Not like that, but I just saying, like take it easy on the kids, like they are, like just being hard.

Q: Ok, I am trying to understand. Say its 9:30, no 9:00 and you are supposed to be in first period and somebody is out wandering. Should a teacher ignore that?

A: No

Q: Ok, say, because you know this is my pet peeve, if a student doesn't have their ID, should, and not just me, should that be something where we say, aw I'm going to just let that slide?

A: Ya

Q: Ok, is bullying, and I'm not talking about they are coming up on someone, but is kind of subtle? Do you know what subtle means?

A: Ya

Q: Should a teacher ignore that?

A: No

Q: Should a teacher ignore someone being late?

A: Ya

Q: When should they not ignore someone being late?

A: If they come in late everyday, I'm saying if it is just once in awhile.

Q: Ok, let that slide?

A: Ya

Q: What if they come in late five minutes everyday?

A: (Laugh) I don't know

Q: Do you see what I am trying to understand, because, do you think, ok, I am going to ask a general question. Do you think that teachers can be trusted to make those kinds of judgments?



A: Ya, I think so

Q: If I was to say, Teachers can be trusted, would you agree with that statement in a general way?

A: Ya

Q: Do you think teachers are fair?

A: Ya

Q: Ok, are teachers sometimes not fair?

A: Yup

Q: Ok, when you see what you think is something not fair, are talking about academics, like grades and schoolwork, or would you think in terms of how they discipline, meaning somebody does something and they get away with it and somebody else does the same thing and they don't get away with it? So when you see teachers not being fair, where do you see that happening?

A: I think in the discipline

Q: Ok, do teachers have bad days sometimes?

A: Ya

Q: What do you think might cause a teacher to have a bad day?

A: Probably something happening at home

Q: Do you think students sometimes have a bad day?

A: Ya

Q: What would cause a student to have a bad day?

A: Same thing

Q: Ya. If you had a bad day, because something happened at home, does Adrian write you?

A: Ya

Q: So you got a letter from Adrian. He is having a bad time for whatever reason and you are worrying about him, are you comfortable going to your teacher who ever that happens to be, and say, I'm having a bad day. Are you comfortable doing that?

A: Ya

Q: Do you do it?

A: Ya

Q: Do you do that with all you teachers or sort of pick and choose?

A: Pick and choose

Q: Would you like to be in the position, no matter who the teacher was, you have enough feelings, confidence or trust to say I am having a bad day and don't want to tell you why, I just need some slack. Do you do that?

A: No

Q: Ok, I think that would be hard to do

A: Ya

Q: Ok. Think about the environment of the school. Can you describe it? Use some words like I am going to throw out. If you believe them, use them, but if you don't, don't. Don't use them just because I say them. Supportive, not supportive. Friendly, not friendly. Comfortable, not comfortable. When I come here I get a warm, fuzzy feeling, you know what I mean? How would you describe the environment?

A: I think it is safe most of the time, but sometimes not. People can be friendly, but the same ting, people can sometimes not be friendly.

Q: Ok. Why do you think students sometimes don't come to school?

A: I don't know

Q: Because you come to school pretty much everyday, don't you?

A: Ya

Q: You have friends that don't. Why do you think they don't come to school?

A: They don't like the teachers

Q: Do they think school is important?

A: No

Q: Ok. Do they think what they are learning has any meaning or is like, what the hell are we learning that for?

A: Ya, why are we learning that.

Q: Ok. You are the principal, so you have changed the teachers. What about what you learn here? Would you change anything?

A: No. Leave it the way it is.

Q: How are your grades? Are you happy with them?

A: No, but they are getting better.

Q: If you were to look at the first semester and now, what has been the biggest change in you and school?

A: First semester I didn't come to school, like I was gone half, like it was a new school and I didn't know nobody so I just stayed home. The second semester I just came and did my work.

Q: Do you think you are a better student now than say three months ago?

A: Ya

Q: Ok. Now what about comparing here and now and say Sunnymeade Middle School. How do you see yourself as a student?

A: I think I got better

Q: Why do you think?

A: In middle school, I didn't even care. I was just all fun and games. But when I got to ninth grade, I got to change.

Q: So you feel better about or see the value of school?

A: Ya

Q: What would you add here if you could add a class or academics or whatever? Is there anything that you say, wow that would be so neat?

A: I don't think so

Q: What is your greatest interest? If I was to say, In ten years what do you want to be doing, work wise, what do you think that might be?

A: I don't know

Q: Have you thought about what you might do right after high school?

A: No

Q: Do you think about it in job skills?

A: Ya, but I don't know, sometimes I feel like doing it, but then I don't want to do it. I just have to see how it goes.

Q: Ok, any questions for me?

A: No

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