

AN EXPLORATORY EVALUATION OF A  
GROUP GUIDANCE COURSE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Role of Group Guidance in Total Guidance Program. .	1
Evaluation of Group Guidance Courses . . . . .	2
Specific Course . . . . .	5
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	8
METHOD . . . . .	8
Sampling . . . . .	8
Instruments Used and Method of Administration . .	11
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	14
Description of Class on Test Variables . . . . .	14
Evaluation of Course . . . . .	19
Critique of Course . . . . .	29
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH . . .	30
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	34
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	35

## INTRODUCTION

### Role of Group Guidance in Total Guidance Program

Group guidance as defined by Hoppock (6) "is any group activity undertaken for the primary purpose of facilitating or improving the total guidance program". He states that group guidance was never intended to take the place of individual counseling but should supplement and support it and that the best guidance program is one which does not rely wholly upon either group guidance or counseling but one which makes judicious use of both. Failor (4) elaborated on this idea when he said:

Group activities supplement and contribute to guidance services by utilizing the cooperative, supportive, and economical values of group situations to forward the choices and adjustments of students through the mastery of commonly needed and desired information and the exploration of common problems.

If group guidance is to be one of the essential parts of any guidance program, what then, should be expected of it? What are its opportunities and also what limitations does it have? Failor (4) lists the following as some of the advantages or opportunities of group guidance activities:

1. In areas of common needs and desires they are more economical of time, facilities and personnel.
2. They provide both students and the counselor with information valuable in counseling.
3. They establish relationships between students and the guidance staff which create a demand for and facilitate other guidance services.
4. They provide students with opportunities to pool and share information, attitudes and experiences.

5. They produce supportive relationships among students as they learn that other students have problems and become acquainted with the means by which they solved them.

6. They provide opportunities for practicing and testing behavior in interpersonal relations.

Some of the most serious and common limitations and difficulties as stated by Faylor (4) are:

1. Group activities are not adequate for the solution of problems which require the face to face relationship of counseling.

2. Many students are not sufficiently practiced in impersonal and objective approaches to problems in group situations.

3. The organization of groups with sufficient homogeneity of interests, maturities, and problems poses administrative difficulties.

4. There is a shortage of available teachers sufficiently competent and motivated to provide group activities of a proper quality.

5. It is difficult to schedule group activities so that they present a comprehensive, progressive, and continuous program for all students.

6. It is not easy to correlate group activities with the total program of guidance services and with the educational program.

#### Evaluation of Group Guidance Courses

Group guidance, in general, and orientation, in particular, has been used quite extensively for some time but as Hoppock (6) points out most of what has been done in group guidance up to the present time has been done because it seemed like a good idea and only in rare instances has anyone attempted to find out whether or not anticipated results were in fact achieved.

Research methods for evaluating group guidance courses have varied from the most elementary and subjective such as teacher opinion, where the teacher frequently asks, "Am I getting the results I expected?" to the more objective forms such as the use of pre-test and post-test and the control group design.

Eckert (3) says:

Basic to educational evaluation is the point of view that the success of a school or college is most validly judged by examining its students---their understanding and insight, their control of basic skills, the character of the activities in which they participate outside the classroom, their social attitudes, and their goal for the future.

A control group design which complies with this point of view was the method utilized in this study.

Hoppock (6), who has made a thorough review of what has been done in the way of evaluating group guidance, reached the following general conclusions:

Sweeping generalizations based upon a few research studies frequently are upset by later research. The reader is urged to regard the following conclusions as tentative. They appear to be justified by the research to date, but any or all of them may have to be revised if future evidence contradicts, rather than confirms, the pioneer studies. From the research which the author has found to date, the following inferences appear to be reasonable.

Group guidance plus individual counseling produced better results than either one alone.

Psychological testing plus individual counseling brought occupational choices into closer harmony with the measured abilities of the students; it failed to bring them into closer harmony with employment opportunity.

The study of occupations, with emphasis upon local opportunities for employment, brought occupational

choices into closer harmony with employment opportunity; it failed to bring them into closer harmony with measured abilities.

Courses in orientation measurably increased the ability of students to answer questions about the institution, the educational program, and other matters presumably related to student adjustment.

Courses in occupational information measurably increased the range of occupations in which students were interested, their interest in specific occupations, and their tenure of employment after graduation.

Courses in occupational information increased the ability of students to answer questions about occupations by as little as zero per cent and by as much as 217 per cent.

Separate courses in occupational information, which met five times a week for one semester, were measurably more effective than homeroom programs or English courses as mediums for the presentation of occupational information.

Students in different institutions found group guidance both more and less interesting and useful than other subjects.

Group guidance increased the demand for individual counseling.

Conflicting results from different studies indicated encouraging success in some cases and dismal failure in others. Apparently the success or failure of group guidance depends upon one or more factors about which we can only speculate. Presumably these factors include the competence of the instructor, the appropriateness and accuracy of the instructional materials, and the interest and ability of the students. In some cases the research results appear to have been influenced by the quality of the tests used to measure results.

Of the eighteen studies on which the above general conclusions are based five are particularly relevant to this study either because of the method of evaluation used or because of

the type of course evaluated. Cole (2) and Stone (12) both used the control group design in obtaining their results while Bennet (1) not only used the same method but evaluated an orientation course somewhat similar in content to the one in this study although it was given to eleventh and thirteenth rather than ninth year students. Both Flowerman (5) and Kefsuever and Hend (7) conducted research on ninth grade students who had taken group guidance and both used the control group method of evaluation. The results of these particular studies as in the group as a whole indicated success in some instances (1) (2) (5) (12) and failure in others (7) (12).

In another study Nelson (9) found that with few exceptions colleges offering orientation courses show significantly higher mean scores on "A Test of College Orientation" than do colleges without such courses. While this does not prove causal relationship, in general, high mean scores on the test and well organized orientation programs were found in the same colleges.

#### Specific Course

The particular group guidance course with which this paper is concerned is the "Orientation" course required for freshmen in the Ellinwood Rural High School, Ellinwood, Kansas. At the time this study was initiated the course had been offered for two years. The idea for "Orientation" at Ellinwood originated with and was carried out by R. M. Schadt, Superintendent of Schools.

He has felt and expressed the need for an evaluation to help determine whether the course is meeting the needs of the freshmen in an area which has previously been neglected and if it is meeting the needs, in what areas has it done so and if not, in what areas has it failed.

Delineation of objectives is the first step in evaluation. For example, Eckert (3) says:

No adequate appraisal can be planned until the goals of a particular school or college have been rather explicitly outlined. Evaluation studies rest on the assumption that the school's successes and the school's failures must be viewed in the light of the objectives toward which all its activities have been directed.

Schadt (11) set up the following as objectives for the course he was going to teach:

1. To assist the members of the freshmen class to acquire a feeling that they belong to the high school group or are "at home".
2. To impart certain information that will be useful to all students.
3. To foster attitudes and habits that will be useful to all.
4. To help with any personal and social problems that need resolving to enable the student to profit most from a high school education.
5. To accumulate certain data about the members of the class that may become a part of the personal file to be used during high school for guidance purposes.
6. To help the student to see his relation to the community, the state, the nation and the world.

"Orientation" is a one semester course designed for a class of approximately sixty members to be divided into two sections.



Since a very broad or general approach was to be used it was decided that the direction and content of the course should be influenced somewhat by the needs and interests of the students who compose the group rather than to use a definite textbook for that purpose. In general, Schadt (11) intended the first six weeks to be spent in the area of getting acquainted with the school and its educational opportunities, how to study and gather information; the next six weeks was to be devoted to personal and social problems; and the final period to a rather broad study of the occupational areas plus opportunities to explore several other fields as a group or as individuals.

About once every two weeks one of the following tests was given, sometimes to introduce an area for study and at other times to simply supply more information about the student:

SRA Test of Primary Mental Abilities

SRA Mechanical Aptitude Test

SRA Clerical Aptitude Test

Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test

Iowa Silent Reading Test

Kuder Preference Record

California Test of Personality

In addition, about once a week educational movies were used, such as "How to Study", "Know Your Library", "Are You Popular", "Shy Guy", "Going Steady", "You and Your Work", "Aptitudes and Occupations", etc. Other projects such as outside speakers, reports by students and an autobiography were used to

supplement the class discussions, which were used more than any other device in the course. The topics for these discussions were suggested by both the students and the instructor.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study had the following two aspects:

1. Describe a ninth grade class in terms of (a) the students' knowledge and use of sources of information and (b) their expressed problems of adjustment.

This aspect is significant in itself since it is necessary for anyone working with ninth grade students to know their problems or what they feel to be their problems. It is significant also because herein lies the core of the evaluation. By determining where the students start it is possible to measure any change made by them during the period of evaluation.

2. Determine whether students enrolled in a group guidance class for one semester differ significantly from a comparable group of students not enrolled in (a) their knowledge and use of sources of information and (b) the number of their expressed problems of adjustment at the end of the semester.

#### METHOD

##### Sampling

##### Method of Establishing Experimental and Control Groups.

The ninth grade class of Ellinwood on which this study was based was divided into two approximately equal groups at the beginning of the year with one group taking orientation the first semester

while the other group enrolled in driver's education. Then the second semester the two groups exchanged classes. Due to the nature of the enrollment process it was felt by the administration and the investigator that the best approach would be to allow the students to choose, as they enrolled, which class they wished to take the first semester. It was assumed that since no attempt was made to divide the classes according to any specified plan any selective factors would, consequently, be ruled out. This was not an entirely accurate assumption as the results will show and it would have been better if a method less vulnerable to bias had been used in the establishment of the experimental and control groups.

After dividing the class into experimental and control groups there was a division of the data between the males and the females to provide a more complete analysis.

Description of Sample on Non-test Background Data. In the fall of 1952 a ninth grade class of 59 members with 30 males and 29 females enrolled at Ellinwood. Out of this group 15 males and 18 females composed the experimental group while the control group consisted of 15 males and 11 females.

All the members of this class were within the age limits of 13 to 15 years with one exception, a boy in the experimental group who became 17 while taking orientation. The majority or 66 per cent were 14 or would be 14 at their nearest birthday.

Since Ellinwood is located in the oil producing part of Kansas it was not surprising to find that 53 per cent of the class came from homes in which the fathers' occupation was in some way associated with the oil industry. The next largest occupational group was farming with 22 per cent while the remainder of the students listed a variety of parental occupations.

With regard to church preference the students listed their choices in the following order: Catholic---27 per cent; Baptist---17 per cent; Evangelical---17 per cent; Lutheran---14 per cent; Methodist---12 per cent; None---8 per cent; Church of Christ---3 per cent; Assembly of God---2 per cent. These choices were fairly evenly distributed throughout the groups with the exceptions that there were no Catholics in the female control group, no Methodists in the male experimental group and no Lutherans in the male control group.

The previous schools attended by the groups in terms of per cent were found to be as follows:

Male:

	<u>Experimental</u>	<u>Control</u>
Ellinwood Jr. High . . . . .	33 1/3	53
St. Joseph's . . . . .	33 1/3	40
Rural Schools . . . . .	33 1/3	0
Other Towns . . . . .	0	7

Female:

	<u>Experimental</u>	<u>Control</u>
Ellinwood Jr. High . . . . .	33	73
St. Joseph's . . . . .	28	0
Rural Schools . . . . .	28	27
Other Towns . . . . .	11	0

Total:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Ellinwood Jr. High . . . . .	43	48
St. Joseph's . . . . .	37	17
Rural Schools . . . . .	17	23
Other Towns . . . . .	3	7

The most noticeable difference was the experimental female as compared with the control female group. This might be one factor which accounts for the difference which was found between these two groups on test scores at the beginning of the experiment.

#### Instruments Used and Methods of Administration

The tests used in making this study were the SRA Youth Inventory (10) and the Use of Sources of Information (8). These tests were selected because the objectives of orientation could best be evaluated by them. Since the SRA Youth Inventory was subdivided it was possible to evaluate not only the over all course but also the specific areas into which orientation was divided. The SRA Youth Inventory was used also because the change taking place in the orientation class, if any, was to be mainly a change in attitude and the Youth Inventory was designed to measure this type of phenomenon.

The Use of Sources of Information was included to measure the change in quantity of information possessed and used correctly by the students. Since this was not a change in attitude a separate test was necessary.

The SRA Youth Inventory is a check list of 298 questions designed to help those working with young people identify the problems young people say worry them most. The test is divided into eight major areas which are (a) My School, (b) Looking Ahead, (c) About Myself, (d) Getting Along With Others, (e) My Home and Family, (f) Boy Meets Girl, (g) Health and (h) Things in General. The Youth Inventory also has what is termed a Basic Difficulty score which, if high, may indicate that the student has serious personality problems. However, as Remmers and Shimberg (10) point out, this score should always be corroborated by other evidence before being taken at face value.

Reliability coefficients for each of the eight problem areas are reported in the manual to be as follows:

My School . . . . .	.84
Looking Ahead . . . . .	.90
About Myself . . . . .	.88
Getting Along With Others . . . . .	.88
My Home and Family . . . . .	.94
Boy Meets Girl . . . . .	.87
Health . . . . .	.75
Things in General . . . . .	.89

The reliability coefficients for seven of the eight problem areas are sufficiently high but the lower reliability in the Health area indicates that it should be used more cautiously in interpreting scores. The reliability of the Basic Difficulty scale was found to be .90.

Since the SRA Youth Inventory is supposed to indicate what a student thinks are his problems it is difficult to determine the validity against outside criteria. Remmers and Shimberg (10)

say:

The items which an individual checks have validity for that individual. As long as the student thinks that certain things bother him it makes little difference whether the problems are real or whether he is unconsciously exaggerating their importance. The measure of validity becomes, in a sense, the reliability coefficient, for no test can be any more valid than it is reliable.

By studying the results of item analysis a measure of the validity of individual items may be obtained while still another indication of validity was the ability of seven experts in guidance and psychology to agree closely on the possible diagnostic significance of nearly two thirds of the items.

The Use of Sources of Information is Test 9 of the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. Lindquist (8) describes the following specific skills measured by this test: (a) knowledge of the nature and purpose of the major types of sources of information; (b) knowledge of the specific contents of the more common sources such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and year-books; (c) ability to select the source most appropriate to use in a given situation; (d) ability to interpret bibliographical references; and (e) ability to use a card index efficiently.

The reliability coefficient for this test is .81 based on within grades, within school which was a relatively homogeneous group thus making the reliability considerably lower than those computed on the basis of heterogeneous groups, which is usually the case on most tests.

Since there were no adequate outside criteria on which to base the validity of the test it was suggested by Lindquist (8) that the best way to judge the validity would be for the individual to take the test and in that way decide what the test really measures and what abilities are required from the student.

The tests were administered to all ninth graders at the beginning and again at the end of the semester. All freshmen were taking English I so the tests were given during their regular class period. Since both tests are relatively simple to administer the English I teacher, after consulting with the investigator on administration procedures, gave both the pre-test and post-test to her classes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Description of Class on Test Variables

Sex Differences. In describing the class on the test variables a comparison was made between all the males and all the females at the beginning and at the end of the experiment. The results of this comparison are presented in Tables 1 and 2.



Table 1. Pre-Test differences in mean scores of all males and all females on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Male		Female		:Difference : : Between :	t : value
	N=30		N=29			
	M	S D:	M	S D :		
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	6.57	4.11	6.55	4.91	.02	.017
Looking Ahead	13.37	6.28	12.10	8.05	1.27	.665
About Myself	7.70	6.48	9.17	6.96	1.47	.837
Getting Along With Others	8.13	6.16	8.52	6.24	.39	.238
My Home and Family	3.77	5.21	4.48	5.39	.71	.507
Boy Meets Girl	6.70	6.17	4.34	4.79	2.36	1.616
Health	2.83	2.53	4.07	3.72	1.24	1.476
Things in General	5.17	5.71	5.31	6.79	.14	.083
Use of Sources of Information:	9.76	6.23	12.25	5.87	2.49	1.528

Table 2. Post-Test differences in mean scores of all males and all females on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Male		Female		:Difference : : Between :	t : value
	N=30		N=29			
	M	S D:	M	S D :		
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	5.17	3.32	5.21	3.84	.04	.033
Looking Ahead	9.20	6.29	7.45	8.04	1.75	.911
About Myself	5.30	4.36	6.03	6.51	.73	.497
Getting Along With Others	5.53	4.96	5.31	5.32	.22	.162
My Home and Family	3.10	5.01	4.52	7.59	1.42	.830
Boy Meets Girl	4.00	4.43	2.89	3.46	1.11	1.057
Health	2.03	1.87	3.14	3.49	1.11	1.500
Things in General	3.03	3.96	3.10	4.94	.07	.059
Use of Sources of Information:	12.93	5.19	13.71	6.11	.78	.506

An analysis of the results in Tables 1 and 2 indicate little overall difference within the class as compared on a male-female

basis. While there were no statistically significant differences there were a few comparisons which were worth noting. In both Table 1 and Table 2 the males were higher than the females on the SRA---Looking Ahead area. This would seem to indicate the males were a little more concerned with the future that pertains especially to occupations and finding a job. The males were also higher in the Boy Meets Girl area while the females were higher in the areas of About Myself, My Home and Family and Health. In a larger sample these trends might become statistically significant. On the other hand they apparently are due to the errors of random sampling and their direction might even be reversed in another sample.

On the Iowa-Use of Sources of Information Test the females were higher in both pre-test and post-test although it should be pointed out that the difference dropped considerably on the post-test. In neither instance was it statistically significant.

Comparison with Ninth Grade Norms Given by Publisher. In order to determine what the members of this class were like in comparison to freshmen throughout the nation they were compared with the norms given by the publishers of the two tests. The results of this comparison for the SRA Youth Inventory for the males and females in the September testing are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. A comparison of the pre-test scores of ninth grade males with the publisher's norms for the SRA Youth Inventory.

Percentile	Area			Raw			Score	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
75	9	16	10	12	6	7	4	6
	#6.57	13.37	7.70	6.13	3.77	6.70	2.83	5.17
50	6	10	6	7	3	4	2	3
25	3	6	3	3	0	1	0	0

# scores of Ellinwood Freshmen

Table 4. A comparison of the pre-test scores of ninth grade females with the publisher's norms for the SRA Youth Inventory.

Percentile	Area			Raw			Score	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
75	9	15	13	14	8	9	5	6
	#6.55	12.10	9.17	9	4.48	5	4.07	5.31
50	6	9	8	9	3	5	3	2
				8.52		4.34		
25	4	5	5	5	1	2	1	0

# scores of Ellinwood Freshmen

From Tables 3 and 4 it can be seen that the majority of males and females in September scored somewhere between the 50th and the 75th percentile. This would seem to indicate that at the beginning of the experiment the class as a whole was just a little above average in its number of expressed problems.

The results of the comparison with the publisher's norms for the SRA Youth Inventory for the males and females in the January testing are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. A comparison of the post-test scores of ninth grade males with the publisher's norms for the SRA Youth Inventory.

Percentile :	Area			Raw		Score		
	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: 8
75	9	16	10	12	6	7	4	6
					3.10	4.00	2.03	3.03
50	6	10	6	7	3	4	2	3
	#5.17	9.20	5.30	5.53				
25	3	6	3	3	0	1	0	0

# scores of Ellinwood Freshmen

Table 6. A comparison of the post-test scores of ninth grade females with the publisher's norms for the SRA Youth Inventory.

Percentile :	Area			Raw		Score		
	: 1	: 2	: 3	: 4	: 5	: 6	: 7	: 8
75	9	15	13	14	8	9	5	6
					4.52		3.14	3.10
50	6	9	8	9	3	5	3	2
	#5.21	7.45	6.03	5.31		2.89		
25	4	5	5	5	1	2	1	0

# scores of Ellinwood Freshmen

On the post-test the trend was for the first four areas of both males and females to drop between the 25th and 50th percentile in the favorable direction while the majority of the remaining scores stayed between the 50th and 75th percentile. A closer study revealed that over half of the males moved closer to the average while over half of the females moved slightly away from the average. However, by January the class as a whole had moved a little closer to the 50th percentile than they were at the beginning of the experiment.

When the scores of the Ellinwood freshmen in the September testing were compared with the publisher's norms on the Iowa Use of Sources of Information it was discovered that the females ranked at approximately the 84th percentile while the males ranked at about the 39th percentile. This difference was due mainly to the fact that the control female group ranked above the 95th percentile. Apparently they were a select group with respect to this particular factor being measured. In January the females were at the 96th percentile while the males had moved to the 91st percentile. Thus the males and the females were more alike at the end of the study than they were at the beginning. It is interesting to note that the control female group which was ranked so high at the start made the least gain. This was probably due to the fact that since they were so near the top there was less room for improvement to be made.

#### Evaluation of Course

Males. In order to determine what effect orientation had on the males, the experimental and control groups were compared in September on the pre-test to see if they were successfully matched. It was assumed that if the matching was successful then the two groups would be approximately equal at the beginning of the study.

Table 7. Pre-test male differences in mean scores of experimental and control groups on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	: Experimental :		: Control :		: Difference: t	
	: N=15 :		: N=15 :		: Between :value	
	: M :	: S D :	: M :	: S D :	: Means :	:
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	7.66	4.55	5.47	3.28	2.19	1.460
Looking Ahead	13.67	5.77	13.07	6.74	.60	.253
About Myself	8.33	7.18	7.07	5.62	1.26	.516
Getting Along						
With Others	8.33	5.45	7.93	6.79	.40	.172
My Home and						
Family	4.33	6.33	3.20	3.67	1.13	.577
Boy Meets Girl	7.13	6.58	6.27	5.69	.86	.371
Health	2.47	2.50	3.20	2.51	.73	.769
Things in General	5.47	4.98	4.87	6.33	.60	.279
Use of Sources of						
Information:	10.00	5.14	9.50	7.15	.50	.210

Table 7 shows that there were no statistically significant scores between the experimental and control male groups at the beginning of the study. That is, they were roughly equated on the test variables. It can be noted, however, that on the SRA Youth Inventory the experimental males had slightly more expressed problems in all the areas but one, that of Health.

The crucial test of the effectiveness of the course was made as follows: the experimental male and control male groups were compared in January on the post-test to see what change, if any, had taken place. It was assumed that if the course had an effect besides other school and out of school activities on the experimental group the difference between it and the control group should have become statistically significant.

Table 8. Post-test male differences in mean scores of experimental and control groups on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Experimental		Control		Difference		t
	N=15		N=15		Between		
	M	S D	M	S D	Means		value
SRA Youth Inventory:							
My School	5.67	3.41	4.67	3.15	1.00		.806
Looking Ahead	10.80	6.59	7.60	5.54	3.20		1.391
About Myself	5.67	4.61	4.93	4.06	.74		.451
Getting Along With Others	6.07	5.49	5.00	4.29	1.07		.575
My Home and Family	2.87	4.69	3.33	5.30	.46		.243
Boy Meets Girl	3.40	4.54	4.60	4.22	1.20		.723
Health	1.73	1.81	2.33	1.89	.60		.858
Things in General	3.33	4.90	2.73	2.67	.60		.403
Use of Sources of Information:							
	11.93	5.86	13.20	6.05	1.27		.555

Table 8 shows that there were no statistically significant scores between the two groups at the end of the study on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information. This seems to indicate that, with respect to the males, exposure to the course did not result in any significant differences between the experimental group and the control group. Table 8 does show that on the post-test the control males were higher on the Use of Sources of Information which might indicate that other factors besides the course were operating on what was learned with regard to this particular area since the experimental group were higher on the pre-test. However, at no time, either on the pre-test or on the post-test comparisons, were there any statistically significant differences between the experimental male and the control male groups.

In addition to the comparison on an experimental and control basis the same groups were analyzed on a pre-test and post-test basis so that the trends of the scores might be more easily identified. That is, whether the scores changed in a favorable or an unfavorable direction and whether that change was statistically significant or not. A favorable direction on the SRA Youth Inventory was one in which there were fewer expressed problems at the end than at the beginning of the investigation. A favorable direction on the Use of Sources of Information was an increase in the mean score. The results of the pre-test and post-test for the males are listed in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9. Experimental male differences in mean scores of pre-test and post-test on SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Pre-test		Post-Test		Difference Between	t value
	M	S D	M	S D		
<b>SRA Youth Inventory:</b>						
My School	7.66	4.55	5.67	3.41	1.99	.861
Looking Ahead	13.67	5.77	10.80	6.59	2.87	1.225
About Myself	8.33	7.18	5.67	4.61	2.66	1.166
Getting Along With Others	8.33	5.45	6.07	5.49	2.26	1.092
My Home and Family	4.33	6.33	2.87	4.69	1.46	.693
Boy Meets Girl	7.13	6.58	3.40	4.54	3.73	1.745
Health	2.47	2.50	1.73	1.81	.74	.897
Things in General	5.47	4.98	3.33	4.90	2.14	1.146
<b>Use of Sources of Information:</b>						
	10.00	5.14	11.93	5.86	1.93	.894



Table 10. Control male differences in mean scores of pre-test and post-test on SRA Youth Inventory and Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	t
	N=15		N=15			
	M	S D	M	S D	Means	:
<b>SRA Youth Inventory:</b>						
My School	5.47	3.28	4.67	3.15	.80	.658
Looking Ahead	13.07	6.74	7.60	5.54	5.47	2.347*
About Myself	7.07	5.62	4.93	4.06	2.14	1.157
Getting Along						
With Others	7.93	6.79	5.00	4.29	2.93	1.363
My Home and						
Family	3.20	3.67	3.33	5.30	.13	.076
Boy Meets Girl	6.27	5.69	4.60	4.22	1.67	.884
Health	3.20	2.51	2.33	1.89	.87	1.037
Things in General	4.87	6.33	2.73	2.67	2.14	1.169
<b>Use of Sources of Information:</b>						
	9.50	7.15	13.20	6.05	3.70	1.479

\*significant at five per cent level.

The first thing that should be noted in Tables 9 and 10 is that, with only one exception, on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information the scores changed in a favorable direction for both groups. The one exception was the area of My Home and Family in the control group where the change was slightly in the unfavorable direction.

However, there was only one statistically significant difference in the pre-test and post-test results. On the Looking Ahead section, the control group improved significantly. The changes made in the rest of the test scores in Tables 9 and 10 were about evenly divided with the experimental males making greater changes in some areas while the control males made greater changes in other areas.

Since both groups changed in a favorable direction and since the experimental group did not make any significantly larger changes than the control group apparently the change that did take place was not dependent on orientation.

In general then, it can be concluded from the results obtained on the males that the course did not have a significant effect on the experimental group. Since both groups changed in the favorable direction and to about the same extent, although the amount of change was not statistically significant, the obtained shifts probably were due to other school and out of school activities rather than to the specific course evaluated in this investigation.

Females. The females were evaluated in the same way as the males. The experimental and control groups were compared in September on the pre-test to see if they were successfully matched. If the matching was successful then the two groups would be approximately equal at the beginning of the investigation.

Table 11. Pre-test female differences in mean scores of experimental and control groups on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	:Experimental:		Control		:Difference: t	
	: N=18 :		: N=11 :		: Between :value	
	: M :	: S D :	: M :	: S D :	: Means :	:
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	8.00	5.49	4.18	2.29	3.82	2.513**
Looking Ahead	13.89	8.89	9.18	5.26	4.71	1.732
About Myself	10.89	7.79	6.36	3.94	4.53	2.004
Getting Along With Others	10.06	6.82	6.00	4.02	4.06	1.943
My Home and Family	6.17	7.21	1.73	2.34	4.44	2.337*
Boy Meets Girl	5.94	5.42	1.73	1.28	4.21	3.073***
Health	5.17	4.70	2.27	1.29	2.90	2.397*
Things in General	7.11	7.56	2.36	3.77	4.75	2.123*
Use of Sources of Information:	10.53	5.46	14.90	5.47	4.37	1.977

\*significant at five per cent level.

\*\*significant at two per cent level.

\*\*\*significant at one per cent level.

From Table 11 it can be noted that there are a number of statistically significant differences between the experimental female and the control female groups at the beginning of the study. Besides the significant differences given in Table 11 the About Myself, Getting Along With Others and Use of Sources of Information scores were almost statistically significant at the five per cent level. It is apparent from this that the matching of the female groups was unsuccessful at the beginning of the investigation.

The experimental female and control female groups were compared again in January on the post-test to determine whether the differences were still significant and if they were not to discover the nature of the changes.

Table 12. Post-test female differences in mean scores of experimental and control groups on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

Test	: Experimental :		: Control :		: Difference: t	
	: N=18 :		: N=11 :		: Between: value	
	: M :	: S D :	: M :	: S D :	: Means :	:
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	6.39	4.11	3.27	2.30	3.12	2.516**
Looking Ahead	8.33	7.47	6.00	8.72	2.33	.706
About Myself	7.72	7.60	3.27	2.18	4.45	2.259*
Getting Along						
With Others	5.72	5.13	4.64	5.56	1.08	.502
My Home and						
Family	6.44	9.04	1.36	1.44	5.08	2.268*
Boy Meets Girl	3.50	3.80	1.91	2.50	1.59	1.303
Health	3.78	4.13	2.09	1.57	1.69	1.509
Things in General	3.50	4.66	2.45	5.30	1.05	.520
Use of Sources of						
Information:	12.29	5.61	15.91	6.21	3.62	1.502

\*significant at five per cent level.

\*\*significant at two per cent level.

Table 12 shows that the differences between the groups were still statistically significant in some cases in January, but that the number had decreased. This decrease in the statistically significant differences from September to January can partially be explained by the fact that the experimental group, with only one exception, made greater changes in a favorable direction than did the control group. This had a tendency to make the groups more similar at the end of the investigation than they were at the beginning.

The same female groups were analyzed on a pre-test and post-test basis so that the trend of the scores might be more easily identified. A change in a favorable direction for the female scores was the same as it was for the male scores. The results

of the pre-test and post-test for the females are listed in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Experimental female differences in mean scores of pre-test and post-test on SRA Youth Inventory and Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	t
	N=18		N=18			
	M	S D	M	S D	Means	
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	8.00	5.49	6.39	4.11	1.61	.969
Looking Ahead	13.89	8.89	8.33	7.47	5.56	1.972
About Myself	10.89	7.79	7.72	7.60	3.17	1.201
Getting Along						
With Others	10.06	6.82	5.72	5.13	4.34	2.096*
My Home and						
Family	6.17	7.21	6.44	9.04	.27	.097
Boy Meets Girl	5.94	5.42	3.50	3.80	2.44	1.520
Health	5.17	4.70	3.78	4.13	1.39	.916
Things in General	7.11	7.56	3.50	4.66	3.61	1.679
Use of Sources of						
Information:	10.53	5.46	12.29	5.61	1.76	.912

\*significant at five per cent level.

Table 14. Control female differences in mean scores of pre-test and post-test on SRA Youth Inventory and Use of Sources of Information.

Test	Pre-test		Post-test		Difference	t
	N=11		N=11			
	M	S D	M	S D	Means	
SRA Youth Inventory:						
My School	4.18	2.29	3.27	2.30	.91	.883
Looking Ahead	9.18	5.26	6.00	8.72	3.18	.988
About Myself	6.36	3.94	3.27	2.18	3.09	2.161*
Getting Along						
With Others	6.00	4.02	4.64	5.56	1.36	.627
My Home and						
Family	1.73	2.34	1.36	1.44	.37	.427
Boy Meets Girl	1.73	1.28	1.91	2.50	.18	.202
Health	2.27	1.29	2.09	1.57	.18	.280
Things in General	2.36	3.77	2.45	5.30	.09	.044
Use of Sources of						
Information:	14.91	5.47	15.91	6.21	1.00	.385

\*significant at five per cent level.

Table 13 reveals that the scores for the experimental females on all but My Home and Family changed in a favorable direction on both the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information. However, there was only one statistically significant change and that was in the Getting Along With Others section.

In Table 14 approximately the same results were found for the control females with the only exception to favorable change being in the Boy Meets Girl section while the only statistically significant change was in the About Myself section.

Since the changes from the pre-test to the post-test for both the experimental and control female groups were in a favorable direction even though the experimental group made larger changes, apparently the change for the females, like the males, was not dependent on orientation.

Although the female groups were not matched at the beginning of the investigation and therefore it is difficult to say just what effect, if any, orientation had on them it can be concluded from the data in Table 13 that the course did not have a statistically significant effect on the experimental group. However, the evidence for the females was not as conclusive as it was for the males.

Basic Difficulty Scale. Since the suggested use of the Basic Difficulty score is as a rough screening device to discover those with serious personal problems it is somewhat different than the other scores obtained from the SRA Youth Inventory and is treated separately. In September the percentile for

the experimental males was 61 while for the control males it was 58. For the experimental females the percentile was 66 and for the female control it was 29. The means on which these percentiles were based indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups in September although the difference between the two female groups was almost significant at the five per cent level.

In January the experimental males dropped to the 41st percentile while the control males dropped to the 39th percentile. The difference in the means of these groups was still not statistically significant but when the experimental females dropped to the 54th percentile and the control females dropped to the 17th percentile the difference in their means became statistically significant at the five per cent level.

On a pre-test and post-test basis it was found that all the scores moved in a favorable direction but the changes were not large enough to make them statistically significant.

The Basic Difficulty score also seems to indicate that orientation had little, if any, effect on the experimental group as far as the SRA Youth Inventory was concerned.

#### Critique of Course

One object of this study was to try to discover ways in which the orientation course might be improved if it was indicated that such improvement was needed. Perhaps one improvement might be to divide the class according to the students previous

school background since about half of the freshman come from the Ellinwood Jr. High while the rest come from other schools. This should have a tendency to make the groups more homogeneous although this could have the effect of making the group coming from other schools more heterogeneous in that the one certain thing they would have in common would be that they did not come from the Ellinwood Jr. High. The group coming from other schools should take orientation the first semester since they would be less familiar with the school system in general.

Another improvement that might increase the effectiveness of the course would be to make allowance for counseling with students in orientation where it is indicated by tests taken, problems expressed or behavior observed.

With respect to the content of the course it would seem evident from the results of this study that there needs to be either a greater emphasis or a new emphasis on personal and social problems including problems dealing with health. The area dealing with information also needs to be made more effective if that objective of the course is to be attained.

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In evaluating the "orientation" course at Ellinwood Rural High School the experimental-control group method of evaluation was used with a pre-test and post-test given to each group.



When the ninth grade class was compared on a male-female basis there was very little difference between the two groups in their scores on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

In comparing the males and females with the publisher's norms it was discovered that at the beginning the majority of the class had scores which fell between the 50th and 75th percentile. After one semester these scores, in general, had moved closer to the 50th percentile with approximately one half dropping to the 25th to 50th percentile range which was in a more favorable direction.

There were no statistically significant differences between the experimental males and the control males either at the beginning of the investigation or at the end. This would indicate that the course did not have enough of an effect on the males to make their change statistically significant.

The scores of the males, when analyzed on a pre-test and post-test basis, were found to change in a favorable direction with only one exception in the control group. The control males also had one statistically significant change in the Looking Ahead section of the SRA Youth Inventory. Otherwise, there were no statistically significant differences.

Differences between the experimental female and control female groups on the pre-testing were found to be statistically significant in five areas and almost statistically significant

in three additional areas so apparently they were unsuccessfully matched at the beginning of this investigation. The differences were still statistically significant in three areas in January but since the number of these differences had decreased apparently the two groups were more alike at the end than at the beginning of the experiment.

The majority of the scores of the females, like the males, on a pre-test and post-test basis moved in a favorable direction. There was only one statistically significant difference in the experimental female group in the area, Getting Along With Others, and only one statistically significant difference in the control female group in the area, About Myself.

The results obtained in this investigation in some instances agreed and in other instances disagreed with the generalizations made by Hoppock (6). The investigator can only speculate as to why orientation, in this investigation, seemed to have little effect on the experimental group.

There is the possibility that a course in orientation for ninth grade students might not be able to achieve the objectives desired. This could be due to the nature of the objectives, the appropriateness of the materials being taught, the ability of the teacher to get the students to respond to this type of course, or perhaps students of the ninth grade level do not have the interest or ability to get the most from a course of the nature of orientation.

If orientation actually did achieve the desired objectives then the seeming lack of success reported here may be due to the instruments used to measure a course of this nature. Most of the change taking place was a change in attitudes and it was very difficult to say with any real assurance that the tests used really measured the actual change taking place in the students. Since ninth grade students are in a period of such great and varied change anyway, this may make it even more difficult for any test to measure their real changes in attitudes.

It might be worthwhile in the way of further research to make a follow up of these groups to see how they compare after having been in high school for two or three years. This might help determine whether the students continued to decrease in their number of expressed problems as the trend shows in this investigation.

Another possibility might be to give orientation to tenth, eleventh or twelfth grade students with about the same course content although with perhaps a little more emphasis on occupational information and guidance. This should help to discover at what age orientation is most applicable for high school students.

Further research also needs to be done on tests used to measure attitudes. With better attitude measuring instruments it would be possible to better evaluate a course like orientation.

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AN EXPLORATORY EVALUATION  
OF A GROUP GUIDANCE COURSE

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation was to evaluate the "Orientation" course required for ninth grade students in the Ellinwood Rural High School, Ellinwood, Kansas. At the time this investigation began the course had been offered for two years. The idea for the course originated with and was carried out by R. M. Schadt, Superintendent of Schools.

He had felt and expressed the need for an evaluation to determine whether the course was meeting the needs of the freshman in an area which had previously been neglected and if it were meeting the needs, in what areas was it succeeding and if not, in what areas was it failing. Schadt listed the following as objectives of the course:

1. To assist the members of the freshman class to acquire a feeling that they belong to the high school group or are "at home".
2. To impart certain information that will be useful to all students.
3. To foster attitudes and habits that will be useful to all students.
4. To help with any personal and social problems that need resolving to enable the students to profit most from a high school education.
5. To accumulate certain data about the members of the class that may become a part of the personal file to be used during high school for guidance purposes.
6. To help the student to see his relation to the community, the state, the nation and the world.

## METHOD

This evaluation was conducted by using the control and experimental group method with a pre-test at the beginning of the investigation and a post-test at the end. This was made possible by the fact that approximately one half of the ninth grade took "Orientation" the first semester and the rest took it the second semester.

The tests used in making this study were the SRA Youth Inventory and the Iowa Use of Sources of Information. These tests were selected because the objectives of the course could best be evaluated by them. Since the SRA Youth Inventory was subdivided it was possible to evaluate not only the overall course but also the specific areas into which "Orientation" was divided. The Iowa Use of Sources of Information was included to measure the change in quantity of information possessed and used correctly by the students.

## RESULTS

The results of this investigation were based first on a description of the class on test variables. In describing the ninth grade a comparison of all females with all males was made and then a comparison was made of these two groups with the publisher's norms.

The evaluation of the course was made by dividing the ninth grade on a male-female basis. The males were analyzed on an



experimental and control group basis to see what change, if any, had taken place, and then they were analyzed on a pre-test and post-test basis to see what the trend of their scores were. The same process was used for the females.

#### SUMMARY

When the ninth grade class was compared on a male-female basis there was very little difference between the two groups in their scores on the SRA Youth Inventory and the Use of Sources of Information.

In comparing the males and females with the publisher's norms it was discovered that at the beginning the majority of the class had scores which fell between the 50th and 75th percentile. After one semester these scores, in general, had moved closer to the 50th percentile with approximately one half dropping to the 25th to 50th percentile range which was in a more favorable direction.

There were no statistically significant differences between the experimental males and the control males either at the beginning of the investigation or at the end. This would indicate that the course did not have enough of an effect on the males to make their change statistically significant.

The scores of the males, when analyzed on a pre-test and post-test basis, were found to change in a favorable direction with only one exception in the control group. The control males also had one statistically significant change in the Looking

Ahead section of the SRA Youth Inventory. Otherwise, there were no statistically significant differences.

Differences between the experimental female and control female groups on the pre-testing were found to be statistically significant in five areas and almost statistically significant in three additional areas so apparently they were unsuccessfully matched at the beginning of this investigation. The differences were still statistically significant in three areas in January but since the number of these differences had decreased apparently the two groups were more alike at the end than at the beginning of the experiment.

The majority of the scores of the females, like the males, on a pre-test and post-test basis moved in a favorable direction. There was only one statistically significant difference in the experimental female group in the area, Getting Along With Others, and only one statistically significant difference in the control female group in the area, About Myself.

In general, "Orientation" did not have a statistically significant effect on those enrolled in it for one semester as measured by the SRA Youth Inventory and the Iowa Use of Sources of Information.