

1986

The effect of group counseling on academic achievement and achievement motivation of alternative high school students

Anne Klare Sullivan

College of William & Mary - School of Education

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**THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND
ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

Ed.D. 1986

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THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING
ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION
OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to the
Faculty of the School of Education
College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Anne Klare Sullivan
May, 1986

APPROVAL SHEET

We the undersigned do certify that we have read this dissertation and that in our individual opinions it is acceptable in both scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education.

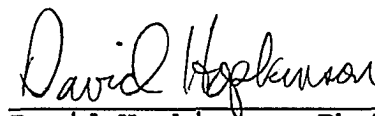
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John Lavach, Ed.D.



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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Elizabeth and Robert Klare, whose loving support and confidence in my abilities have been critical factors in motivating me to achieve. It is dedicated, also, to my husband, Timothy Sullivan, a model of achievement, and my best friend.

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many discussions of ways to address the problem of student underachievement at Point Option. As my supervisor he permitted the flexibility which made it possible for me to work and go to school at the same time. Without him, the task would have been impossible.

There are not adequate words to express my appreciation for Thelma Spencer, a gifted counselor, a talented group leader, and a loving friend. Her sensitivity and caring support, her willingness to listen, and her irrepressible sense of humor kept me going when the going got tough.

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Timothy Sullivan has been a bulwark of stability and support throughout the long years of my doctoral program. He has shown loving concern and patience. I'm not sure that I would have persevered without his confidence, his ability to provide perspective, and his love.

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**THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION
OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Justification for the study

Chronic underachievement is a problem experienced by a large number of high school students whose attainments fall below the level of achievement suggested by their abilities (Ahlstrom & Havighurst, 1971; Cervantes, 1965; Glasser, 1969; Silberman, 1970). Underachieving students, described by Martin, Marx, and Martin (1980) as characterized by general apathy, depression, absenteeism, tardiness, irresponsibility, and unreliability, present problems to school personnel at all levels.

The development of alternative schools, coming about in the late 1960's and early 1970's primarily to diversify educational opportunities in communities (Smith, Barr, & Burke, 1976) addressed the issue of chronic underachievement in high school students. Such schools, often incorporating principles such as flexibility of curriculum, nonauthoritarianism, community life, free and functional learning, innovative teaching methods, and open door policy (Reddy, Langmeyer, & Asch, 1978), became a means for

providing "continuing educational opportunities for students who drop out of or prove disruptive in the regular high school. Typically, alternative schools represent a 'last chance' for such students to continue and perhaps complete their high school programs" (Smith, Barr, & Burke, 1976, p.31).

Smith (1978) reports that students attending alternative schools perform as well academically as those in traditional schools. He maintains that students in alternative school programs have shown a decrease in absenteeism, fewer suspensions, and a more positive self-concept as compared with their attitudes and behaviors when enrolled in traditional school programs.

Entry into an alternative program, however, does not necessarily change patterns of underachievement, some of which have existed for years. At Point Option, an alternative open high school program for able underachievers operated by the public school system of Newport News, Virginia, approximately one third of the 140 students fail more than 25 percent of their classes each six weeks marking period. These students, who are tested in basic skills areas prior to admission to the program, are at least average in intellectual ability as measured by standardized

IQ tests, at or near grade level in reading comprehension skills, and capable of satisfactory academic performance. Many of these underachieving students are chronically absent or tardy, display poor attitudes toward school, are negligent with regard to completion of assignments, are drug- or alcohol-involved, and are generally deficient in the motivation to achieve academic success.

As a result of poor academic achievement, many of these students fail to acquire an adequate number of credits to allow their promotion through the sequence of high school grades. Eventually, finding themselves approaching the age of eighteen but not nearing completion of high school graduation requirements, a significant percentage of such students drop out of high school altogether.

The fact that a significant number of able individuals fail to achieve academic goals which are within the scope of their abilities, and that many of these individuals leave high school without completing the requirements for a diploma, represents a notable waste of human potential. The most important purpose of this study was to discover counseling strategies which improve the likelihood that able underachieving students will develop behaviors necessary to allow them to complete their high school diplomas.

Statement of the problem

This study compared the effects of two structured small group counseling techniques, Peer Counseling Training and Achievement Motivation Training, on the school attendance and academic achievement of a population of underachieving alternative high school students in grades nine through twelve. In addition, it attempted to determine whether participation in daily small-group counseling sessions over a six-week period positively effected measures of self-concept, locus of control, and tendency to achieve (or achievement motivation). Students participating in the experimental treatments were compared with placebo control group subjects participating daily in unstructured "rap sessions," and with students receiving no formal group counseling.

Theoretical Rationale

This study was an attempt to increase behaviors associated with achievement in a population of underachieving high school students. Such students would be considered by some motivational theorists (e.g. Murray, 1938) to be deficient in a characteristic known as need for

achievement or n Ach.

Need for achievement is a learned motive to strive for success and excellence (Byrne & Kelley, 1981). Murray has been a central influence in achievement motivation research, and in the development of achievement theory, and is considered by many to be the father of the modern need theory of personality (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982).

Murray and his associates working at Harvard during the 1930's constructed an approach to personality which dealt with "directional forces in the subject, forces which seek out or respond to various objects or total situations in the environment" (Murray, 1938, p. 61). Murray defined these forces, which he called "needs," as "organic potentiality" or readiness to respond in a certain way under given conditions (Murray, 1938).

Murray's theory of personality, which he called "personology," focused upon the study of individual personalities with their concomitant complexities. It was Murray's position that an individual's personality is in fact an aggregate of the events that span the person's lifetime, thus making the history of the personality synonymous with the personality itself (Hall & Lindzey,

1978). Murray viewed personality as an organizing or governing agent of the individual which functioned to integrate the conflicts and constraints to which the individual was exposed, to satisfy the individual's needs, and to formulate plans to attain future goals (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). The study of an individual's personality is of necessity the study of a lifelong series of episodes, actions which involve the reaction of the organism to its physical and social environment (Masden, 1968).

Murray's theory, reflecting its author's strong academic background in medicine and the biological sciences, placed great emphasis upon the importance of physical and biological factors in behavior. At the same time, he hypothesized that behavior must be understood within its environmental context in order to fully make sense. Although Murray believed that the person and his environment must be considered together as a person-environment interaction (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982), he separated those forces hypothesized to originate within individual from those felt to originate within the environment for the purposes of analysis of the interaction. He referred to these internal and external constructs as "needs" and "press," respectively.

Murray defined a need as a hypothetical construct, a "convenient fiction" which represented a force

..in the brain region, a force which organizes perception, apperception, intellection, conation, and action in such a way as to transform in a certain direction an existing, unsatisfying situation. A need is sometimes provoked directly by internal processes of a certain kind ... but, more frequently (when in a state of readiness) by the occurrence of one of a few commonly effective press (Murray, 1938, p. 123)

Although defining "need" as a hypothetical construct, Murray nonetheless made it clear that its existence is linked to some sort of underlying physiological processes in the brain. Whether produced by internal force, or by external stimulation, the need "produces activity on the part of the organism and maintains this activity until the organism-environment situation has been altered so as to reduce the need" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978, p. 217).

Murray distinguished between primary or viscerogenic needs, which are linked to the physical requirements of the organism, and the secondary or psychogenic needs, which are hypothetically derived from the primary needs but are characterized by lack of direct connection with organic processes or physical satisfactions. Typical viscerogenic

needs are the needs for air, water, food, sex, or urination. Typical psychogenic needs are those for acquisition, achievement, recognition, autonomy, affiliation, or succorance. Murray's original formulation included 20 psychogenic needs, but subsequent reformulations produced a total of 27, some of which are thought not to be entirely independent of one another (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982).

The importance of considering human behavior in its environmental context is represented by the concept of press, the effective significant forces provided by objects, situations, or events in the environment. "In simplest terms, a press is a property or attribute of an environmental object or person that facilitates or impedes the efforts of the individual to reach a given goal" (Hall & Lindzey, 1978, p. 221). Murray distinguished between alpha press, an objective description of environmental objects as they exist in reality, and beta press, the significance of environmental objects as they are perceived or interpreted by the individual. Optimal interaction with any environment requires a reasonable congruence between alpha press and beta press, or objective and subjective experiences of the same situation.

It was Murray's contention that needs might sometimes

be manifest, or observable in overt behavior, and sometimes latent, or without immediately observable characteristics. In order to accurately measure the strength of a need, both forms must be considered. Murray suggested that the strength of overt or manifest needs might be estimated by the frequency of the action, the duration of the action, the intensity of the action, and the readiness to act (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982). However, it is more difficult to assess needs which are not expressed through overt actions. In order to assess latent needs, Murray and his colleagues developed the Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1938, 1943), a projective technique which has achieved wide use since its inception in the 1930's. The test consists of twenty cards, most of which contain at least one human figure with whom the respondent might potentially identify. The subject is instructed to devise a story about each of the pictures that he is shown, and the material thus generated is analyzed for the presence of needs and press.

An outgrowth of Murray's development of his need-centered theory of personality has been the large amount of research which the theory has stimulated. The desire to support the existence of needs as relatively enduring personality characteristics has spawned considerable motivational research, prominent among which is

that of McClelland (e.g. McClelland, et al., 1953) who was greatly influenced by Murray in his original conceptualization of achievement motivation. "McClelland's molar approach to personality, his desire to examine all the facts about the person, and his interest in needs systems and the measurement of those needs all attest to Murray's formative guidance" (Weiner, 1972, p. 173).

While Murray and McClelland "share a common bias concerning the nature of human personality" (Liebert & Spiegler, 1982, p. 259), they differ conspicuously in their approach to the study of personality. While Murray devoted his efforts to the catalog and study of a wide variety of needs, McClelland focused most of his attention upon the exploration of a single need, the need for achievement (n Ach).

McClelland's early work in personality distinguished among motives, traits, and schema. He saw motives as those constructs which determine why people behave as they do. Traits describe "consistencies in behavior or the mode of adjustment which the subject habitually adopts to meet recurrent situations. ... (T)he trait construct account(s) for the how of behavior" (McClelland, 1956, p. 352). McClelland hypothesized that schema involve ideas, values,

and attitudes toward the world and himself (Weiner, 1972). Motives can be understood as the causes of behavior, and traits are the method by which motives are expressed, while schema are cognitions about the self and others.

Motives are central constructs in McClelland's analysis of behavior. A motive is defined as "the reintegration by a cue of a change in an affective situation" (McClelland et al, 1953, p. 28). McClelland contended that

...throughout life certain stimulus situations become associated with affective states. The hot stove elicits fear because it has been associated with pain; tasks are associated with positive affect (pride) or negative affect (shame) because they have led to such feelings in past encounters. The appearance of meaningful cues, such as the hot stove or an achievement task, arouses affective states that, in turn, elicit instrumental approach or avoidance behavior. That is, anticipatory goal reactions, or emotions, learned from prior cue-affect associations, energize and direct behavior." (Weiner, 1972, p. 174)

In McClelland's formulation, emotions are not motives, but they are the basis for motives. McClelland expects that motives are aroused in situations in which there are discrepancies between the present affective condition and an expected affective state (Weiner, 1972). Thus it might be said that certain stimuli in the environment arouse anticipation of an emotional state which might be different

from the present emotional state. Prior experiences have shaped these emotional expectations, which are automatically reproduced in the presence of stimuli which resemble those present during the time of original learning. The discrepancy between present and expected emotional states leads to approach or avoidance behavior. McClelland labels this conception of motivation an affective arousal model (Weiner, 1972).

McClelland's formulation allows for the development of positive or approaching motives, and negative or avoiding motives. The former follow from an expectation of pleasure or satisfaction, while the latter follow from an expectation of pain. Thus, for example, in the case of the achievement motive, there is the possibility of the need for achievement (n Ach), but also the possibility of fear of failure (f Failure).

As a method of studying achievement motivation, McClelland and his colleagues utilized Murray's Thematic Apperception Test, or modifications of that test. Their typical procedure involved exposing subjects to a motive-arousing stimulus, or to a neutral stimulus. Subjects were then shown a number of TAT-like pictures, and asked to write stories about the pictures. Stories were

subsequently analyzed for content, with the expectation that persons with a strong motive (hypothetically, those subjects who had been exposed to the motive-arousing condition) would respond to a neutral stimulus such as the TAT pictures in a manner that differentiated them from subjects who had been exposed to a neutral stimulus. Thus the experimental work of McClelland and his colleagues (McClelland et al., 1953), provided empirical support for the theoretical formulation of the need theory of personality hypothesized by Murray.

As an outgrowth of his experimental work in achievement, McClelland developed a seminar procedure for increasing achievement motivation in entrepreneurial situations. Modifications of his procedure have been utilized in attempts to increase achievement motivation in underachieving high school students.

Definition of terms

Academic underachievers. Students who consistently function below their expected levels of scholastic performance. For the purposes of this study, such students can further be defined as possessing at least average academic potential as indicated by standardized IQ test scores in conjunction with standardized test scores in basic

skills areas such as reading, mathematics, and language arts which do not fall more than one standard deviation below the norm.

Achievement motivation. Defined by Alschuler, Tabor, & McIntyre (1970) as a condition in which desire for achievement (attaining excellence, getting ahead, beating competitors, or improving on past records) becomes a dominant concern for an individual.

Achievement Motivation Training. A group counseling technique designed to increase achievement motivation. Patterned on the work of McClelland & Winter (1969), this approach involves learning characteristics which distinguish high from low achievers, and teaching methods of increasing the incidence of these factors in the behavior of group participants.

Alternative education. A "program of education which stresses the uniqueness of the individual while members work together toward a true sense of community. The program attempts to serve students whose characteristics include high rates of absenteeism, poor motivation, lack of discipline, tardiness, and drug usage" (DeSalvo, 1982, p.10).

Alternative high school. A high school or high school program which exists in addition to the standard or traditional school programs, usually to serve students who find the regular high schools inadequate to their needs.

Locus of control. A set of learned generalized expectancies about how reinforcement is obtained (Phares, 1978). A person whose locus of control is Internal expects to be able to control his or her own fate. A person whose locus of control is External believes that what happens is the result of luck or the behavior of more powerful people in the environment.

Need for achievement (n Ach). A learned motive to strive for success and excellence (Byrne & Kelley, 1981), or the strong desire to achieve (Johnson & McClelland, 1984).

Peer counseling training. A systematic group counseling approach to teaching communication skills and helping behaviors (Myrick & Erney, 1979, 1984). Young people trained in these techniques might subsequently be expected to apply these strategies in working with their peers in counseling situations.

Self-concept. Defined by Carl Rogers (1951) as an

aggregate of values, attitudes, and judgments which an individual holds regarding his or her appearance, behaviors, skills, and general worth as a person. "The self-concept or self-structure may be thought of as an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence" (Rogers, 1951, p. 191).

Self-esteem. Defined by Brandon (1969) as "... an individual's view of himself. Self-esteem has two interrelated aspects. It entails a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth. It is the integrated sum of self-confidence and self-respect. It is the conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living" (p.110).

General hypotheses

It was hypothesized that students taking part in an Achievement Motivation Training group would show greater

gain on a measure of achievement motivation, and more movement toward internality on a measure of locus of control than students participating in a Peer Counseling training group, a Placebo Control group, and a No-Treatment Control group. It was further hypothesized that students participating in an Achievement Motivation training group and those participating in a Peer Counseling training group when grouped together would show greater gains on a measure of self-esteem than Placebo Control and No-Treatment Control group subjects. It was also hypothesized that students participating in Achievement Motivation and Peer Counseling treatments would show greater improvement in academic grade point average and percentage of classes attended than Placebo and No-Treatment Control group subjects.

Sample and data-gathering procedures

The purpose of this study was to assess and compare the effectiveness of two group counseling approaches to enhancing academic achievement in alternative high school students: an Achievement Motivation Training group and a Peer Counseling program.

The study was conducted at the Point Option Program/Deer Park, an open alternative high school program

located in Newport News, Virginia. Point Option has approximately 140 students in grades nine through twelve. Student ages range from fourteen to twenty. Subjects were Point Option students who had passed fewer than 75 percent of their academic classes during the six week marking period immediately preceding the experimental treatments. Previous experience has shown that as many as fifty students can fall into this underachieving category each marking period.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four treatments: Achievement Motivation Training; Peer Counseling Training; Attention Placebo; and No Treatment Control group. In order to ensure that group participation did not result in the loss of opportunity to take a class for academic credit, subjects who participated in Achievement Motivation Training, Peer Counseling, and Placebo Control groups were offered elective credit for participation. Such credit was not offered to No-Treatment Control group subjects, since experimental participation did not interfere with their ability to take full load of classes. Groups met for fifty minutes each day during a six-week marking period (approximately thirty contact hours). Experimental groups varied in size from eight to twelve students each.

The Achievement Motivation group participated in a structured training program designed to facilitate behaviors which are found to be characteristic of individuals high in achievement motivation. These include realistic goal-setting, acceptance of personal responsibility, and the ability to delay short term gratification in favor of long range goals.

The Peer Counseling Training group participated in a structured program in human relations training designed to facilitate the development of communication skills and empathic responding behaviors. The Attention Placebo group participated in unstructured group discussions on topics of their choice. The No-Treatment control group pursued the normal school curriculum without any modification except to be told (as all experimental subjects were told) that failure to improve their academic performance might result in dismissal from the Point Option Program.

Mehrabian & Bank's Measure of Achieving Tendency, Fitts' (1965) Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale were administered pre- and post-treatment to the entire Point Option student population as a control for the effects of test-taking as an extraneous variable in the treatment procedure. Academic grades (GPA)

and attendance for the six-week marking period immediately preceding the group interventions were compared with GPA and attendance for the six-week period during which the interventions took place, and for the marking period immediately after the interventions in an attempt to assess both the immediate and the long-term effects of the experimental treatments.

Limitations

Among the factors which limit the generality of the conclusions which can be drawn from this study is the fact that students at Point Option might not be truly representative of underachieving high schools students in the city of Newport News. Many underachievers do not choose to leave the traditional high school program in spite of lack of success, and many drop out of high school without trying an alternative program. In addition, Point Option does not accurately reflect the racial composition of the high school population of the Newport News Public Schools. While that population is approximately 60 percent white, the population of Point Option is approximately 92 percent white.

Because of limitations in the number of Point Option

staff members with the requisite training and experience to serve as facilitators in small counseling groups, it was necessary for the experimenter to serve as facilitator in some small group treatments, introducing the possibility of experimenter bias. However, in an attempt to provide some control for this effect, the experimenter served as facilitator for a different type of treatment group at each six-week interval, as did other facilitators.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Summary of Rationale and Relationship to Problem

Theorists espousing a "needs" approach to personality might consider underachievers to be deficient in a trait known as need for achievement or n Ach. Murray, originator of the modern need theory of personality, considered the need for achievement to be one of those "directional forces within the subject, forces which seek out or respond to various objects or total situations in the environment" (Murray, 1938, p.61). McClelland, influenced by Murray's theory, focused his attention upon the exploration of a single need, the need for achievement. In collaboration with a number of students and colleagues, most notably Atkinson, McClelland amassed considerable evidence in support of need for achievement as a stable personality trait.

McClelland (1961), in an attempt to relate the need for achievement to behaviors occurring outside a laboratory situation, hypothesized that achievement motivation is responsible for the economic growth of societies, and that

differences in need for achievement were responsible to some degree for the economic growth or decline of all societies. As an outgrowth of his ideas he developed an experimental training program designed to increase levels of need for achievement in adults (McClelland, 1965; McClelland & Winter, 1969), and using this program, demonstrated increases in achievement-related behaviors in Indian businessmen (McClelland & Winter, 1969).

McClelland's training program has stimulated several attempts to develop organized programs to increase the level of achievement motivation in underachieving elementary and high school students (Alschuler, Tabor, & McIntyre, 1973; Kolb, 1965; deCharms, 1976). Such programs, which have met with mixed results, have attempted to train students in behaviors which are characteristic of individuals high in the need for achievement. These behaviors include future time orientation, intermediate levels of risk-taking, and clarification of future goals. Some evidence (e.g. Keck, 1977) exists that such training programs can have an incremental effect on personality measures of achievement motivation, and on behavioral measures of achievement, such as academic grades, standardized test scores, and school attendance.

A departure from the somewhat didactic model used by McClelland and his associates is found in the use of peer counseling techniques to stimulate academic achievement. Although peer counseling programs, especially at the secondary level (e.g. Buck, 1977; Schweisheimer & Walberg, 1976; Cooker & Cherchia, 1976) have generally focused upon the enhancement of communication skills and the improvement of personal adjustment among peer counselors and clients, many (e.g. McManus, 1982; Vriend, 1969; Hamburg & Varenhorst, 1972; and Fink et al., 1978) have reported improvement in academic achievement as a by-product of involvement in peer counseling programs. Such studies suggest that participation in such a program, in which students are taught communications skills such as active listening and empathic responding, and subsequently function as individual or group counselors with peers, has a positive effect upon the achievement of high school students as measured by academic grades, standardized test scores, and school attendance. In addition, participation in such programs has been shown to positively influence measures of student self-esteem.

Arkes and Garske (1982) have suggested that achievement motivation is a function of an individual's level of self-esteem and confidence. It is their hypothesis that

high achievers have higher levels of self-esteem and confidence than low achievers, although these differences are not necessarily reflective of differences in ability. Those who are highly motivated have higher estimates of their probability of achieving success, and persist longer in achievement-oriented tasks. Arkes and Garske suggest that high confidence becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Supportive of this stance is the fact that deCharms (1976) and Miller, Brickman, and Bolen (1975) report significant academic improvement in children for whom they had made experimental interventions involving the enhancement of self-esteem. Arkes and Garske (1982) maintain that, in both of these studies, achievement improved in spite of the fact that the experimental program did not involve the teaching of academic skills.

If the theory proposed by Arkes and Garske (1982) is correct, interventions which bring about an increased level in achievement motivation should also bring about an increased level of self-esteem. By the same token, interventions which raise a subject's level of self-esteem would likely bring about an increase in achievement motivation. The purpose of the proposed study is to compare the effectiveness of two group counseling techniques in enhancing self esteem and achievement motivation in

underachieving alternative high school students, and to determine what effect, if any, such techniques have upon actual academic achievement.

Summary of Relevant Research

Achievement Motivation: Theoretical Concepts

The experimental work of McClelland, Atkinson, and their colleagues grew out of the hypothesis that achievement situations arouse positive feelings in some people and negative feelings in others. Early attempts to measure the motive to achieve focused upon the Thematic Apperception Test, developed by Murray (1938, 1943) to measure the "psychogenic" needs of the personality. In order to assess the TAT's capacity to differentiate among differing levels of a specific need, it was necessary to use a need which could be made stronger in an objectively defined way in one group of subjects as opposed to another. Thus Atkinson and McClelland (1948) chose to manipulate hunger in their first experimental test of the ability of the TAT to detect differences in the intensity of a need. They tested three groups of sailors who had been deprived of food for either one, four, or sixteen hours. The sailors, writing stories in response to seven thematic apperception pictures which

were projected on a screen, were told that they were participating in a test of visual acuity. Using an elaborate scoring system assessing content related to food, Atkinson and McClelland found significant relationships between the level of hunger and the content of the stories. As the level of hunger increased, the number of stories which involved the need for food, and the theme of overcoming food deprivation increased. Atkinson and McClelland concluded that the TAT could be used to measure the magnitude of a need, and began to develop a scoring system which related to the need for achievement.

In an attempt to validate the use of the TAT to measure nonbiological needs, McClelland, Clark, Roby and Atkinson (1949) devised an elaborate experiment which involved six groups of male subjects, each of which were given paper and pencil tests, and, subsequently, a TAT. Experimental procedure involved having some groups tested under nonarousing conditions with regard to the need for achievement, and other groups under arousing conditions. All subjects were told that the TAT was a measure of their ability to imagine things creatively. The experimental groups differed in that the members of the Achievement-oriented group were told that the initial paper and pencil test was a measure of their ability, but were given no

feedback on how well they performed on this test. The Success group members were told that they had done extremely well on the paper-and-pencil test. The Failure group members were treated in the same manner as the two previous groups, but were led to believe that they had done poorly on the ability test. The Success/Failure group members were told that they had done well on the initial part of the ability test, but poorly on subsequent parts. In each of these four groups, the experimenter behaved in a formal and business-like manner. In the Relaxed group, a graduate student asked the members to take the paper-and-pencil tests to provide normative data for a test he was developing. His behavior was informal, and he minimized the importance of the test-taking. For the Neutral group, the experimenter again identified himself as a graduate student, but made no effort to minimize the importance of the test-taking activity. The neutral condition was an attempt to assess the achievement imagery in the TAT stories when the experimenter made no attempt to influence the achievement motive.

Experimental results showed that, as was the case in the food-deprivation experiment, the content of TAT stories reflected the intensity of the subjects' needs for achievement. Subjects in the Relaxed group composed TAT

stories which contained little achievement imagery. Subjects in the Neutral group produced stories with levels of achievement imagery that were considered by the experimenters to be consistent with the achievement motivation aroused in a typical classroom situation. The remaining four groups displayed higher levels of need for achievement than is typical in normal classroom situations, with the Failure and Success/Failure groups displaying the highest mean levels of need for achievement. However, the fact that the Success group members thought that they had already succeeded at the critical task when the TAT was administered was thought to account for their somewhat lower expression of achievement need (Arkes & Garske, 1982). The fact that the Achievement-oriented group scored below the two failure groups was attributed to the circumstance that they receive no feedback about the results of their performance, thus failing to arouse their need for achievement to the maximum extent. McClelland (1961) hypothesized that three conditions are necessary to arouse the motive to succeed: the subject's sense of personal responsibility for the outcome of a given situation, the subject's knowledge of the outcome, and the subject's perception of some risk concerning the chances for success.

A number of studies subsequently investigated the

relationship between fantasy expression as measured by TAT responses and the arousal of psychogenic needs (Weiner, 1972). Shipley and Veroff (1952) showed manipulation of arousal of the need for affiliation, while Walker and Atkinson (1958) investigated the effects of the arousal of fear on the content of TAT stories by studying soldiers who varied in physical and temporal proximity to an atomic bomb explosion. An exploration of the arousal of the power motive was conducted by Veroff (1957), who had students running for a school office respond to TAT pictures immediately after the counting of election ballots. Such studies indicated that more need-related imagery might be expected under arousal conditions than under neutral conditions, and suggested that the TAT is sensitive to a variety of motivational states (Weiner, 1972).

Early experimental evidence caused McClelland to differentiate between two aspects of motives, depending upon whether the potential response involved approach or avoidance. McClelland states that "... we have found fairly convincing evidence in our own data for two aspects of the achievement motive, one of which seems characterized by defensiveness and a fear of failure, the other by increased instrumental striving and hope of success" (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953, p. 74).

McClelland and his colleagues had been able to provide support for the use of the TAT to detect motivational differences among subjects whose needs were aroused to varying degrees by prior experimental manipulations of environmental influences. However, influenced by the Lewinian concept that behavior is a function of the individual in interaction with his environment, they turned their efforts to gathering data on individual differences in the need to achieve. Lowell (1952) showed that people with high need for achievement (n Ach) scored better than low n Ach people on both verbal and mathematical tests. Cox (1962) showed a correlation between n Ach and school grades. Other investigations of the correlation between n Ach and performance measures have found a relationship with performance in clerical tasks (Atkinson & Raphelson, 1956), and success as President of the United States (Donley & Winter, 1970). Heckhausen (1967), citing evidence that high n Ach people are no more intelligent than those who are low in n Ach, suggests that need for achievement, although not correlated with intelligence, does predict level of performance in certain areas (Arkes & Garske, 1982).

McClelland's colleague, Atkinson (1964), expanded and refined the theory of achievement motivation, construing it as an "expectancy- value theory." His theory assumes that

one's tendency to engage in a particular activity is an outgrowth of the strength of a cognitive expectation that the behavior will lead to a particular outcome. Atkinson developed a mathematical representation of his theory which conceptualized the tendency to engage in achievement behaviors as a multiplicative function of the motive for success, the probability of success, and the incentive value of success. Atkinson also conceptualized a fear of failure which he hypothesized to develop out of negative experiences with failure. Atkinson felt that the tendency to engage in achievement behaviors (M_s) and the tendency to avoid failure (M_{af}) exist in different strengths in different people because of varied past experiences in achievement related situations.

Atkinson and his colleagues performed a variety of experiments to test the predictions that people for whom $M_s > M_{af}$ would prefer tasks of an intermediate level of difficulty, while people for whom $M_{af} > M_s$ would prefer very easy or very difficult tasks. Isaacson (1964) showed that $M_s > M_{af}$ men choose college majors of intermediate difficulty. DeCharms and Carpenter (1968) showed that $M_s > M_{af}$ children tended to choose arithmetic problems of intermediate difficulty, while $M_{af} > M_s$ children were likely to choose problems of extreme difficulty or ease. Veroff and Peele

(1969), studying the effects busing on the achievement motivation of Black children, found that Black males who were bused showed a significant increase in achievement motivation, accompanied by a decrease in level of vocational aspiration. "If it is assumed that low n Ach males have unrealistically high aspirations, the drop in aspiration to a realistic level was a beneficial result of the busing program" (Arkes & Garske, 1982, p. 263).

A test of the Atkinson model was performed by Feather (1961) who used the model to generate hypotheses about individual differences in performing tasks thought to be easy or difficult. Feather, using insoluble puzzles in his study, defined persistence as the length of time a person continued to work on a task for which he or she fails to find an acceptable solution. Feather investigated persistence in trying to solve the puzzles when the subjects were told that the task was easy and when they were told that it was difficult. Feather predicted that subjects for whom $M_s > M_{af}$ would persist at the task longer when told that the probability of success was high than when told that it was very low. The opposite should be true for subjects for whom $M_{af} > M_s$. These subjects would be expected to quit the task quickly when their initial attempts to solve it were unsuccessful and they were told that they probability that

they would succeed was slight. Experimental evidence supported Feather's predictions. Feather found that high achievers as a group preferred failing at a difficult task to failing at an easy one. Low achievers, on the other hand, preferred the reverse.

O'Conner, Atkinson, and Horner (1966) applied Atkinson's model to the motivational implications of ability grouping in schools. They studied the academic performance of sixth-grade children switching from a fifth-grade heterogeneous classroom to either a homogeneously grouped sixth-grade class, or a heterogeneous sixth-grade class. It was predicted that, in the heterogeneous situation, children who were above average in ability should find the academic situation relatively easy, and children who were below average in ability should find it relatively difficult. Children in the homogeneous situation, on the other hand, should all find the situation moderately difficult since they would find themselves in competition with children of relatively equal ability. The experimenters found that children in whom $M_s > M_{af}$ tended to perform better in homogeneously grouped classrooms, while children for whom $M_{af} > M_s$ performed better in heterogeneously grouped classrooms. "On the whole, the results of the O'Conner et al. study do extend the predictive range of

Atkinson's model in that they show some of the conditions under which individuals who differ in achievement-related motives may be expected to exhibit optimal performance" (Brody, 1983, p. 73).

Some interesting extensions of Atkinson's theory have suggested that situational variables effect its applicability. Raynor (1970) tested the hypothesis that the importance of achievement in one's long range plans might effect the probability of success. To the extent that each step in a series of achievements is contingent upon the completion of the prior step, each step is instrumental in achieving the final goal. Raynor assumed that, for the Ms>Maf person, total achievement motivation would be greater in a multistep contingent path than in a single-step path. In the same way, the motive to avoid failure, and thus the threat of the achievement situation, is greater for the Maf>Ms person in the contingent situation than in the noncontingent situation. However, Raynor noted that a contingent path frequently has some extrinsic reward associated with its successful completion, providing an impetus to overcome the person's negative intrinsic motivation. This fact might distort the predicted results in a situation where a large extrinsic reward is available, but should apply in a situation where no large extrinsic

reward is forthcoming.

Raynor tested his prediction in an introductory college psychology class, where students were asked two questions designed to assess the degree to which they believed the psychology class would be important for their futures. Students who responded that the course was important were assigned to the high Perceived Instrumentality (PI) group, and were assumed to consider the class as part of a contingency path. The low PI subjects were assumed to consider the class a single-step path. All subjects were classified as to dominance of Ms and Maf. Raynor's predictions were supported in that Ms>Maf students received better grades when they considered the course to be part of a contingent path instrumental to future plans, while Maf>Ms students performed worse in that situation. "Raynor believes that this elaboration of achievement theory is very important because it allows the analysis of real-life situations not treated adequately in the McClelland/Atkinson model. Most of the tasks that subjects perform in laboratory experiments have zero PI: the subject perceives the task not to be instrumental in any way to his or her future plans. ... But the theory should also be applicable to real-life situations in which the subject occasionally undertakes tasks crucial to future goals. For those

situations the theory must take PI into account to make accurate predictions" (Arkes & Garske, 1982, p. 267).

A number of criticisms have been leveled at the theory of achievement motivation, many of them dealing with the instrument with which McClelland, Atkinson, and their associates measured the variable of need for achievement. Entwisle (1972) is among the most critical, citing several studies to indicate that the internal consistency of the TAT is quite low. She points out that the amount of achievement imagery in a story told in response to one TAT picture tends to correlate poorly with the amount of achievement imagery in other TAT pictures. She questions whether need for achievement can be construed as a stable personality characteristic if it varies so drastically from one TAT picture to another. Entwisle also presents several studies to indicate that the test/retest reliability of the TAT is low (although this might be expected if momentary need states in fact influence the content of stories), and that instruments developed as alternative methods of assessing achievement motivation correlate poorly with TAT measures.

Klinger (1966), in reviewing the literature of assessment of need for achievement, concluded that n Ach scores are not adequate measures of motivation, since only

about half of the published studies indicated a significant relation between n Ach and measures of performance. Klinger asserts that, if n Ach has no predictive validity, its value as a statistic is negligible. However, Ceranski, Teevan and Kalle (1979) have shown that the TAT has better predictive power when used to measure a fear of failure than when used to assess generalized achievement tendency.

Lazarus (1961) contended that TAT measures of the need for achievement might be inversely related to actual achievement motivation, suggesting that the fantasy expression of need for achievement might be a compensatory response for the failure to exhibit achievement motivation in daily life as opposed to a direct measure of the person's motive to achieve. There is certainly validity in the assertion that measures of need for achievement obtained under laboratory conditions are not necessarily evidence of the existence or expression of such needs outside the laboratory.

Atkinson and his colleagues have been vigorous in defense of their measure of achievement motivation. Their primary defense is based upon the contention that, even if the TAT had very low reliability, the test could still have accurate predictive ability, since they contend that the

test is capable of predicting behavior (Atkinson, Bongort, and Price, 1977).

Solomon (1968) has contended that one general achievement motive cannot possibly explain all behavior occurring in the multiple situations in which an individual's performance can be measured against a standard of excellence. Klinger (1966) also criticizes the instability of the TAT measure from situation to situation, stating: "It seems clear that whatever n Ach scores measure is quite ephemeral, capable of registering differently in different fantasy instruments, differently at different times in the same experimental session with the same or with similar instruments" (p. 300).

Other deficiencies in achievement motivation theory which have been noted (Arkes & Garske, 1982) include: interdependence among environmental determinants of achievement behavior; a lack of precision in operational definitions of variables such as expectancy of success; and an inability to account for the motivational effects of success and failure.

In spite of these criticisms, it is clear that the theory of achievement motivation has been a heuristic one,

generating considerable research over a period of thirty years. Although some of the research so generated has focused upon practical problems such as vocational aspiration, ability grouping in the classroom, and sex differences in the need to achieve, there has been a relative dearth of experimental attempts to raise the level of achievement motivation in academic situations, and, concomitantly, to determine whether an increase in measures of achievement motivation can be shown to correlate with increases in achievement-inspired behaviors, such as academic success as measured by grades and standardized test scores.

Teaching Achievement Motivation: Treatment Procedures

McClelland (1961), in an attempt to relate the need for achievement to behaviors occurring outside a laboratory situation, hypothesized that achievement motivation is responsible for the economic growth of societies. He based his hypothesis upon the findings of Winterbottom (1953) that when mothers expected their sons to be self-reliant and independent at an early age, these sons were relatively high in the need for achievement. McClelland hypothesized a relationship between child-rearing practices and the effects of the Protestant Ethic (Weber, 1904/1958) which "infused a

more vigorous spirit into the attitude of both workers and entrepreneurs which ultimately resulted in the development of modern industrial capitalism" (McClelland, 1961, p. 47). McClelland speculated that the independence-oriented training shown by mothers of males who were high in the need for achievement might be a reflection of the shift toward self-reliance training and increased need for achievement which could have occurred at a societal level in the history of Western Europe. Thus, "... the Winterbottom study suggests a psychological means by which the historical development described by Weber may have come about. The Protestant Reformation might have led to earlier independence training, which led to greater n Achievement, which in turn led to the rise of modern capitalism" (McClelland, 1961, p. 47).

Extending this hypothesis, McClelland suggested that differences in need for achievement were responsible to some degree for the economic growth and decline of all societies. As an outgrowth of his ideas, he developed an experimental training program designed to increase the need-achievement levels for adults (McClelland, 1965; McClelland and Winter, 1969). His procedure involved several components: the description of the characteristics of the person with a high need for achievement; the use of games and problems

combined with an opportunity to discuss the characteristic behaviors of individuals who were high in achievement motivation on such games and problems; and teaching the subjects the techniques for scoring fantasy materials for need achievement. The training course, lasting three to six weeks, offered the participants an opportunity to become acquainted with the attitudes and behaviors associated with achievement motivation, including the future time orientation and the tendency toward intermediate level risk-taking. In addition, the participants underwent a program of self-study in which they described their life goals, self-image, values, etc. It was the purpose of the training program to assist in the establishment of future goals, and to suggest means to assess progress toward these these goals. McClelland's groups were conducted in a warm and permissive atmosphere, and were felt by McClelland (1965) to employ all the psychological principles believed to be effective in behavioral change.

McClelland and Winter (1969) report the results of a study which showed that Indian businessmen displayed more instances of achievement-related behavior as the result of a training program designed to alter their needs for achievement. Comparable groups of businessmen in two Indian cities were chosen to receive or not to receive achievement

training. Those chosen to receive training were required to leave their work and attend a special training workshop. Subjects were businessmen engaged in industry, commerce, or one of several professions. When subjects who had received achievement training were compared with control subjects over a period of two years subsequent to the training program, trained subjects were found to have engaged significantly more in entrepreneurial behaviors such as starting new businesses, or increasing the size of existing businesses, than had untrained subjects. Reviewing the results of their Indian project, McClelland and Winter (1969) conclude:

Analysis of several measures of individual behavior and economic effects demonstrated that the participants in achievement motivation courses showed significant improvement in many aspects of entrepreneurial performance both as compared with themselves and as compared with three matched groups of controls. Course participants showed more active business behaviors. Specifically, they worked longer and they actually started more such ventures. They made more specific investments in new, fixed, productive capital. They employed more workers. Finally, they tended to have ... larger percentage increases in the gross income of their firms. (p. 230)

McClelland and Winter conclude that the training program achieved results by strengthening the self-confidence of the participants, along with teaching

them concrete methods to reach their goals.

Kolb (1965) designed a similar program for presentation to underachieving high school boys at a summer camp. Kolb's subjects had above average ability but were performing below average in their high school programs. Subjects, who were classified by their socioeconomic class, were divided into experimental (training program) or control groups. Kolb found that both groups, experimental and control, showed increments in grade point average six months after attending the summer camp. However, only subjects of high socioeconomic class participating in the experimental condition continued to show academic progress after an additional year. Kolb concluded that the subcultural values of the low socioeconomic students were at odds with the values instilled by the program, and thus hindered continued academic development. Students from higher socioeconomic families were felt to receive more cultural and family support for their increased achievement motivation. Kolb felt that his experimental results provided support to the hypothesis that teaching underachieving boys the characteristics of high achievers can lead to better academic performance.

DeCharms (1968, 1976), approaching the problem of

motivating underachieving students from a theoretical perspective that modified to some extent that of McClelland, invented the "Origin/Pawn" concept to describe feelings of competence versus helplessness. According to DeCharms, a person who feels like an Origin believes that he can originate his own behavior and structure his own goals, while a person who feels like a Pawn believes that he is pushed around by others. In other words, an Origin is intrinsically motivated while a Pawn believes that the causes of his behavior are extrinsic. DeCharms tested his theory, which has much in common with the theories of locus of control and attribution of responsibility, by implementing an ambitious program of teacher training in an urban school district. The teachers, in turn, introduced their students to the Origin/Pawn concept, and engaged them in activities stressing achievement motivation, realistic goal setting, and positive self-esteem. The purpose of DeCharms's program was to instill in the students the idea that they were Origins capable of controlling what happened to them. Experimental results showed that the academic achievement of the experimental subjects, who were drawn from a school district where children are usually a half-year behind national norms by fifth grade, and increasingly behind as they progress to higher grades, showed a reversal in the tendency to decline over time,

while control children continued to lose academic ground. Experimental results are particularly interesting in light of the fact that DeCharms's program did not involve training in academic areas, but rather concentrated entirely upon motivation. The resulting improvement in skill areas suggests that training in Origin attitudes and behaviors can have psychological benefits which can influence academic achievement.

Keck (1977) studied the effect of an intensive human potential workshop, the Achievement Motivation Program, on self-concept, attitudes toward careers, and general progress in the classroom of high school students identified as "incorrigible" due to chronic truancy or behavior problems, or both. Keck's achievement motivation program consisted of two parts: a two day off-campus workshop and a one day on-campus follow-up workshop. Keck concluded that there was no difference in self-perception and career maturity between experimental and control groups on pre- and post-treatment instruments, although non-significant positive gains were reported by the experimental group. Highly significant differences were found, however, between experimental and control groups on pre- and post-treatment comparisons of grade point averages and daily attendance, with the experimental group showing better attendance and higher

grade point averages.

The studies cited provide some support for the contention that structured training in achievement motivation or behaviors which are characteristic of high achievers can have a positive influence upon academic achievement.

Academic Achievement and Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) suggests that need for achievement is one of the major conceptions which relates to the belief in internal versus external locus of control of reinforcement. In Rotter's view, the work of McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell (1953), Atkinson (1958), and Crandall (1963) suggests that individuals evidencing high need for achievement are likely to have some belief in their ability to control the outcomes of their behaviors. Rotter suggests, however, that this relationship might not be a perfectly consistent one since he considers it possible for individuals with a high need for achievement not to be equally high in their belief in internal control of reinforcement. At the same time, it is possible that there are many individuals whose need for achievement is low, but who believe in the internality of their control of

reinforcement.

Rotter (1966) suggests that Internals would be likely to show more overt striving for achievement than Externals, who would be expected to feel that they have little control over available environmental rewards and punishments. There has been some support for this position, with several investigators (e.g. Crandall, Katkovsky & Preston, 1962; Chance, 1965; Crandall, Katkovsky & Crandall, 1965; Harrison, 1968; McGhee & Crandall, 1968; Nowicki & Rountree, 1971) reporting that Internals spend more time in academically-oriented or intellectual activities, and attain higher course grades and achievement test scores than Externals. Lefcourt (1972) reports data which suggest that Externals show preference for immediate as opposed to delayed reinforcement, while Internals show more ability to delay gratification, a characteristic of high achieving individuals. Lessing (1969) found that a sense of personal control (internality) predicted grade point average of students, even after controlling for intelligence quotients. Brewin and Shapiro (1984) found Rotter's IE scale to be a successful predictor of examination performance, with Internals performing better than Externals on university psychology examinations. On the other hand, Eisenman and Platt (1968) and Hjelle (1970) did not find evidence that

the locus of control construct was a significant factor in academic achievement.

Academic Achievement and Self Concept

Purkey (1970) asserts that the way in which a student views himself and his world is a product of how others see him, and is a strong force in the level of academic achievement he attains. The notion that a student must believe in himself in order to achieve academic success is one which has gained widespread acceptance, as noted by Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge (1977). A number of authors (e.g. Coopersmith, 1959; Roth, 1959; Irwin, 1967; Williams & Cole, 1968; Caplin, 1969; Hamacek, 1979) have reported the relationship between academic achievement and self concept for students in various grades. Gadzella and Williamson (1984) found significant positive correlations between self concept and study skills, and between self concept and academic achievement. Hamacek (1979) suggests that while positive self concept alone does not cause high academic achievement, such a self concept is vital to achievement at a high level.

Research evidence reviewed by Purkey shows what he considers to be a "persistant and significant relationship

between the self concept and academic achievement" (Purkey, 1970, p.15). Purkey notes, however, that the relationship is clearer for boys than for girls. For example, Edson and Bell (1960), exploring differences between achievers' and underachievers' perceptions of themselves, found that male achievers felt more positive about themselves than male underachievers. Their data was inconclusive for female subjects. Fink (1962), studying ninth grade achievers and underachievers, also concluded that a significant relationship exists between self concept and academic underachievement, but that the relationship is stronger for boys than for girls.

Brookover, Patterson and Thomas (1964), studying the self reports of urban seventh graders, found significant correlations between self-reported concepts of students' abilities and their grade point averages. In addition, they found that academic self concepts could be differentiated into specific self concepts, corresponding to particular subject areas, and differing in some cases from the concept of general ability. They also found self concept to be correlated positively and significantly with others' perceptions of the student's abilities.

Another study which found a significant relationship

between self concept and academic achievement was that of Bledsoe (1967), who found a significant correlation between self concept and achievement for elementary-school boys, but not for girls of the same age. Irwin (1967) found significant relationships between the self concepts and academic achievement of freshman college students, and suggested that "(i)t may well be that a positive conception of one's self as a person is not only more important than striving to get ahead and enthusiasm for studying and going to school, but that it is a central factor when considering optimal school performance" (Irving, 1967, p. 271).

Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge (1977) suggest that, although it is widely believed by educators that improved self esteem will lead not only to greater happiness but to greater academic achievement (e.g. Brookover, 1964; Purkey, 1970), this belief has not been demonstrated in a convincing manner. They assert that the majority of reported studies which have investigated the relationship between self-concept and measures of school achievement have found significant correlations ranging from moderate ($r = .30$ to $.45$) to low ($r < .25$). In addition, some studies have failed to find any significant relationship at all between these variables (e.g. Butcher, 1968; Williams, 1973).

In their own study, Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge (1977) attempted to examine the relationship between self-esteem and educational achievement for a sample of 530 twelve-year-olds. They found that self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory had a moderate relationship with, but not a strong independent effect on, school achievement. "When the interrelated variables of socioeconomic status, intelligence, and self-esteem were combined in multiple regression equations to predict various aspects of school achievement and behavior, it was found that self-esteem, when added to multiple regression equations derived from SES (socioeconomic status) and IQ, accounted for no more than an additional three percent of the total variance" (Rubin, Dorle & Sandidge, 1977, p. 506). Rubin, Dorle and Sandidge suggest that, from a practical standpoint, much of the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement derives from prior causes such as socioeconomic background, intellectual ability, and previous academic success.

Kunce, Getsinger and Miller (1972) suggest that self esteem tests seem to have a limited capacity to assess differences in self esteem which might be associated with socioeconomic status, race, or educational achievement. In their study of 247 ninth grade students, Kunce et al. found

self esteem scores to be a reliable and valid, but nominal indicator of academic achievement. They concluded that strategies designed to improve an individual's self esteem are not likely to affect academic performance in a notable way. Since they found that a measure of the enrichment of the home environment was, like the measure of self esteem, a nominal indicator of academic achievement, they suggested that environmental manipulations such as the enrichment of the home environment might be expected to affect academic performance as much as counseling strategies directed toward the improvement of self esteem. An optimum strategy might aim both to enrich the home and to improve self esteem.

Research into the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement indicates the possibility that there is a relationship between these variables, but does not provide much information about the nature of that relationship, particularly with respect to cause.

Peer Counseling: Theoretical Concepts

The use of paraprofessionals in mental health and related areas is not a new concept. More than two decades ago, Albee (1959) predicted critical mental health manpower shortages, and Action for Mental Health: Final Report of

the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health (1961) suggested the utilization of nontraditional methods to alleviate the pressures brought about by such shortages. Early studies such as that of Rioch et al. (1963), which documented the effective use of middle-aged housewives as therapists in community and educational settings, and Poser (1966), whose study of untrained college students working with chronic, hospitalized schizophrenics showed the students performing as effectively as trained, experienced professional therapists, laid the groundwork for the use of paraprofessionals in a wide range of settings (McManus, 1982). Morrill, Oelting and Hurst (1974) have strongly recommended the use of paraprofessionals in school and community settings as a method of extending the "range of influence" of the professional.

Peer counseling provides a means whereby paraprofessionals can extend available counseling services and help develop procedures that might better meet the needs of special groups. Scott and Warner (1974) suggest that the development of peer counseling programs in schools derives from a rationale that has three basic components. Such programs are seen as expanding the resources of school counseling services in terms of available manpower and programs. In addition to providing more individuals to

serve in counseling roles, such programs can create nontraditional counseling models which "capitalize on the natural empathy and ease of relating found in student to student interactions" (Fink, Grandjean, Martin, & Bertolini, 1978, p. 80). These programs are also seen as beneficial to the students who serve as peer counselors, regardless of whether these students are themselves experiencing adjustment problems (Mosher & Sprinthall, 1970, 1971). A third and somewhat more abstract rationale involves the potential development of a school-wide network of sensitive and empathic students created by peer counseling training, and the positive effect that such a network might have on the social and emotional climate of an entire school.

Studies indicating the effectiveness of peer counseling in educational settings can be found at all levels of the educational spectrum. The largest number of studies have been conducted at the college level, where many (McCarthy & Michaud, 1971; Murry, 1972; Froman, 1972; Upcraft, 1971) document the effective use of trained peers to help fellow students with academic problems. Other studies (Ware & Gold, 1971; Brown, Wehe, & Zucker, 1971; Brown, 1965; and Pyle & Snyder, 1971) have explored the use of college student peers as counselors in areas of personal adjustment, with much reported success. Particular effectiveness is

noted in peer counseling programs where the peers derive from the same general ethnic or socioeconomic background as the students they counsel (Ware & Gold, 1971; Pyle & Snyder, 1971).

The use of peer counseling at the elementary and secondary levels is less extensively documented than at the college level. Gumaer (1973) describes a peer facilitator program at the middle elementary school level which employed counselor-trained peer facilitators as group discussion leaders in a program designed to foster interracial understanding. Grumaer reported increased attention and participation in class discussions in situations in which peer facilitators were used, and suggested that such a program can be instrumental in improving interpersonal relationships in the classroom as well as improving student self esteem. Kern and Kirby (1971) studied the use of fifth and sixth graders as co-helpers in organized group counseling situations with children of the same grade level. Their comparison of a peer-and-counselor led group with a counselor-only group and a no-contact control group indicated that the conjointly led group significantly improved participants' school adjustment behaviors. Many groups at the elementary level (Winters & Arent, 1969; Vassos, 1971) involve the utilization of older elementary

children in interaction with younger students, making it difficult to consider them actual peer counseling programs.

Studies of the effectiveness of peer counseling programs at a secondary level have produced somewhat conflicting results. Buck (1977) reported improvements in attendance and problem-solving skills but no improvement in academic achievement on the part of students participating in nine weeks of peer-led counseling sessions. Schweisheimer and Walberg (1976) found significant improvements in school attendance and decisiveness for potential dropouts taking part in a peer counseling program, but felt that the experimental results were inconclusive in demonstrating the efficacy of this program for such counselees. Margro (1973) found no difference among peer-led, counselor-led, and peer-and-counselor led groups dealing with the social-behavioral problems of junior high school girls. Hamburg and Varenhorst (1972), on the other hand, found unspecified self-report measures to indicate what they considered to be positive academic, social, and personal growth as a result of participation in a peer counseling program for students in grades seven through twelve.

Cooker and Cherchia (1976) attempted to ascertain the

effects of training versus nontraining of peer group leaders in a high school setting. Particular attention was paid to the effect of training with respect to the peers' ability to function as facilitators in a group setting with fellow students as participants. Of special interest, too, was the effect of communication skills training on the subjects' levels of facilitative communication.

Utilizing an eight-hour training program based upon Carkhuff's (1969) Helping and Human Relations, Cooker and Cherchia trained the experimental group of peer counselors by means of didactic techniques, experiential role playing, and modeling of counseling skills by the trainer. Control group members met for a total of eight hours to engage in group discussions on topics of their own choosing, but did not receive training in counseling skills.

Sixty experimental and control group peer counselors were then randomly assigned as leaders in three one-hour discussion groups composed of 8-12 students drawn from the high school student body. The trainees' ability to function as group facilitators was assessed by the five trainers, who acted as observer-judges. Their ability was also evaluated by student participants, using a descriptive scale which allowed rating of the peer facilitators on a nine-point

continuum ranging from "not helpful, detracting" to "extremely helpful, necessary for the group."

The ability of each peer counselor to facilitate communication was also assessed by means of pre- and post-training taped mock interviews, and responses to Carkhuff's (1969) Index of Communication (CI), an instrument requiring subjects to formulate "meaningful responses" to sixteen helpee-presented situations. Responses to the CI and mock interviews were assessed in terms of ability to facilitate communication by doctoral level counseling students.

Cooker and Cherchia found significant differences between pre- and post-training ratings for written (CI) and taped interview responses, implying that trained students communicated at higher levels in a helping situation after treatment than did their untrained counterparts. Analyses of expert judges' and peer ratings indicated that trained students functioned at higher levels in facilitating small group discussions than untrained students. Results suggest that a relatively short (eight hour) period of training can bring about significant differences in the ability of high school students to facilitate communication in helping situations.

Leibowitz and Rhoads (1974) found empirical support for the hypothesis that high school students can learn to differentiate high levels of understanding in various client statements after short-term training. Utilizing a nine-week series of two-and-one-half hour training sessions, professional counselors trained selected students in two basic counseling skills: effective listening and responding, and decision-making. Emphasis was placed upon teaching peer counselors to help clients formulate goals in behavioral terms, and to focus upon modest but attainable and verifiable goals. Peer counselors' ability to discriminate between Level 3 and Level 4 counselor responses on Carkhuff's Empathic Understanding Scale (Carkhuff, 1969) was found to be significantly improved after peer counseling training.

Fink, Grandjean, Martin, and Bertolini (1978) attempted to assess whether an ongoing peer counseling program in a large consolidated public high school in fact increased the counseling resources of the school and had a beneficial impact upon school atmosphere as a whole. Focusing upon the impact of a Peer Tutoring-Counseling Service in its third year of operation at the school, Fink et al. administered questionnaires to selected tutor-counselors, clients, faculty members, administrators, and members of the general student

body. Questionnaires generally requested feedback on the amount of the respondent's contact with the Peer Counseling-Tutoring Service, evaluation of the service's effectiveness and worth to the school, and the nature of the problems dealt with in the counseling service. An attempt was made to distinguish between formal and informal counseling and tutoring.

Fink et al. reported results which indicated "general client improvement" and a positive evaluation of counselor skills, and suggested that as many as one third of the school's students may have received informal services from peer counselors. Data suggested that formal contacts with peer counselors (initiated by teachers or administrators) tended to involve primarily academic problems, whereas informal (student-initiated) counseling seemed to focus upon more personal issues.

Fink et al. suggested that data indicated the operation of two rather distinct peer counseling systems, both of which appeared to be effective in meeting goals. A formal system, involving referrals from teachers for academic problems, used tutoring as the primary intervention. An informal system, functioning with little professional staff intervention, involved contact initiated

either by the peer counselor or the client, and focused upon personal problems such as family and social relationships, identity, and physical problems. Data suggested that both systems operated effectively in the school studied, a finding which provides support for the claim that a peer counseling program can serve a large number of students.

McManus (1982) described the use of adolescent paraprofessionals, called "student psychologists," in a comprehensive model for the delivery of school psychological services at the secondary level. Utilizing a 48-hour classroom training program, and a "pyramid approach," in which peers who had been operative in the program for a year assisted in the training of new students, McManus's program involved student paraprofessionals in twelve areas facilitating the delivery of school psychological services. Included among these areas were recruitment and training of peer counselors; individual direct student assistance; group direct student assistance; assessment and evaluation; education; liason; program organization; drop-in center management; fund-raising; and personal growth.

McManus's Valhalla program, operating over a four-year period, demonstrated a notable increase in the number of

student clients utilizing services offered by student psychologists. Pre- and post-contact data suggested that 73 percent of student clients showed improvement in academic grades, 83 percent showed improvement in class attendance; and 94 percent showed either no increase or reduction in disciplinary referrals. In addition, client self report data in conjunction with the reports of parents, teachers, siblings, and friends, suggested improvement in attitude toward school, self-image, and study skill behaviors in over 85 percent of the student clients seen.

McManus suggested that the use of a student paraprofessional counseling program resulted in several favorable outcomes, including increases in expressed satisfaction with school psychological services on the part of teachers and administrators; expansion of the ability of the school psychologist to meet the needs of all students, not just those in need of diagnostic services; increased awareness of the beneficial aspects of school psychological services, with concomitant increases in public and administrative support for such services; and positive effects for the school psychologist growing out of the opportunity to foster involvement with a cross-section of the student population.

Scott and Warner (1974), surveying a large sample of the experimental literature on peer counseling, offered a number of suggestions with regard to the selection of peers, their training, and the focus of peer counseling programs. They suggest that effective peer counselors appear to have good interpersonal and adjustment skills, linked with a desire to help others, and are perceived by those they work with as potentially helpful persons. They suggest that peer counseling training should include one-to-one and/or group counseling experiences, supplemented by didactic training in the development of interpersonal or human relations skills. The peer counselor should always have access to a professional counselor for consultation or referral. Scott and Warner observe that peer counseling appears to be effective in the areas of information giving, academic concerns (e.g. study habits, choice of curriculum, educational goals), and social adjustment, particularly for students entering new academic environments.

Scott and Warner (1974), in an attempt to document the claim that peer counseling can enhance counseling services of all kinds, surveyed more than sixty "experimental" studies of peer counseling programs and found that, in fact, only a relative handful of those studies, all of which mentioned evaluative components, actually bore scrutiny as

experimental research. Lack of control groups, poorly designed experiments, and heavy reliance upon self report measures weakened the quality of empirical support for the efficacy of peer counseling programs. In addition, Scott and Warner point out the lack of longitudinal assessment of such programs, indicating that most research has been exclusively short-term, usually extending for one semester only. In spite of these criticisms, there are indications (Vriend, 1969) of some empirical support for positive effects of peer counseling programs, particularly at the secondary and college levels. More and better-designed studies are needed to determine whether such support is ephemeral.

Peer Counseling for Increased Academic Achievement

Although peer counseling programs at a secondary level have generally focused upon the enhancement of communication skills and the improvement of personal adjustment among peer counselors and clients, many (McManus, 1982; Fink et al., 1978; Hamburg & Varenhorst, 1972) have reported improvement in academic achievement as a by-product of involvement in peer counseling program. A relatively small number of studies have made the improvement of academic achievement, particularly among chronic underachievers, the focus of a

peer counseling program, with mixed results. Engle and Syperski (1965, reported in Scott and Warner, 1974) conducted a three year experimental study which indicated that peer counseling had little effect on academic achievement or anxiety among seventh, ninth, and tenth graders, but did have a tendency to lower the number of disciplinary problems among participants. In contrast, Lobitz (1970) found that peer counselors were effective in helping tenth graders improve academic achievement.

Vriend (1969), in an attempt to utilize the peer group as a positive force for school achievement among disadvantaged inner city high school students, developed a program of supervised peer leadership in counseling and study groups. Students in an inner city high school who were designated high achievers on the basis of academic achievement (grades), test performance, or teacher recommendation, were trained as peer leaders. These leaders met with a counselor and students designated as low achievers by the same criteria for a forty-minute daily period. Three periods a week were spent with the guidance counselor, three peer leaders, and nine underachievers in counseling group sessions designed to support the behavior of becoming more achievement oriented and improving actual academic achievement. One weekly session, in which the

guidance counselor did not participate, was spent in study group with one peer leader and three student participants. The function of this session was flexible, based upon individual members' needs. Supplementary activities that involved the entire group of 24 students and provided information about career and educational planning, were held once a week.

After two semesters of twenty weeks each, Vriend found that students who took part in the peer counseling project showed significant improvement over control group students in achievement test scores and grade point averages. Significant improvements were also found in the areas of positive classroom behaviors as measured by teacher reports, and in attendance and punctuality. Vriend also showed that students who participated in the peer counseling program showed an increase in vocational and educational aspirations as compared with control group subjects. Vriend's results provide support for the contention that peer leaders can be trained to assist fellow students to improve school performance.

Ross (1982) studied the effectiveness of a peer self-help support group among high risk community college students. He investigated the correlation between

participation in the support group and academic performance, retention (continuation at college), and self concept. Subjects were students identified on the basis of unsatisfactory academic performance in their community college courses.

Ross found no overall correlation between group participation and improved academic performance or increased retention. He did, however, find that notable academic improvement occurred for those students who evidenced adequate reading skills. In addition, Ross found notable improvement on six of eight scales of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale for participating students.

In summary, although there are relatively few experimental studies which focus upon the efficacy of peer counseling programs aimed primarily at boosting academic achievement, the experimental results which exist suggest some promise for this approach.

Population: Underachieving High School Students

Chronic underachievement is a problem experienced by a large number of high school students whose academic

achievement does not measure up to the level suggested by their abilities (Ahlstrom & Havighurst, 1971; Cervantes, 1965; Glasser, 1969; Silberman, 1970). Such students, according to Martin, Marx and Martin (1980) are characterized by general apathy, depression, absenteeism, tardiness, irresponsibility, and unreliability, and they present severe problems to school teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Clarizio and McCoy (1970) present the following synopsis of Gallagher's (1964) portrait of the underachiever:

1. The underachieving child grows up in, or belongs to, a cultural group which does not value education, independence, or individual achievement.
2. He has poor parental relationships, in which the parents, especially the father, either show limited interest in academic matters or try to put undue pressure on their children to succeed.
3. The child, unable to obtain satisfaction from parental contacts, seeks out his peer group for satisfying human relationships. Since he searches for others of the same interests as himself, he will often find himself allied with other rebellious and angry children.
4. These children will be faced by teachers and other school officials who ask them to meet standards of behavior which are not possible for them, and who treat these children, in many ways, as their parents do. The children thus reject them and their

program.

5. The school, in its attempt to deal with these nonconforming and angry children, is likely to take more strict and repressive measures which will turn the children even more emphatically against the school. (p. 30)

Research by Gawronski and Mathis (1965) and a review by Taylor (1964) suggest that many motivational, interest, study habit, and personality characteristics interact in various ways to influence school achievement. They found underachievers to combine some or all of the following characteristics: inability to delay gratification; impulsivity; poor interpersonal relationships with peers; low self concept; low academic orientation but high social, pleasure seeking orientation; and either unrealistic long-term goals, or no long-term goals at all. Underachievers appear to have more difficulty than overachievers or normal achievers with "self-regulation," and appear more interested in immediate rewards. They also appear less cooperative, more selfish, less dependable, less respecting of "authority, order, and tradition," and "less diligent in the efforts to attain socially acceptable goals" (Gawronski & Mathis, 1965, p. 153). They enjoy both school and home less than normal achievers, are more likely to manifest "resentful" behavior, and are more likely to become disorganized, especially under pressure. Gawronski and

Mathis found underachievers to be generally more pessimistic about their futures than normal achievers.

Taylor (1964) found evidence to indicate that high achievers, when compared with their underachieving peers, are more likely to be characterized by positive self-value, acceptance of authority, positive interpersonal relationships, little conflict between dependency and independence, academic orientation, realistic goal orientation, and better control over anxiety. In contrast, Taylor found underachieving students more likely to be characterized by a high level of free-floating anxiety, low self-esteem and negative self concept, hostility toward authority, and difficulty relating to peers combined with excessive dependency upon the peer group.

Kennedy and Willcut (1964) have suggested that underachievers do not respond as well to praise as do individuals whose attainment approximates their level of ability. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is suggested by Marecek and Mettee (1972) who gave female college students a self esteem questionnaire and then subjected them to a card-matching test involving geometric figures. Subjects, who were grouped according to levels of self-esteem, were told either that the task was one which

required a lot of skill, or that it was one in which good performance depended largely upon luck. All subjects were given feedback indicating that they were doing very well halfway through the task. Initially, subjects who performed the task under the skill condition did better than those who performed it under the luck or chance condition, suggesting that when a person views a task as one in which her actions determine the outcome, she will put forth more effort. However, Marecek and Mettee found that, whereas success feedback improved the performance of subjects with high self esteem only slightly more under the skill than the luck condition, the subjects with low self-esteem improved far more after success feedback under the luck than the skill condition. Subjects who were judged very certain of their low self-esteem improved very little with success feedback under the skill condition, but improved greatly under the luck condition. Thus it is possible that underachievers, who characteristically have feelings of low self-esteem (Gawronski & Mathis, 1965; Taylor, 1964) will show little task improvement when praised. Dreikurs and Cassell (1972) have suggested a possible explanation for the process that occurs when a person with low self-esteem is praised. They hypothesize that "(i)f a child has set exceedingly high standards for himself, praise may sound like mockery or scorn, especially when his efforts fail to measure up to his

own standards. In such a child, praise only serves to increase his own anger with himself and his resentment at others for not understanding his dilemma" (Dreikurs and Cassell, 1972, p. 55).

Mehrabian (1968) describes high achievers as individuals who have a stronger motive to achieve relative to their motive to avoid failure, while he conceptualizes low achievers as those who have a stronger motive to avoid failure relative to their motive to achieve. He posits a cluster of interrelated characteristics which distinguish high achievers from low achievers. High achievers, according to Mehrabian, have been indulged less by their parents during their childhood; are more independent in their interpersonal relationships and less susceptible to conformity pressures than low achievers; are better able to delay gratification; and tend to engage in activities which may not be intrinsically satisfying but which lead to distant rewards. Low achievers prefer activities which involve an element of cooperation, while high achievers prefer activities which involve skill and competition. Low achievers tend to value being liked over being successful.

Ringness (1967), surveying 26 high-, average-, and low-achieving bright eighth grade boys, found low achievers

more motivated to affiliate with peers, and more likely to be nonconforming. High achievers were more motivated with regard to academic work, and evidenced more independence. Most of the students surveyed felt that school demanded conformity. Most felt that academic achievement had little to do with peer popularity, and perceived the norm for school achievement as mediocrity.

Roberts (1962) surveyed 50 high-achieving and 64 low-achieving students of approximately the same level of ability. She found the fathers of high achievers to be in higher-level occupations than those of low-achievers. Low achievers were absent from school more than high achievers, and reported significantly more time spent watching television.

In a study of high-, average-, and low-achieving high school seniors and their families, Lupton (1984) found significant differences between the homes of high and low achievers. He found that parents of high achievers are often higher than average achievers themselves, and tend to provide enriched learning environments for their children. Lupton found that high achievers reported significantly higher levels of comfort in several areas of parent-child communication, and tended to identify with higher

educational and occupational goals.

Morrow and Wilson (1961), studying over- and under-achieving males of superior intelligence, compared self-report measures of personal and social adjustment. They found that, although both groups described themselves as possessing moderate to high satisfaction with life, the underachievers described themselves as more impulsive and adventuresome, and as having generally less emotional stability and maturity. The underachievers also saw themselves as belonging to social groups which were characterized by a negative attitude toward school achievement, an oppositional attitude toward authority, and the tendency to seek stimulation and excitement.

Although a number of investigators (Kimball, 1952; Dowd, 1952) have studied the causes of chronic underachievement, present day knowledge of the underlying variables which contribute to or account for such behavior is still minimal. In fact, as is suggested by Powell (1971), it seems likely that chronic academic underachievement is the result of an interaction among a number of personal, familial, social, and societal variables.

The Alternative School and its Student

The development of alternative schools, coming about in the late 1960's and early 1970's primarily as a method of diversifying the existing educational opportunities in communities (Smith, Barr & Burke, 1976), allowed for a method of addressing the issue of chronic underachievement in high school students. Although wide diversity exists among alternative school programs, Smith, Barr and Burke (1976) identify four purposes basic to the role of alternative schools.

1. They provide continuing educational opportunities for students who drop out of or prove disruptive in the regular high school. Typically, alternative schools represent a "last chance" for such students to continue and perhaps complete their high school programs.

2. They serve students who, for a variety of reasons, find the regular high school inadequate to their needs and who are interested in exploring opportunities in alternative schools. Some school systems view this function as "retreading," because these students will likely return to the regular high schools eventually.

3. They explore possibilities in developing new school procedures or plans for subsequent wider application in the system. Alternative schools function in this respect as "experimental laboratories," and occasionally become pacesetters or lighthouse institutions within the existing school system.

4. They develop alternative programs in

keeping with the diverse needs of student clients and parental conceptions of the type of schooling preferred for their children. This function reflects the growing demand for diversity and plurality in school forms available to a community, in contrast to the fairly uniform process of schooling prevailing, by and large, in contemporary systems. (pp. 31-32)

Students who enroll in alternative schools tend to differ in some ways from students who remain in traditional programs (McCauley & Dornbusch, 1978). Data reported by Duke (1978) indicates that nineteen out of forty alternative schools surveyed enrolled at least one quarter of their students with unsuccessful public school experiences. Fifteen of these nineteen also enrolled significant numbers of students with successful public school experiences immediately prior to transfer. While noting that alternative schools attract competent students, Duke (1978) concludes that "the only generalization that really applies to students in contemporary alternative schools is that no generalization fits them at all" (p. 77).

McCauley and Dornbusch (1978) report that a desire for independence was the most frequent reason given by students for entering the alternative schools they surveyed. The second most frequent reason involved dislike of the regular school either because of the perceived negative and

authoritarian attitudes of teachers, or because of the student's poor academic achievement. Students in alternative schools perceived a major difference between the alternative program and the regular school to be the amount of individual attention they received. They felt that the amount of individual attention was not adequate in the regular school situation, but was adequate in the alternative school.

McCauley and Dornbusch found that alternative school students, compared with a control group of students in the regular high school program, perceived the regular school as a less favorable environment for learning, and felt less happy in school. In addition, they evidenced greater concern about attempts to make them conform to the values of others. However, both the students who chose to enter alternative programs and those who chose to remain in the regular high school program indicated that in the traditional high school, they did not have feelings of independence, responsibility, and initiative, that students played only a small part in the school's decision making, that parents were unlikely to participate in school decisions, and that relationships between students and teachers were rarely close. They agreed, too, that in the regular school, teaching was seldom interesting and

effective.

Although some effort has been made in recent years to collect data relating to academic progress and attitudinal changes for students in alternative schools, there is a relative scarcity of information of this kind. Raywild (1982) asserts that student achievement in alternative schools is comparable to that of students remaining in traditional school settings. However, this assertion is based upon data from self-report measures rather than upon standardized measures of achievement, which weakens its power.

Schlemer (1981) reports data indicating that students in an alternative school often exceed the achievement level of students in the traditional program. However, Schlemer's data was drawn from "school within a school" programs where students were in the conventional program for part of the day, and in the alternative program for the other part. The movement from one program to another makes it difficult to pinpoint the source of the observed gains. In general, data in this area is relatively scarce, and it appears that student achievement, studied widely in traditional schools, has received little formalized study in alternative schools.

There has been somewhat greater interest in the effect of alternative education upon student attitudes and school-related behaviors. Several authors (e.g. Case, 1981; Whitehead, 1978; and Wilson, 1976) report an improvement in the quality of relationships between students and teachers in alternative schools as compared with such relationships in conventional schools. Neel and DeBruler (1979) report an improvement in attendance patterns, and Wood (1979) and Perry and Duke (1978) note a decrease in student disciplinary incidents. Barr, Colston and Parrett (1977) and Smith, Gregory and Pugh (1981) found improvements in work orientation for students who were enrolled in alternative schools.

In general, available data suggest that enrollment in alternative programs has a positive effect on school-related behaviors and attitudes of students. However, there have not been a large number of studies in this area, and data is scarce enough to make consistent conclusions difficult.

Students at Point Option, the open alternative high school program operated by the Newport News Public Schools, are like alternative school students described by McCauley and Dornbusch (1979) and Duke (1978) in that most enter the Point Option program after unsuccessful experiences in

traditional high school programs. Many indicate that the desire for greater freedom from rules and restrictions is a factor in their choice of an alternative program. Some have been described as disciplinary problems in the traditional high school situation because of their inability to deal successfully with rules, particularly when rules are enforced in an authoritarian manner. Many Point Option students have evidenced attendance problems in the traditional high school situation, and many express negative attitudes about school in general. Many Point Option students indicate that they are involved in the regular use of alcohol and/or drugs, particularly marihuana, although no attempt has been made to gather concrete data on the number of substance abusing students in the program.

In general, Point Option students are considered to be at high risk for dropping out of school because of chronic attendance problems and the prevalence of negative attitudes towards school.

Summary

The term "underachiever" has been used to describe students who do not perform academically at their intelligence level, and whose achievement in school is

negatively affected by their attitudes, interests, and lack of motivation to perform academic tasks (Silverman, 1975). Theorists espousing a "needs" approach to personality might consider such students to be deficient in the need for achievement, n ach. A number of authors (e.g. McClelland, 1961; Kolb, 1965; McClelland & Winter, 1969; Alchuler, Tabor & McIntyre, 1973) have suggested that strategies designed to facilitate behaviors which are known to be characteristic of high-achieving individuals can have an incremental effect on personality measures of achievement motivation, and on behavioral indicators of achievement, such as academic grades. However, there is only a small amount of experimental evidence supporting this contention.

Another approach to the problem of underachievement has been the use of peer counseling techniques, focusing upon the enhancement of communication skills and the improvement of personal adjustment among peer counselors. Improved academic achievement has been reported by some (e.g. Vriend, 1969; Hamburg & Varenhorst, 1972; Fink et al., 1978; McManus, 1982) as a side-effect of involvement in peer counseling programs. However, there are very few experimental studies which focus upon the effectiveness of peer counseling programs undertaken primarily to improve academic achievement.

In general, a survey of pertinent literature suggests the possibility that either of two structured small-group treatments, Achievement Motivation Training or Peer Counseling Training, might provide a useful method of intervention for a population of underachieving alternative high school students.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Population and selection of the sample

This study was conducted in order to compare the effectiveness of two small-group counseling techniques, Peer Counseling Training and Achievement Motivation Training, in enhancing academic achievement, feelings of self-esteem, achievement motivation, and internal locus of control in underachieving alternative high school students.

The location for the study was the Point Option Program, an open alternative high school program located at Deer Park School in Newport News, Virginia. Point Option has approximately 140 students in grades nine through twelve. Students range in age from fourteen to twenty.

Experimental subjects were Point Option students who had passed fewer than 75 percent of their academic classes during the six week marking period preceeding the onset of the experimental intervention. Previous experience has shown that as many as a third of the students enrolled at Point Option are likely to pass fewer than 75 percent of

their classes each six week marking period. This underachieving group was reflective of the Point Option population in general in that it consisted of approximately equal numbers of males and females, was about 90 percent white, and was approximately equally distributed across grade levels.

All Point Option students were informed that support groups would be provided for students whose academic achievement was unsatisfactory. Those who passed fewer than 75 percent of their classes were strongly encouraged by counselors and teacher advisors to sign up for these groups. Those who did not wish to participate did not do so. However, most eligible students were willing to participate.

From the accessible population of students (those who signed up for support groups), subjects were assigned randomly to one of four treatment groups: Achievement Motivation Training; Peer Counseling Training; Attention Placebo; and No-Treatment Control. Those students assigned to the No-Treatment Control condition were told that the groups were too large, and that they would be able to sign up for a support group during the next marking period if they so desired.

In order to ensure that group participation did not result in the loss of opportunity to take a class for academic credit, subjects who participated in Achievement Motivation Training, Peer Counseling, and Attention Placebo control groups were offered elective credit for participation. Such credit was not offered to No-Treatment Control Group subjects, since experimental participation did not interfere with their opportunity to take a full load of classes.

Procedures

Data Gathering

Experimental data was gathered from three sources: academic grades, school attendance, and attitudinal instruments which measured self-esteem, level of achievement motivation, and locus of control.

Changes in academic grade point average were assessed by comparing the subject's grade point average for the marking period preceeding the experimental intervention with the grade point average at the end of the marking period during which the experimental intervention took place. Grades, which are awarded in A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's,

were converted into grade point averages on a four-point scale. In an attempt to assess the more long-term effects of the experimental treatments, grade point averages were calculated for each experimental subject for the six-week marking period subsequent to the period of experimental treatment.

School attendance was calculated from teacher roll books, and was expressed in terms of the percentage of class periods the student attended. Attendance for the marking period prior to the experimental intervention was compared with attendance for the marking period during which the experimental treatment occurred. Attendance for the marking periods subsequent to the experimental treatment was also examined as a method of determining whether the experimental treatments had more long-term effects on attendance.

Mehrabian and Bank's (1978) Measure of Achieving Tendency, Fitt's (1965) Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, and Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale were administered pre-treatment to the entire Point Option student population to control for the effects of test-taking as an extraneous variable in the treatment procedure. These instruments were readministered to the experimental subjects and control groups at the end of the experimental treatment period. All instruments were

readministered to the entire Point Option population at the end of the school year to provide a means to compare the questionnaire responses of underachieving students with those of students whose achievement was adequate throughout the school year.

Treatments

The experimental treatments took two forms: a six-week Peer Counseling group modeled after the procedures suggested by Myrick and Erney (1979, 1984), and a six-week Achievement Motivation training group based upon the work of McClelland and Winter (1969), Alschuler, Tabor, and McIntyre (1970) and Johnson and McClelland (1984). The groups were conducted simultaneously for three consecutive six-week marking periods, and met at the same time each day. Group leaders were Point Option staff members with at least four years of experience facilitating small group counseling sessions in an alternative high school situation. In order to control for leader personality as an extraneous variable, group leaders alternately led Peer Counseling, Achievement Motivation, and Placebo control groups during the sequence of marking periods during which treatments took place.

The Achievement Motivation Training seminar was loosely

divided into three parts. The first two weeks of group meetings were devoted to the issues of group formation, trust building, and development of cohesion, along with introduction to the behaviors thought to be characteristic of individuals high in the need for achievement, including future time orientation, intermediate levels of risk taking, and clarification of future goals. Students were also introduced at this time to activities in which they wrote out fantasy achievement stories and learned to identify achievement themes and realistic goals in those stories.

The second two weeks were devoted to helping participants set short- and long-term goals, and to formulating plans of action for pursuing those goals. Students made use of vocational interest inventories and career decision making materials to explore a variety of post-secondary school opportunities. Emphasis was placed upon developing plans which were realistic and attainable for the individual student, and upon encouraging each student to develop a series of short- and long-term goals which would lead to the implementation of the plan. Positive imagery, information about careers and educational choices, brainstorming, risk-taking games, vocational and personality testing, and groups discussion were used during this period.

During the final two weeks, activities were directed toward reinforcing the concepts introduced during the first four weeks, and an attempt was made to mobilize group support for achievement-related behaviors. The group leader monitored each group member's progress in academic classes, and group support was mobilized for regular attendance and the achievement of passing grades.

Although, as anticipated, personal problems became the focus of group discussions at times during the course of the six-week period, an attempt was made to give "air time" to such problems while maintaining the focus upon achievement-related behaviors, or those behaviors which interfere with achievement.

At the end of the course, students were asked to re-take the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, the I-E Scale, and the Measure of Achieving Tendency. Elective credit was awarded for group participation on the basis of attendance in a manner that was outlined to all participants at the beginning of the group. Participants were informed that course credit would be awarded to all group members who attended at least 80 percent of group sessions.

The Peer Counseling group focused upon the development

of communication skills and appropriate helping behaviors using activities such as those suggested by Myrick and Erney (1979, 1984). Following a general orientation session, activities focused on learning to be an attentive listener; learning to give facilitative responses; learning to make use of positive and negative feedback; learning to make responsible decisions; and learning to help one's self and others. Structured activities as set forth by Myrick and Erney (1979, 1984) were used in each session. As with the Achievement Motivation Training group, participants were asked to re-take the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, the I-E Scale, and the Measure of Achieving Tendency at the end of the six week period.

Placebo Control Group subjects participated in unstructured group discussions on topics of their choice. No-Treatment Control Group subjects pursued the normal school curriculum without any modification except to be told (as all experimental subjects were told) that a failure to improve academic performance might result in dismissal from the Point Option program. Placebo and No-Treatment Control Group subjects re-took the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the I-E Scale, and the Meaning of Achievement Tendency at the end of the six-week treatment period.

Participants in Achievement Motivation Training, Peer Counseling, and Placebo Control treatments were offered elective credit for group participation, and grades were awarded on the basis of attendance. Students who missed no more than three group sessions received A's, and each additional absence resulted in a lower letter grade. Students who missed more than six sessions did not receive course credit.

Ethical Safeguards and Considerations

All reasonable efforts were made to insure that ethical safeguards were maintained throughout the study. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Research Committee of the Newport News Public Schools, the College of William and Mary (Human Subjects Research Committee), the Director of Point Option, the parents of students under the age of eighteen, and the students themselves. Since small group classes conducted with a counseling format are often a part of the Point Option curriculum, and are generally quite popular, little or no difficulty was anticipated or encountered in achieving parental and student involvement.

Underachieving students who were assigned to Placebo and No-Treatment Control Groups and who failed to improve in

academic achievement during the treatment period were offered the opportunity to receive one of the experimental treatments during the subsequent marking period.

Instruments

Mehrabian Measure of Achieving Tendency

Using Atkinson's (1964) model of achievement motivation, Mehrabian (1968, 1969) developed a questionnaire measure of achievement tendency. Atkinson's model conceptualized high achievers as those individuals whose desire to achieve success outweighed their motive to avoid failure, while low achievers were those whose motive to avoid failure outweighed their desire to achieve success. Construction of Mehrabian's instruments grew out of his dissatisfaction with Atkinson's measure of achieving tendency, which was based upon the difference between an individual's fantasy-based n-achievement score (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark & Lowell, 1953) and his score on the Mandler and Sarason (1952) Test Anxiety Questionnaire. Mehrabian hoped to develop a questionnaire measure of achieving tendency which would yield greater reliabilities than those obtained from fantasy-based measures of achievement motivation.

Mehrabian's earlier (1968, 1969) questionnaire consisted of separate male and female measures of achieving tendency. In subsequent studies, Mehrabian and Bank (1978) expanded and improved Mehrabian's original scales into a single, broad-based measure applicable to both sexes. The resulting instrument is a 38-item measure of achieving tendency which is balanced for response bias in such a way that 19 items are positively worded and 19 negatively worded. Positively-worded items are statements such as "I believe that, if I try hard enough, I will be able to reach my goals in life," and "I am ambitious." Negatively worded items are exemplified by statements such as "I don't work well under pressure," and "Constant work toward goals is not my idea of a rewarding life." Subjects respond to each item by using a nine-point scale ranging from +4 (strong agreement) to -4 (strong disagreement). A total score is computed for each subject by algebraically summing the responses to negatively worded items and subtracting this amount from the algebraically summed total responses to positively worded items.

Mehrabian and Bank's revised questionnaire was normed on a group of 76 male and 66 female undergraduate university students. Mehrabian and Bank(1978) found a Kuder-Richardson (1937) reliability coefficient of .91 for their 38 item

scale. They found this to be evidence of a high level of internal consistency for the Scale. They found satisfactory evidence for convergent validity in the Scale's .74 correlation with Jackson's (1967) achievement scale. The combined (male and female) form of the scale also correlated .59 with Mehrabian's (1969) measure of achieving tendency for males, and .68 with Mehrabian's (1969) measure of achieving tendency for females.

In previous studies, utilizing the male and female forms of the Mehrabian Scale (Mehrabian, 1969), Reid and Cohen (1973), Strumpfer (1973) and Weiner, Johnson and Mehrabian (1968) found evidence to support the validity of the Mehrabian scales as predictors of scholastic achievement. However, other attempts to predict scholastic attainment by measures of achievement tendency have failed (e.g. Farley, 1972; Wolk & DuCette, 1973; Strumpfer, 1973).

In terms of discriminant validity, the Mehrabian Scale was constructed to be relatively independent of variables such as affiliative tendency and social desirability. However, Mehrabian (1970) administered the Measure of Achieving Tendency along with his scales of Affiliative Tendency and Sensitivity to Rejection to 507 university

undergraduates and obtained significant negative correlations between achieving tendency and affiliative tendency. Negative correlations between achieving tendency and sensitivity to rejection were also significant.

Mehrabian and Ksionzky (1974) found similar results with a sample of 202 undergraduates. Mehrabian and Bank (1975) hypothesize that fear of failure manifests itself in social situations as sensitivity to rejection. Thus they suggest that increasing sensitivity to rejection would decrease achieving tendency. Such data suggests that performance on the Measure of Achieving Tendency is inversely related to some extent to affiliative tendency.

Strumpfer (1973) found low but significant correlations of achieving tendency with the Crowne and Marlowe (1960) Social Desirability Scale for males and females. However, since Mehrabilan and Bank (1978) found a correlation of .02 between the Mehrabian and Bank questionnaire, which combined Mehrabian's male and female scales, and the Crowne and Marlowe Scale, they judged the revised instrument to be free of social desirability bias. They also felt their instrument to be free of response bias, since items are balanced for scoring direction.

Mehrabian and Bank's (1978) Measure of Achieving

Tendency was chosen for used in this study because, although limited in normative and validation data, it appeared to be more adequately researched and validated than other such questionnaire measures investigated. The fantasy-based measures of achievement motivation used in much of the early literature in this area (e.g. McClelland et al., 1953) were considered unreliable and potentially too complicated for the widespread admission and scoring needed for this study.

Rotter's I-E Scale

The I-E Scale is a forced-choice self-report inventory developed by Rotter (1966) to assess the individual's generalized expectations for internal as opposed to external control of reinforcement. Developed within the context of social learning theory, the I-E scale was constructed to assess the extent to which an individual perceives a causal relationship between his own behavior and the receipt of reinforcement from the environment. Internal control is seen as the perception that events are the result of one's personal characteristics or behavior. External control is seen as the perception that positive or negative consequences following an individual's action is as much or more the result of fate, luck, or behavior of other powerful people, than of the actor's behavior. An externally

oriented individual is more likely than an internally oriented individual to see future occurrences as unpredictable and uncontrollable. Rotter hypothesized that, depending upon past reinforcement experiences, a person will develop a consistent attitude expecting either an internal or an external locus as the source of reinforcement (Rotter, 1966).

Rotter (1966) reports that the first attempt to measure individual differences in belief in external control as a personality variable was made by Phares (1957). Phares developed a 13-item Likert-type scale which was subsequently modified several times by Rotter and his associates. The resulting 60-item forced-choice survey devised by Rotter, Crowne and Liverant (Rotter, 1966) was again revised to reduce correlations with the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) which were felt to be too high, and to make the wording of the items appropriate for non-college adults and high school students. The final version, called the I-E Scale, has 29 forced-choice items including six filler items designed to make the purpose of the test somewhat more ambiguous.

Joe (1971) observes that reliability measures for Rotter's (1966) I-E scale have been consistent. "The

test-retest reliability measures reported by Rotter (1966) for varying samples and for intervening time periods varying from 1 to 2 mo. ranged between .49 and .83" (Joe, 1971, p. 620). Other investigators (e.g. Hersch & Scheibe, 1967, and Harrow & Ferrante, 1969) also found test-retest reliability over a 1-2 month period to range between .48 and .84.

Rotter (1966) reports internal consistency estimates of reliability which range from .65 to .79, generally falling into the .70's. Rotter suggests that internal consistency estimates for his instrument are relatively stable. He points out that the items in the IE Scale are samples of attitudes in a wide variety of situations and are not arranged in order of difficulty. Since the test is a forced choice measure, is scored additively, and consists of items which are not equivalent in meaning to one another, Rotter asserts that split-half or matched-half reliability estimates tend to underestimate the reliability of the scale.

In terms of construct validity, Rotter reports that his scale correlates satisfactorily with other methods of assessing locus of control, including questionnaires, Likert-type scales, interview assessments, and ratings from

a projective story completion technique. Rotter suggests that the strongest evidence supporting the construct validity of his scale comes from the "predicted differences in behavior for individuals above and below the median of the scale or from correlations with behavioral criteria (Rotter, 1966, p.25). Studies have indicated that internals spent more time pursuing intellectual activities, displayed more interest in academic pursuits, and scored higher on scholastic tests than did externals (McGhee & Crandall, 1968; Chance, 1965; Crandall, Katkovsky & Crandall, 1965; and Crandall, Katkovsky & Preston, 1962).

Anastasi (1982) reports that split-half and Kuder-Richardson reliabilities of total scores of the I-E scale cluster around .70, with test-retest reliabilities after one or two month intervals at the same level. She also reports correlations between I-E scale scores and social desirability scores to be low.

Brewin and Shapiro (1984) note that Rotter's I-E Scale is still widely used in spite of its known factorial complexity (e.g. Collins, 1974; Gurin, Gurin & Morrison, 1978). They suggest that interpretation of scores on this measure is additionally complicated by the fact that some items concern positive outcomes while others concern

negative outcomes. As evidenced by research on self-serving biases (e.g. Bradley, 1978; Zuckerman, 1979) many people tend to attribute success internally and failure externally. Brewin and Shapiro's studies investigate the question of whether Rotter's I-E Scale primarily measures control over positive or over negative outcomes. They report data which support their assertion that locus of control for positive outcomes should be considered distinct from locus of control for negative outcomes. They suggest that Rotter's I-E Scale is mainly concerned with control or responsibility for positive outcomes, and suggest that responsibility for positive outcomes may in fact represent a central dimension underlying the I-E Scale. Thus they suggest that the I-E Scale is better suited to predicting goal-oriented or achievement behavior than to predicting responses to failure or misfortune.

The I-E scale was chosen for use in this study because it was judged adequate in terms of validity and reliability, and because it has been used frequently in studies assessing the relationship between achievement behaviors and locus of control.

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, developed by Fitts (1965), consists of 100 self-descriptive statements, 90 of which assess the self-concept, and ten of which assess self-criticism. The TSCS is designed for use with subjects age twelve or older who have at least a sixth grade reading level. Subjects are asked to read each scale item and respond to it on a numerical scale of "1" to "5," with "1" indicating that the statement is completely false and "5" indicating that it is completely true. Most individuals complete the scale in 10-20 minutes.

The TSCS is available in two forms: the Clinical and Research Form and the Counseling Form. The Counseling form, considered by Fitts to be appropriate for self-interpretation and feedback to clients, was chosen as appropriate for the present study. (Both forms use the same test booklet and consist of the same items.)

The Counseling Form of the TSCS yields scores on fourteen scales, among which are the Identity score, where the individual describes his basic identity or what he is as he sees himself; the Self-Satisfaction score, which is an indicator of how he feels about the self he perceives; the Behavior score, assessing the person's perception of the way he functions; the Physical Self score, representing the

individual's view of his body and bodily functions; the Moral-Ethical Self score, indicating feelings of being a "good" or "bad" person; the Personal Self score, reflecting feelings adequacy as a person; the Family Self score, suggesting feelings of adequacy and worth as a family member; and the Social Self score, reflecting the person's sense of adequacy and worth in his social interaction with other people in general. The Total Positive score reflects the individual's overall level of self-esteem, and is considered by Fitts (1966) to be the most important single score on the Counseling Form. "People with high scores tend to like themselves, feel that they are people of worth and value, have confidence in themselves, and act accordingly. People with low scores are doubtful about themselves and have little faith or confidence in themselves" (Fitts, 1965, p.2).

The TSCS was normed on a sample of 626 persons varying in age, race, sex, and socioeconomic status, although not representative of these variables as they are distributed in the population in general (Buros, 1972).

Test-retest reliability data for the TSCS as reported by Fitts (1965) falls in the .80 to .90 range. While test-retest reliability for the TSCS was determined over a

two-week period using a sample of 60 college students (Fitts, 1965), Fitts asserts that there is evidence of "remarkable similarity of profile patterns found through repeated measures of the same individuals over long periods of time" (Fitts, 1965, p.15).

The test-retest reliability coefficients for the TSCS cluster in the high .80's, and Buros (1972) comments that "...many psychometric qualities of the scale meet the usual test construction standards that should exist in an instrument that hopes to receive wide usage" (p.366).

Fitts (1965) discusses validation procedures of four kinds: content validity, discrimination between groups, correlation with other personality measures, and personality changes under particular conditions.

With regard to content validity, Fitts reports that the first step in the development of his scale was the compilation of a large pool of self-descriptive items, many of which were derived from self-concept measures designed for unpublished doctoral dissertations (Fitts, 1965). Self-descriptive items written by healthy and mentally-ill patients also became part of the item pool. A phenomenological classification system was developed whereby

items were assigned to a 3x5 classification scheme by a panel of clinical psychologists who also judged the items on their positive or negative content. The final items used in the scale were those upon which there was perfect agreement by the judges. In light of such procedures, Fitts (1965) assumed that the categories used in the scale were "logically meaningful and publicly communicable" (Fitts, 1965, p. 17).

Fitts points out that it would be logical to expect that groups differing on certain psychological dimensions should differ also in self-concept. He cites research studies to support highly significant differences between psychiatric patients and non-patients, between delinquents and non-delinquents, and between "average" people and people "characterized as high in personality integration" (Fitts, 1965, p. 17).

In an attempt to determine construct validity, the TSCS has been compared to other instruments which were felt to measure similar personality constructs. Fitts (1965) presents data to support his position that the TSCS, especially the Total Positive score, appears to demonstrate construct validity with other tests such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Minnesota Teacher

Attitude Inventory, and Izard's Self-Reporting Positive Affect Scale.

In his discussion of the TSCS, Bentler (1972) cites two major weaknesses: lack of information on the internal consistency of the scale scores, and overgeneralization of the instrument relative to its normative data base. Bertinetti and Fabry (1977) report that validity studies of item contributions to the scales of the TSCS have produced mixed results. Component analyses (e.g. Vacchiano & Strauss, 1968; Fitzgibbons & Cutler, 1972) have produced conflicting results with respect to their support of the construct of self-concept as delineated by Fitts. Bertinetti and Fabry (1977), using a factor analysis to extend the validation of the TSCS to adolescents, found nine factors which accounted for 36.4 percent of variance. They found the results of their study to support to some degree Fitts's (1965) model of the construct of self-concept.

The TSCS was chosen for use in the present study because it was judged to be adequate in reliability and validity, and because it has been used at Point Option for several years to assess the effect of the alternative school experience on student self concept.

Design

The research design used in the study is a "true" experimental design, the Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The experimental population (those students who passed fewer than 75 percent of their classes for a given six week marking period) were assigned randomly to one of two treatment groups (X): Achievement Motivation Training or Peer Counseling Training; or one of two control groups: Attention Placebo or No-Treatment Control. The dependent variables were grade point averages, attendance, and scores on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the I-E Scale, and the Measure of Achieving Tendency. The experimental design can be outlined in the following manner:

R 01 X1 O2 (AMT group)

R 03 X2 O4 (Peer Counseling group)

R 05 X3 O6 (Placebo Control group)

R 07 08 (No Treatment Control group)

The Pretest-Posttest Control group design with random

assignment to treatment group was used to control for numerous threats to internal validity. Differences in background, age, sex, and race were assumed to be controlled through random assignment. Motivation, maturation, and testing-taking behaviors were felt to be essentially the same for experimental and control groups. The treatment periods were also be the same for all treatments. The random assignment to treatment groups controlled for the effect of regression, as well as for that of selection. In an attempt to control for the effects of mortality, efforts were made to collect posttest data even from those subjects who did not regularly attend group sessions. This was generally successful except in the cases of students who had dropped out of school. Although the experimental population is generally at high risk for dropping out of school, random assignment to treatment groups was felt to insure that mortality did not effect one treatment condition more than any others. In fact, the loss of subjects who dropped out of school occurred to about the same degree in all treatment groups. In fact, only seven of 88 subjects failed to complete the study.

Specific hypotheses

The study was conducted in an attempt to assess and

compare the effectiveness of two group counseling approaches to enhancing academic achievement in alternative high school students. Specific experimental hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Students participating in Achievement Motivation Training (AMT) groups will show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by Mehrabian and Bank's (1978) Measure of Achieving Tendency than students participating in Peer Counseling (PC) groups.

Hypothesis 2. Students participating in AMT groups will show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by Mehrabian and Bank's (1978) Measure of Achieving Tendency than students participating in Placebo Control or No-Treatment Control Groups.

Hypothesis 3. Students participating in AMT groups will show significantly more change toward internal locus of control as measured by Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale than students participating in PC groups.

Hypothesis 4. Students participating in AMT groups will show significantly more change toward internal locus of control as measured by Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale than students participating in Placebo Control or No-Treatment

Control Groups.

Hypothesis 5. Students participating in AMT and PC groups will show significantly greater increase in self-esteem as measured by the Total Positive score of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) than students in Placebo and No-Treatment Control groups.

Hypothesis 6. Students participating in AMT and PC groups will show significantly greater improvement in grade point average at the end of the six-week marking period during which the experimental treatment takes place than Placebo and No-Treatment Control group students.

Hypothesis 7. Students participating in AMT and PC groups will show a significantly greater increase than control group subjects in the percentage of classes attended in the six week period during which the experimental treatment takes place.

Hypothesis 8. Class attendance and grade point average will be significantly higher for students taking part in AMT and PC groups than for Placebo and No-Treatment Control Group subjects at the end of the marking period subsequent to the the marking period during which the experimental

treatment took place.

Statistical analysis

Data were analyzed utilizing a factorial analysis of variance which provided for the use of repeated measures, and with a one way analysis of variance. SPSSx (1983), a statistical software package for the social sciences, was used in data analysis.

Summary of methodology

The purpose of this study was to compare two group counseling approaches to enhancing academic achievement in underachieving alternative high school students. The study was conducted at the Point Option Program, an open alternative high school program located in Newport News, Virginia. Point Option has approximately 140 students in grades nine through twelve. Students range in age from fourteen to twenty. Subjects were Point Option students who had passed fewer than 75 percent of their academic classes during the six week marking period preceding the beginning of the study.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four

treatments: Achievement Motivation Training; Peer Counseling Training; Attention Placebo Control group; and No-Treatment Control group. In order to maximize the likelihood of student participation in the project, subjects were offered elective credit for taking part in the groups, which met for an hour each day during a six week marking period (approximately thirty contact hours). Experimental groups ranged in size from six to twelve students each. Parental and student consent for group participation was obtained in writing.

The Achievement Motivation Group participated in a structured training program designed to facilitate behaviors which are found to be characteristic of individuals high in achievement motivation, including realistic goal setting, acceptance of personal responsibility, and the ability to delay short term gratification in favor of long range goals.

The Peer Counseling Training Group participated in a structured program in human relations training designed to facilitate the development of communication skills and empathic responding behaviors. The Attention Placebo Group engaged in unstructured group discussions on topics of their choice. The No-Treatment control group pursued the normal school curriculum. Treatments were conducted by counselors

or teachers with at least four years experience facilitating small group counseling sessions in an alternative school situation.

Mehrabian and Bank's (1978) Measure of Achieving Tendency, Fitts's (1965) Tennessee Self Concept Scale, and Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale were administered pre- and post-treatment to the entire Point Option student population to control for the effects of test-taking as an extraneous variable in the treatment procedure. Academic grades (GPA) and attendance were also compared before and immediately after experimental treatments, and at the end of one marking period subsequent to participation in the experimental treatments in an attempt to measure both the immediate and the more long-term effects (if any) of the experimental interventions.

CHAPTER 4

Results

This study was conducted to assess and compare the effectiveness of two group counseling approaches to enhancing academic achievement for underachieving students in an alternative high school situation. A sample of 81 students participated in the study over three six-week marking periods. Students were randomly assigned to one of four treatment conditions. The groups were unequal in size. Treatment Group 1 (n=22) participated in a Peer Counseling training program (PC). Group 2 (n=18) participated in a structured Achievement Motivation Training seminar (AMT). Group 3 (n=17) participated in an unstructured "rap group" focusing on topics of their choice. Group 4 (n=24) received no treatment. Students in all four groups were told that failure to improve their academic achievement to the point that they were passing at least 75 percent of their classes might result in dismissal from the Point Option program. Administration of such a warning is the procedure that has been used traditionally to address academic underachievement at Point Option, although actual dismissal from the program is not a consequence that has been applied with consistency.

All groups were administered questionnaires at the beginning of the group treatment, and again at the end. Pre- and posttest questionnaire data was obtained from 66 subjects. Lack of questionnaire data from the other 15 subjects was due to the fact that some subjects dropped out of school during experimental treatment, and some subjects, all of whom were voluntary participants in the study, did not complete all questionnaires. As a result, questionnaire data was analyzed for the 66 subjects who completed both pre- and posttests, while data regarding attendance, percentage of classes passed, and grade point average was analyzed for all 81 subjects. Analysis of the questionnaire data was based upon the following numbers: Group 1 (PC): 20; Group 2 (AMT): 17; Group 3 (Placebo Control): 14; Group 4 (No Treatment Control): 15. Attendance and grade point average data was based upon the following numbers: Group 1: 22; Group 2: 19; Group 3: 17; and Group 4: 23. Since the instances of incomplete data occurred with near-equal frequency in all groups, the random nature of the sample was not thought to be threatened..

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. Will students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training treatment group show a significantly

greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by the Measure of Achieving Tendency (Mehrabian & Banks, 1978) than students participating in the Peer Counseling Treatment group?

2. Will students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training treatment group show a significantly greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by the Measure of Achieving Tendency than those students assigned to Placebo Control and No Treatment Control conditions?

3. Will students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training treatment group show a greater movement toward internal locus of control as measured by the I-E Scale (Rotter, 1966) than students participating in the Peer Counseling Training treatment group?

4. Will students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training treatment group show a greater movement toward internal locus of control as measured by the I-E Scale than students assigned to the Placebo Control and No-Treatment Control conditions?

5. Will students participating in the Achievement

Motivation Training and Peer Counseling Training treatment groups show greater increase in self-esteem as measured by the Total Positive score of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) than students assigned to the Placebo Control and No Treatment Control conditions?

6. Will grade Point average for students taking part in the Achievement Motivation Training and Peer Counseling Training treatment groups be significantly higher at the end of the six-week treatment period than those of control group subjects?

7. Will students in the AMT and PC treatment groups show a significantly higher percentage of classes attended at the end of the six-week treatment period than control-group subjects?

8. Will students in AMT and PC treatment groups show significantly higher grade point averages and a greater percentage of classes attended than control group subjects at the end of the six-week marking period subsequent to the marking period during which the experimental treatment took place?

The major hypotheses derived from these questions were

tested using a "true" experimental design, the Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that students participating in Achievement Motivation Training groups would show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by the Measure of Achieving Tendency (MAT) (Mehrabian & Bank, 1978) than students participating in Peer Counseling training groups. To test this hypothesis, pre- and posttest scores on the MAT were analyzed by Achieving factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. SPSSx, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Norusis, 1985) was used as a software program for computer analysis. (Because MAT scores are produced by algebraic summation of positive and negative items, negative total scores are possible. Since some negative scores were included in the experimental data, a constant of +30 was added to each subject's pre- and posttest scores in order to eliminate negative scores from the data analysis.) As indicated by Table 1, the interaction effect of treatments and measures was not a significant one, with \underline{f} (1,34)=.153, n.s. This analysis indicated that the AMT group did not show an increase in achievement motivation significantly

greater than the PC group as measured by the MAT. In light of this evidence, Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Table 1

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
Measure of Achieving Tendency Scores for AMT and PC Groups

Source	df	MS	<u>F</u>	sig of <u>F</u>
Treatments (T)	1	86.681	.046	.832
Error	34	1892.230		
Measures (M)	1	2.347	.007	.936
T x M	1	55.125	.153	.698
Error	34	360.226		

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that students participating in AMT groups would show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation as measured by the MAT than students participating in the Placebo Control or No Treatment Control groups. To test this hypothesis, pre- and posttest MAT scores for AMT, Placebo Control, and No Treatment Control groups were compared by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. Data analysis, as illustrated by Table 2, did not reveal any significant

differences in terms of the interaction of treatments and measures, with $F(1,45) = .918$, n.s. Data analysis reveals that students participating in the AMT group did not show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation over the period of experimental treatment than did control group subjects. Thus Hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Table 2

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
Measure of Achieving Tendency Scores for AMT, Placebo
Control and No Treatment Control Groups.

Source	df	MS	F	sig. of F
Treatments (T)	2	4255.061	1.758	.184
Error	45	2420.212		
Measures (M)	1	353.464	1.069	.307
T x M	2	303.464	.918	.407
Error	45	330.692		

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that students participating in the AMT group treatment would show significantly more change toward internal locus of control as measured by the I-E Scale (Rotter, 1966) than students participating in the Peer Counseling treatment. To test this hypothesis, pre- and

posttest scores on the I-E Scale were compared for AMT and PC groups by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. (Movement toward internality on the I-E Scale is indicated by change from a higher to a lower score.) As indicated by Table 3, data analysis did not reveal any significant difference between groups in terms of the effect of the experimental treatment on the measures used, with $F(1,34)=.414$, n.s. Students receiving the AMT treatment did not show significantly more movement toward internality on the I-E Scale than did students receiving the PC treatment, and there was no indication that either treatment significantly affected locus of control. Thus it was necessary to reject Hypothesis 3.

Table 3

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
I-E Scale Scores for AMT and PC Groups.

Source	df	MS	<u>F</u>	sig of <u>F</u>
Treatments (T)	1	14.222	1.165	.228
Error	34	12.208		
Measures (M)	1	.889	.101	.753
T x M	1	12.500	1.414	.243
Error	34	8.842		

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that students participating in the AMT group treatment would show significantly more change toward internal locus of control as measured by the I-E scale than students participating in Placebo control and No-Treatment control groups. To test this hypothesis, pre- and posttest scores on the I-E scale were compared for AMT and control group subjects by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. As indicated by Table 4, data analysis revealed no significant interaction effects for treatment and measures, with $F(1,45) = .374$, n.s.

Table 4

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
I-E Scale Scores for AMT, Placebo Control and NT
Control Groups

Source	df	MS	F	sig of F
Treatments (T)	2	3.471	.174	.841
Error	45	19.997		
Measures (M)	1	1.581	.235	.631
T x M	2	2.524	.374	.690
Error	45	6.742		

Students receiving the AMT treatment did not show

significantly more movement toward internality over the period of experimental treatment than did the control group subjects. Since there was no significant main effect for measures, there was also no indication that the AMT treatment or either control treatment significantly effected locus of control as measured by the I-E Scale. Thus Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 stated that students participating in AMT and PC groups would show significantly greater increase in self-esteem as measured by the Total Positive Score on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1965) than students in Placebo and No-Treatment control groups. To test this hypothesis, pre- and posttest Total Positive scores on the TSCS were compared for experimental and control group subjects by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. As indicated by Table 5, data analysis revealed no significant interaction effects for treatments and measures, with $F(1,64) = .434$, n.s. Students receiving the experimental AMT and PC treatments did not show significantly greater increase in self-esteem as measured by the Total Positive Score of the TSCS than did students participating in both control groups. Thus it was necessary to reject Hypothesis 5.

Table 5

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
TSCS Total Positive Scores for AMT, PC, Placebo Control
and NT Control Groups

Source	df	MS	F	sig of F
Treatments (T)	1	131.702	.075	.785
Error	64	1752.090		
Measures (M)	1	814.727	1.917	.171
T x M	1	184.000	.434	.512
Error	64	432.887		

Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 stated that students participating in AMT and PC experimental treatment groups would show significantly greater improvement in grade point average at the end of the six-week treatment period than Placebo and No-Treatment control group subjects. To test this hypothesis, grade point averages (GPAs) were compared for experimental and control group subjects by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures. Pre-treatment GPAs were compared with GPAs earned at the end of the experimental treatment period. As shown in Table 6, data analysis revealed no significant interaction effect for

treatments and measures, with $F(1,79) = 1.219$, n.s. Students receiving the experimental treatments showed no greater improvement in GPA than did students in Placebo and NT control groups.

Table 6
Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
GPAs for Experimental and Control Groups

Source	df	MS	F	sig of F
Treatment	1	1.322	2.093	.152
Error	79	.632		
Measures (M)	1	5.484	13.215	.000*
T x M	1	.506	1.219	.273
Error	79	.415		

* = sig > .001 level

It is noteworthy that the Measures effect, assessing the difference between pre- and post-treatment grade point averages for all groups, was highly significant, with $F(1,79) = 13.215$, $p > .001$. Examination of the data indicates that the pre-treatment mean GPA for the experimental groups (AMT and PC) was .998. while the mean GPA for the control group (Placebo and NT) was 1.29. Subsequent to the treatment period, the mean GPA for the Experimental groups was 1.478, while the mean GPA for the control groups was

1.5471. Thus it can be seen that a significant improvement in grade point average was evidenced by both experimental and control group subjects. However, since experimental (AMT and PC) subjects did not show significantly more improvement in GPA than control group subjects, Hypothesis 6 was rejected.

Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 stated that students participating in AMT and PC groups would show a significantly greater increase than control group subjects in the percentage of classes attended during the six-week period during which the experimental treatment took place as compared with attendance for the previous marking period. To test this hypothesis, attendance figures for the six-week marking period previous to the onset of experimental treatment were compared by means of a factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures to attendance figures for the period of experimental treatment. As can be seen in Table 7, data analysis revealed no significant interaction effect for treatments and measures, with $F(1,79)=1.471$, n.s. Students participating in AMT and PC groups did not attend a significantly greater percentage of classes during the experimental treatment period than did control group subjects. Thus it was necessary to reject Hypothesis 7.

Table 7
 Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance:
 Percentage of Classes Attended for Experimental
 and Control Groups

Source	df	MS	<u>F</u>	sig of <u>F</u>
Treatments (T)	1	.001	.013	.911
Error	79	.040		
Measures (M)	1	.031	2.011	.160
T x M	1	.023	1.471	.229
Error	79	.015		

Hypothesis 8

Hypothesis 8 stated that class attendance and grade point average would be significantly higher for students taking part in AMT and PC groups than for Placebo and No-Treatment control group subjects at the end of the marking period subsequent to the experimental treatment. In order to test this hypothesis, a oneway analysis of variance (SPSS Inc, 1983) was performed to examine grade point averages and the percentage of classes attended for the six-week marking period subsequent to the one in which group treatments took place.

Table 8

Oneway Analysis of Variance: Grade Point Averages
for Experimental and Control Groups Six Weeks
Subsequent to Experimental Treatment

Source	df	MS	<u>F</u>	sig of <u>F</u>
Between groups	1	6.5840	6.453	.4252
Within groups	1	1.0203		
Total	80			

Grade point averages and the percentage of classes attended for the experimental (AMT and PC) subjects were compared with those of the control (Placebo and NT) group subjects. As indicated by table 8, there was no significant difference between groups on the variable of grade point average, with $\underline{F} (1,80) = 6.453$, n.s. Likewise, as shown in Table 9, there was no significant difference between groups for the percentage of classes attended, with $\underline{F} (1,80) = 3.042$, n.s. The hypothesis, stating that class attendance and grade point average would be significantly higher for the experimental groups than for the control group for the marking period six weeks subsequent to the experimental treatment, was rejected.

Table 9

Oneway Analysis of Variance: Percentage of Classes
 Attended for Experimental and Control Groups Six Weeks
 Subsequent to Experimental Treatment

Source	df	MS	<u>F</u>	sig of <u>F</u>
Between groups	1	2.1700	3.042	.5828
Within groups	79	.0713		
Total	80			

Summary

Statistical analysis of questionnaire, attendance, and GPA data indicated that there is no evidence to support the effectiveness of either experimental small-group counseling technique, AMT or PC, over Placebo and No-Treatment control treatments, in increasing levels of achievement motivation, self-esteem, internality of locus of control, or class attendance for underachieving high school students. Data indicated that mean academic grade point averages for all groups rose significantly during the experimental treatment period, but there was no indication that this phenomenon was an effect of the experimental treatments.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter provides a summary of the main purposes of the study, states its findings and conclusions, suggests implications and offers recommendations for future similar research.

Summary

Chronic underachievement is a problem for many high school students whose academic attainments fall short of what might be predicted by their abilities as indicated by standardized ability tests. Such students, often characterized by absenteeism, tardiness, general apathy, irresponsibility and unreliability, are sources of frustration and challenge to teachers, counselors, and administrators. Alternative schools, providing a means to diversify educational opportunities within a community, have offered a possible method to address the issue of chronic underachievement in high school students. Such programs often provide a last chance for underachieving students to develop more effective patterns of school behavior, and thus to complete their high school programs.

However, entry into an alternative program does not necessarily change chronic patterns of underachievement. The present study was developed in response to the need to attend to the large number of high school students at Point Option, an alternative open high school program in Newport News, Virginia, who fail a significant percentage of their classes each marking period.

This study compared the effectiveness of two structured small group counseling techniques, Peer Counseling and Achievement Motivation Training, on the school attendance and academic achievement of underachieving alternative high school students. It also sought to determine whether participation in daily small group counseling sessions over a six-week period positively effected measures of self concept, locus of control and tendency to achieve (or achievement motivation) for such students.

Experimental subjects were those Point Option students who had passed fewer than 75 percent of their academic classes during the six-week marking period preceding the onset of the study. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of four treatment groups: Achievement Motivation Training (AMT), Peer Counseling training (PC), Attention Placebo control group, and No-Treatment control group. The AMT

group participated in a structured training program designed to facilitate behaviors which are found to be characteristic of individuals high in achievement motivation, including realistic goal setting, acceptance of personal responsibility, and the ability to delay short term gratification in favor of long range goals.

The PC group participated in a structured program in human relations training designed to facilitate the development of communication skills and empathic responding behaviors. The Attention Placebo group engaged in unstructured group discussions on topics of their choice, while the No-Treatment control group pursued their normal curriculum. All experimental subjects were told that failure to improve academic achievement might result in dismissal from the Point Option program. Group treatments were conducted by two male and two female Point Option staff members, all of whom had at least four years experience facilitating small group counseling sessions in an alternative school environment. Each group met daily for fifty minutes during a six-week marking period. All groups met at the same time each day.

Treatment effects were measured by means of several dependant variables. Academic grade point average was

calculated for each experimental subject for the marking period immediately previous to the experimental treatment, the marking period during which the treatment took place, and the marking period subsequent to the experimental treatment. The percentage of classes attended by each subject was also calculated for the same three periods. Achievement motivation was assessed by means of the Measure of Achieving Tendency questionnaire, which was administered prior to and after treatment. Locus of control was assessed by means by the I-E Scale, and self concept by means of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, both of which were administered previous to and after treatment.

A one way analysis of variance and a two-way factorial analysis of variance with repeated measures were used in the analysis of the experimental data.

Conclusions

Findings and conclusions for this study are stated in terms of the eight experimental hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

Hypothesis 1: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training group did not show

significantly greater increase in achievement motivation than students participating in the Peer Counseling Training group.

Hypothesis 2: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training group did not show significantly greater increase in achievement motivation than did control group subjects.

Hypothesis 3: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training group did not show greater movement toward internal locus of control than did students participating in the Peer Counseling treatment.

Hypothesis 4: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training group did not show significantly more movement toward internal locus of control than students in control groups.

Hypothesis 5: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation and Peer Counseling treatment groups did not show significantly greater increase in self-esteem than control group subjects.

Hypothesis 6: Students participating in the

Achievement Motivation and Peer Counseling treatment groups did not show significantly greater improvement in academic grade point average than control group subjects. A significant improvement in grade point average was evidenced by all groups, regardless of treatment condition.

Hypothesis 7: Students participating in the Achievement Motivation Training and Peer Counseling treatment groups did not show significantly greater improvement in the percentage of classes attended than did control group subjects.

Hypothesis 8: Class attendance and grade point averages were not significantly higher for AMT and PC students than for control group students at the end of the marking period subsequent to the one in which the experimental treatment took place.

In general, it might be concluded that neither an Achievement Motivation Training seminar nor a Peer Counseling Training workshop conducted daily over a six-week period appears to significantly effect the academic achievement, class attendance, achievement motivation, locus of control, or self-concept of underachieving alternative high school students. The significant improvement in grade

point average evidenced at the end of the treatment periods was seen in all groups, including the control group which received no treatment.

Discussion

This study was designed to determine whether two structured small-group treatment procedures conducted on a daily basis for six weeks would positively effect the academic achievement, attendance, self-concept, locus of control, and achievement motivation of underachieving alternative high school students. It is necessary to conclude that neither Achievement Motivation Training nor Peer Counseling Training produced the predicted changes in any of the dependant variables.

There are several reasons that this study may have failed to produce the hoped-for results. As previously mentioned, many students enrolled in the Point Option program have histories of poor school attendance, negative attitudes toward school, and little interest in academic achievement. Many have come to Point Option as a last resort, having exhausted efforts in more traditional school programs to encourage a higher level of achievement. Although these students possess the potential for average or

above-average achievement, many are individuals in whom non-achieving attitudes and behaviors are firmly entrenched. Thus it is possible that no intervention, no matter how cleverly contrived, might be expected to make a significant impact on such attitudes.

It is also possible that the impact of daily small-group treatments was lessened by its application in this particular alternative school situation. DeSalvo (1982), studying the effect of group counseling on achievement and self-concept for alternative high school students, found significant gains in achievement and self-concept for both experimental subjects (those who participated in group counseling) and controls (those who had no group counseling). She concluded from her study, conducted over the period of one semester, that participation in an alternative program (with or without group counseling) had a positive effect on achievement and self-concept. It is possible that this same effect took place in the present study. Because of the small size of the Point Option program, class sizes are usually small, and many classes are conducted in a small-group format which allows for considerable informal interaction between teachers and students. Many staff members have some training in small-group facilitation, and the school

structure in general places high priority upon democracy and humanistic values in terms of student-teacher interaction. For this reason, a small-group counseling situation, regardless of content, does not provide the dramatic departure from normal classroom behaviors that would be true in a conventional high school setting. It is possible that a small-group treatment has less impact on students in this environment than it might in others because it is less novel, or because students are already receiving the full benefits (if any) of small-group, facilitative learning.

The fact that all groups, experimental and control, showed significant improvement in grade point average during the treatment period indicates that an effect derives from initiating some action when a student's academic achievement is unsatisfactory. Thus, there may have been a generalized Hawthorne effect. However, threat of dismissal from the Point Option program if academic improvement did not occur was made to all students who participated in this study. It appears that the possibility of dismissal from the program may have been a factor partly responsible for the significant improvement in grade point averages which occurred for all groups during the experimental treatment period. It is noteworthy that both percentage of classes attended and academic grade point average declined for

experimental and control groups in the marking period subsequent to the one in which the experimental treatment took place.

In terms of the measure of achievement motivation, this study provides some support for the position of Klinger, (1966) who, in reviewing the literature of assessment of need for achievement, suggested that n Ach scores are not adequate measures of motivation, since only about half of the published studies indicated a significant relationship between n Ach and measures of performance. In the present study, data indicated a significant improvement for experimental and control groups in academic achievement as measured by grade point average. However, there was no concomitant improvement in achievement motivation as assessed by the Measure of Achieving Tendency (Mehrabian & Bank, 1978). Thus there is no indication that an increase in achievement-inspired behaviors, as evidenced by a significant increase in academic grade point average, is reflected in higher scores on an instrument designed to measure achievement motivation. It appears that, at least in this experimental situation, an increase in academic achievement is not reflected by an increase in achievement motivation as assessed by the Measure of Achieving Tendency.

It is possible that a six-week treatment period is not of sufficient length to have an impact upon complex attitudes such as self-concept, locus of control, and achievement motivation. This is a possible explanation for the fact that a significant change in achievement behavior for all groups was not accompanied by concomitant changes in attitudinal measures.

It is also possible that the groups, which came to be called "probation groups" by students because group members were all students who were on academic probation at Point Option, developed a negative association because group members perceived themselves (and were possibly perceived by others) as being "in trouble." Although not an overt issue, this negative association could have lessened the potential positive impact of the groups.

Recommendations

Attempting to increase academic achievement in a population composed largely of underachievers is, at best, a challenge. However, the problem of motivating the underachieving alternative high school student is one which could benefit from additional research effort, especially because there is so little research which addresses the

problems of this special population. The present study has suggested some possible directions for further research.

The improvement in academic achievement which came about for experimental and control group students during the experimental treatment period suggests the possibility that a more consistently enforced system of probation might be effective for the Point Option student body, with or without supportive group counseling. Underachieving students could be informed that they are on probation, and that they have one marking period to improve academic achievement to an acceptable level. Support groups could be made available for those probationary students who wished to take part in such groups (although the present study does not suggest that such groups improve the likelihood of gains in academic achievement). Under a strict probation system, failure to improve achievement to an acceptable level would result in automatic dismissal from the Point Option program. It might be productive to assess the effects of such a strict probationary system, consistently applied over the period of a year, on student achievement.

It is possible that an Achievement Motivation Training Seminar or a Peer Counseling workshop would be more effective in stimulating academic achievement if a student

were allowed to choose the group which came closer to addressing the issues which he saw as interfering with his achievement. Students who felt that poor family or peer relationships were a factor in poor academic achievement could choose a Peer Counseling workshop. Those who felt that poorly defined goals or insufficient future planning effected their achievement could choose Achievement Motivation Training. An attempt to match students to appropriate groups might increase group effectiveness.

It is also possible that offering the Achievement Motivation Seminar and the Peer Counseling workshop as a regular part of the Point Option elective curriculum, opening them to all students rather than to probationary students alone, would provide another means for studying their effectiveness. It might then be possible to compare the progress of probationary students who were involved in such group treatments with that of those who were not. This would remove the possibility of a negative association for group participation, and might increase the potential effectiveness of the groups.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARENT LETTER

Dear Point Option Parent:

We know that each student accepted into the Point Option program has the ability to do well academically and to graduate from high school. It is the sincere hope of the Point Option staff that every student who enrolls here will do well at Point Option, and achieve a high school diploma. We have found, however, that some students do not work up to potential, even in an alternative school situation. It has been our practice in past years to place students who pass fewer than 75 percent of their classes on "probation." Such students are informed that failure to improve in achievement during the subsequent marking period, and to maintain adequate achievement, can result in a recommendation of dismissal from the Point Option program.

We are presently attempting to find out whether participation in special counseling groups will help students who have been placed on probation to improve their grades, their attendance, and their attitudes toward school achievement. If we feel that participation would be beneficial to your child, we would very much appreciate your permission for your child to take part in such a group. Students who attend the groups regularly will receive elective credit for group participation. It is possible, however, that because of scheduling conflicts, not all students who are on probation will be able to participate in groups.

If you have any questions about the format of the groups, or their content, we would be happy to discuss these matters, or any other areas of concern, with you at any time.

Sincerely,

Director

School psychologist

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

Probation Group Consent Form

I understand that, when a Point Option student fails to pass 75-80 percent of his classes, he is placed "on probation." Failure to improve academic achievement can result in dismissal from the Point Option program.

If my child's lack of academic achievement causes him to be placed on probation, I give permission for him to participate in a counseling group designed to help improve school adjustment, attendance, and academic achievement. I also give Point Option staff members permission to administer questionnaires designed to determine attitudes toward school achievement, and to use the information gained from these questionnaires to determine whether counseling groups are an effective means to help underachieving students at Point Option to improve academic performance. I understand that questionnaire results will be analyzed in terms of groups rather than individuals, and that individual questionnaire results will be kept confidential.

Signature of parent

Name of student

APPENDIX C: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I understand that my academic achievement at Point Option has dropped below an acceptable level, and that, if my achievement does not improve, I am in danger of dismissal from the Point Option program. I agree to attend Probation Group sessions on a regular basis, and to take attitude questionnaires if asked to do so by my group leader. I understand that I will receive elective credit for group participation if I miss no more than () group meetings.

Student signature

APPENDIX D

Peer Counseling Seminar: Course Outline

Module 1: Peers as helpers.

1. Introduction

Confidentiality

Name Game (Howe & Howe, 1975, pp. 41-43)

Personal coat of arms (Canfield & Wells, 1976,
p. 51)

2. What is a Peer Facilitator?

The Need for helpers (Myrick & Erney, 1984,
(pp. 2-9)

The Case of Mary (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 2-9)

The Case of Nick (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 2-9)

3. Problems of young people.

Notes to myself (Myrick & Erney, 1984, p. 12)

Problems of Youth (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 10-11)

4. Identity

Who am I? (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 14-15)

Module 2: Human Behavior and Interpersonal Relationships.

1. Understanding Human Behavior (Myrick & Erney, 1984,
pp. 16-25)

Fifteen things I love to do (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 26-27)

2. Interpersonal relationships

I am Loveable and Capable (Myrick & Erney,
pp. 27-28)

Trust Walk (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 29-30)

3. Helping characteristics (Myrick & Erney, 1984,
pp. 29-35)

Think of a secret (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 31-32)

Module 3: Attentive Listening

1. Six steps for attentive listening (Myrick & Erney,
1984, pp. 43-53)

Twenty Questions (Myrick & Erney, 1979, p. 37)

Rogerian Listening (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 38-39)

How I See the World (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 39-40)

Module 4: Facilitative responses.

1. Learning to facilitate (Myrick & Erney, 1984,
pp. 57-64)

2. The facilitative responses (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 43-45)

Triads (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 46-47)

3. High and low facilitative responses (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 66-91)

Let me help (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 47-48)

The opposite sex (Myrick & Erney, 1979,

Turning of the question (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
p. 51)

Say something helpful (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 52-56)

Module 5: Facilitative Feedback -- Praising and Confronting

1. What is feedback? (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 97-100)

Positive feedback (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 60-61)

2. Facilitative feedback model (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 101-104)

The absent person (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 62-63)

3. Helpful guidelines (Myrick & Erney, 1984,
pp. 107-112)

Using feedback with others (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 64-65)

4. Feedback as praise (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 113-115)

Strength bombardment (Myrick & Erney, 1979,
pp. 66-67)

5. Feedback as confrontation (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 116-117)

The amnesia game (Myrick & Erney, 1979, p.68)

Module 6: Responsible Decision-Making.

1. Five-step decision-making process (Myrick & Erney, 1984, pp. 133-143)

Setting priorities (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 72-73)

Good decisions, poor decisions (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 74-75)

Western Union (Myrick & Erney, 1979, p. 76)

Personal contract (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 79-80)

Module 7: Assessing Self and Others.

1. Assessing the self-concept

Self Appraisal Inventory (Myrick & Erney, 1984, p. 151)

What makes success? (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 86-87)

People scavenger hunt (Myrick & Erney, 1979, pp. 89-90)

How do I respond? (Myrick & Erney, 1979, p. 91)

2. Wrap-up

APPENDIX E

Achievement Motivation Training Seminar Course Outline

Module 1: What is Achievement?

1. Introduction

Confidentiality

Name Game

2. Learning to achieve

Achievement can be learned (Johnson & McClelland,
1984, pp. 3-6)

3. Why are we here? Where do we want to be?

Course credit sheets (transcripts)

Graduation requirement sheets

4. Being better achievers

Six Steps to Achievement (Johnson & McClelland,
1984, pp. 13-18)

Module 2: Self-study.

1. Who am I and where am I going?

Finding your strengths and weaknesses (Johnson &
McClelland, 1984, pp. 19-24)

2. What's your type?

Myers-Briggs Type Indicators

3. Career goals

Harrington-O'Shea (Vocational Interest Inventory)

4. Choose three careers

Worksheets

Virginia View (Microfiche readers and catalog of
job information)

Occupational Outlook Handbook

5. Future fantasies

Where will you be in ten years?

6. Acting like an achiever.

How achievers tend to think and feel (Johnson &
McClelland, 1984, pp. 25-28)

How achievers tend to act (Johnson & McClelland,
1984, pp. 29-32)

How achievers are responsible (Johnson &
McClelland, 1984, pp. 33-34)

Module 3: Goal-setting.

1. What are your goals?

Fantasy trips

Worksheets

Information from questionnaires and research into
occupational requirements

Setting medium-risk goals (Johnson & McClelland,
1984, pp. 41-44)

2. Goal-setting activities.

Practicing goal-setting in a game (Johnson &
McClelland, 1984, pp. 45-46)

Setting a real goal for yourself (Johnson &
McClelland, 1984, pp. 47-48)

3. Setting academic goals.

Schedules

Course credit sheets (transcripts)

Estimates of grades for current marking period

4. Where do we stand?

Interim reports

Module 4: Thinking about achieving.

1. Ways to think about achievement.

Ten Thoughts (Alschuler, Tabor & McIntyre,
1970b, pp. 3-8)

Need for achievement

Need for affiliation

2. What are motives?

Learning achievement thinking (Alchuler, Tabor
& McIntyre, 1970b, p. 9)

3. Achievement fantasies.

Achievement collage

Module 5: Achieving Goals.

1. Dealing with obstacles.

Planning to overcome personal obstacles (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 53-56)

Planning to overcome world obstacle (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 57-60)

Defining one's own obstacles: brainstorming .

Planning to use help (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 61-62)

Planning to achieve the goal you set (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 63-64).

2. Dealing with competition.

Experiencing competition in a game (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 73-74)

Module 6: Evaluating and Looking Ahead.

1. The value of evaluationg.

Why evaluate? (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 87-88)

Evaluating your own performance (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 93-94)

Evaluating yourself as an achiever (Johnson & McClelland, 1984, pp. 95-98)

2. Wrap-up.

APPENDIX F: ROTTER'S I-E SCALE

This is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of choices lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (and only one) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: there are no right or wrong answers. Please read each pair of statements, choose the statement which more closely reflects your beliefs, and record its letter on the answer sheet. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.
2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
b. People's bad luck is due to the mistakes they make.
3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
4. a. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
b. Most students don't realize how often their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
6. a. Without the right opportunities, one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try, some people just don't like you.
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
8. a. Heredity plays a major role in determining one's personality.
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what he or she is like.
9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
10. a. In the case of the well-prepared student, there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12. a. The average citizen can have an influence on government decisions.
b. The world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyway.
14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
b. There is some good in everybody.
15. a. In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon

ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it.

17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.
b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs, the people can control world events.
18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
b. There is really no such thing as "luck."
19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
b. How many friends you have depends upon what a nice person you are.
21. a. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people; if they like you, they like you.

27.
 - a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
 - b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28.
 - a. What happens to me is my own doing.
 - b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29.
 - a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
 - b. In the long run, the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

APPENDIX G: THE TENNESSEE SELF-CONCEPT SCALE

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale is copyrighted by its author, William H. Fitts, Ph.D. It can be obtained from Counselor Recordings and Tests, Box 6184, Acklen Station, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

APPENDIX H: MEASURE OF ACHIEVING TENDENCY

The Measure of Achieving Tendency is copywrited by its author, Albert Mehrabian. It can be obtained from Albert Mehrabian, Department of Psychology, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90024.

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Abstract

THE EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELING ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION OF ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Anne Klare Sullivan, Ed.D.

College of William and Mary, May, 1986

Chairman: David Hopkinson, Ph.D.

This study compared the effectiveness of two structured small-group counseling techniques, Peer Counseling and Achievement Motivation Training, on the school attendance and academic achievement as measured by grade point averages of underachieving alternative high school students. It also investigated whether participation in daily small group counseling sessions over a six-week period positively effected measures of self-concept, locus of control, and tendency to achieve, or achievement motivation.

Experimental subjects were 81 high school students in grades nine through twelve who attended a public open alternative high school in a mid-sized Southern city. Subjects, all of at least average ability, were students who had passed fewer than 75 percent of their academic classes during the six-week marking period preceding the onset of the study.

Subjects were assigned randomly to one of four treatment groups: Achievement Motivation Training (AMT), Peer Counseling Training (PC), Attention Placebo control group, and No-Treatment control. The AMT group participated in a structured training program designed to facilitate behaviors which are found to be characteristic of high achievers, including realistic goal-setting, the acceptance of personal responsibility, and the ability to delay short-term gratification in favor of long-range goals.

The PC group participated in a structured program in human relations training designed to facilitate the development of communication skills and empathic responding behaviors. The Attention Placebo group engaged in unstructured group discussions on topics of their choice, while the No-Treatment control group pursued the normal

curriculum. All subjects were told that failure to improve academic achievement might result in dismissal from the alternative program. Groups met daily for fifty minutes during a six-week marking period. All groups met at the same time each day.

Academic grade point averages and percentage of classes attended were calculated pre- and post-treatment for all subjects. The Tennessee Self Concept Scale, Rotter's I-E Scale, and Mehrabian's Measure of Achieving Tendency were also administered pre- and post-treatment. It was hypothesized that students participating in the AMT group would show greater increase in achievement motivation and movement toward internal locus of control than those participating in the PC group or control groups. It was also hypothesized that students participating in AMT and PC groups would show greater increase in self-esteem, and greater improvement in attendance and achievement as measured by grade point average than control group subjects.

Data analysis did not support any of the experimental hypotheses. There was no evidence that treatments effected achievement motivation, locus of control, self-concept, or class attendance for experimental or control groups. All groups, experimental and control, showed significant improvement in grade point average subsequent to the experimental treatment period.

It was concluded that neither an Achievement Motivation Training seminar nor a Peer Counseling Training program significantly effected the academic achievement, class attendance, achievement motivation, locus of control, or self-concept of underachieving alternative high school students. Several possible reasons were discussed for the failure to obtain the hypothesized results.