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EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF THREE METHODS OF STUDY SKILL
GROUP INTERVENTION WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL UNDERACHIEVERS

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

Ed.D. 1982

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

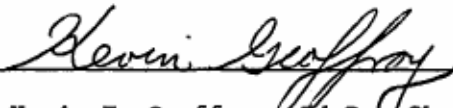
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
George Ira Fenigsohn
May 1982

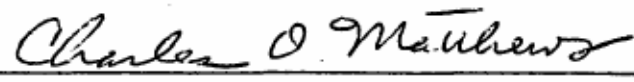
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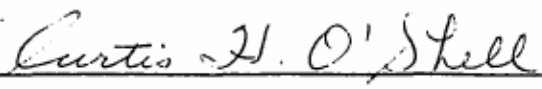
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EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF THREE METHODS
OF STUDY SKILL GROUP INTERVENTION
WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL
UNDERACHIEVERS

Chapter 1

Introduction

A. Justification for Study

Low achieving students present counselors and teachers with complex problems, and ways to deal with the students are not always apparent. Students with a long history of poor achievement have developed poor study skills, poor attitudes towards school, and, at the very least, poor images of themselves as students. Most students must overcome these impediments to learning; the turnaround is normally evidenced by good but not gigantic strides. Doyle, Gottlieb, Schneider. (1979, p. 141)

Boosting academic averages through improved study skills and habits and developing more positive levels of academic attitude in marginal learners has long been a problem in public schools. The middle school years find numerous students unprepared to cope with the transition from elementary methodology and curriculum to the more vigorous and complex seventh and eighth grade cognitive and behavioral demands. Many students not only lack study skills and competencies required for passing achievement, they have developed self defeating and apathetic attitudes which hinder basic performances. Martin, Marx and Martin (1980) state, "Chronic school failure is a problem experienced by an unfortunately high number of adolescent students who demonstrate no significant intellectual incapacity. Characterized by general apathy, depression, absenteeism, tardiness, irresponsibility, and unreliability, adolescent chronic underachievers present severe problems to school teachers, counselors, and administrators who often feel impotent in their interactions with them." (p. 109)

Approximately 20% of all seventh and eighth graders at Poquoson Middle School in Poquoson, Va. fail academic courses (English, Science, Math or Social Studies) each semester and most are intellectually capable of improved achievement. These students have poor attitudes and lack

knowledge of proper study skills to help themselves and, as the year progresses develop negative self-images regarding their ability to pass these courses.

Parents are also searching for increased academic performance by their children. In a 1981 Gallop Poll, thirty-nine percent of parents questioned requested a "great deal" of improvement on the schools emphasis on reading, writing and computation. Thirty-one percent replied that a "great deal" of improvement was needed on student progress and effort. Seventy percent called for more stress on academic basics (Williams, 1981). Thus parents are clearly interested in having their children learn and compete in a more productive and efficient manner.

The underlying problem is how properly to motivate young adolescents towards increased effort in the classroom. In the study three approaches towards improving study skills and academic attitude were examined. The three used a common situation, the group experience, to convey three distinctly different philosophies. Following is a brief overview of these methods.

The rational-emotive approach stresses personal responsibility and teaches rational, pragmatic solutions to academic problems. By attacking the "blame factor" which is so common to adolescents, the group leader guides the students towards discussing and implementing solutions to their own personal classroom failures. Rather than allow the students to adopt an all familiar defeatist attitude, the group members are urged to examine objectively the reasons for failure and then actively pursue ways to overcome these reasons. Practical study skill instruction is an adjunct to the rational-emotive approach. There has been little research using

this particular method to foster academic improvement with adolescents in small groups and thus this appears to be a fruitful area for study.

The Structured Study-Skill approach takes the more traditional approach of introducing skills to improve daily behavior which in turn will improve attitude. This didactic approach concerns itself with procedures and techniques and thus is more interested in goal directed practiced skill implementation than with lengthy examination of causes of failure. Structured group activities provides nine intensive opportunities for the leader to provide useful skills for the students to implement in their daily homework and classwork assignments. The leader also fosters discussion as to the rationale behind the techniques. This approach is most often utilized in college and high school study skill classes and provides a good comparison treatment to the rational-emotive group.

The third model is that of Affective Education. Its premise is that by attending to the underlying personality dynamics associated with academic failure the student, through a cathartic group experience, is better able to cope with personal and social problems and thus becomes able to deal with academic ones. This is a client-centered, unstructured approach with formal study skill instruction receiving less emphasis than activities concerning social adjustment and academic motivation. Little research has been carried out using this method with middle school pupils and thus further study is needed.

The common goal of all three above mentioned groups is to maximize student achievement. The groups are thus based upon the central tenet that the students can improve academic achievement and attitude through the group experience. The justification of the study is to investigate

the needs of academically deficient students and the proper ways to attend to those needs.

B. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to seek the answer to the following question: Using small group interaction, which of three types of strategies best influence positive academic achievement and academic attitudinal changes in seventh and eighth grade low achievers?

Inherent in this study is an examination of the constructs or traits which most often hinder academic progress. Other questions that are examined: Is the rational-emotive approach an effective and proper one for young adolescents? Is skill building alone enough to improve a student's academic average and attitude? Is treating the emotional, affective component of young adolescents the trait to focus upon in striving to improve academic progress?

C. Theoretical Rationale

The review of theory pertaining to the proposed study is divided into three basic areas. Initially discussed is the theory base relative to the utilization of the rational-emotive technique. The purpose of inclusion in the study of Structured Study Skills and Affective Education as treatment methods will then conclude the Theoretical Rationale.

Rational-Emotive Counseling is both a theory and technique which, when applied in the group setting, shows promise for promoting positive academic achievement and improved academic attitude. The three facets of this model which shall be addressed in this theoretical rationale are: rational-emotive counseling in theory and technique; as applied to behavioral change in children; and rational-emotive counseling in the group

situation.

Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET) was developed by Dr. Albert Ellis in the late 1950's. According to Corey (1977):

It is a school of psychotherapy, based on the assumption that human beings are born with a potential for both rational, straight thinking and irrational, crooked thinking. People have predispositions for self-preservation, happiness, thinking and verbalizing, loving, communion with others and growth and self-actualization. They also have propensities for self-destruction, avoidance of thought, procrastination, endless repetition of mistakes, superstition, intolerance, perfectionism and self-blame, and avoidance of actualization of growth potential. (p. 143)

RET is essentially based on confrontation and reindoctrination of value systems and beliefs. It stresses full responsibility, decision making and self-control over personal behavior. It refutes, as part of its basic theory, a number of "shoulds" or irrational ideas often held by middle school students such as: "it is easier to avoid rather than face certain life difficulties," "it is awful when things don't go our way," "human unhappiness is externally caused and past history is the main cause of one's present behavior." The goal of RET is thus, "The minimization of the client's central self-defeating outlook and his/her acquiring a more realistic, tolerant philosophy of life." (Corey, p. 146)

The technical aspects of RET are based upon the observations of Epictetus 2000 years ago: The things that occur do not upset you - but your view of those things does." Ellis (1977) uses an A-B-C-D-E approach which is well suited, with some adjustment for developmental level, for use with middle school age children. "A" is an activating experience, "C" an emotional consequence of that experience and "B" an individual's belief about the experience - either rational or irrational. "D" is the disputing of irrational beliefs and "E" is the development of new and

healthy behaviors.

As applied to adolescents, RET has given rise to Rational Emotive Education by Knaus (1975) who terms it a preventive, interventionist approach by which children can be taught sane mental health concepts and skills. It emphasizes positive self-acceptance, critical and logical thought processes and the use of scientific methods to approach self-understanding and problem solving. Meichenbaum and Goodman (1971) refer to studies in which they teach second grade children to talk aloud to themselves to develop self-control and increase self concept. Thus they "dispute by doing" irrational beliefs and behaviors.

The rationale of using RET in a group setting is well outlined by Ellis. He lists sixteen benefits which will reasonably apply in a group situation to treatment of low academic performers. Among these are: accepting reality and trying to change it through concerted work rather than whining demands, understanding how we think and how muddled thoughts cause negative behavior, the performance of activity-oriented homework assignments by the group, role playing with group members, the sharing and learning of RET techniques through group process, the benefit of group feedback, the observation of progress by members using RET techniques, the educational and didactic nature of RET groups including explanations, information giving and the discussing of problem solving techniques. One of the few RET workshops to improve study skills was discussed by Taylor (1975). Members (college level) who had completed the group sessions showed an average per student gain of .53 (on a 4-point scale) and reported improved study attitudes on a self-report inventory.

Thus, as presented in the above comments, group treatment using rational-emotive methodology to improve academic performance and attitude is a valid and justifiable concept. Applying RET to middle school, young adolescents in a group situation is a research area in which few practical studies have been accomplished.

The rationale of including a structural study-skill group in the study is next presented. A discussion of the necessity of study-skill instruction itself will be followed by a theory base review of structured, counselor-centered groups.

Robyak (1977) in describing the necessity for study-skill training states that, "marginal academic performance is a result of ineffective study skills which can be remediated through instruction in effective study skills" (p. 171). Obtaining academic skills and developing proper study habits are two necessities of middle school classroom success. The typical seventh or eighth grader may have the intellectual ability to comprehend the material at hand but is often weak on how to study at home, prepare and take tests, organize notes, follow directions and other such applied study procedures.

The necessity for a seventh grade study skill group is presented by Wagner (1961) who states:

It is all too obvious that the teaching of good study habits must come early in a student's academic career. Certainly the development effective study habits must follow general principles of human development, i.e., the student's developmental pattern moves from simple to complicated stages, from general to specific, and from primitive to more sophisticated. Indeed it is not too early to introduce some of the devices contained in the manual (college level) during the elementary grades, provided that the principles and techniques are taught on an elementary and acceptable level of didactic and pedagogical soundness. (p. 3)

That knowledge of proper study habits and skills is correlated to academic achievement is well documented by the strong correlation coefficients of the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument when scores are compared to GPA's on college, high school and middle school levels.

In one such study form H of the SSHA (the form to be utilized in the proposed study) was administered to 3,731 students in grades seven through twelve. Correlations between SSHA total score and grades were "without exception statistically significant ranging from .31 to .85 with a mean of .55." (p. 19 of the SSHA manual).

The high-authority, leader-structured nature of study skill group is justified by the Chestnut and Gilbreath study (1969) which demonstrates that group counseling is particularly effective when underachievers experience a fairly high authority leader-structured method of group counseling. The nine structured study-skill sessions feature a strong leader who sets limits, rules, goals and suggests various procedures to improve skills.

The rationale for inclusion of a cognitive, directive, didactic skill building group is thus based on the need for practical how-to-study training and the effectiveness and necessity of a strong leader in providing the content material.

The third treatment modality contained in the study is that of Affective Education. Other terms for this program are client-centered study group, non directive study group or unstructured group counseling. The term Affective Education is used throughout the study to refer to all of the above. Kilman and Henry (1979) refer to Affective Education as:

The attempt to increase the student's understanding

of human feelings and behaviors, to develop his/her ability to get along with others, and therefore to make him/her more motivated to learn. Problems in the affective domain may result in underachievement, or the students failure to measure up to his or her scholastic potential. Thus a recognized goal of affective education is to promote academic achievement by meeting the emotional needs of each student. (p. 217)

The acknowledged founder of the affective or client-centered school is Carl Rogers who is essentially concerned with the experiences of a person and his or her subjective and phenomenal world. Thus, developing self-directed skills in middle school students by allowing the students to express feelings that were previously denied to awareness is a prime rationale for the affective group. Greater potentialities are then discussed and developed so that problem awareness and resolution may be possible. The affective group counselor provides a safe climate to enhance student self-exploration. Increased spontaneity about expressing problems (rather than hiding or ignoring them) is fostered. The counselor generates genuineness, warmth, empathy, and respect to the student who in turn internalizes these feelings and applies them to dealing with significant others such as teachers as well as to self. Techniques of affective group counseling emphasizes trust and communication. Much role playing simulates student-teacher discussion of academic problems and thus mutual problem resolution.

As compared to the Structural Study-Skill group and the rational-emotive group, low rates of study-skill procedures or "mechanics" are found in the affective group. As in the Kilman and Henry study, the focus of treatment is on facilitating the student's affective adjustment (e.g., self-concept, ability to relate to others, maturation to learn). In the

spirit of open, non-structured communication typical topics include: attitude towards study in general, teacher-student relationships, relationships with friends, home problems, personal feelings and attitudes, habits of concentration and relaxation and how to organize time to the best advantage. Throughout the group sessions the counselor attempts to help students gain self-understanding and accept responsibility for making their own plans and carrying out their decisions.

A final rationale for the affective education group refers to the frequently mentioned term "self-actualization". Rogers terms this, "the inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the organism" (Shertzer and Stone, 1974, p. 216). Yalom's curative factors of instillation of hope, altruism, and catharsis will be prime features of the affective education group as well as interpersonal learning and cohesiveness.

The above mentioned Theoretical Rationale basically discusses three different programs all with the same goal: increased academic achievement and positive attitude change. These types of programs compare favorably with Chestnut's (1965) review of general group approaches to provide constructive aid for the underachieving student. He states, "The first (technique) is the study skills or orientation course where the major emphasis is upon the more obvious symptomatic problem areas related to academic underachievement. The second approach is the counseling opportunities which are designed to provide assistance with the underlying personality dynamics of underachievement" (p. 388).

D. Definition of Terms

Terms important to the understanding of the research and this dis-

cussion are operationally defined to achieve consistency in interpretation.

Transescence:

The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. (Vars, 1980)

Rational-Emotive Study Skill Group:

This group utilizes the basic principals of Rational-Emotive Therapy and employ RET techniques and group interaction to effect treatment.

Rational Belief:

A rational belief is one which is based on objective reality and considers only known, relevant facts of a situation.

Irrational Belief:

A belief that is based on unempirical, unrealistic, or illogical concepts may be termed an irrational belief.

Rational-Emotive Education:

REE developed by Knaus is an adjunct to RET for adolescents. It teaches the student to gain important emotional insights, to learn basic problem-solving skills and to examine the outcome of his/her efforts.

Structural Study-Skill Group:

This group emphasizes cognitive and behavioral procedures and strategies to reach goals of increased academic achievement. The primary concern of the group is the student's daily academic performance and it features coaching of study-skill material with leader directed format.

Affective Education Group:

This is a basically unstructured, nondirective client-centered group which stresses the affective realm as the cause of academic failure and poor attitude. This group is highly supportive and cathartic in nature and features high degrees of counselor empathy and warmth.

Academic Achievement Level:

The numerical grade point average of students in seventh and eighth grade English, Math, Social Studies and Science classes at Poquoson Middle School.

Academic Failure:

A score below 60 on any of the above mentioned courses is termed an academic failure in the study.

Academic Attitude:

This is operationally defined as a student's score on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument and Teacher Observation Tally. Included in attitude are work methods, study habits, educational acceptance and study orientation. (See enclosed instruments)

Teacher Observation Tally (TOT):

This is a naturalistic instrument designed to gauge teacher observation of a student's pre and post treatment study habits and study attitudes. (See enclosed form)

Group:

For the purposes of the study a group is a gathering of nine students who have a shared experience-academic failure, in at least one subject, and who have joined together for the purpose of improving their academic attitude and performance. The group meets 9 times and is lead by a group leader who conducts the group with a predetermined philosophy in mind.

E. General Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant statistical differences pre and post treatment between and within RET, Structural Study Skills, Affective

Education and Control group means on the three Dependent Variables: Academic Average, Survey of Study Habits and Attitude Scores, and Teacher Observation Tally.

The rationale for the above hypothesis is found in the fact that little research has been done using the RET procedure Structured Study Skills and the Affective model to influence academic average and attitude in transescents. Thus it is difficult to predict which of the four groups will be statistically more influential than the others.

F. Sample

The sample within the study is randomly selected from an accessible population of 65 seventh and eighth grade students at Poquoson Middle School (PMS) who have failed (59 average or below) one or more academic subjects (English, Science, Math or Social Studies) for a nine week period. Students who are strongly learning disabled (2 or more classes) are not included in the study. These students range between the ages of eleven and fourteen and due to the racial make-up of PMS are all white. Thirty-six students are selected on a random basis and are placed in one of four groups: three of treatment and one control. The students may leave treatment at any time. (See section 3A for more details on Sample).

G. Data Gathering

Data gathering is accomplished by three instruments. These are selected to measure constructs which are believed to be inherent in the improvement of academic average and attitude.

The first measure is pre and post treatment observation of student academic average in four core courses at PMS-English, Science, Math and

Social Studies. These are obtained from the teachers in numerical form. Scores below sixty are considered failing. This data is gathered at the conclusion of the first semester and immediately following nine treatment sessions.

Two other instruments in the experiment are directed to the constructs of treatment influence of study habits and academic attitude. Scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument are gathered before and after treatment. This is a self-report inventory with 100 statements concerning habits and attitudes that the students in the four groups are requested to respond to in a truthful manner. The Teacher Observation Tally is designed to be a companion instrument to the SSHA. This is a ten question naturalistic observation rating sheet designed to measure pre and post treatment change in study habits and attitudes as observed by the teachers of the students.

The above mentioned measures and instruments are not shown to the group leaders in order to prevent their "teaching to the test". The general philosophies of the three groups however is intended to influence positively the constructs that the instruments measure: academic average, study habits and academic attitude.

Further explanation of the above mentioned data gathering procedures is contained in section 3C-Instrumentation.

H. Limitations

There are several limitations in the study.

The population involved in the study is not truly representative of the racial and socioeconomic distribution of public school seventh grades in the United States. Poquoson seventh and eighth graders are all white

and generally represent a slightly upper middle class socioeconomic background. Thus generalization of results to the seventh and eighth grade population at large would be unwarranted.

The differential effects of group leader ability and personality are difficult to account for in the dependent variable results. This is a recognized problem in the proposed three leaders/three groups research design experiment. Tape recordings and material covered are provided to allow some examination of treatment procedures and leader style.

The reliability and validity of the Teacher Observation Tally is not as accurate as the other two instruments. It has been designed to complement the SSHA and is being included in this study for this purpose.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This chapter is divided into five sections which summarize both theory and research relevant to the study. These sections, which follow a brief introduction, are: (a) needs of population, (b) group research, (c) Rational-Emotive Therapy, (d) structured-study skills, and (e) affective approach. A summary will conclude Chapter Two.

The study at hand is the small group instruction and motivation of poorly skilled or reluctant learners to develop competencies and attitudes that will enable them to demonstrate increased academic success. The developing adolescent in the seventh and eighth grade has, for the first time, pressures on a cognitive and behavioral level which he or she is often inadequately trained to cope with. These weaknesses may be in organization, self-discipline, responsibility, test-taking skills, motivation, self-confidence, or a wide range of other skills and attitudes. The problem is then what type of treatment is most effective in an intensive nine session group experience.

Population and Needs of Population

The proper term for the eleven to fourteen year old age group which comprise the population in the experiment is "Transescence". Vars (1980) comments that the term was coined by Donald Eichhorn in 1966 and may be defined as: the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Other terms in both popular and research literature for this age group are: "late childhood," "pre-adolescence," "early adolescence" or "emerging adolescence." For review of research purposes "transescence" and "adolescence" may be used interchangeably.

The period of life termed by educators, psychologists, and the public as "adolescence" is one of the human organism's most difficult experiences. Erik Erikson states that, "Adolescence is a period fraught with the danger of role diffusion as youth seeks identity. Adolescents are now primarily concerned with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with occupational prototypes of the day. In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to refight many battles of earlier years. ...The 13 year old thus occasionally resembles the 3 year old in the way he relates to authority. He must reappraise his sense of identity" (Gordon, 1969, p. 251). Erikson's Eight Stages of Man include two that are inherent in seventh and eighth grade students - School Age (Industry v. Inferiority) and adolescence (Identity v. Identity Diffusion).

Havinghurst as cited by Blair, Jones and Simpson (1975) lists eight tasks that are particularly significant for the adolescent and that need much attention during the period:

1. achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes
2. achieving a masculine or feminine social role
3. accepting one's physique and using the body effectively
4. achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
5. preparing for marriage and family life
6. preparing for an economic career
7. acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior - developing an ideology
8. desiring and achieving socially respectable behavior.

Thus a public middle school must not only concern itself with matters of an academic nature, but focus some attention on the above eight tasks of the developing adolescent (Cole, 1981), (Lounsbury, 1980) and (Tobin, 1973).

Smart and Smart (1977) focus attention on the characteristics of adolescent thinking. Freedom, mobility and flexibility of adolescent thought as opposed to the child's rigid cognitions are now coming into play. Control of thought enables the adolescent to engage in more formal thinking. The ability to focus out irrelevant thoughts, take into account all premises or pertinent information and organize information is often difficult for the young adolescent but this must be developed for greater achievement. The twelve or thirteen year old is also just beginning to develop combinational systems which vary one factor at a time keeping all others equal and then determine the effect of one more factor.

The above intellectual abilities are only in the formative stage in middle school children. Academic failure may thus be due to the slow maturation of a student's cognitive ability coupled with a low self-concept, which is often quite fragile at this vulnerable stage.

For Blair et al., the term "need" is cited as, "The lack of something that if present would further the welfare of the organism. ...Needs are descriptive constructs applied to the organism by an observer" (p. 364). When a need exists and is unsatisfied, the individual becomes restless and tense (Beery, 1975). When a need is completely satisfied, a temporary or momentary state of equilibrium is established and activity towards the appropriate goal ceases. Social and personal needs are grouped into five areas: needs for status, need for security, need for affection, need for independence and need for achievement. Transescent's whose needs are

thwarted may develop adjustment mechanisms such as aggression, compensation, projection, repression, negativism, withdrawal, regression and development or physical ailments (Kelly, 1979), and (Vriend, 1976). The need for achievement is one which the middle school student is faced with every day. His or her drive to reach this need, such as motivation and study, is continually being monitored in the form of written grades and verbal comments. The inability to satisfy achievement needs and the unfortunate result of this inability, such as academic failure, creates a young adolescent who often demonstrates mild depression, lack of self-confidence and feelings of inadequacy and hostility towards school and academic matters (Sherman, 1975), and (Baughman, 1972).

The adolescent need for achievement and motivation is discussed by Smart and Smart. They describe achievement as doing something that is worth doing and doing it well. They relate it to Erikson's stage of Industry in which doing well and being able to do well are important components. They describe studies of achievement behavior of white middle-class children (the population to be treated in this study) as being more achievement oriented than that of other cultures and ethnic origins. They also relate a study on children's attitudes towards achievement which suggest that children's self reward for achievement demonstrates the ways in which their achievements are evaluated and rewarded in the cultural environment in which they are growing up.

Dragastein and Elder (1975) support the concept that when parents have unrealistically high aspirations for the child, the child may develop high aspirations which he cannot fulfill and thus ultimately become withdrawn and discouraged. They also review the Cramer, Bowerman

and Campbell (1966) study which found that parental practices and goals relevant to achievement training were relatively unrelated to the educational goals of black adolescents, while they were related for white youth.

Smart and Smart review family support, locus of control and discipline in the stimulation of achievement and cognitive development. They state, "Families promote intellectual growth in two main ways: by stimulating the child's desire for achievement and by offering experiences through which the child can grow mentally" (p. 451). Internal locus of control leading to autonomy is favorable to achievement behavior in the middle school pupil (Disque, 1973). Parental discipline is, for Smart and Smart, also important in that proper discipline fosters reason, security and self-esteem which in turn leads to greater ability to succeed in academic endeavors. Parental expectancy or faith in the child can lead the student into fulfilling expectations for achievement.

In the area of achievement motivation, Travers (1972) comments that a person may have a high need for achievement, but if no situation arises that may challenge his needs, then he will not show it. Achievement motivation is aroused by any task that challenges the individual (Frymier, 1974). Two important categories of transescent motivation are those of expectation of academic success and fear of academic failure. The former is goal directed and a positive influence to motivation while the latter is negative and tends to hinder self-confidence and progress.

In summation, a key need for the transescent middle school student is that of achievement. Obtaining a "minimum daily requirement" of this need directly influences related needs for status, security, and affection. School, society, parents and peers place high value on adolescent

achievement and when it is not obtained, programs of remediation, such as study-skills groups, are required to help the student better fulfill his or her much required need for achievement.

Group

The concept of group and the motive for using the group experience has been a topic of wide research. Group experience in public schools is a common occurrence, for it appears to meet two main criteria - it is effective and efficient. Of group counseling, Shertzer and Stone (1974) state:

Group counseling appears to develop members' insights into their problems and feelings and helps them to arrive at some understanding of the causes of their concerns. Members talk about themselves, the things that disturb them and what they can do to improve themselves. Each one learns to express himself in actions, feelings, and attitudes. Members learn that they can interact and discuss with one another and that the group will help each person draw out his feelings. Alternate ways of behaving may be elicited and tried out in the group (p. 369).

The use of groups to provide the setting in which the three techniques may be implemented and examined is based in the practical nature of group interaction. Mahler (1969) quotes the members of the 1964 workshop on Research in Group Counseling as stating:

Group counseling is a dynamic interpersonal process involving the use of counseling techniques with normal individuals. The members of the group mutually explore, with the counselor, their problems and feelings in an attempt to modify their attitudes and values so that they are better able to deal with their developmental and educational situations. (p. 8)

Lewis (1970) in referring to the objectives of group counseling states, "The most acceptable lies in the positive use which can be made of the group situation to help the individual members reach their counseling goal. The counseling group represents, in a sense, a half-

way situation between the individual counseling relationship and the real world," (p. 117).

Bates (1972) and Lewis find that through group experience, members can gain a better perspective on themselves and their problems. Reality testing can be accomplished in a group as the counselor may simulate, through role playing or other exercises, real classroom situations or parent - student interactions. Support from group members will enable those students who lack self-confidence to gain skills in positive thinking. Group serves as an impetus to change to the student who might otherwise drift into apathy about his or her problems. Nonverbal students will be learning through vicarious means in the group situation. Lewis contends that group counseling, as compared to individual counseling, is more economical of the counselor's time and effort as the group members move together toward a common goal.

Harmon (1982) relates that groups may be used in remediation with students in their immediate environment to assist them in overcoming skill weaknesses. Group situations allow the leader to gather a needy population (in this case academic failures) and treat that population with a variety of processes. Not only does the content of the material introduced and discussed provide aid, so too does the group experience itself. Yalom (1975) lists eleven curative factors of the group experience which, properly utilized, could aid middle school students in increasing their academic ability and improving their attitude towards school endeavors. These factors are:

1. Instillation of hope
2. Universality

3. Imparting of information
4. Altruism
5. The corrective recapitulation of the primary family group
6. Development of socializing techniques
7. Imitative behavior
8. Interpersonal learning
9. Group cohesiveness
10. Catharsis
11. Existential factors

Of the eleven cited above instillation of hope, imparting of information, interpersonal learning and group cohesiveness are of special importance to a middle school, academically deficient group.

The structure and development of group activity and progress is described by Yalom, Tyra (1979) and Kacykowski (1979). Yalom sees three stages of group development which flow from orientation, hesitant participation and search for meaning to conflict and hierarchy development and finally cohesiveness or consensual group action. He states that, "The developmental phases are rarely well demarcated; there is considerable overlap and the boundaries between them are, at best, dim." (p. 312).

Within a single group session Kacykowski describes the relationships between four key elements. These are: unstructured material, unstructured approach; unstructured material, structured approach; structured material, unstructured approach; and structured material, structured approach. The method of utilization of various materials and approaches determines the daily activity of the group.

Tyra presents a four stage model to help the counselor facilitate

necessary tasks and maintenance functions within the group. These he notes as Structure, Involvement, Process and Awareness (SIPA).

Structuring is any warm-up activity which directs group members towards the main topic of the day. Energizing experiences and demonstrations would be types of structuring activities. Involvement finds each group member participating in an active or passive manner. The counselor demonstrates both types of involvement. Processing involves sharing of feelings and thoughts as to the groups' activity of that session. Awareness is the technique of relating the groups' activity to useful application in out of group, i.e. real life experience. Another term for awareness is life-skill building. These four may be utilized during a single session to focus upon various daily goals of the group.

Martin, Marx and Martin (1980) present a five stage group counseling program for underachievers that includes: counseling goals, pre-assessment, objectives, instructional activities and evaluation of learning and instruction.

Details of group treatment will be discussed as each of the three different techniques is reviewed. Following is a brief overview of several successful group programs.

A major problem in groups is the dropout or mortality rate. Kimlicka and Haight (1981) describe an attempt to decrease this rate with a personal commitment form which listed a number of suggestions of appropriate goals for the individuals in the group. They reduced attrition from twenty-five percent (in previous groups) to three percent.

Hoffman (1976) studied a fifth-grade group which utilized peer relationships in thirteen one-hour sessions to focus on peer relationships, academic difficulties, family problems and teacher - pupil interactions.

Although data-based evaluation was not provided, positive comments from parents, teachers and students did focus on the usefulness of the groups.

The results of an achievement motivation group for third through sixth graders is described by Silverman (1976). Eight one-half hour sessions over a three year period involved ninety students. These groups focused on self-concept, motivation, positive attention and interest in school. Seventy-eight percent showed a marked improvement in their report card grades.

The efficacy of group use in middle schools is well documented. Stamm and Nissman (1979) state, "Group counseling is effectively used with middle schoolers as interaction with peers seems to be compatible with their lifestyle. Comparing mutual concerns and questions helps the middle school child feel normal - a vital concern at this age" (p. 183).

Cole (1979) views middle school group work as, "an excellent arena for practicing communications skills that enhance peer and adult acceptance and seems to offer a greater degree of security to most middle schoolers than does an individual counseling session" (p. 294).

Miller and Pappas (1978) surveyed 110 middle school counselors. Eighty-four percent replied that identifying students in need of special assistance was a function of the middle school counselor while eighty percent stated that conducting small group counseling for selected student populations was important.

The 1977 survey on The Status of Elementary and Middle School Guidance in Virginia (Ball, 1977) indicated that Virginia Elementary and Middle School counselors viewed counseling groups second in importance to only counseling individuals. Counseling with groups occupied fifteen

percent of counselors time in the survey.

That group counseling is effective over long periods of time is documented by Doyle, Gotllieb and Schneider (1979) and Riester and Tanner (1980). The latter conducted two to eight year follow-up research in which a majority of the participants reported that the group was influential in attaining the stated group goals, one of which was a positive attitude towards school. The positive future of group work with special groups in their environment is discussed by Wilson and Matter (1982). They see groups as a counseling trend as they comment, "With the increased number of younger children to be served and the possible decrease in number of compulsory schooling years, the counselor will likely find group activities of increasing importance to ensure a firm grounding in the child's earliest years of school" (p. 356).

Evaluation of group treatment procedures in the realm of study skills finds formats and concepts which are common to most. The Chestnut (1965), Chestnut and Gilbreath (1969) and Bednor and Weinburg (1970) studies reviewed approximately thirty study skill group projects. Their findings are as follows:

Group treatment, including a control group, was found in almost all research reviewed. Groups commonly included ten or less members. Group nomenclature included: "group guidance," "non-directive groups," "diagnostic counseling approaches," "client-centered," "motivational," "affective education," "academic guidance," "remedial studies," and a "how-to-study course." Only when the objective was to compare group vs. individual counseling were single subjects utilized.

In the studies reviewed, approximately 25% could be termed unstructured or non-directive and few of these were deemed "truly signifi-

cant." The majority of successful study skill groups were thus conducted in a structured or directive manner.

The duration of time the subjects were exposed to treatment has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of the program. Experiments lasting longer than ten hours of treatment had a 75% rate of effectiveness in raising GPA's; while those lasting less than ten hours demonstrated a 37% positive result.

Common to all successful study skill programs is the effect of high therapeutic conditions (empathy, warmth and genuineness). Bednor and Weinberg state, "The higher the therapist-offered conditions, the more effective was the counseling and the greater the improvement in academic achievement" (p. 4).

The above-mentioned research found that those studies which utilized volunteers in treatment reported an 80% rate of positive change. When all of the subjects were "forced" to participate in experimental or control groups only about 55% reported positive findings.

When group counseling is used as an adjunct to a didactic academic studies program significant results were demonstrated. 75% of mixed (counseling plus skills) programs had higher GPA's while those "straight skill programs" demonstrated less significant results.

In those programs dealing with the constructs of academic achievement and attitudes, two types of dependent variables were most often used. GPA's and scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes or Wrenn's Inventory of Study Habits were employed pre and post treatment.

Bednor summarized the following variables as emerging as relevant treatment considerations: duration of counseling, structured versus unstructured counseling, levels of therapeutic conditions present dur-

ing counseling, group versus individual counseling, and volunteer versus forced subjects.

Group work in the middle school is a natural vehicle by which transescents in need of academic remediation may be treated. The varying educational, psychological and logistical needs of both counselors and students may be incorporated into the group experience with positive and rewarding results for all concerned.

Rational - Emotive Therapy

The following will be an overview of RET itself, as applied to children and as related to group research.

Any review of RET must rationally start with the psychologist Albert Ellis who first publicly presented the theory in 1955 and whose first text was Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy, published in 1962. Using his life experiences and clinical observations, Ellis developed RET as a method to treat the faulty belief systems which he saw truly made people miserable and which traditional psychotherapy seemed to ignore. Shertzer and Stone (1979) state, "Ellis came to believe that orthodox analytical procedures with their emphasis upon insight were not sufficient to enable his clients to overcome their deep seated fears and hostilities. Drawing upon his experiences as a private practitioner and his knowledge of behavioral learning theory, he formed Rational-Emotive Therapy" (p. 184).

Corey (1977) perceives RET as a highly didactic, action oriented model of therapy that stresses the role of thinking and belief systems as the root of personal problems. Humans adopt irrational beliefs and proceed to reindoctrinate themselves with self-defeating thoughts. Corey notes, "RET is cognitive/behavior/action oriented, and stresses thinking,

judging, analyzing, doing and redeciding. This model is didactic-directive. Therapy is a process of re-education" (p. 186).

Ellis (1973) lists numerous features of cognitive therapy in general and rational-emotive psychotherapy in particular. Cognitive therapies:

1. deal with beliefs, attitudes and values, not stimuli and responses
2. put man in the center of the universe
3. do not accept man the way he is - they work on creative thinking
4. are philosophic and reeducative
5. help individuals with a neater, saner balance between self and society
6. make maximum use of humanistic - scientific methodology
7. strike a balance between short and long range hedonism
8. employ a wide range of educational methods
9. are usually effective for pain reduction
10. cognitive therapies are usually accepting of human fallibility. (p. 9-14)

That humans are crippled by numerous self defeating irrational ideas which they persecute themselves with is a prim tenete of Ellis (1977).

These he terms "Musturbatory Ideologies" and include the following:

Main Irrational Ideas

1. I must be loved or approved by all.
2. I must be thoroughly competent, adequate, achieving in all possible respects to be worthwhile.
3. Human unhappiness is externally caused.
4. My past history is the all-important determinant of my present behavior.

5. There is a right, precise, perfect solution to all human problems and it is catastrophic if right solution is not found.
6. If something is dangerous or fearsome, I should be terribly concerned about it and dwell on the possibility of it occurring.
7. People are bad or wicked and should be severely blamed or punished for their villainy.
8. It's awful and catastrophic when things are not the way I would like them to be.
9. It is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.
10. I should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances. (p. 12-14)

Feeling "undepressed though frustrated" is a common theme in the works of Ellis (1975). He urges his clients to accept gracefully and realistically problems and that the greater the loss or frustration the greater the need for a philosophic, rational viewpoint. By careful examination of "shoulds" "oughts" and "musts" we can lead our lives with less guilt and anxiety and more self-discipline and happiness. By attacking irrational beliefs, Ellis (1973), feels that the client is then free to establish sensible beliefs and appropriate behaviors which are psychologically healthy and beneficial to the individual.

Morris and Kanitz (1975) list various positive RET research results in areas such as: public speaking anxiety, overcoming academic underachievement, general anxiety reduction, snake anxiety and suicidal clients. They conclude by stating, "There is a large amount of literature which supports RET as a therapy system" (p. 58).

The personality of Albert Ellis is quite dominate in the RET literature. He has been termed abrasive and impatient yet Weinrach (1980)

after an extensive interview states that, "RET is a humanistic theory and Al Ellis exudes humanism" (p. 153).

Lastly, RET is known for the rather active or even forceful role of the counselor in disputing a counselee's irrational beliefs. Johnson (1980) addresses this point by commenting that counselors who are more supportive and less confrontive can also effectively use Rational Therapy principles. He states, "Even Ellis indicates that RET can be successfully applied by less outgoing therapists who actively challenge and question the irrational ideas of clients. He (Ellis) also suggests that the ABC theory of personality disturbance, the main essence of RET, can be effectively used by non-RET therapists who wish to incorporate aspects of this theory into their own approaches to dealing with clients" (p. 49).

RET With Children

Knaus (1975) has done extensive work with RET principles and children. For Knaus the emphasis with children is not so much upon the "elegant solution" of disputing "irrational beliefs" (for their belief systems are still being formed), but rather upon the teaching of new and better ways to deal with old but common problems. Knaus has written a manual for elementary school teachers using the "inelegant solution" method of RET. He terms this technique Rational Emotive Education. The REE program targets basic rational-emotive concepts: feelings (feelings and thoughts are interwoven); mistake making (a part of the human condition and the learning process); and challenging (by questioning irrational assumptions one develops greater self-understanding, more positive self-concepts, problem solving techniques and critical thinking skills). REE has developed special activities that focus on irresponsibility, hopelessness and frustra-

tion in the school setting. The REE program with children combines rational-emotive psychotherapy, behavior modification, role playing and social modeling; all which may be utilized to influence a student's attitudes and study habits.

Ellis (1978) writing directly for parents and teachers concerning the motivation of children suggests that: we teach children to enjoy activities for fun; achievement takes patience, practice and perspiration; positive reinforcement is still the best motivator; achievement and popularity are not always the same; trial and error is an excellent way to learn about real life; and children need to be taught to laugh at themselves, which lessens anxiety about some external situation.

Dinkmeyer and Loscony (1980) offer numerous techniques for encouraging human behavior, especially in the school setting, which espouse RET beliefs. Among activities suggested are: relationship building and exploring, communication skills, self-awareness, focus on strengths, assets and resources and development of perceptual alternatives. They place emphasis on RET methodology as they state, "Beliefs are important. When our beliefs are irrational we become angry, depressed or afraid and thus immobilized. When our beliefs are rational, however, we become temporarily displeased or upset, but are soon mobilized to action" (p. 254). It is this action which can be utilized to stimulate academic motivation.

That the classroom is a proper arena for RET concepts is strongly promoted by Maultsby (1974). He describes Rational Behavior Therapy (RBT) and Rational Self-Counseling (RSC) which are based on RET concepts of self help and rational thinking. He notes that most schools counselors are approaching students the same way they did twenty-five years ago while

students' problems have far outgrown traditional approaches. Maultsby (1974) also views the rational concept as a viable alternative to other methods, "provided the students actually learn and use the techniques" (p. 447).

Hauck (1967) discusses the need for parents and teachers to behave towards children with rational tactics and to educate their children in rational beliefs. He states:

Any adult who uses rational therapy to help children will soon find his own disturbing emotions dwindle. He will become more and more convinced of his own irrationalities as he challenges those of the child. This by-product has the added benefit of making it easier for the child to live with the adult the more such counseling is done. (p. 129)

RET urges the student to "loosen up" his vigorous blaming of others for his or her problems and look at the total picture more objectively. Humor can stimulate more realistic communication so that concerns, fears or conflicts can be more easily explored. Huber (1978) refers to humor, as used in his presented case study, as effective in building rapport and an aid in "decatastrophizing" issues and making them appear more manageable. Greenburg (1966) utilizes satire on such topics as anxiety, worry, negative thinking and frustration. He follows the RET precept of allowing the child to carry foolish problems to an absurd conclusion and then laugh at the results. His "Seventeen Basic Pessimistic Philosophies" are an unusual twist to traditional counseling procedures.

Sparks (1978) and Kelly and Sweeny (1979) discuss goal setting and review typical faulty goals of adolescents which are well to be considered in the philosophy of a rational - emotive study skill group session. Ruble and Slevka (1975) describe the need for active confrontation of a student's irrational and sympathy seeking verbalizations. This often precipitates a

crisis (disputing an irrational belief) which may lead to faster and more effective growth and change.

Evidence for the efficacy of rational - emotive techniques in the education sphere derives from two lines of evidence: case studies and controlled experiments.

Di Guiseppe (1977) describes the use of behavior modification to establish rational self-statements in children. His program combined rational - emotive psychotherapy and behavior modification and included role playing, social modeling, fading and reinforcement of antecedent cognitions. Two case studies described significant, rapid gains when behavioral principles were employed to change the child's negative self-statements.

Meichenbaum and Goodman (1977) utilize rational - emotive teaching to train impulsive children to talk to themselves and reduce frustrations. Significant pre and post treatment results were found on Kagan's MFF test, performance subtests of the WISE and on the Porteus Maze. They term the process used a "systematic cognitive modification technique" and it appears it would have use in a study skills program.

Morris and Kanitz (1975) favorably evaluate Maultsby's use of Rational - Emotive Imagery (REI) to be utilized as a self-help exercise to develop more rational and desirable responses to a given situation, such as negative comments by a teacher or a peer.

RET and the Group

The utility of the group situation is addressed by Ellis (1977), who lists a number of curative factors of the RET oriented group. Among these are: group acceptance of reality; trying to overcome problems

through concerted work rather than through whining demands; role playing to mimic reality; learning of RET techniques through group process; and benefit of group feedback and observation of progress of others (p. 274).

Morris and Kanitz (1975) enumerate five RET group goals which may be applied to study skill acquisition, increased academic performance and improved attitude. These are: bringing to awareness problem areas, developing challenges or attacks on the problems, devising methods of bringing ideas or plans to attention, providing opportunities and plans for action and engaging in assessment of goal directed efforts (p. 68).

Ellis (1975) offers suggestions which may be utilized by a group leader dealing with academically deficient children. Among these are: have the students determine if the academic deficiency is a true handicap or if it is their definition of the problem which hinders the students' attitude; help the students accept problems realistically and gracefully, instead of whining; help the children develop determination to overcome serious frustrations; aid the students in examining shoulds, oughts and musts; and teach the students to keep busy mentally so that they will not worry about failure in a negative light.

Knaus (1975) reports on a group program using rational-emotive education lessons with inner-city seventeen and eighteen year old students with high absenteeism and academic failure rates. The program, effectively reduced subject failure rate, increased school attendance, increased self-concept, and socialization and ethical awareness, as compared to a passive, non-directive group and a no treatment control group" (p. 405). Taylor (1975) conducted a college level rational-emotive workshop on overcoming study blocks. His eight session REE group

resulted in improved GPA's (.53 average increase for individuals) and positive change on self-reported study attitudes of the participants.

Devoge (1977) discusses a group behavioral approach to RET with children. With a rational-emotive treatment group and a control group, she significantly reduced frustration, personal rejection and failure reaction in a group of children between the ages of eight and thirteen.

Cangelosi, Gressard and Mines (1980) review a high school "Rational Thinking Group" which met once a week for twelve weeks. An analysis of variance for treatment and control groups indicated statistically significant differences ($p < .01$) for three clusters: behavior, anxiety and happiness.

Clawson (1976) conducted a group experiment using Rational Self-Counseling (RSC) with 60 subjects. They received a 16 hour, eight week treatment course in the principles of RSC. The results indicated that, "RSC is effective in changing Internal-External Locus of Control whether internals or externals are treated" (p. 148).

Group research with transescents utilizing RET methods to influence academic averages, study habits and attitudes is not extensive. It is evident that more controlled experiments and follow-up work with these variables are needed to justify its use in the public school setting.

Structured Study-Skills

The second treatment to be reviewed is that of Structured Study Skills. This is a structured, directive, academic treatment modality that at times resembles a "how to" class in study skills while still fostering an atmosphere whereby students may discuss attitudes towards study and learning. Three facets of the literature will be reviewed: the purpose of study skill material in aiding achievement and attitude,

the necessity of the structured format, and actual research using the study skill technique.

Of the rationale regarding good study skills, Wrightstone (1972) comments, "Some people are born with greater abilities to learn than others, but poor study habits can make a poor student out of the brightest person. Good study habits will help any student - poor, average, or good - make the most of his abilities" (p. 5). Thus the study skill group purpose is to maximize the potential of all the students involved.

Smith (1970) notes that, in high school, very little emphasis is placed on the mastery of the best methods of study. He evaluates the results of a study at a large unnamed university where, of three hundred and twenty seniors, more than one third admitted they did not know how to study. He believes that before a student can make academic progress he/she must have an understanding of the basic skills necessary to learn properly. He lists the following procedures, which can and must be taught to students: efficiency, underlining, note-taking, recall, outlining, reviewing, library skills, interpreting visual aids, test-taking skills and proper study habits.

Farquhar (1960) lists similar topics as Smith, but also adds habits of concentration, establishment of routine, distribution of time, report writing, and study environment as needed concerns of all students. Brown and Holtzman (1964) and Naron (1961) also focus on proper attitude to study and list the following as common faults which may be discussed in a study-skill group: rationalization - examining self-deceiving attitudes; projection - blaming other persons (teachers) for problems; repression - not thinking about academic problems; withdrawal - getting away from the

problem by not taking action: and compensation - thinking you really do not wish to improve at all.

Martin, Marx and Martin (1980) note, "Since most underachieving students demonstrate a variety of dysfunctional or inadequate performances in the general skills necessary for success at school, direct instruction in skill-deficient areas is a usual component in the overall counseling program. Through the academic skills training session, the underachieving student comes to realize school success depends, in a large part, on the acquisition and refinement of a number of skills that can be clearly described, learned and improved" (p. 115). They list the following as skills that can be modeled, demonstrated, specified, practiced, and coached during an academic skills counseling session: assertion, generic study skills, anxiety coping skills and test-taking skills.

The curative factor of "Imparting of Information" is a primary one in the structural study-skill group. Yalom comments upon this factor by relating, "Didactic instruction has been employed in a variety of fashions in group therapy. ...Often it functions as the initial binding force in the group until other curative factors become operative. Didactic instruction, through its provision of structure and explanation, has intrinsic value and deserves a place in our repertoire of therapeutic instruments" (p. 11). Thus, the act of giving information has, in its own right, value in the group situation.

Bauer (1977) and Tratyer (1980) also comment on the need for guidance groups where the emphasis is on educational progress in orientation, articulation and study skills. Especially helpful is test anxiety discussion within the group.

The noted developmental psychologist Bruner comments:

"One of the big changes in educational psychology over the past decade is a shift to "metacognition"-teaching kids how to think about problem solving, how to attack problems" (1982).

Just as the didactic format of the skill building group is important, so is the structural element. Chestnut (1965) relates research on high counselor-structured study skill groups vs. group-structured and control groups. Results indicated that those students in the more didactic counselor-structured groups which placed emphasis on material based upon a priori diagnostic assumption had significantly greater rates of change in GPA than the group-structured or control group. Chestnut concludes by noting that in order to reach maximum efficiency and effectiveness the leader-structured study skill group is best. Yalom (1975) contributes to this in his review of the Lieberman, Yalom, Miles (1973) study: too little executive function - a laissez-faire style - resulted in a bewildered, floundering group.

That there are certain skills the middle school student must be formally instructed in is a common theme in study-skill literature. Vogel (1981) stresses the need for transescents to develop greater ability to organize material and schedule time, for they do not have the "trial and error" experience that adults possess. She comments, "Organizing skills need to be taught just as any school-related skills need to be taught" (p. 9).

The importance of student note taking is of concern to Ganske (1982). He describes the mixed results from studies involving notetaking and the

need for more research.

The need for greater investigation into homework is of interest to Strang (1960). Middle school pupils often receive numerous zeros or low grades for not doing homework or doing incorrect assignments. Strang advocates greater exploration by students, teachers, parents and administrators into such areas as: objectives of homework, time spent in homework, relation of study time to scholarship, kinds of homework, homework and family relations, mental health aspects of homework and effects of distraction on home study. Discussion of these topics would be a natural theme of a structured study - skill group.

Structured Study - Skill Groups

There is no dearth of studies using the structured study - skill format in a wide range of educational settings. A middle school study - skill program is described by Cole (1979). This involved one 25-minute session a week for four consecutive weeks. Six to ten students constituted a group and some typical topics covered were: how to increase efficiency, scheduling homework, preparing for tests, avoiding television, goal setting, notetaking and tips on completing projects. Through a self-report questionnaire Cole relates that students generally report positive results especially in managing their study time.

Wiggins (1977) reviews elementary and middle school programs that focused on improved study habits, increased academic averages and student attitudes. Students who had undergone special study skill training were described by teachers as "significantly improved" over both one and three year periods of time. Jones (1977) notes that especially for junior high level pupils group study skill counseling is effective. Using peer groups in a structured format, Jones relates success in improving teacher -

student communication, study habits instruction and test anxiety reduction.

Ball (1977) refers to studies done in Detroit whereby students ranging in age from nine to eleven who received counseling for a twelve week period improved significantly on teacher behavior ratings and demonstrated some improvement on school achievement. Ball also relates a three year study of Florida children in 30 schools. It was found that children who were counseled at least five times had improved grades and better attitudes.

A major study is reviewed by Doyle, Gottlieb and Schneider (1979). This study-skill experiment involved over 10,000 high school students who participated in 10 small group counseling sessions at different periods of the school year. The groups were not larger than 10 members and ran for approximately 40 minutes each. A pretest - posttest comparison group design was employed and overall positive statistical significance was observed in the students' grade average and in teacher reported attitudes.

Bednor and Weinberg (1970) reviewed 23 studies that evaluated the effectiveness of various treatment programs for underachieving college students. All of the studies used grade - point average as the dependent variable and a specific treatment program intended to improve student academic performance as the independent variable. Studies that were "structured" included all those that were directive, authoritarian, academic, prescriptive or cognitive. Structured treatment programs were found to be effective in 10 out of 16 studies and tended towards effectiveness in two studies. They summarize their extensive findings by stating, "Not only are highly structured programs the most effective in improving academic performance, as measured by GPA, but the effects are lasting" (p. 6).

The Mitchell and Piatkowski (1974) study of 31 treatment programs examined counselor experience, treatment type, treatment duration and structure treatment targets and client motivation. They found an overall low success rate in raising GPA and few clear relationships between isolated variables and improvement in academic performance. They describe the Bednor and Weinberg findings as "overoptimistic" and are somewhat pessimistic as to the efficacy of groups to influence GPA significantly.

The Chestnut study (1965) indicated that students (college level) in counselor directed, structured groups had a significantly greater rate of change in GPA after counseling than the students in either group directed, unstructured groups or control groups. An interesting feature is that on the Chestnut (1969) three year follow up to the above mentioned study the major differences between the two types of groups did not persist. He urges further investigations with specific under-achievement groups such as dependent vs. independent subjects.

Structured Study Skill groups have a long and somewhat positive history in various academic remediation programs. Their didactic nature and utilitarian approach appeals to the "guidance" nature of counselors who are usually seeking a format with practical application and high accountability.

Affective Study - Skill Group

The third treatment group in the study is that of Affective Education, which has its roots in the client-centered model of Carl Rogers. Rogers, who in 1942 wrote Counseling and Psychotherapy initially was exposed to traditional Freudian views, but these conflicted with the objective and scientific ideas he also had developed (Shertzer and Stone, 1979).

Rogers presents nineteen propositions of his theory which may be interwoven into the fabric of an Affective Education group. Among these are: every individual exists in a changing world of experience of which he/she is the center; behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced; the best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual; most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self. (Shertzer and Stone)

For Corey, (1977) the trust, communication, warmth, empathy and responsibility of the client-centered group is significant in modifying members attitudes and behaviors. He notes, "This approach has wide applicability to individual and group counseling and therapy for student-centered teaching. This approach's unique contribution is having the client take an active stance and assume responsibility to direct the course of his or her own therapy" (p. 210). Thus, in academic improvement and study skill acquisition, a student-centered approach places this burden of change on the student who must make numerous choices and live with his/her own success or failure.

The client-centered or Affective Education model assumes that underachievement stems from difficulties, "of an underlying, personal-social nature characterized by self-concept, relationship to parents, expression of impulses, social adjustment, academic motivation and anxiety level" Chestnut (1965, p. 388). Thus, less structured, nondirective, affectively oriented groups will provide assistance with underlying personality dynamics of underachievement, rather than the visible symptoms related to

failure and poor attitude.

Kilman and Henry (1979) describe the recognized goal of Affective Education as the promotion of academic achievement by meeting the emotional needs of each student. They continue by stating:

An important test of affective education procedures would be to determine if gains in basic learning skills and personality changes could be fostered in underachievers. Since some support has been found for the effectiveness of group counseling with senior high school underachievers, it seems reasonable and expedient to use this treatment modality with elementary school underachievers (p. 218).

A major problem of underachievers is lack of confidence and encouragement. Dinkmeyer and Loscony (1980) and Simon (1974) employ a number of strategies for developing student self-encouragement which include: communicating through listening and responding; focusing on student's strengths, assets and resources; encouraging commitment and movement; and independence and humor. All of the above may be utilized in an affective group to bolster a negative, discouraged student.

Self-concept plays a major role in the motivation and school achievement of transescents. Johnson, Markle and Means (1981) review the Brookover (1964) study which reported correlations of .42 and .39 between grade point average and self-concept for one thousand urban seventh graders. They contend that self-concept affects other behaviors which hinder or aid achievement. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963) review certain negative self-concept feelings which middle school underachievers may already have developed. Among these are: "I am helpless," "I'm no good," "I cannot do what I should," "The world owes me a living" and "People are here to serve me." The affective study-skill group must, by necessity, focus on these feelings if a student is to increase his or her motivation for

achievement.

More affective education in the middle school sphere is the request of Hillman and Runion (1978) and Hendricks (1979). "I would like affective education activities used on a more regular basis in our schools. ...Because it's clear that lack of human relations skills, not lack of intellectual know-how, is likely to doom our planet, it would be ideal for every student to be a human relations specialist" (Hendricks, p. 132).

Rast (1976) has developed a teacher's guide which can well be implemented in an affective group. Among the topics are: Becoming a Person, Dealing with Reality, Me and My Emotions, My Self-Image, Defenses, Dependence and Independence, and Relating to Others. These subjects would certainly influence self-image and thus school attitude and motivation.

Arth and Freeman (1981), Kelly and Sweeny (1979) and Sparks (1978) comment upon the need for realistic, active, practical goals for adolescents. The affective format allows much discussion of the group's and individuals' goals for school and beyond. Responsibility is a great factor in adolescent decision making. Rowe (1980) stresses "Curricular opportunities" in public schools to allow more discussion of responsibility and affective group offers such an experience. Constructive self-criticism, decision making and competition are three issues which may influence a student's desire to achieve and excel. Harmin (1976) urges the student towards greater self examination and with transescents this is best accomplished in the small group situation.

The value of the group leader is of importance to Elkind (1981) and Wrenn (1979). They stress the potential benefits of attachment to a significant adult by a self-defeating and unproductive child. As Wrenn,

writing for counselors, states, "A point I would like to make is that you recognize that you contribute significantly to the affective development of others by demonstrating emotionally mature behavior" (p. 86). The affective group is an excellent arena for demonstration of "emotionally mature behavior" by the group leader.

Yalom (1975) in his review of the 1973 Lieberman, Yalom and Miles study, discovered four basic leadership functions: Emotional Stimulation, Caring, Meaning Attribution, and Executive Function. Of these, Caring (offering support, affection, praise, protection, warmth, acceptance, genuineness, concern) will be a paramount feature of the Affective Education group experience, more so than the other three procedures.

Being able to explore and discuss one's values, especially those regarding academic success, in a warm, accepting environment is important for Rast (1976) and Casteel and Stahl (1975). They contend that concepts such as self-image, defenses, conscience and guilt, dependence and independence and relating to others are crucial to developing motivated, committed students.

The third procedure, Affective Education, is an ingredient of most study skill procedures, but is usually not a method commonly used alone. Kilman and Henry review a study with sixty-three students in the fourth through sixth grades who participated in nine counseling groups that met once a week for fifteen weeks. The focus of treatment was, "on facilitating the students' affective adjustment (e.g. self concept, ability to relate to others, motivation to learn)" (p. 219). The basic instrument utilized was the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, which was designed to assess skills that are prerequisite to studying and learning in subject

matter courses. The experimental group showed significantly greater pre to post test gain on the CTBS than did the control subjects.

Doyle, Gottlieb and Schneider (1979) review an intensive, basically affective study skills program with one thousand sixty-one poorly achieving students. The program concentrated on developing more positive self-image, improved study habits, greater self-confidence, and improved relationships with both teachers and peers. The results were not dramatic, due, in part, to the very low functioning of the students (four to five years below grade level in reading), but teachers and administrators did observe positive attitude change in many of the participants.

Bednor and Weinberg's (1970) study of twenty-three types of study-skill programs did note five out of seven non-directive, client-centered study skill groups which resulted in "significant improvement" or "trend toward significant improvement."

Light and Alexakos (1970) report on a study where the affective realm was utilized to aid study habits. During the early sessions, students demonstrated such feelings as indifference, nonchalance, anxiety, boredom and withdrawal. Upon further investigation, the counselor aided the students in verbalizing their problems - most of which stemmed from some difficulties (divorce, separation, illness) or lack of self-confidence (poor grades in the course of the previous year). A major topic in the groups was the hostile attitudes among counselees and their attempts to rationalize their failure by blaming teachers. Light suggests, "it was necessary for the members of the group to learn how to deal with their feelings towards teachers in a more realistic and effective manner" (p. 452). The results indicated that study habits as measured by Wrenn's

Inventory of Study Habits improved significantly ($p < .01$) for the groups.

"Achievement motivation" groups with underachieving students in grades three through six in South Florida are described by Silverman (1976). "Underachievers" are described by Silverman as, "children whose achievement in school is negatively affected by their attitudes, interests, and lack of motivation to perform academic tasks" (p. 100). For optimum conditions, Silverman recommends that the group be limited to eight members, both boys and girls, who should meet for one-half over a period of eight weeks. Goal setting is a prime feature of these groups and Silverman reports an approximate 85 percent success rate over three years in raising the GPA's treatment of students.

A mixture of individual and group affective counseling with "high risks" tenth graders is evaluated by Abbott (1978). High risk students were identified as those who demonstrated academic failure due primarily to low motivation, inadequate study skills, and social immaturity. During the last four sessions the ten treatment students met as a group and discussed such topics as: feelings about school, conflicts with authority figures (parents and teachers) and goals in school. Abbott relates that using an analysis of variance a "statistically significant difference" in grades and absences was evident between treatment and control groups.

That self-esteem and self-image are vital parts of the transescent's attitude towards learning is a key tenet of affective education. McCurdy, Ciucevich and Walker (1977) employed the affective mode to modify the self-image of twelve boys ages 12 to 16 in a group situation that met one hour per week for three months. Using the Coopersmith Self - Esteem Inventory the group showed a significant ($p < .05$) increase in self-esteem from pre-

testing to posttesting. They recommend smaller groups (four to six members) and more frequent meetings (twice weekly, 45 minutes to 1 hour).

Poor interpersonal relationships may also be a source of distraction from academic matters for middle school transescents. Hutchins and Cole (1977) utilized affective groups to treat sixteen middle school students in four different groups of three to five members each. This group-process lasted for three months and focused upon values, alternatives and consequences of inter - peer relationships. The researchers reported that a survey of teachers indicated that during the three month period of the experiment none of the students were referred to an administrator for misbehavior and this result enabled the students to concentrate on academic matters rather than interpersonal quarreling - a favorite sport of middle school pupils.

Affective education is applicable not only in the small group situation for numerous elementary schools are positively utilizing affective instruction in the general classroom scene to influence motivation and attitude. CREST (Nelson, 1980); activity group guidance (Hillman and Runion, 1978); and HDP/DUSO (Gerber, 1980) are three programs which, "help children practice positive behaviors. ...Many teachers see these behaviors as important in the learning process, and teachers are likely to reinforce children who exhibit these behaviors" (Gerber, p. 189). A study designed to assess the attitude of teachers and mothers, two of the significant adults in the lives of elementary children, towards affective education demonstrated that teachers and mothers supported affective education at the elementary level, but that teachers were significantly more supportive than mothers (Burlison, Nelson and Tollefson, 1980).

That affective group counseling has long term effect and is evaluated by Riester and Tanner (1980) who describe two to eight year follow-up studies of a school - based affective group counseling program. The majority of the participants related that the group was influential in attaining the original group counseling goals - one of which was a positive attitude towards school.

Affective study - skill groups on the surface do not focus upon the symptomatic factors most commonly believed to be responsible for poor academic performance and attitude. Rather they delve deeper into the "underlying personality dynamics of underachievement," and attempt to redirect the student in areas of self - concept, values, social adjustment and motivation: areas usually ignored by more traditional study - skill approaches.

Summary

The problem common to the literature reviewed and to this study is how to best provide aid for the underachieving student in a small group situation. Some programs attend to functional skill building, while others focus on personal/social aspects of achievement. A concern with the reviewed research is that few studies related directly to the needs of transescents, who are certain to view and respond to treatment differently than high school or college students most commonly described in the literature.

Certain inferences may be drawn from the literature, for successful programs did have some communality. Among prevailing features were:

Contract signing

Volunteer subjects

45 minutes to one hour sessions

A general theme for each session

Use of GPAs and attitude scales as dependent variables

Combinations of open dialogue, worksheets to discuss and filmstrips to observe

Leaders who are comfortable with the population and fairly knowledgeable of small group dynamics

High empathy level of leaders

At least medium amounts of structure

Modification of the "inelegant" RET approach in REE groups

Goal setting by both individuals and groups.

This study was thus designed to treat the young adolescent student "in situ" using the above norms and employing techniques that he or she may directly relate to and apply both in class and during home study.

In conclusion, the reviewed treatments base their purpose on one main concept: low achieving students need special remedial attention in the form of group experience in order to better perform in the competitive school environment. Left untreated, these students develop a pattern or cycle of failure, self-doubt, low motivation and repeated failure. Intensive treatment intervention can sometimes break the cycle and allows the student to maximize his/her potential - a goal the failing student simply has not yet achieved.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Population and Selection of the Sample

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of three different types of treatment groups on academically deficient seventh and eighth graders. This chapter presents the research methods that were used in the investigation.

The location of this study was Poquoson Middle School in Poquoson, Virginia. Poquoson Middle School has approximately 810 students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. The accessible population was seventh and eighth grade students (varying in age between eleven and fourteen) who, after one nine week marking period, failed (59 average or below) one or more academic subjects (English, Science, Math or Social Studies). Not counted in the study were grades in other courses (physical education, art, music and other electives). The students involved were both male and female and, due to the racial makeup of Poquoson Middle School, were all white. Past informal research at PMS predicted that males would outnumber females three to one, and this did occur in the study.

From the accessible population of 65 students, a random sample of thirty-six students was selected, Dyer (pp. 91-92), to serve as a sample group. Students who were strongly LD (learning disabled) were not included in the study. A random placement of nine students into one of four groups (three treatment, one control) was then made. Nine students is the normal size group utilized in experiments of this type. No attempts to balance or influence the groups for sex, compatibility or homogeneity of academic difficulty was made. The students were informed

of the general nature and objectives of the groups, but details of the total study were kept to a minimum from both students and teachers involved. The students were requested, rather than required, to join the groups and they could resign at any time.

Procedures

Data Gathering

The data gathering of the proposed study employed three instruments to measure treatment effects on academic average, study habits and academic attitude.

The change in academic average, by the treatment procedures, was gauged by a pre and post treatment examination of the sample student's average in four academic subjects - English, Science, Math and Social Studies. Teachers provided these averages in numerical form with sixty being a failing mark. Teachers had no knowledge of which students were in which treatment modalities. (See enclosed copy of grade average sheet).

The second instrument was the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes. This tool has been used in numerous research studies to measure treatment effect upon student study habits and attitudes towards teachers, school and academic endeavors. One trait common to all modalities was that of positive acceptance of school demands and active pursuit of scholastic improvement and responsibility. The SSHA is a self-report inventory and was completed by the selected students pre and post treatment. It is designed to determine rates of change in work methods, study habits, teacher approval, education acceptance, study attitudes and study orientation.

The third instrument was the Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) (see

enclosed sheet). This was designed to obtain teacher observation of student rate of change in study habits and attitudes towards academic matters. It is an observation technique designed by this experimenter to provide a description (pre and post treatment) of the student "in situ" or in the environment, which is most familiar to the subject - the classroom. This Tally is based largely upon the SSHA in its rating scale and content.

Greater detail regarding the above procedures is available in section 3C - instrumentation.

Treatments

The treatment procedures in the experiment were directly related to the purpose of the study - an investigation of the effects of three types of procedures to effect change in seventh and eighth grade students academic averages and attitudes. The three treatments were selected for their differing philosophies and thus covered a wide range of topics and material to both instruct and motivate academically deficient subjects in methods and rationale for improved study habits and scholastic beliefs. Cognitive and/or behavioral changes were measured through the use of instruments chosen for their construct validity.

The actual setting of treatment was the group room at Poquoson Middle School. The students and leader sat facing each other in a circle which made for ease of interaction. Group meetings in this room during school hours were a normal procedure at PMS and offered little logistical problems or inconvenience for students or leaders.

In order to compare and contrast the efficacy of the varying procedures, treatment groups consisted of three groups of nine students each,

plus a control group of nine students. Nine members made group intimacy for learning and discussion possible, yet did not resemble a "class" as such. Less than nine students would offer problems of absenteeism and possible group mortality. The groups met for nine sessions, each session lasting about forty-five minutes. Nine or ten sessions is a common number of meetings for this age group as suggested by the literature (Mahler). Nine sessions for the three groups insured constant internal validity as regards history of the treatment period. The forty-five minute session fit in well with the forty-eight minute periods at PMS. The sessions met for an average of two times every week. This allowed approximately four weeks of treatment. Christmas vacation, days missed for snow, and the end of the semester forced a constricted time period for the group meetings.

The three individuals chosen to be group leaders were selected: for their ability to project and maintain treatment philosophy; for their suitability in working with seventh and eighth graders; and for the logistical ease in which they could participate in the experiment. The three all possessed competency in their field, yet no one leader could be projected as being more "expert" than the other two. A necessary goal of the treatment plan was to minimize the differential effects of counselor personality, ability and style and focus upon treatment philosophy. The RET group leader had been at Poquoson Middle School for four years as a psychologist, had a working knowledge of RET principles and had been a teacher. The Structured Study Skills group leader had been at PMS seven years and was well versed in the teaching of study skills. The Affective group leader was a teacher of special education who had much experience

in the affective needs of middle school students. All three were female and had offices and classes in the building, which aided logistics and organization. The leaders were instructed equally as to the general aims and objectives of the groups, but to avoid "teaching to the test" specific details of the dependent variables, especially the SSHA and TOT, were not revealed to them.

The following is a brief overview of the content of the three treatment procedures:

The Rational-Emotive sessions were concerned with two major objectives which were directly related to the purpose of the study. Using the aforementioned rationale of RET groups as prescribed by Ellis and Knaus, the group leader was primarily attempting to aid in explanation and foster discussion along the RET mode, and to provide basic study skill information. Proceeding on the RET concept that cognition, emotion and behavior are interrelated, the leader played an active role in debating and defining causes of student failure and suggested ways to improve skills, habits and attitudes. Typical irrational beliefs: "I'm dumb, the teacher hates me, the work load is unfair, the teacher can't teach, the class is boring, I should get a schedule change, the class is too early in the day and I can't wake up, etc." were examined and new behaviors and attitudes discussed. Practical study skill instruction (how to prepare for tests, organize homework, get along with teachers, take notes, follow directions, etc.) was also covered. Basic REE principles were explained to the students and, in general, self-responsibility for behavioral change was a theme of the group. The group followed a general topic each meeting with approximately two-thirds of the session spent on RET philosophy discussion and one-third on

didactic skill building. (See sample outline of material in appendix)

Structured Study Skills was largely concerned with techniques, methods and procedures that poorly performing students could utilize to improve their abilities in the classroom. It was projected by the rationale of this method that positive reinforcement through improved grades during treatment would, in turn, foster a better attitude towards study, which would lead the student to seek more applied skills. Typical topics to be covered included: physical and mental health as applied to school and home study, how to schedule and budget time, test-taking skills, methods of taking notes, how to listen and follow directions, the SQ3R method, memorizing and concentration, goal setting, communication with teachers, homework habits and relaxation techniques and other such topics. The leader of the group focused approximately two-thirds of the group's time on structural skill sheets and film strips, which were discussed and debated in a traditional group format. Cathartic sharing of feelings towards school, various subjects, teachers, parental pressures and restrictions were encouraged, but the prime direction of the group was decidedly towards learning and practicing the above-mentioned practical skills to create a more self-reliant, better-prepared student. (See sample outline of material in appendix)

The third treatment group was in the affective mode. This group was the least didactic in nature and most open to leader empathy, warmth and genuineness. The rationale for this group was that students in the seventh and eighth grade often have the academic skills necessary for achievement (i.e. average to above average SRA scores or good previous report card grades), but lack the proper attitude and motivation to

achieve basic success in the day-to-day classroom situation. Thus, the Affective group focused on: self-concept and self-respect; ability to relate to the needs and demands of parents, teachers and classmates; and motivation to study and concentrate both at home and in the school environment. Some value clarification was explored through such topics as basic needs, dealing with reality, emotions, life plans and hopes, conscience and guilt, and dependence and independence. Discussion sheets were employed by the leader to focus the session, but much time was allowed for open discussion of day-to-day problems both at home and in school. Little technical study skill training as such was employed, but positive messages about academic attitude were woven throughout the sessions. In effect, the leader served as both a coach and a "cheerleader" for the students in order to build morale and promote positive self-image. (See sample outline of material in appendix)

The above-described treatment groups were distinctly different in both philosophy and structure; while the stated constructs - academic improvement and improved attitude were the same for all. Within the school, groups were only known as, "Group One," "Group Two," and "Group Three."

Ethical Safeguards and Considerations

The study attempted to insure ethical safeguards throughout the experiment. Permission to experiment and conduct the groups was obtained from the College of William and Mary (Human Subjects Research Committee), the Superintendent of Poquoson Public Schools, the Principal of Poquoson Middle School, the parents of the students involved and from the students themselves. As similar groups have been conducted by this experimenter

at PMS, and as the treatments were in keeping with the academic philosophy of the Poquoson School System, few problems in the permission sphere were experienced.

The usual group ethics considerations were an inherent part of the study and carefully explained to the students before and reinforced during treatment. An agreement sheet (see appendix) was signed by all group members. This involved confidentiality, participation and leaving the group (which was permissible, at any time, if the student felt that he or she was not benefitting from the group experience). The group leaders were enjoined not to discuss treatment with each other, with PMS teachers or with others outside of the PMS System. All test scores and rating sheets were kept confidential as regards individual student's identity.

This experimenter was aware that the control group would not be receiving treatment. This experimenter was in an excellent position to aid those control group students after experimentation and to insure that their needs were tended to immediately after treatment conclusion.

Instrumentation

Three methods of instrumentation served as measures of the differential effects of treatment. The following describes each instrument and discusses its reliability and validity.

Academic achievement is, at PMS, formally measured four times a year by numerical and letter grades which are recorded on report cards. The numerical average of each student in the study was obtained in four subject areas: English, Social Studies, Math and Science. Individual and group averages were recorded. Immediately after nine treatment sessions, and four weeks after treatment, the individual and group GPA's were again

recorded and examined by statistical analysis.

The reliability and validity of using grades pre and post treatment was based on the consistency of the four teachers that graded the individual students. All of the teachers involved in the study were experienced in instruction and measurement of seventh and eighth grade students in their content field. At least fifteen grades were recorded and averaged during the period of treatment. These involved classwork, homework, quizzes, tests, oral reports, projects and other assignments. Most of the students had the same set of teachers and these teachers did not change during the treatment. The group grade averages were directly related to treatment in that the rationale for treatment is to effect some observable and measureable change in grades. If, for example, a student was receiving zeros for not doing homework, a common occurrence for seventh and eighth graders, then this was a topic covered in treatment. Statistical methods were utilized to determine if significant rates of change had taken place within the groups and between the groups.

The second instrument utilized in the study was the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes, form H - Junior High Edition. This instrument is directly related to the second main purpose of treatment - to effect positive change in attitude towards academic matters by the students undergoing treatment. The SSHA is a self-report inventory which asks a student to reply to one hundred statements in one of five ways: Rarely, Sometimes, Frequently, Generally, or Almost Always. Four twenty-five item subscales are delineated: Work Methods, Delay Avoidance, Teacher Approval and Education Acceptance. Scores on the first two subscales may be combined to yield a score for Study Habits, and the last two sub-

scales combine to form Study Attitudes. The total score is labeled Study Orientation. Study Habits, Study Attitudes and Study Orientation were the key scores to be examined.

The reliability coefficients of the SSHA in a four week test - retest situation given to two hundred thirty-seven ninth graders ranged between .95 and .93 for the four scales and .95 for the SSHA total score (SSHA Manual, 1967, p. 24). The mean and standard deviation for SSHA total scores changed very little over the four week interval (99.4 and 32.1 - first administration, and 98.3 and 31.8 second administration).

The major validity for the SSHA study was done with 3,731 students in grades 7 through 12. Evidence for validity was demonstrated by a .55 correlation coefficient between SSHA scores and grades. The criterion used was the one semester grade point average of the same four courses of the proposed study - English, Social Studies, Math and Science. This figure points to an underlying assumption of the entire study - that frequently students with poor study habits and attitudes will, in turn, perform poorly in academic grading criteria and vice versa.

A weakness of the SSHA, which is readily acknowledged by Buros (1972) and this experimenter is that it is a self-report inventory and, "has all the inherent weaknesses of this type of measure." (p. 1211). Buros continues to state, "The SSHA has demonstrated a suitable level of reliability and predictive relationship with GPA to warrant its inclusion in research studies where the above-mentioned limitations (self-report) are recognized and minimized." (p. 1212). The SSHA was administered in a non-threatening manner to small groups of students before and immediately after treatment. They were requested to relax and to be frank in their

responses to the survey.

The third measure in the study was a Teacher Observation Tally (TOT). The purpose of the TOT was to measure teacher observation of student change (if any) in study habits, and attitudes. This type of instrument has been utilized in similar research. As the SSHA surveyed the students themselves, the TOT asked the same teachers who provided academic averages (first instrument) to record pre and post treatment observation of classroom preparation, completion of homework and classwork assignments, punctuality and participation and cooperation in making up missed work. These scores served as a naturalistic observation that provided a record of what the student demonstrated in real class situations. The teachers were familiar with the observation sheet for it is similar to one they already use. The teachers were not aware of which students were in which treatment group, only that they were in some "study skill group." The average seventh and eighth grade teacher at PMS has over one hundred students and this, hopefully, negated too careful an observation of one particular student, i.e. the "halo effect." The students were unaware that they were being observed and the group leaders were unaware of the details of the TOT and the SSHA - thus negating "teaching the test." This rating sheet was designed to be a companion instrument to the SSHA in determination of study habits and attitude change. (See enclosed sample of TOT with added explanations).

The above-mentioned instruments attempted to record and measure both cognitive and behavioral changes in the students undergoing treatment and the control group. The measurements recorded both subjective data (student and teacher rating scales) and objective data (grades). Having three dif-

ferent instruments, insured sufficient data from each of the four groups to draw conclusions regarding the efficacy of treatment. The GPA scores and the SSHA scores are the most common measures utilized in similar study-skill treatment programs with college and high school populations.

Design

The research design of the study was a "true" experiment in which the subjects drawn from the accessible population involved were assigned to treatment groups in a randomized fashion.

The design itself was a Pretest/Posttest Control Group design (Dyer, p. 243). This is a common and well tested design which is often used in high school and college research similar to that of this study. Random selection was made from the accessible population (65 seventh and eighth grade academic failures for one nine week period) into one of the four groups (RET, Structured Study Skills, Affective and Control). Students who were strongly LD (two or more classes) were removed from the accessible population before group selection was done. (X) was the three types of procedures, which were applied in the nine group sessions. The dependent variables (O) were the above-mentioned measures and scores obtained as pretests and posttests. The rationale for pretests is given by Dyer, "...it may be important to document the initial level of key variables in order to examine the direction and rate of change. ... (This) enables the researcher to document the amount of that change and its direction (assuming the pretests and posttests are measures of the same variable)" (p. 243).

The design may be diagrammed as follows:

R O₁ X₁ O₂ (RET Group)

R 0 ₃	X ₂	O ₄	(Structured Study Skill Group)
R 0 ₅	X ₃	O ₆	(Affective Education Group)
R 0 ₇		O ₈	(Control Group)

This design controlled for numerous threats to internal validity. History was controlled since events in time which influenced one group would also influence the others involved. Group average measurements are of key interests so that an unusual occurrence to one member (out of nine) would not greatly influence group means. Maturity, testing and instrumentation were basically the same for experimental and control groups. The period of treatment was approximately four weeks and group meetings numbered nine, which appears in the research to be standard for this type of experiment with children. Regression to the mean was expected, but due to random selection this influenced all four groups somewhat equally. Selection was not an internal threat due also to the randomization of group membership. Mortality is a common problem for all pretest/post-test designs when volunteers are used. A strong emphasis in the study was on attendance at all sessions. On the basis of similar groups done at PMS, it was projected that the students would see the benefit of treatment and attend willingly. The randomization of the placement insured that one group was not decimated by mortality to such a degree that group scores were jeopardized. The loss of even one member from a single group did not occur. (See Chapter Four for attendance results)

Statistical Hypothesis

For statistical purposes, the following null hypotheses were presented: for within group means (a) and between group means (b).

- I 1. No significant difference will be found in academic averages (pre and post treatment) of the RET group.

2. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument (pre and post treatment) of the RET group.
 3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) (pre and post treatment) of the RET group.
 4. No significant difference will be found in four weeks GPA scores of the RET group.
- II
1. No significant differences will be found in Academic Averages (pre and post treatment) of the Structured Study Skill Group.
 2. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument (pre and post treatment) of the Structured Study Skill group.
 3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the TOT (pre and post treatment) of the Structured Study Skills group.
 4. No significant difference will be found in four weeks GPA scores of the Structured Study Skills group.
- III
1. No significant differences will be found in Academic Averages (pre and post treatment) of the Affective Education group.
 2. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument (pre and post treatment) of the Affective Education group.
 3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the TOT (pre and post treatment) of the Affective Education group.
 4. No significant difference will be found in four weeks GPA scores for the Affective Education group.

- IV
1. No significant difference will be found in Academic Averages (pre and post treatment) of the Control group.
 2. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument (pre and post treatment) of the Control group.
 3. No significant difference will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) (pre and post treatment) of the Control group.
 4. No significant difference will be found in four weeks GPA scores for the Control group.

Statistical Analysis

The data in the proposed study was interval in nature.

The statistical analysis procedure utilized in examination of the null hypotheses was the T-Test and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedure.

Summary of Methodology

The basic methodology of the study was a middle school/transescent replication of similar research projects and remedial programs utilizing high school and college level populations. The experiment was predicated upon the concept that academic failure is a negative event and not a state which is welcomed or encouraged by students, teachers or parents. The accessible population demonstrated an a priori need for some remediation of their deficiencies. These inadequate behaviors were primarily caused by inferior study skills and habits and poor or apathetic attitudes towards the subject matter of the course, the teacher or both.

The data gathering procedures were administered in a fair and equitable manner. Approximately fifty individuals (thirty-six students,

eleven teachers and three group leaders) were asked to demonstrate cooperation in the areas of honesty, punctuality and objectivity. Treatment lasted four weeks during which time the participating students had adequate opportunity to apply new skills and cognitions gained in groups to the reality of the classroom. The group leader attended to the needs of the various individuals while remaining firm in maintaining the ideology of their respective groups.

Instrumentation was administered with little threat or inconvenience to any participant, for it had been selected and designed to mesh with typical PMS procedures. The three measures were actually interwoven in the theory base for, as achievement rises often so does attitude, and as study skills and habits improve, this usually reflects improved motivation and yields increased academic averages. The various measures were statistically examined to determine both pre and post test within group and between group means and rates and direction of change. The design was a common one in the educational sphere and was the "design of choice" in the literature on study skill improvement.

In conclusion, it is proposed that the treatment procedures, instrumentation, design and statistical analysis met the criteria of a typical experiment - replication of previous studies - with the addition of unique features to meet the needs of a transescent, Middle School population.

Chapter 4

Results

The results of this study are presented in this chapter according to hypothesis for within group results (a) and between group results (b). The data and statistical findings for each hypothesis will be reviewed and interpreted as applicable. An overview of results is first provided for each group. A Two-Tailed T-Test was utilized to obtain within group results and the Analysis of Variance procedure was utilized to obtain between group results.

An Overview of Results

Table 1

RET (Pre-Treatment) Individual and Group Scores and Averages

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT
27	55	76	2.4
7	64	69	3.1
31	68	92	2.6
16	72	98	4.0
23	59	47	2.1
3	74	85	3.1
35	40	54	2.2
7	67	53	3.7
9	75	87	3.4
Average	63.7	73.4	2.9

Table 2

RET-Post Treatment - 89% Attendance

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT	4 Week GPA
27	57	79	2.4	48
7	64	77	3.2	68
31	58	110	3.2	73
16	79	110	4.3	79
23	60	69	2.9	58
3	76	107	4.1	77
35	47	62	3.6	45
7	76	122	4.4	68
9	71	100	3.5	63
Average	65.3	94	3.5	64.4

Table 3
 Structured Study Skills - Pre Treatment
 Individual and Group Scores and Averages

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT
32	61	49	2.5
36	62	51	3.1
28	73	45	3.1
25	64	59	3.4
3	57	87	2.8
33	69	47	3.3
6	59	46	3.2
10	70	90	3.6
15	73	90	4.1
Average	65.3	62.6	3.2

Table 4
 Structured Study Skills - Post Treatment - 93% Attendance

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT	4 Week GPA
32	60	63	2.7	38
36	68	115	3.6	73
28	74	81	3.8	70
25	76	75	4.2	71
3	54	94	3.5	77
33	60	92	3.7	67
6	60	41	4.2	60
10	63	68	4.2	63
15	77	138	4.3	71
Average	65.7	85.2	3.8	64.4

Table 5

Affective Group - Pre Treatment
Individual and Group Scores and Averages

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT
18	62	89	2.8
8	62	56	2.4
22	69	67	2.9
30	71	50	3.4
1	69	73	3.3
26	59	77	3.5
4	74	101	4.4
13	59	67	3.1
11	73	100	3.7
Average	66.4	75.5	3.2

Table 6

Affective Group - Post Treatment 91% Attendance

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT	4 Week GPA
18	57	79	2.8	66
8	68	44	3.5	65
22	59	80	3.6	63
30	78	57	3.7	67
1	63	78	3.2	61
26	63	101	3.9	70
4	88	97	4.7	90
13	61	92	3.9	57
11	60	94	3.7	72
Average	66.3	80.2	3.6	67.8

Table 7

Control Group - Pre Treatment Period
 Individual and Group Scores and Averages

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT
21	68	62	3.7
19	67	53	3.3
12	59	62	2.9
14	70	138	4.1
2	74	82	3.5
34	71	74	3.5
20	68	111	3.5
24	64	76	3.6
29	62	47	3.5
Average	67.0	78.3	3.5

Table 8

Control Group - Post Treatment Period

Subject Number	GPA	SSHA	TOT	4 Week GPA
21	68	54	4.0	68
19	60	61	3.4	68
12	67	74	3.1	66
14	80	119	4.7	78
2	81	104	4.4	80
34	56	96	4.1	64
20	76	118	4.4	81
24	72	76	3.8	68
29	67	39	3.7	59
Average	69.6	82.6	3.9	70.2

For statistical purposes the following null hypotheses will be reviewed:

Hypothesis I (a)

The RET group will demonstrate no significant difference in GPA, Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA), Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) and four week GPA scores (pre and post treatment).

Hypothesis II (a)

The Structured Study Skill group will demonstrate no significant difference in GPA, Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes, (SSHA), Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) and four week GPA scores (pre and post treatment).

Hypothesis III (a)

The Affective group will demonstrate no significant difference in GPA, Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA), Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) and four week GPA scores (pre and post treatment).

Hypothesis IV (a)

The Control group will demonstrate no significant difference in GPA, Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA), Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) and four week GPA scores (pre and post treatment).

Hypothesis I, II, III, IV (b)

No significant difference will be found between the four groups on GPA scores, SSHA scores, TOT scores and four week GPA scores.

Hypothesis I (a)

1. No significant difference will be found in GPA (pre and post treatment) of the RET group.

Table 9

RET Within Group GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
RET PRE-GPA	9	63.7	1.5	-0.79	8	0.455
PST-GPA		65.3				

This was accepted at the .05 level since Two-Tail Probability was $0.455 > .05$.

2. No significant differences will be found in the pre-test and post-test scores on the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) of the RET group.

Table 10

RET - Within Group Study Attitudes (SA)
Study Habits (SH), and Study Orientation (SO)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
RET PRE-SA	9	41.6	-10.8	-2.3	8	0.045
PST-SA		52.5				
RET PRE-SH	9	31.7	- 9.6	-3.6	8	0.007
PST-SH		41.4				
RET PRE-SO	9	73.4	-20.5	-3.16	8	0.013
PST-SO		94.0				

For Study Attitudes this was rejected since $0.045 < .05$. For Study Habits this was rejected, since $0.007 < .05$. For Study Orientation this was rejected, since $0.013 < .05$.

3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally (TOT) (pre and post treatment) of the RET group.

Table 11

RET - Within Group Teacher Observation Tally (TOT)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
RET PRE-TOT	9	2.9	-0.6	-3.53	8	0.008
PST-TOT		3.5				

For TOT this was rejected, since $0.008 < .05$.

4. No significant differences will be found in scores on the four weeks post GPA as compared to immediate post GPA in the RET group.

Table 12

RET - Within Group Four-Week GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
RET PST-GPA	9	63.7	-0.6	-0.31	8	0.761
4 Week GPA		64.4				

For four weeks GPA this was accepted, since $0.761 > .05$.

Hypothesis II (a)

1. No significant differences will be found in GPA pre and post treatment of the Structured Study Skill Group.

Table 13

Structured Study Skills Within Group GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
PRE-GPA	9	65.3	-0.4	-0.21	8	0.842
PST-GPA		65.7				

For academic average this was accepted since $0.842 > .05$.

2. No significant differences will be found in SSHA scores pre and post treatments of the Structured group.

Table 14

Structured Study Skills Within Group Study Attitudes (SA),
Study Habits (SH), and Study Orientation (SO)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
S.S. PRE-SA	9	38.0	-5.3	-1.08	8	0.312
PST-SA		43.3				
S.S. PRE-SH	9	24.6	-17.2	-3.28	8	0.011
PST-SH		41.8				
S.S. PRE-SO	9	62.6	-22.5	-2.44	8	0.041
PST-SO		85.2				

For Study Attitudes this was accepted, since $0.312 > .05$. For Study Habits this was rejected, since $0.011 < .05$. For Study Orientation this was rejected, since $0.041 < .05$.

3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally pre and post treatment of the Structured group.

Table 15

Structured Study Skills

Within Group Teacher Observation Tally (TOT)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
S.S. PRE-TOT	9	3.2	-0.6	-6.31	8	0.001
PST-TOT		3.8				

For Teacher Observation Tally this was rejected, since $0.001 < .05$.

4. No significant differences will be found in scores on the four weeks post GPA as compared to immediate post GPA in the Structured group.

Table 16

Structured Study Skills

Within Group Four - Week GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
S.S. PST-GPA	9	65.3	0.8	0.26	8	0.803
4 Week GPA		64.4				

For four weeks GPA this was accepted, since $0.803 > .05$.

Hypothesis III (a)

1. No significant differences will be found in GPA pre and post treatment of the Affective group.

Table 17

Affective - Within Group GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
AFF PRE-GPA	9	66.4	0.1	0.04	8	0.971
PST-GPA		66.3				

For GPA this was accepted, since $0.971 > .05$.

2. No significant differences will be found in SSHA scores (pre and post treatment) of the Affective group.

Table 18

Affective Within Group Study Attitudes (SA),
Study Habits (SH), and Study Orientation (SO)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
AFF PRE-SA	9	40.2	1.1	0.33	8	0.752
PST-SA		39.1				
AFF PRE-SH	9	35.3	-5.7	-2.89	8	0.020
PST-SH		41.1				
AFF PRE-SO	9	75.5	-4.6	-1.01	8	0.343
PST-SO		80.2				

For Study Attitudes this is accepted, since $.752 > .05$. For Study Habits this is rejected, since $0.020 < .05$. For Study Orientation this is accepted, since $0.343 > .05$.

3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally pre and post treatment of the Affective group.

Table 19

Affective - Within Group

Teacher Observation Tally (TOT)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
AFF TOT	9	3.2	-0.4	-2.98	8	0.018
PST-TOT		3.6				

For Teacher Observation Tally this was rejected, since $0.018 < .05$.

4. No significant differences will be found in scores on the four weeks post GPA as compared to immediate post GPA in the Affective group.

Table 20

Affective - Within Group

Four - Week GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
AFF PST-GPA	9	66.4	-1.4	-0.55	8	0.600
4 Week GPA		67.8				

For four weeks GPA this was accepted, since $0.600 > .05$.

Hypothesis IV (a)

1. No significant differences will be found in GPA scores pre and post treatment of the Control group.

Table 21

Control - Within Group GPA

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
CON PRE-GPA	9	67.0	-2.6	-0.94	8	0.373
PST-GPA		69.6				

For GPA this was accepted, since $0.373 > .05$.

2. No significant differences will be found in SSHA scores pre and post treatment of the Control group.

Table 22

Control - Within Group Study Attitudes (SA),
Study Habits (SH), and Study Orientation (SO)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
CON PRE-SA	9	39.1	-0.4	-0.18	8	0.864
PST-SA		39.5				
CON PRE-SH	9	39.2	-3.8	-1.10	8	0.304
PST-SH		43.1				
CON PRE-SO	9	78.3	-4.3	-0.90	8	0.397
PST-SO		82.6				

For Study Attitudes this was accepted, since $0.864 > .05$. For Study Habits this was accepted, since $0.304 > .05$. For Study Orientation this was accepted, since $0.397 > .05$.

3. No significant differences will be found in scores on the Teacher Observation Tally for the Control group.

Table 23

Control - Within Group

Teacher Observation Tally (TOT)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
CON PRE-TOT	9	3.5	-0.4	-4.26	8	0.003
PST-TOT		3.9				

For Teacher Observation Tally this was rejected, since $0.003 < .05$.

4. No significant differences will be found in scores on the four weeks GPA as compared to immediate post GPA in the Control group.

Table 24

Control - Within Group

Four - Week (GPA)

Variable	# of Cases	MEAN	(Difference) MEAN	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	2-Tail Prob.
CONTROL PST-GPA	9	67.0	-3.2	-1.58	8	0.153
4 Week GPA		70.2				

For four weeks GPA this was accepted, since $0.153 > .05$.

The following reviews the Analysis of Variance procedure conducted on the groups by variable scores. A summary of the vital statistics is given plus an explanation.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (GPA)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on GPA scores.

Table 25

ANOVA Between Groups-GPA

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/PST-GPA BY GROUP WITH GPA					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/GPA	1201.809	1	1201.809	21.1	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	44.583	3	14.861	0.261	0.853

The F-ratio of 0.261 is not significant, since $0.853 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by the variable of GPA.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (SA)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on Study Attitude scores.

Table 26

ANOVA Between Groups-Study Attitudes (SA)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/PST-SA BY GROUP WITH SA					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/SA	2446.731	1	2446.731	19.1	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	862.429	3	287.476	2.25	0.102

The F-ratio of 2.252 is not significant, since $0.102 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by the variable of Study Attitudes.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (SH)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on Study Habits scores.

Table 27

ANOVA Between Groups-Study Habits (SH)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/PST-SH BY GROUP WITH SH					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/SH	1962.960	1	1962.960	18.4	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	380.466	3	126.822	1.195	0.328

The F-ratio of 1.195 is not significant, since $0.328 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by Study Habits.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (SO)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on Study Orientation scores.

Table 28

ANOVA Between Groups-Study Orientation (SO)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/PST-SO BY GROUP WITH SO					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/SO	7873.738	1	7873.738	21.2	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	1913.848	3	637.949	1.721	0.183

The F-ratio of 1.721 is not significant, since $0.183 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by Study Orientation.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (TOT)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on Teacher Observation Tally scores.

Table 29

ANOVA Between Groups-Teacher Observation Tally (TOT)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/PST-TOT BY GROUP WITH TOT					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/TOT	6.597	1	6.597	48.7	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	0.104	3	0.035	0.256	0.857

The F-ratio of 0.256 is not significant, since $0.857 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by the variable of Teacher Observation Tally.

Hypothesis (b) I, II, III and IV (four-week GPA)

No significant differences will be found between the groups on four week post GPA scores.

Table 30

ANOVA Between Groups-Four Week GPA

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE/4 WEEK GPA BY GROUP WITH GPA					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sign of F
COVARIATES/4 WEEK GPA	1444.545	1	1444.545	22.8	0.000
MAIN EFFECTS GROUP	89.289	3	29.763	0.471	0.704

The F-ratio of 0.471 is not significant, since $0.704 > .05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Thus one cannot say with confidence which group treatment is more effective when comparing the groups by the variable of GPA four weeks after treatment.

Summary

The T-Test statistical analysis has indicated that within group means may be influenced somewhat by treatment. GPA and four weeks GPA were not significantly influenced by any one group while Teacher Observation Tally did improve slightly in all groups. Within group RET demonstrated some

influence on Study Attitudes, Study Habits and Study Orientation. Structured Study Skills modified Study Habits and Study Orientation but not Study Attitudes. The Affective group showed positive results in Study Habits. The Control group demonstrated significant change only on the Teacher Observation Tally.

The ANOVA results revealed that one cannot say with confidence that there is a significant difference in main effects (treatment) between the groups.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

Chapter 5 will provide a brief summary of the study with conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future similar studies.

Summary

Increasing academic averages by fostering improved study skills and habits while also developing more positive scholastic attitudes has been a public school challenge for many years. The present study was predicated on the need to attend to underachieving seventh and eighth graders in a middle school locale. The study was designed to test the efficacy of three types of study skill groups (versus a control group) to modify student grade point average, study habits, and study attitudes. The subjects were 36 seventh and eighth grade students enrolled at Poquoson Middle School in Poquoson, Virginia. They were randomly selected from a population that had received one or more failing (59 or below average) grades in four academic subjects (English, Math, Social Studies or Science). They were then randomly placed in one of four groups (nine students in each group). The first group was termed a Rational-Emotive Study Skill group and its goal was to improve GPA, study habits and academic attitude by directing students in the mode of rational thought and behavior as espoused by Albert Ellis. This group stressed personal responsibility and attacked the "blame factor" which is so common to transescent underachievers. Practical study skill instruction was an adjunct to the rational-emotive approach. The second group of nine students was a Structured Study Skill group which was highly didactic in nature and placed emphasis on the learning of basic technical skills such as homework procedures, organization of time, notetaking, following directions, test taking, and goal

setting. Practical how-to-study activities were taught and little emphasis was placed on affective activities. The third group, in contrast to the first two, was affective in nature and attended primarily to the attitudes and feelings of the students to their school environment. The participating students were offered little structured format but were allowed high levels of ventilation and received much empathy and warmth from the group leader. Positive interpersonal relations with teachers and peers were stressed during this groups sessions. The control group received no remediation and participated in no activities.

The groups were lead by three leaders (all female) each of whom had a special interest in the type of philosophy that the group maintained. Each group met for nine sessions during various times of the school day, over a five week time period. The sessions were in a group room with the students and leader seated in a circle. Several film strips were viewed and discussed and appropriate worksheets were utilized at times to guide the discussions (see appendix for samples of group activities). The three groups had an average of 91 percent attendance rate and the students appeared eager to participate and came willingly to the sessions.

The dependent variables utilized were selected and designed to measure treatment effects. GPA was obtained and averaged for each student in four major academic areas - English, Math, Social Studies and Science. Group averages were then compiled. These averages were recorded immediately before treatment, immediately after treatment and four weeks after treatment. Study habits and study attitudes were measured by the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument which was completed by all subjects immediately prior to and after treatment. Teacher obser-

vation of study habits and attitude was obtained pre and post treatment by the Teacher Observation Tally, an experimenter designed form used to complement the SSHA.

T-Tests and Analysis of Variance were used to provide statistical results for the study.

Conclusions

Conclusions concerning the research questions of this study are presented in this section by hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1

The general hypothesis that RET group treatment would not significantly influence within group means on grade point average, study habits and study attitudes was partially accepted and partially rejected. RET did have effect on study habits, study attitudes and overall study orientation (as measured on the SSHA) and the Teacher Observation Tally. GPA and four weeks GPA were not affected. RET was not significantly more effective than the other groups on the various dependent measures.

Hypothesis 2

The general hypothesis that Structured Study Skill group would not influence within group means on grade point average, study habits, and study attitudes was partially accepted and partially rejected. Structured Study Skills did have effect on Study Habits, overall Study Orientation, and Teacher Observation Tally but showed no effect on GPA or four week GPA. Structured Study Skills was not significantly more effective than the other groups on the various dependent measures.

Hypothesis 3

The general hypothesis that affective group treatment would not

significantly influence within group means on grade point average and study attitudes was generally accepted although Study Habits were influenced positively. Affective treatment had no significant effect on GPA, or overall Study Orientation and only slight effect on Teacher Observation Tally. No effect was noticed on GPA or four weeks GPA. The Affective group was not significantly more effective than the other groups on the various dependent measures.

Hypothesis 4

The general hypothesis that the Control group (no treatment) would not significantly influence within group means on grade point average, study habits and study attitudes was accepted. Control conditions did have slight effect on within group means on the Teacher Observation Tally but on no other variable was significant. The Control group was not significantly more effective than the other groups on the various dependent measures.

Due to the paucity of significance of between group results a general conclusion of the study is that nine treatment sessions consisting of three varying philosophies and a control group have not determined any highly significant results for improving transescent grade point averages, study habits and study attitudes.

Discussion

The lack of highly significant results by any one of the four groups must be commented upon and some positive yet unmeasured effects of treatment must be reviewed.

The 36 students selected for the experiment were, on the whole, extremely untrained in practical study habits and were thus also quite low

in study attitude and self motivation. The pretreatment average for the selected subjects was 32 points on the study habits section of the SSHA (44.6 being the mean of 5425 cases). This placed them in the 25th percentile. The subjects scored 39 points on the study attitude section (55.6 mean of 5425 cases) which ranked them in just the 20th percentile. Their combined Study Orientation score (SH and SA) placed them in the 22nd percentile range. These somewhat inferior scores presented a true challenge to any type of treatment, whether it be individual remediation, group treatment or classroom instruction. The students appeared capable of willingly attending and participating in group activities but carrying these activities and newly acquired cognitive skills back to the classroom was a definite problem.

RET/REE appear to require perhaps a greater level of maturity of thought and concentration than this group was able to accept. Nine sessions over five weeks was simply not enough input and duration to introduce and maintain RET concepts with students who were barely passing their regular academic subjects although Study Attitudes were influenced. Cangelosi, Gressard and Mines (1980) in reviewing RET group dealing with self concept recommend assigning group members on the basis of their cognitive stage level. A number of the RET group were simply not able to grasp and apply the intellectual concepts being presented. A more unorthodox, less "elegant" approach may prove more acceptable to lower ability children.

The Structured Study Skill group, while not influencing GPA, did show some promise in study habits but nine sessions within five weeks was clearly not enough time to introduce, practice and reinforce the material.

The time to go "in depth" into topics was not available and superficial treatment is clearly not sufficient for this age group.

The Affective group results somewhat replicated the Buffington and Stilwell study (1980) which also "failed to indicate any reason to reject the null hypothesis". That experiment used RET and Affective education techniques in a two group situation to modify self-control skills and they obtained a "paucity of significant results." The two researchers, as does this experimenter, urge future studies to look not only at criterion measures in affective education but also to be responsive to small, subtle changes in behavior and attitude. They stress the need to focus on, "what treatment, by whom, is most effective for this individual with that specific problem?" (p. 155) The Affective group procedure obviously did not attend to the major academic problems of the individuals in the group.

A slight logistical problem that must also be brought to light is that each time a student attended a group they missed a class and despite all good intentions the students sometimes neglected to make up the work missed and thus were actually slightly penalized academically for group attendance. This was not a major problem but it did not effect the Control group experience.

The experiment did influence teachers comments positively which were added to the post treatment TOT and which need to be brought forth as, "small subtle changes in behavior and attitude." No comments were mentioned by teachers about control subjects but the following were recorded on individuals in various treatment modalities:

Overall performance has been better than the

grade indicates. (RET)

Average did not improve but noticeable

positive change in attitude. (AFF)

Much improvement - attitude and grade! (AFF)

Improved grades. (RET)

Much better! (SS)

Is now completing every assignment. (RET)

Is working hard on Social Studies. (AFF)

Is doing assigned work now... I am pleased. (AFF)

Is asking for help now and trying to make

up missed work! (SS)

Is completing work, is enthusiastic and on task. (RET)

Has improved in all areas! (AFF)

Several weeks after treatment termination teachers, parents and students commented on the positive effects of the groups and students especially desired to continue the meetings. These "non-numerical" results did not appear in the statistics as such but do augur well for future groups of some nature, meeting for longer durations to actually influence study habits, study attitudes and even grade point average to a significant degree.

Recommendations

The attempt to effect positive changes in middle school underachievers in grade point average, study habits and academic attitude is a difficult and often frustrating activity but one which is definitely in need of further research. Transescents are experiencing natural pressures and stresses as part of the very nature of their development and failing

grades only add to their lowered self concept and unhappiness. Attending to their identified needs through small group activity provides both remediation for the student and generates increased data related to the efficacy of the treatment modality chosen.

This study has revealed several areas which must be considered when similar research is conducted in the future.

The Rational-Emotive technique is a useful vehicle for academic motivation but the chosen students must be of an intellectual level that can grasp the basic fundamentals and apply them to their behavior. Above average ability students who are failing in daily school work (a not uncommon occurrence) would make an interesting RET transescent group, especially if the groups were carried out over a several month period.

Structured Study Skills is a viable method of small group intervention yet enough time (perhaps twice or three times a week for a nine week semester) must be allowed in order to properly influence results. Attitude change leads to habit change which conceivably, if given sufficient time, may lead to behavior (GPA) change - a lengthy and challenging process for underachieving transescents to carry out successfully.

The affective mode is perhaps best utilized in the middle school in dealing with personal/social problems rather than those of a purely academic nature. If the affective mode is to be utilized the groups must meet for longer periods of time and may wish to be organized around a theme - i.e. academic underachievers who are experiencing or who have experienced a recent divorce in their family - a common occurrence in the middle school population.

A logistical recommendation is that students never miss an academic

APPENDIX

class when attending a group session. This would enable them not to potentially fall behind while participating in the group experience.

Further investigation of middle school students motivation towards academic matters is a definite need in educational research. By conducting small group activities an experimenter is given fascinating insights into the beliefs, behaviors, frustrations and feelings of a truly challenging and complex body of individuals - the transescents in our educational society.

Appendix A

Permission Slips For Various Concerned Parties

I Parents/Guardian

I am granting permission for _____
son's/daughter's name

to participate in a Group Study Skill Program at Poquoson Middle School organized by Mr. George Fenigsohn, Guidance Counselor. The program is one part of Mr. Fenigsohn's graduate school work.

I am also giving permission for my son/daughter to be administered the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes instrument to aid the program's goals.

Please call Mr. Fenigsohn
if you have any questions
(868-6031).

Signature of Parent/Guardian

II Superintendent - Poquoson City Schools

Principal - Poquoson Middle School

I am granting permission for Mr. George Fenigsohn, Guidance Counselor at Poquoson Middle School, to conduct research at Poquoson Middle School concerning the topic of Academic Improvement and Study Skill Aquisition. I have discussed the project with Mr. Fenigsohn and am aware of the ramifications of the proposed study.

Superintendent - Poquoson City Schools

Principal - Poquoson Middle School

Appendix B

CONTRACT FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION

I, _____, promise to uphold to the best of my ability the following group rules:

I will be aware of when the meetings take place.

I will try to attend all meetings.

I will try to be on time to all meetings.

I will see at least two other members and remind them of the meeting.

I will inform the leader or a group member if I have to miss a meeting.

I will work closely with my teachers to make up any work missed while I attend a meeting.

In the group I will listen to whomever is speaking. I will not interrupt.

I will not put down or make fun of any member in a mean way.

I will be honest and open to the group.

I promise never to discuss outside of the group what is said. I understand the meaning of confidentiality.

SIX RULES OF GROUP

1. Show up on time - each time.
2. Make up any work missed - each time.
3. Listen to others and follow the discussion.
4. Be honest to the group with your feelings.
5. Never put down another in a mean way.
6. Confidentiality --- at all times!!

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

Appendix C

Sample Outline of Material in Each Treatment Group

1. Rational-Emotive Group

- a. Organization, rule setting, contract signing, general instructions as to needs and goals of the group.
- b. Explain A-B-C-D-E rational-emotive concept with school example.
- c. Role play and discuss A-B-C-D-E concept.
- d. How to do homework rationally.
- e. Discuss rational-emotive "philosophy" on: worry, anxiety, fear, boredom, dissatisfaction, guilt and other common feelings about school.
- f. The rational way to prepare for and take tests.
- g. Dealing with teachers - being assertive rather than aggressive.
- h. Responsibility for one's actions at home and school.
- i. Rational-emotive imagery and relaxation techniques.
- j. Making a schedule to allow more time for self.
- k. Home problems and dealing with them rationally.
- l. Take and discuss - Children's Survey of Rational Beliefs.
- m. Discuss rational and obtainable goals in different classes.
- n. Discuss rational attitude towards parents' expectations.
- o. Discuss humor and how it can help in school.

2. Structured Study Skill Group

- a. Organization, rule setting, contract signing, general instructions as to needs and goals of the group.

- b. Setting personal goals for next semester.
- c. How to schedule time properly.
- d. How to prepare for and take a test.
- e. How to do homework properly.
- f. How to understand and deal with a teacher's personality.
- g. How to properly take notes.
- h.. How to memorize and concentrate.
- i. Relaxation techniques.
- j. SQ3R method.
- k. Reading and understanding maps and graphs.
- l. How to listen effectively.
- m. How to get your day organized.
- n. Motivation for doing work.
- o. Need for physical and mental health.

3. Affective Group

- a. Organization, rule setting, contract signing, general instructions as to the needs and goals of the group.
- b. Who am I? - handout to do and discuss.
- c. Family systems.
- d. School problems - classes, teachers, other students.
- e. Organization of one's own time.
- f. How to understand and deal with teacher's personalities.
- g. Problems of getting older - rights and responsibilities.
- h. Emotions - what they are and how they affect us.

- i. Self-image discussion.
- j. Goals for one day, one week, one year, one life.
- k. Relaxation about tests.
- l. Values in school - why bother at all?
- m. Physical and mental health - who needs it?
- n. How time is spent at home.
- o. Any relevant topic that students may bring up.

The above groups will utilize verbal discussion, body language, role playing, handouts, film strips and modeling to provide the content of the nine 45 minute sessions.

The structured group will be highly organized with a handout or film-strip to see and discuss each period. The affective group will be "open" to any relevant direction the students may wish to follow. Some handouts will be used to "guide" a discussion, i.e. "Who am I?"

Appendix D

Children's Survey of Rational Beliefs

Directions: Next to each question there are three possible answers. Pick out the answer you think is best for you. Write the letter on the answer sheet beside the number of the question.

1. When somebody calls your best friend or mother a bad name:
 - a. you have to fight
 - b. you have to tell him off
 - c. you can think before you act
2. If you can't answer the teacher's question:
 - a. you'll get a bad report card
 - b. you may be able to answer the next one
 - c. it shows you that you can't learn
3. When you get mad at somebody:
 - a. it is because of what that person did
 - b. you think yourself into getting angry
 - c. it is because the person is no good
4. A child who throws a temper tantrum:
 - a. is a spoiled kid
 - b. always gets his own way
 - c. is acting immaturely
5. You feel upset because you believe the world should be perfect. You can handle this problem by:
 - a. trying to figure out why the world should be any different than it is
 - b. trying to force the world to be your way
 - c. telling yourself it doesn't matter how the world is
6. When you feel anxious (nervous) it is because:
 - a. somebody is going to punish you
 - b. you are thinking thoughts like "some awful thing is going to happen"
 - c. you are a bad person
7. If you can't learn your school lessons right away:
 - a. you'd better give up because you'll never learn right
 - b. the work is too hard to do
 - c. you'll need more time to practice
8. When somebody teases you, you:
 - a. can wonder what his problem is
 - b. think that people don't like you
 - c. think that he is stupid and no good

9. If a person is not acting his age, the first thing to do is try to:
 - a. show him he is acting silly
 - b. understand that not everybody acts their age at all times
 - c. pretend he doesn't exist
10. When you feel worried (anxious) you:
 - a. can't stand feeling that way
 - b. think there is nothing you can do about feeling that way
 - c. can ask what you are getting yourself anxious over
11. If you have trouble learning to read that means:
 - a. you must be pretty stupid
 - b. you won't learn anything well
 - c. you have to spend more time practicing
12. The best way to get over your worries and troubles is:
 - a. try to forget them
 - b. complain to your friends
 - c. question your troubling thoughts
13. When you do well in school:
 - a. you are a good person
 - b. you knew the subject
 - c. you were lucky
14. Some people who easily become angry:
 - a. have a hard time liking themselves
 - b. have many bad things happen to them
 - c. can never stop being touchy people
15. A person who doesn't like himself:
 - a. doesn't think much of his positive qualities
 - b. is not a very smart person
 - c. is never liked by other people
16. If a person thought "it's too bad I didn't get what I wanted" he would likely feel:
 - a. angry (mad)
 - b. disappointed
 - c. nervous (anxious)
17. Your feelings come from:
 - a. how people behave towards you
 - b. how you think about things which happen
 - c. your heart and your stomach
18. A person who is angry or "mad":
 - a. has been treated unfairly
 - b. sees only one side of the story
 - c. is a bad person

Appendix E

Academic Average Form - One

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____

Class _____ Numerical Average _____

Please indicate above the precise numerical average of the above-named student in your class for the first marking period at Poquoson Middle School. Return to Mr. Fenigsohn's box as soon as possible.

Academic Average Form - Two

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____

Class _____ Numerical Average _____

Please indicate above the precise numerical average of the above-named student in your class since January 4, 1982 at Poquoson Middle School. Return to Mr. Fenigsohn's box as soon as possible.

Appendix F

Teacher Observation Tally (T.O.T)

Student's Name _____ Date _____

Teacher's Name _____ Subject _____

Please rate, as accurately as possible, the above-named student on the five point scale as indicated below:

- 5 = Almost Always (86 to 100 percent of the time)
- 4 = Generally (66 to 85 percent of the time)
- 3 = Frequently (35 to 65 percent of the time)
- 2 = Sometimes (16 to 35 percent of the time)
- 1 = Rarely (0 to 15 percent of the time)
- NA= No Observation

- I 1. Comes to class on time. _____
- 2. Comes to class with proper supplies (books, pencils, notebook, etc.). _____
- 3. Completes homework assignments and brings them to class. _____
- 4. Seems prepared for classwork, quizzes and tests. _____
- 5. Asks questions when not sure of work. _____

- II 1. Inquires about and attempts to complete work when missed. _____
- 2. Completes classroom assignments willingly without being constantly urged to do so. _____
- 3. Cooperates with teacher by being responsible for personal behavior. _____
- 4. Seeks teacher attention in a positive manner. _____
- 5. Seems to have a positive attitude about the subject matter and teacher in general. _____

Note: Your response to this tally will remain confidential. This information will not be included in the student's file and will be destroyed after its use.

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Abstract

EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF THREE METHODS
OF STUDY SKILL GROUP INTERVENTION
WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL
UNDERACHIEVERS

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The purpose of this study was to seek the answer to the following question: Using small group interaction, which of three types of strategies best influences positive academic achievement and academic attitudinal change in seventh and eighth grade low achievers?

Thirty-six students who had failed one or more academic subjects (English, Math, Social Studies or Science) were randomly placed in one of four groups of nine students each. The first group was based on the theory and techniques of Rational-Emotive Therapy. It attacked the "blame factor" so common to transescents and attempted to build a strong and positive attitude in the students.

Practical study skill instruction was an adjunct to the rational-emotive approach. The second group was that of Structural-Study Skills. This group concentrated on procedures and techniques in practical skill building areas such as organization, note and test taking, homework preparation and other such didactic procedures. The third group was that of Affective Education. Its premise was that by attending to the underlying dynamics associated with academic failure the student, through a cathartic group experience, is better able to cope with personal and social problems and thus becomes able to deal with academic ones. Little emphasis was placed on study skills as such but rather on the emotional needs of the student. The fourth group was a control group which received no treatment.

The groups each met nine times for a period of forty-five minutes per session. The activities included open discussion, film strip viewing, paper and pencil activities and didactic instruction in various study skill areas.

Dependent variables were obtained pre and post treatment for all subjects. These included grade point averages, results of the Survey of Study Habits and Attitude questionnaire and results of the Teacher Observation Tally.

From the data analysis, the following conclusions were drawn on within group means:

The RET group showed significant improvement in Study Habits, Study Attitudes, Study Orientation and Teacher Observation Tally scores. It did not show improvement in GPA.

The Structured-Study Skill group showed significant improvement in Study Habits, Study Orientation and Teacher Observation scores but not in GPA or Study Attitudes.

The Affective group showed improvement in Study Habits and Teacher Observation Tally but not GPA, Study Attitudes or Study Orientation. The Control group showed improvement only in the Teacher Observation Tally but in no other variables.

Between groups, no one group showed statistically significant improvement over any other.