ESTEEM BUILDING VERSUS PUNISHMENT: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SELF-ESTEEM GROUP COUNSELLING ON THE BEHAVIOR OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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THE BEHAVIOR OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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A Report Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies In
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
October 1994

St. John's Newfoundland

ISBN 0-612-01855-5

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of an eight week group counselling self-esteem program in changing the behavior of junior high school students frequently disciplined with detention. Changes in behavior were measures using self-reports from students and behavioral observations of teachers from the Brown and Hammill Student and Teacher Behavior Rating Scales (BRP-2), the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (School Form), and the Coopersmith Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem Teacher rating scales. Three groups were measured for changes in behavior: (1) a group of ten students identified for showing recidivism in detention; (2) a group of ten students identified by teachers as having the potential to benefit from self-esteem intervention; and (3) a control group of ten randomly selected students. Data were analyzed using both the paired and independent t-test statistic. Results showed a significant decrease in the incidence of detention following group counselling. Although the improvements in self-esteem did not reach levels of statistical significance, significant changes in student behavior were reported by the students and their teachers. The results were discussed in relation to their implications for school discipline practises and the applications of self-esteem intervention programs in schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to many people who made the completion of this thesis possible.

A special thank you is extended to Ms. Betty Lou Kennedy for being a great support and mentor for me throughout the course of this study.

Thank you to the Administration and Teachers of the school in which this project was piloted. Also a sincere thank you to the children who participated in this study. Without them, none of this would have been possible.

A very special thank you to my loving sister Kim, my friends, my special grandmother Mrs. Loretta Furlong, and my extended family for their interest, concern and support.

Thank you Mom and Dad for making me the person I am today. Your unconditional support, encouragement and love have given me the gifts of strength and confidence. I am forever grateful. I love you both.

Finally, I share this accomplishment with my dear husband Chris, whose love, strength, encouragement and appreciation of my aspirations, have made this possible.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of a group counselling self-esteem program in decreasing the incidence of detention and improving the behavior of grade six and seven students who frequently receive detention as a form of punishment for breaking school rules. The study undertook to determine if there was empirical support for the use of self-esteem group counselling as an intervention to decrease recidivism in detention and to improve the behavior of these students as rated by themselves and their teachers.

INTRODUCTION

According to the literature, a variety of practices have been used in many schools to combat discipline problems. While many approaches are used to eliminate disruptive behaviors, educators continue to rely on a limited number of techniques (Lundell, 1982). According to Lundell, among the most frequently used behavior control methods are: (1) verbal reprimand; (2) revoke privileges; (3) corporal punishment; (4) detention; (5) suspension; and (6) expulsion. The most commonly held perception of

discipline, according to the Executive Committee of the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (1989) is one of punishment for rule-breaking behavior. This often results in punitive school discipline policies, as well as a limitation of the range of options pursued by school personnel.

Schools have been known to use both detention and suspension as specific intervention strategies to deal with discipline problems. Like suspension, "detention is often ineffective, but, lacking other alternatives, it continues to be a standard way of dealing with classroom problems" (Dodd, 1990, p. 94). In an observational study on school rules in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Martin & Baksh (1984) note that detention is probably the most widely used form of punishment in schools in the province. Martin & Baksh suggest that if student observations are valid then detentions may not be achieving the goals teachers and administrators have for this method of punishment.

Methods of discipline such as detention and suspension support a behavioral approach to school discipline, whereby punishment is issued following the violation of school rules. While there is extensive literature on the use of behavior modification as a method of intervention with behavior disordered children, the generalizability of its impact is questionable (Hyman & Lally, 1982).

In contrast to behavior theory, humanistic theory posits that human beings are capable of self-awareness (Corey, 1991). As a result of this self-awareness, humans have the capacity that allows them to think and decide. The more awareness a person has, the more alternatives he/she has available. This theory assumes that human beings strive for self-actualization, i.e. the fulfilment of human potential. According to existential-humanistic theory, by expanding self-awareness and thus increasing choice potentials, people are more likely to become responsible for the direction of their lives (Corey, 1991). According to Hyman & Lally (1982), "The human potential movement has as its goals the increased understanding of self in terms of interpersonal relationships. Because of its emphasis on group process and communication, proponents see it as a major method for improving teacher-student relations" (p.184). From their interactions with adults and peers, as well as from increased self-insight, children begin to develop a more definite self-concept and to become aware who they are (Morganett, 1990). Providing children who often get into trouble in schools with a structured opportunity to develop self-insight and self-esteem may decrease the frequency and severity of behavior problems in schools.

Based on the literature on discipline, it appears that the majority of

intervention programs to combat discipline problems in schools are punitive measures. The present researcher believes that further investigation needs to be done to examine the effectiveness of more positive approaches to discipline which foster self-esteem and self-awareness in students. Although the researcher believes that the implementation of rules is key to the development of social order in a school, she believes that consequences for breaking rules are necessary but not sufficient for solving all school discipline problems. The issue concerning the use of punishment cannot be resolved unless teachers are provided with alternative and effective methods of dealing with children who misbehave and refuse to learn (McDaniel, 1980).

PROBLEM

In theory, if punitive methods of intervention were effective; e.g., detention, suspension, there would be fewer discipline problems in schools. A major criticism of a punitive approach to discipline is that the application of behavior management techniques grounded in behavior theory may not necessarily promote action to change behavior once contingencies are removed. They can also be threatening to the self-esteem of students. According to Lundell (1982), "Persons who punish fail

to realize the psychological reality that punishment typically leads only to a temporary suppression of the unacceptable behavior" (p. 9). As a result, educators need to examine in more detail why students behave as they do and then find alternative methods of discipline which will decrease undesirable behavior while limiting the threat to the self-esteem of students.

Results of a schoolwide needs assessment for a local Elementary/Junior High School indicated that teachers rated building self-esteem and decreasing disruptive behavior as the two top priorities respectively, for the 1992-1993 academic school year. Current methods of discipline including detention, suspension, verbal reprimand, etc. have not succeeded in decreasing misbehavior for a certain population of students. This is evident from reports of teachers indicating that they have been seeing the same students quite frequently in the detention room after school.

It is a policy at this Elementary/Junior-High School to use detention (a form of punishment), as a discipline strategy with students who break school rules in the classroom and/or on school grounds. Twice per week a teacher meets with these students to hold a sixty minute detention period wherein these students are required to complete academic work above and

beyond their regular homework, as well as complete a writing assignment inquiring about the reason for the detention as well as what they would do the next time the same situation arises. Based on teacher reports and office records of students who attend detentions, it is evident that there is a group of students for whom intervention strategies based on principles of behaviorism is ineffective; i.e., there is a population of students for whom detention and/or suspension are ineffective deterrents for the infringement of school rules.

RATIONALE

Since schools are a part of society, they reflect the problems and changes in society at large. They serve large numbers of children who come from a wide variety of backgrounds and diverse cultures (McDaniel, 1986). Given the heterogeneity of students in classrooms today, discipline issues are inevitable. Because the present student population is more diverse, it is also more challenging for educators to deal with. In a survey of 1,388 kindergarten through grade six teachers in the United States, Clapp (1989) found that 69 percent cited discipline as the most crucial of 10 educational issues today and almost half said discipline problems have increased during the past 10 years. Gallup Polls held in the United States

for sixteen consecutive years examining the public's attitude towards public schools indicated that discipline was perceived as the number one problem (McDaniel, 1986). As a result, teachers and administrators are spending a large proportion of their time dealing with discipline issues. According to Wolfgang & Glickman (1986),

> When a teacher encounters a disruptive student in the classroom setting, whatever sense of class achievement previously attained begins to erode. Not only is the particular child's school life unhappy, but his or her actions scream for the teacher's constant attention. Such attention pulls the teacher away from what he or she desired to do with the other children. Given that the teacher has to attend to the disruptive child, he or she is often left with a sense of guilt that insufficient attention was given to the other students i.e. the amount of attention he or she had intended to give them was not followed through (p. 4).

Now more than ever educators must inquire into new methods of dealing with discipline problems in schools if they are to meet the needs of their students. In his investigation of the problems and causes of self-destructive youth, Hunter (1989) brought attention to how the social conditions in North America as well as the rest of the world are producing a generation of youth at risk who are ill prepared to cope with the realities of the world in which thy live. Hunter suggests that this is reflected in:

> the heightened number of academic failures and school dropouts; in increased drug, alcohol, and tobacco use; in the tragic increase of adolescents infected with AIDS and HIV;

> in the expanded number of teen and pre-teen pregnancies; and in the rising rate of gang violence (p. 52).

Similar concerns have been documented by Youngs (1989) who discussed how at one point in time, it seemed that only certain students were at risk in becoming involved in destructive behaviors. Youngs states that today, many more students are at risk, not just the ones who are often labelled as economically deprived, or emotionally or physically neglected and/or abused. Given the seriousness of these issues, it is imperative that schools be given workable programs that treat discipline as an educational problem instead of solely as a management problem (McDaniel, 1986).

One type of program to deal with students with chronic discipline problems which may also help to reduce the stress these students place on teachers is a self-esteem group counselling program offered by the school counselling staff. Instead of providing only punishment to children for misbehavior, this alternative could offer students the opportunity for creating positive relationships, and improving self-esteem. Leaders in the field of research on self-esteem have indicated the importance of healthy self-esteem in order for human beings to realize their full potential. According to The Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (1990), "As teachers and administrators serving children with behavioral and

emotional disabilities, we have a mandate to facilitate their academic and social development and to ameliorate behaviors that may reduce their access to free, successful, and happy lives" (p. 243). For some children, in particular those children who are unresponsive to punishment as a method of intervention for misbehavior, this provides them with an alternative model of discipline. This is not to imply that children who break school rules should not receive consequences for their behavior. It suggests, rather, that there may be more effective intervention strategies for shaping behavior that when coupled with school delivered discipline, may cause more lasting behavioral change.

Numerous studies over the past few decades have provided evidence for the benefits of promoting high self-esteem in children. The relationship between self-esteem and performance has been supported by research (Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Samuels, 1977) and from anecdotal reports from teachers and parents. As stated by Canfield (1990), "Teachers intuitively know that when kids feel better about themselves, they do better in school" (p.48). Youngs (1989) wrote on the value of creating a schoolwide environment that promotes positive self-esteem. She notes the following:

1. The higher a student's self-esteem, the better able he is to

take on the challenges and frustrations associated with the learning experience.

2. The higher a student's self-esteem, the better equipped she is to cope with adversity and diversity in the school place, as well as in other areas of her life.

3. The higher a student's self-esteem, the more able he is to develop and sustain nourishing relationships.

4. The higher a student's self-esteem, the more secure she will be in confronting obstacles and conflicts, the better able to solve problems rather than worrying about them.

5. The higher a student's self-esteem, the more decisive and purposeful he is.

6. The higher a student' self-esteem, the better able she is to recognize her strengths and capabilities.

7. The higher a student's self esteem, the more likely it is that he will treat others with respect and fairness.

8. The higher a student's self-esteem, the more resilient she is to problems and defeats (p. 61).

In summary, it is evident that there are limitations to the effectiveness of punishment as a discipline strategy for solving all problems in school. Given the empirical support for the benefits of healthy self-esteem coupled with the literature supporting the efficacy of group counselling, it seems logical that offering students who are frequently punished in school the opportunity to participate in a group experience which will promote self-esteem may decrease the frequency and severity of

behavior problems in schools. Moreover, school-based group counselling programs focused on developing self-esteem would also contribute to raising school wide levels of self-esteem and in doing so provide schools with a more meaningful intervention strategy to help children who repeatedly break school rules.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Do children who frequent detention perceive themselves as having lower self-esteem and/or poorer behavior than their peers?
2. Do teachers perceive children who frequently receive detention as having lower self-esteem and poorer behavior compared to their peers?
3. Do students and teachers concur in how they rate the self-esteem and behavior of students?
4. Can teachers identify at risk children who can benefit from work in the area of self-esteem?
5. Do students and teachers rate the self-esteem and/or behavior of students as having improved after students participated in an eight week self-esteem group counselling program?

6. Can teachers identify at risk students who could potentially benefit from self-esteem group counselling?
7. Is there evidence to suggest that self-esteem group counselling may be an effective intervention strategy for schools to invest in for the purposes of decreasing discipline problems in school?

The following Chapter provides a more indepth review of the literature with a focus on the following issues: the use of punishment as a method of behavioral change; a review of the concept of self-esteem and how it relates to academic, social and emotional well-being; and the implications of self-esteem and group counselling intervention programs for education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The use of punishment has been criticized as an intervention strategy for dealing with school discipline problems because of the threats it poses to self-esteem. This study examined an alternate approach to discipline which allowed for the development of self-esteem in children who are frequently disciplined in school through participation in a self-esteem group counselling experience. Group counselling programs have been established because of their effectiveness with youth, including efforts at improving self-esteem. This literature review is divided into sections which examine the issues of punishment, self-esteem, the consequences of high/low self-esteem, and the implications of self-esteem/group counselling intervention programs for schools.

Punishment

For many years teachers have kept students after school for violation of school rules. With this system, students who break rules must spend time in silence and/or at work with other disruptive students at the end of the school day. According to a study on school rules in Newfoundland and Labrador, Martin and Baksh (1984) suggested that detention may be the

most widely used form of punishment in schools in the province. Like suspension and expulsion, these methods of punishment have been criticized as prevention strategies because they do little to promote behavioral change.

Punishment is the most common method for behavior control in our culture (Lundell, 1982). Defined, punishment refers to "a spectrum of contingently administered techniques designed to reduce the probability of an individual's behavior" (Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, 1988, p.2). According to Lundell (1982), inherent in the philosophy of punishment is that children misbehave because "they are bad" and that misbehavior is a "fault of the child" (p. 9). Lundell states that one of the main reasons educators continue to punish is the fact that punishment often appears to be an effective and immediate way of eliminating the undesired behavior. Moreover, educators often feel they do not have the resources to provide any other form of intervention. Skinner (1962), a leader in the field of behavior conditioning, brought attention to the limitations of punishment. He stated:

> Punishment is designed to remove awkward, dangerous, or otherwise unwanted behavior from the repertoire on the assumption that a person who has been punished is less likely to behave in the same way again. Unfortunately, punished behavior is likely to reappear after the punitive contingencies

are withdrawn (p. 62).

Some researchers feel punishment does nothing other than make children submissive to those in authority. For example, Jones (1981), states, "The best way to make children become heteronomous obedient adults is to use adult authority to reward and punish them. If we want them to become autonomous adults, we must develop ways to encourage them to construct their own values" (p.14).

Although punishment has been proven to effectively suppress aberrant and unacceptable behavior (MacMillan, Forness, & Trumbull, 1973; Polsgrove & Rieth, 1983), another important issue pertaining to its use revolves around values, ethics, and morals. Commenting on his own perspective on punishment, Hewett (1978) argues that the true message of most punishment procedures is, "We are bigger and stronger than you, and we will punish you when we think you are bad" (p. 103). Teachers and theorists have argued that punishment does not eliminate unacceptable responses but merely suppresses the behavior for as long as the threat of punishment exists (Wood, 1978b). Criticism of punishment has also come from those who highlight the inherent message in punishment as one that conveys the message that those who have the most power and resources control situations and behavior.

Canter (1989), in his work on school discipline, raises concern over the emphasis teachers place on providing only negative consequences when students misbehave. He posits that the key to dealing effectively with student behavior is not negative but positive consequences. By focusing on negative behavior teachers can give students the message that negative behavior gets attention, that the teacher is a negative person, and the classroom is a negative place. Omizo and Omizo (1988) recognize the point that being reprimanded for socially inappropriate behavior and being rejected can take a toll on self-concept and that lowered self-concept may exacerbate the difficulties. Canter (1989) believes, "The key to assertive discipline is catching students being good: recognizing and supporting them when they behave appropriately and letting them know you like it, day in and day out" (p. 58). Mandlebaum et al. (1983) note that when teachers use positive approaches to discipline in their classrooms, there is a great reduction in the number of students they refer to administrators, and significant increases in the students' time on task. Schools with assertive discipline programs that take this positive approach in school districts in California, Oregon, Ohio, and Arizona have indicated an improvement in the climate of the school and the behavior of the students (Moffett et al., 1987).

As educators we must keep in mind that children who frequently receive punishment for misbehavior in schools are more likely to suffer from lower self esteem (Ewashen, Harris, Porter, & Samuels, 1988). Lower self-concept has been related to lower academic achievement (Binder, Jones, & Strowig, 1970; Campbell, 1967), less persistence and motivation (Coopersmith, 1967) and being emotionally as well as socially maladjusted (Rogers & Saklofske, 1985).

As stated by Nathaniel Branden in a speech at the First International Conference on Self Esteem, "All over the world today there is an awakening to the importance of self-esteem to individual and social well being" (Branden, 1992, p. ix). The literature supporting the importance of healthy self-esteem is quite extensive. Before examining it, a review of the concept of self-esteem is warranted.

Self-Esteem Defined

As a child grows and has more experiences, his/her inner picture of self expands. This inner picture is made up of all the descriptions an individual attaches to himself/herself and is referred to as the self-concept (Borba, 1989). This personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes an individual holds towards the self is referred to as self-esteem (Coopersmith, 1986). Using the terminology of Rosenberg (1965),

self-esteem is the "Evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself/herself, expressed as an attitude of approval or disapproval" (p. 5). According to Reasoner (1982), self-esteem is a reflection of a person's respect, confidence, identity, and purpose. Coopersmith, a child psychologist who devoted his life to the study of self-image, wrote that in order to have high self-esteem people need to feel capable; that they possess skills which will allow them to achieve. They need to feel significant; that what they think, say, and do matters to those around them. They need to see themselves as powerful; that they have control over what happens to them; that they are able to make choices and decisions. Finally, they need to feel worthwhile; to feel they have value, that they are unique and worthwhile human beings apart from whatever they may or may not accomplish (Coopersmith, 1967).

Youngs (1989), in her discussions of the vital ingredients of self-esteem, posits that throughout childhood, self-esteem is largely affected by parents and educators. She describes the schoolplace as being "all about believing, achieving, and succeeding" (p. 65) and notes that positive self-esteem is essential for the healthy development of children so that they can take on the challenge of learning. Branden (1992), suggests the need for programs to introduce self-esteem principles and practises in schools. His

reasoning for this is that poor self-esteem can severely limit a person's aspirations and accomplishments.

Coopersmith's research on children with high self-esteem and their families allowed for some insight into the types of environments that are most effective in enhancing self-esteem. Borrowing from Coopersmith, Borba (1989) describes these environments as ones in which children or students:

1. perceive a sense of warmth and love;
2. are offered a degree of security that allows them to grow and to try new things without an overriding concern about failure;
3. are respected as individuals;
4. are encouraged to have ideas and opinions;
5. recognize that there are clear and definite limits within the environment;
6. are given rules and standards that are reasonably and consistently enforced;
7. have a chance to succeed at their own levels; and
8. are accepted with no strings attached (p. 7).

These types of environments could be effectively created within the classroom setting as well as through group counselling sessions.

Since children spend so much of their youth in school, school

appears to be the most logical areas of choice to ensure healthy self-esteem. In their work on self-esteem in schools, Youngs (1989) and Hunter (1989) speak of the increase in destructive behaviors among all students as opposed to just the ones labelled emotionally or physically neglected or abused. Reporting similar symptoms as Hunter (e.g., steady increase of young people inflicting harm on other students, drug and alcohol involvement, youth pregnancy, dropping out of school, disrespect for educators, parents and fellow students), Youngs (1989) argues that efforts at school reform will not be fully successful until "practices that infuse a positive self-regard, namely character-building principles that promote self-respect as a basis for learning, are put in place" (p. 60). According to Reasoner, (1992) schools must elect to strengthen academic skills and help students believe in themselves so that they can cope with the challenges of life in productive ways. Unless educators adopt and enforce a philosophy of education that allows for the development of all facets of human development, including the affective domain, children will be ill equipped to deal with today's world.

Over the years self-esteem has been investigated for its relationship to a variety of outcomes. It has been observed for its relationship to academic achievement, depression, juvenile delinquency, asocial behavior,

and drug abuse to name a few.

Self Esteem and Academic Achievement

Quite an extensive amount of interest has centered around the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. Among the more frequently cited reasons for students being at risk in schools today is low self-esteem (Walz & Bleur, 1992). Children with high self-esteem tend to do better in school (Holly, 1987). Lower self-concept has been related to lower academic achievement (Binder, Jones, & Strowig, 1970), less persistence and motivation (Coopersmith, 1967). Conversely, high self-esteem has been shown to relate positively to academic achievement (Demo & Savin-Williams, 1983). Walz & Bleur argue that the behavior exhibited by at risk students (e.g., high absenteeism, poor grades, classroom inattentativeness, disruptive behavior) are directly related to low self-esteem. If this is indeed the case, then developing self-esteem should help eliminate undesirable behavior. According to Purkey (1970), students with high self-esteem are more receptive to the educational process and show greater motivation in their work and social interactions with teachers and peers. National studies in the United States have clearly indicated that efforts which promote heightened self-esteem also raise academic grades and test scores (Helge, 1987). Covington (1984) noted the following,

> "A review of the correlational studies report a positive association between achievement and indices of self-esteem. As the level of self-esteem increases, so do achievement scores; and as self-esteem decreases, so does achievement. Furthermore, and perhaps most important, self-esteem can be modified through direct instruction and that such instruction can lead to achievement gains" (p. 5).

There is considerable debate over the exact mechanism of how self-esteem affects academic performance or how academic achievement affects self-esteem. Holly (1987) suggests that self-esteem does not cause academic success, but it does contribute in three ways: "First, feeling worthless can be depressing and in turn, inhibit performance; second, fear of failure can cause students to hold back; and third, repeated failure and recurring feelings of incompetence can be discouraging and demoralizing. Given the positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, it seems logical that efforts which would contribute to both are of considerable value.

Self-Esteem and Depression

Studies which examine the relationship between depression and self-esteem have shown that people who are low in self-esteem tend to report more depressive symptoms (Feather, 1985) and that a negative view of self is often taken as a primary defining characteristic of depression (Beck, 1967). Several other studies comparing depression and self-esteem have

indicated an inverse relationship between depression and self-esteem, noting in most cases that when a person is depressed, he/she also has low self-esteem (Storr, 1983; Feather, 1985; Battle, 1987). Rogers and Saklofske (1985) demonstrated a relationship between low self-concept and being emotionally as well as socially maladjusted.

Self-Esteem and Delinquent behavior

The literature has also established a strong relationship between self-esteem, delinquency, and asocial behavior. Offer, Sabshin, & Marcus (1965) suggested that "if poor self-esteem differentially causes delinquent behavior, then it would have to be true that delinquents generally have poor self-esteem" (p. 112). Studies which have compared the self-esteem of delinquents and normal adults mostly show lower self-esteem for delinquents than for normal adults (Berman, 1976; Beyer, 1974; Ferguson, Freeman, & Ferguson, 1977). Adler (1930), Dreikurs (1962), and Kaplan, (1980) all posit that avoiding low self-esteem is the major motivation of human behavior; hence, individuals seek to avoid future devaluing experiences which threaten self worth. Reckless, Dinitz, & Murray (1956) have asserted that poor self-esteem makes a child vulnerable to environmental forces which then lead to delinquency.

Self-Esteem and Peer Pressure

Positive self-esteem has been well established as a means for combatting the negative effects of societal and peer pressure upon children (Jessor & Jessor, 1988; Glenn & Warner, 1983). In a study examining positive self-esteem and its relationship to the non-use of alcohol and drugs, Miller (1988) offered eight one-hour class sessions focused on building self-esteem in a group of Grade 5 students. The results showed significant changes in attitude supporting the non-use of alcohol and drugs. In their study of tobacco use by youth, Bonaguro & Bonaguro (1987) found that in comparison to non-smokers, smokers were significantly lower on measures of self, home, and peer levels of self-esteem.

Self-Esteem/Group Counselling Intervention Programs

Since self-esteem is a primary factor in how well or how poorly an individual functions in society, it is imperative that schools focus on developing the self-esteem of students. Reasoner (1992), a school administrator, reported little success using threats, coercion, and punitive measures when dealing with students with discipline problems, antisocial behavior, and lack of motivation. Having no success with this, he turned to self-esteem programs. Reasoner found that by focusing on self-esteem, the school staff could increase the functional level of students, reduce

disciplinary problems, promote academic motivation, and improve the level of cooperation among students and between students and staff. A great deal of research has provided support for the ability to improve student behavior through self-esteem intervention programs. Covington (cited in Reasoner, 1992), in his review of correlational studies examining the positive association between achievement and indices of self-esteem concluded that self-esteem can be modified through instruction and that instruction can cause achievement gains.

One intervention strategy that has been reinforced for its success in improving self-esteem in adolescents has been group counselling. Group counselling has often been empirically proven in its effectiveness for adolescents (Hagborg, 1991). Arguments for the use of group counselling for youth stem from the fact that adolescents tend to be group oriented and are more willing to discuss concerns in the presence of peers. As a result, they gain support from sharing concerns together and may be more open to change under peer rather than adult influence (Patterson, 1971). Morganett (1990) suggests that,

> Group counselling can provide students with the opportunity to focus on feelings and the resolution of affective issues. It can be used to help those students who are already having behavioral or personality problems. Although group counselling is primarily remedial, it can help these difficulties

> from developing into more serious problems as well as serving a preventative purpose (p. 1).

Improvements in self-esteem through group counselling have been documented in the following:

(1) children who exhibit learning disabilities and acting out behavior (Ozimo & Ozimo, 1986, 1987, 1988);

(2) Undermotivated children (Campbell, 1991);

(3) Emotionally handicapped children (Hagborg, 1991);

(4) Black high school students (Steward & Lewis, 1986);

(5) Children of divorced parents (Ozimo & Ozimo, 1988; Yauman, 1991).

In their 1986 study, Ozimo & Ozimo offered 7 consecutive weekly group counselling sessions to ten learning disabled children ranging in age from 9 to 10 years. The purpose of the study was to eliminate self-defeating behavior. This included problems such as fear of failure, inferiority feelings, bad study habits, lack of motivation, and underachievement. Although they did not report any statistical analysis, Ozimo & Ozimo reported an increase in children's verbal interaction skills. Parents and teachers observed positive changes in the children and the children also reported feeling better about themselves.

In their 1987 study, Ozimo & Ozimo examined the effects of group

counselling on classroom behavior and self-concept among elementary school learning disabled children. Ten weekly sessions lasting 50 minutes in duration were offered to 60 elementary students ranging in age from 5 to 10 years. The results from the Primary Self-Concept Inventory showed a significant improvement in classroom behavior such as less acting out behavior, and less distractibility. Of the measures of self, children who participated in the group sessions showed significant improvements in their social self scores but not in their personal or intellectual self.

In their 1988 study, Ozimo & Ozimo used the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and the Social Behavior Assessment to measure for improvement in self-concept and social behavior in 4th-6th grade children following group counselling. The same ten weekly sessions were offered in this study as in their 1987 study. The results indicated that the children who participated in the group counselling sessions had significantly higher self-concept scores compared to a control group and the children in the treatment group had more positive ratings on two social skills scales (i.e., interpersonal behavior and task-related behavior). The authors brought attention to the fact that their results support the application of group counselling in the teaching of socially appropriate behavior to children.

Hadley (1988) developed a 12-week affective education program for second grade students. Although the mean scores on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale did not demonstrate a significant increase, there was a significant impact on academic performance as measured by SAT reading scores. The researcher suggested that elementary school counsellors can promote the development of the whole child as well as promote academic gains through the inclusion of humanistic education in schools.

Campbell (1991), in a discussion on the applications of group counselling with undermotivated children, suggested that small groups of undermotivated children can be motivated to change their behavior by using a variety of techniques. These techniques include: guided fantasy and discussions of attitudes, behavior, and feelings; focusing on behaviors; positive affirmations to eliminate self-defeating thoughts and behaviors; and visualizations to help students move towards actualizing their goals.

The need for group counselling services for children of divorce has also been highlighted in the literature. In her review of the literature, Yauman (1991) stated that children of divorce can continue to experience problems up to 10 years after the divorce. Yauman wrote that the support for school-based group counselling intervention stems from wel!

documented literature showing the relationship between parental conflict and the emotional effects it has on children. Some of these effects she discussed included increased impulsivity, distractibility, aggressiveness, acting-out behavior, and lowered academic achievement. Yauman concluded her review of the literature arguing the need for group counselling to help children of divorce deal with the root of their problems such that school performance would improve as well as their mental health.

Ozimo & Ozimo (1988) did a study which tested the efficacy of group counselling in helping children of divorce. Using a pre- and post experimental procedure, they issued the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the Locus of Control for Three Achievement Domains to children aged 11-14 years before and after a series of 10 weekly group counselling sessions. Examining the effects of group counselling on the self-esteem and locus of control of adolescents, Ozimo & Ozimo found a significant improvement in levels of self-esteem and moral internal locus of control.

Lavoritano & Segal (1992) examined the efficacy of group counselling programs with a population of high school students in grades 11 and 12 by examining pre- and post test scores on a self-report and self-

esteem measure. The students in the treatment group were identified by either their teacher or parent/guardian as generally having adjustment problems which may be reflected in difficulty with academic and/or inappropriate behavior. The assessment device used to measure self-esteem was the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents. Results indicated a significant improvement in the consistency between their adequacy ratings about what competencies they valued.

In a similar study with elementary school children, Lavoritano & Segal (1992) found a significant and positive improvement in childrens' perceptions of their scholastic competence. A limitation of their study, however, was the absence of a control group. Lavoritano & Segal make several conclusions about counselling in general. They suggest the following:

> Although there is no consensus in the literature about how the psychotherapy/counselling process benefits individuals, the following conclusions would seem to be reasonable common ground across the outcome research: (1) More clients (both child an adult) gain from the experience than do not; (2) no singular orientation to psychotherapy has been determined to be more effective than any other; (3) most participants in psychotherapy show an increase in self-esteem, improved adjustment at school or work, and some degree of anxiety reduction; and (4) research supports the contention that school-based intervention programs can bring about positive outcomes in children (p. 535).

In summary, punishment has been criticized for its inability to cause lasting changes in behavior once contingencies are removed and also for the threat it poses to self-esteem. Given the existing support for the benefits of healthy self-esteem and the success of group counselling in improving the behavior and self-esteem of children the present researcher will attempt to test these findings by examining the effects of a school-based group counselling program on behavior and self-esteem. Chapter III, the Methodology, examines the specific details of how this study was executed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study examined the efficacy of a group counselling program as an intervention strategy to deal with children who are frequently disciplined with detention in schools. Chapter III presents an indepth description of the subjects, sampling, design and hypotheses, instrumentation, procedure, and analysis of results for this study.

SUBJECTS

The subjects for this study consisted of thirty students from a local Elementary/Junior High School. The students were ages twelve and thirteen and in grades six and seven Twenty of the subjects were twelve years of age and ten were thirteen. Eighteen subjects were in grade six and twelve were in grade seven.

SAMPLING

The subjects were selected for participation in one of three groups: (1) Experimental Group I; (2) Experimental Group II; or (3) Control Group. Experimental Group I consisted of a group of ten students who were randomly selected from the school's detention records. They were

chosen from those students who had five or more detentions within the previous three months. A second Experimental Group (Experimental II) was included in the study and consisted of ten students who were randomly selected from a list of students whom teachers identified to the counselling staff as students who could benefit from work in the area of self-esteem yet did not have detention as a problem. This group was included in the study for two reasons: (1) it provided a valuable test of the efficacy of the self-esteem intervention program for students identified as needing help in the area of self-esteem; and (2) the researcher felt it was unethical not to offer the intervention program to children who were identified by teachers as having the potential to benefit from the program. Because of the nature of how these two groups were identified, i.e. incidence of detention and teacher recommendation, it was not possible to select samples congruent for gender or exact age to the year. Table 1 shows a breakdown of each of the three groups in the study. The Control Group for the study consisted of a random sample of 10 students from the grades six and seven class lists, excluding those students included in the Experimental I and II groups.

DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES

The design of this study followed a pre/post design format which

Table 1

Gender and Grade Distribution of Subjects in Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Boys		Girls		
Group	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 7	Totals
Experimental Group I	6	2	2	0	10
Experimental Group II	2	5	2	1	10
Control	4	2	2	2	10
Totals	12	9	6	3	N = 30

investigated the efficacy of an 8-week group counselling self-esteem program in improving the behavior of junior-high school students as perceived by the students themselves and their homeroom teachers. It was predicted that the Control Group would be rated the most favorable by teachers and students on all measures of behavior and self-esteem, followed by the Experimental Group II. The Experimental Group I were predicted to be rated least favorably on all measures of behavior and self-esteem. It was also predicted that Experimental Group I would show the most improvement in detention avoidance and behavior because

Experimental Group II were not referred for group counselling based on behavior or detention.

The following hypotheses were postulated. Group counselling in the area of self-esteem would : (1) improve the behavior and self-esteem of students as rated by themselves and their teachers; and (2) result in a reduction in the number of detentions in children who frequently attend after-school detention as a form of punishment for breaking school rules.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used in this study included: the Brown and Hammill Student Rating Scales (Home, School, and Peer) and the Brown and Hammill Teacher Rating Scale of the Brown and Hammill Behavior Rating Profile 2 (BRP-2) (Brown & Hammill, 1990); the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory - School Form (SEI) (Coopersmith, 1967) and the Coopersmith Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem Rating Scale (BASE) (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982). The BRP-2 was used to measure students' perceptions of their own behavior and teachers' observations of student behavior. The SEI was used to measure students' attitudes towards themselves and the BASE was used as a means of inferring self-esteem from observations of student behavior made by teachers.

Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)

The SEI School Form was designed to measure "evaluative attitudes toward the self in social, academic, family, and personal areas of experience" in students aged eight through fifteen (Coopersmith, 1986, p. 1). The inventory can be used with males and females and for all ethnic groups and many special populations (e.g., learning disabled persons). It can be administered both individually or in groups. Some of the suggested applications for the SEI include; individual assessment and classroom screening; instructional planning; self-esteem program evaluation; and clinical and research studies (Coopersmith, 1985). The School Form consists of fifty-eight items: fifty self-esteem items and eight items that constitute a Lie Scale, which is a measure of a student's defensiveness or test wiseness. The self-esteem items yield a total score and separate scores for four subscales: General Self, Social Self/Peers, Home-Parents, and School-Academic. The subscales allow for variances in perceptions of self-esteem in different areas of experience (Coopersmith, 1986). Each answer representing a favorable response receives four points, for a maximum total of one hundred points. Norms for the SEI raw scores are available for the total scores but not the individual subscales. Consequently, only raw data were used in the analysis.

High scores on the SEI indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Coopersmith (1986) indicated that mean Total SEI scores range from 70 to 80, with a standard deviation of from 11 to 13; however, he recommended developing local norms as the best possible way to analyze data. A score in the upper quartile is generally indicative of high self-esteem, the lower quartile as low self-esteem, and the interquartile range as indicative of medium self-esteem. Lie scores are also very important on this instrument. According to Coopersmith (1986),

> A high score on the Lie Scale may indicate that the examinee responded defensively or thought he or she understood the "intention" of the inventory and was attempting to respond positively to all items. In such instance, the inventory may be invalid if a supplemental observational rating or teacher report indicates low or medium self-esteem for the examinee (p. 8).

The SEI was believed as having sufficient reliability and validity based on extensive studies cited in the SEI manual. A split-half reliability coefficient of .85 and test-retest coefficients above .80 have been reported by Coopersmith (Coopersmith, 1967 cited in Coopersmith, 1986, p. 12). In the user manual, construct, concurrent and predictive validity studies have provided support for the SEI (Kohenes, 1974, 1978; Simon & Simon, 1975; Donaldson, 1974 cited in Coopersmith, 1986). Coopersmith, as well as other researchers, have provided sufficient evidence for showing

acceptable reliability and validity for the SEI (Coopersmith, 1986).

Coopersmith Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE)

The BASE measures children's academic self-esteem by using teachers' direct observations of their classroom behaviors. Its applications are similar to those of the SEI including assessing how programs affect student motivation, identifying students' levels of academic self-esteem and evaluating factors that affect it (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982). The BASE rating scale consists of 16 items which allow the examiner to infer self-esteem from observations of behavior. The instrument yields a total score from the combination of five factor scores. The factor scores represent Student Initiative, Social Attention, Success/Failure, Social Attraction, and Self-Confidence. The Students Initiative factor measures how often students participate in classroom activities such as making decisions, offering new ideas, participating, volunteering, and asking questions. The Social Attention factor measures how well the student "fits into" the classroom environment and exhibits behaviors that facilitate classroom learning (e.g., are quiet when necessary, avoid undue attention, and cooperate in groups with peers). The Success/Failure factor assesses how well students cope with failure, criticism, correction, advice, and other responses that could be perceived as negative. The Social Attraction factor

measures how compatible children are with their peers, including the attractiveness of a child to peers, the child's role with peers when playing and working together, and the child's self-descriptions. The Self-Confidence factor measures a child's level of verbal expression of school accomplishments. All five factor scores discriminate between children functioning at high and low levels of self-esteem. Classifications (e.g., high, moderate, or low) are available for the raw scores of each subscale of the BASE and for the raw Total BASE score; however, classifications are only available for males and females separately. Only Total BASE scores can be converted to standard scores and hence percentiles. In order to obtain percentile rankings for Total scores on the BASE, the researcher averaged the norms for males and females because group norms were not available. For the purposes of this study, scores on the BASE were analyzed using raw data.

To measure self-esteem most thoroughly, Coopersmith suggested using the SEI with the BASE because the best estimate of self-esteem comes from using both self-report and observational methods. This was done in the present study as students' self-reports on both behavior and self-esteem were combined with teacher observations of students' behavior and self-esteem.

Estimates of internal consistency based on correlations of individual items with the total BASE indicated all correlations as significant at the .001 level and ranged from .31 to .76 with a mean z transformation of the correlation coefficients of .61. Intercorrelations of factor scores with the total BASE scores provided BASE reliability ratings of .83 for boys and .84 for girls. Construct validity was established for the BASE using factor analysis with three independent samples which resulted in the BASE items factoring consistently into five components corresponding to the five factors of the instrument. Intercorrelations of BASE scores with other tests of academic achievement (e.g. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) have show BASE ratings as moderately strong predictors of academic achievement (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982).

The Behavior Rating Profile II (BRP-2)

The Behavior Rating Profile 2 (BRP-2) is a norm-referenced battery of six instruments designed to evaluate perceived behaviors of children aged six years-six months through eighteen years-six months at home, in school, and in interpersonal relationships. Five of the six instruments are rating scales and one is a sociogram. These rating scales include: three Student Ratings Scales (Home, School, and Peers); a Teacher Rating Scale; and a Parent Rating Scale. For the purposes of this study, only the

three Student Rating Scales and the Teacher Rating Scale were used.

BRP-2 Student Rating Scales

A single instrument comprises the three student rating scales of Home, School, and Peers. Contained in this instrument are 20 items for each scale to form a 60-item instrument. Students are asked to describe their own behavior by selecting "True" or "False" for each item. The items on the Home Scale describe behaviors that are usually observed at home. The items on the Peer Scale describe social skills or interpersonal relationships and the School Scale items describe behaviors which occur in school. Raw scores on the BRP can be converted into standard scores and percentile ranks. The mean of the standard score distribution is 10 and the standard deviation is 3 (Brown & Hammill, 1990, p. 39).

BRP-2 Teacher Rating Scale

The Teacher Rating Scale contains thirty items/sentences which describe behavior that may be observed in school. The respondent classifies each item as "Very Much Like the Student", "Like the Student", "Not Much Like the Student", or as "Not at All Like the Student". As similar to the Coopersmith, some of the suggested applications for the BRP-2 include identifying students with needs, and evaluating intervention programs.

The BRP-2 has been well established for its reliability and validity. Tests of internal consistency performed on the BRP-2 using 270 samples of the Parent Rating Scales, 530 Teacher Rating Scales, and 700 of the Student Rating Scales across five grade levels yielded coefficients alpha at .80 or above. Test-retest checks of the BRP-2 reported coefficients ranging from .78 to .91. A study of construct validity which calculated item total correlations to test for homogeneity of items revealed statistically significant coefficients ranging form .43 to .83. Concurrent validity was measured against several instruments. Correlation with the Vineland Social Maturity Scale was determined to be significant and quite substantial in magnitude with a coefficient range of .70 to .92 (Brown & Hammill, 1990).

PROCEDURE

Prior to and upon termination of the intervention program given to the Experimental Groups I and II, all thirty subjects completed a behavior rating scale and a self-esteem inventory. The teachers of these students also completed corresponding behavior ratings and self-esteem inventories for these students at the same time intervals. Although the control group did not receive any intervention, the subjects and their teachers completed the same inventories as did the two experimental groups. Detention data

for all subjects were compared for a three month interval prior to and upon termination of the group counselling program. These records were obtained from official records kept in the school office. This interval was determined by the amount of time remaining in the school year at the end of the group intervention.

The group counselling program that was used in this study with Experimental Groups I and II was developed by Rosemarie Morganett and is titled "Feeling Good About Me: Developing Self-Esteem" (Morganett, 1990, p. 85). This group experience consisted of eight sessions of approximately 40-50 minutes each. As developed by Morganett, each session was organized with a lesson plan format which included for each session its goals, required materials, and the process for the session. Included in the process section are specific guidelines for ice breakers, working time and closing time. The sessions were offered to the Experimental groups for 8 consecutive weeks during class time. This class time was agreed upon by the homeroom teachers so that little disruption in academic programming occurred. The school's Guidance Counsellor ran all the sessions. The titles of the sessions were as follows:

(1) Getting Started

(2) What I Like and Dislike About Me

(3) Everyone Has Roles

(4) My Goals As a Learner

(5) Exploring Friendship Goals

(6) Reaching Personal Goals

(7) Perfect in Every Way

(8) Saying Goodbye (Morganett, 1990, p. v).

Consent for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Memorial University of Newfoundland, the School Board to which the targeted school belongs (see Appendix A), the Administrators of the school, the parents and teachers of the students involved, and the students who participated in the study. No student was required to participate if he/she did not wish to and all who participated were given the option to discontinue at any time if they wished to do so. None of the subjects dropped out of the study.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF DATA

The results of the study were analyzed for changes in behavior as perceived by self-reports of students and observations of teachers prior to and following the delivery of an eight week self-esteem group counselling intervention program. Standard scores on Student and Teacher Scales of

the BRP-2, raw scores on the Coopersmith SEI and BASE, and detention scores prior to and upon commencement of the intervention offered to the two experimental groups were compared using the 2-tailed paired t-test statistic and between group differences in behavior, self-esteem, and detention using independent t-tests both before and after the intervention was offered to the experimental groups. The degrees of freedom for all paired and independent t-tests in the study were 9 (N-1) and 18 (N-2) respectively. The cutoff level used to determine statistical significance was a chance probability of five percent or less ($p<.05$). The statistical software used for this analysis was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

In summary, thirty students participated in a study which investigated the use of self-esteem group counselling in improving the behavior and self-esteem of students as perceived by themselves and observations of teachers. Pre- and posttest scores were analyzed using the t-test statistic. Differences among and between groups were investigated. The following chapter provides a presentation and analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter IV provides a presentation and analysis of the results. Using the t-test statistic, pre- and posttest scores on all measures of self-esteem and behavior obtained through school detention records, self-reports of students and teacher observations are presented. Results are presented in the following categories: detention; student self-esteem; student behavior; teachers' reports of student self-esteem; and teachers' reports of student behavior.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Detention

Table 2 shows pre- and post comparisons of the incidence of detention across the three groups. If scores were rounded, Experimental Group I was the only group that received detentions. Baseline data indicated that the average number of detentions Experimental Group I received before and after counselling was 5 and 1 respectively. The results also indicated a significant decrease in the number of detentions received by Experimental Group I ($t=14.09$, $p<.001$) in the three months following counselling compared to the three months prior to start of the experiment. No differences were found for Experimental Group II and the Control

Table 2

A Comparison of Means of Pre- and Posttest Detention Scores and t-Tests for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Detention Scores		Posttest Detention Scores			
Groups	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	Signif.
	N = 10		N = 10			
Experimental I	5.20	0.42	1.30	1.06	14.09	***
Experimental II	0.20	0.63	0.00	0.00	1.00	
Control	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	

*** Significance p < .001.

between pre- and posttest scores on detention. Between group comparisons on the incidence of detention before and after intervention are shown in Table 3. Results indicated that Experimental Group I and the Control Group significantly differed from each other prior to receiving group counselling ($t=20.80$, $p<.001$). This difference was not evident after the termination of counselling. The posttest detention scores of the two groups failed to reach statistical significance. No other group differences were found prior to or after the intervention.

Student Behavior

Table 4 shows comparisons of the means on the Student Behavior Rating Scales Home, School and Peers after intervention. All scores on

Table 3

Between Group Comparisons of Means of Pre- and Posttest Detention Scores and t-Tests Among Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores					Postest Scores				
	Means		S.D.s		t-Value	Means		S.D.s		t-Value
Groups										
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	5.20	(0.20)	0.42	(0.63)	20.80 ***	1.30	(0.00)	1.06	(0.00)	N/A
Exp. I & (C)	5.20	(0.00)	0.42	(0.00)	N/A	1.30	(0.00)	1.06	(0.00)	N/A
Exp. II & (C)	0.20	(0.00)	0.63	(0.00)	N/A	0.00	(0.20)	0.00	(0.00)	N/A

Exp. I = Experimental Group I; Exp. II = Experimental Group II; C = Control Group

*** Significance p < .001

N/A t-Value could not be calculated – one or more samples had no variance

N = 10 for each group

the three Behavior Rating Scales fell within one standard deviation of the mean with the exception of the scores reflecting how students in Experimental Group I perceived their own behavior in school before and after intervention. Students' observations of themselves as indicated by the scores on the Student BRP-2 Scales did not change over the course of the study whether or not they received counselling intervention. Although it did not reach statistical significance, there was a downward trend reflected in the posttest mean of how the members of Experimental Group II rated their behavior in school and with peers after intervention.

Table 4

A Comparison of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Student Behavior Rating Scales of the BRP-2 and t-Tests for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores			Posttest Scores				
Scale/ Group	Mean	S.D.	% ile	Mean	S.D.	% ile	t–Value	Signif.
Home								
Experimental I	7.70	2.71	25th	9.30	2.71	37th	1.55	–
Experimental II	11.80	2.70	75th	11.80	2.10	75th	0.00	–
Control	11.30	2.83	63rd	11.60	2.63	75th	0.68	–
School								
Experimental I	5.10	2.33	4th	6.70	3.74	16th	1.92	–
Experimental II	12.50	2.72	84th	11.00	3.27	75th	1.75	–
Control	10.60	3.20	63rd	10.60	3.40	75th	0.00	–
Peer								
Experimental I	9.10	2.08	37th	9.90	2.18	50th	1.56	–
Experimental II	9.50	3.92	50th	9.00	2.94	37th	0.63	–
Control	11.70	2.63	75th	11.70	2.41	75th	0.00	–

Mean = 10; S.D. = 3.

N = 10 for each group.

Table 5 shows between group comparisons of the means of pre- and posttest scores on the BRP-2 among the groups prior to and after

Table 5

Between Group Comparisons of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Student Behavior Rating Scales Among Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

Scale/ Groups	Pretest Scores Means		S.D.s		t-Value	Posttest Scores Means		S.D.s		t-Value
Home										
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	7.70	(11.80)	2.71	(2.70)	3.39 **	9.30	(11.80)	2.71	(2.10)	2.31 *
Exp. I & (C)	7.70	(11.30)	2.71	(2.83)	2.91 *	9.30	(11.60)	2.71	(2.63)	1.92
Exp. II & (C)	11.80	(11.30)	2.70	(2.83)	0.40	11.80	(11.60)	2.10	(2.63)	0.19
School										
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	5.10	(12.50)	2.33	(2.37)	7.04 ***	6.70	(11.00)	3.74	(3.27)	2.74 *
Exp. I & (C)	5.10	(10.60)	2.33	(3.20)	4.39 **	6.70	(10.60)	3.74	(3.41)	2.44 *
Exp. II & (C)	12.50	(10.60)	2.37	(3.20)	1.51	11.00	(10.60)	3.27	(3.41)	0.27
Peer										
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	9.10	(9.50)	2.08	(3.92)	0.26	9.90	(9.00)	2.18	(2.94)	0.78
Exp. I & (C)	9.10	(11.70)	2.08	(2.63)	2.45 *	9.00	(11.70)	2.18	(2.41)	1.75
Exp. II & (C)	9.50	(11.70)	3.92	(2.63)	1.47	9.00	(11.70)	2.94	(2.41)	2.25

Exp. I = Experimental Group I; Exp. II = Experimental Group II; C = Control Group

Mean = 10; S.D. = 3

Significance * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

N = 10 for each group.

intervention. Results indicated that the self-reports students made of their behavior at home prior to the onset of intervention showed that the most significant differences between Experimental Groups I and II, with

Experimental Group I members rating their behavior at home significantlypoorer than that of Experimental Group II ($t=3.39$, $p<.01$) and to a lesser degree, poorer than home behavior of the Control group ($t=2.91$, $p<.05$). These discrepancies between perceptions of behavior at home decreased after Experimental Groups I and II received counselling. Although Experimental Group I members rated their behavior significantly lower on the pretest than did the Experimental Group II members, the gap between them was not as great on the posttest ($t=2.31$, $p<.01$) and it no longer existed for the Control Group. Students recommended by teachers for group counselling in Experimental Group II did not rate their behavior any differently from that of the Control Group at either the pretest or posttest intervals.

Following a similar trend on the School Scale, Experimental Group I rated their behavior in school significantly lower than that of Experimental Group II ($t=7.04$, $p<.001$) and to a lesser degree than that of the Control Group ($t=4.39$, $p<.01$). At posttesting, these significant differences were still evident but they were not of the same magnitude ($t=2.74$, $p<.05$; and $t=2.44$, $p<.05$ respectively). As in the Home Scale, Group II did not rate their behavior any differently from that of the Control Group either before or after they received counselling.

Student reports of their behavior with peers showed that the only Groups which rated themselves differently were Experimental Group I and the Control Group. Prior to receiving intervention, Experimental Group I rated their behavior with peers significantly lower than that of the Control Group ($t=2.45$, $p<.05$); however, this difference did not exist after Group I completed the group experience.

Teachers' Ratings of Student Behavior

Table 6 shows a comparison of means of pre- and posttest scores on the Teacher's Behavior Rating Scale of the BRP-2 for all three groups. The results showed that teachers rated the behavior of students who frequently received detention in Experimental Group I significantly lower than students in Experimental Group II at both the pretest interval ($t=2.84$, $p<.05$), and the posttest interval ($t=2.50$, $p<.05$). A comparison of teacher ratings between Experimental Group I and the Control Group indicated the same trend; i.e, teachers rated the behavior of students in Group I significantly lower than that of those in the Control Group both before ($t=2.42$, $p<.05$) and after Experimental Group I received the counselling intervention ($t=2.40$, $p<.05$). Teachers did not perceive any significant differences in the behavior of students in Experimental Group II and the Control group before or after counselling.

Table 6

A Comparison of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Teacher Behavior Rating Scale of the BRP-2 and t-Tests for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores			Posttest Scores				
Group	Mean	S.D.	% ile	Mean	S.D.	% ile	t-Value	Signif.
Experimental I	8.70	1.49	37th	8.90	1.66	37th	0.69	–
Experimental II	11.20	2.35	63rd	10.90	1.91	63rd	0.90	–
Control	11.30	3.06	63rd	11.40	2.84	63rd	1.00	–

Mean = 10; S.D. = 3

N = 10 for each group.

Table 7 shows between group comparisons of means of pre- and posttest scores on the Teacher's Behavior Rating Scale of the BRP-2. The results show that teachers' ratings of students' behavior at both pre- and posttest intervals followed the same trend as students' ratings of themselves when subjected to the t-test analysis, in that they did not reflect any significant changes in behavior. Visual comparisons of standard deviation scores for students' self-reports of behavior in school with teachers' observations indicated a higher degree of variance in scores about the

mean in the students' results than in the teachers' results. Comparisons of teacher percentile rankings of student behavior between the groups indicated that they ranked both the Control Group and Experimental Group II at the 63rd percentile and the Experimental Group I at the 37th percentile. These rankings did not change at the posttest interval. Teacher percentile rankings of student behavior placed Experimental Groups I and II and the Control Group at the 37th, 63rd and 63rd percentiles respectively.

Comparisons of teacher percentile rankings with student rankings of themselves on the School Behavior Rating Scale (see Table 4) indicated the following results: (1) Experimental Group I ranked their behavior 33 percent lower than teachers rated them prior to counselling and only 21 percent lower after counselling; (2) Experimental Group II ranked their behavior 21 percent higher than teachers did before counselling but only 12 percent higher after counselling; and (3) no discrepancies existed between teachers and students in the Control Group ranked school behavior either before or after the eight week time period elapsed, during which Experimental Groups I and II received group counselling.

Student Self-Esteem

Table 8 shows a comparison of means of pre- and posttest scores on

Table 7

Between Group Comparisons of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Teacher Rating Scale of the BRP-2 and t-Tests for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores					Posttest Scores				
	Means		S.D.s		t-Value	Means		S.D.		t-Value
Group										
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	8.70	(11.20)	1.50	(2.35)	2.64 *	8.90	(10.90)	1.66	(1.91)	2.50 *
Exp. I & (C)	8.70	(11.30)	1.50	(3.06)	2.42 *	8.90	(11.40)	1.66	(2.24)	2.40 *
Exp. II & (C)	11.20	(11.30)	2.35	(3.06)	0.06	10.90	(11.40)	1.91	(2.64)	0.26

Exp. I = Experimental Group I; Exp. II = Experimental Group II; C = Control Group

Mean = 10; S.D. = 3

* Significance $p < .05$.

N = 10 for each group.

the Coopersmith Student Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) for all the groups before and after the intervention. Students' self-reports of self-esteem indicated that they generally did not perceive any differences in self-esteem at the posttest interval. This was indicated by the lack of significance in the paired t-tests for any of the Subscales Scores, Total and Lie Scale Scores of the SEI. Students in the Control Group rated their overall level of self-esteem higher (Mean = 75.40) than did both Experimental Groups I and II (54.00 and 69.00 respectively) at pretest. The groups, Experimental I and II and the Control Group, were ranked third, second

and first respectively with regard to overall self-esteem at both pre-and posttest intervals. Mean percentile rankings placed the Control Group in the upper quartile on the SEI (Mean = 75.40), indicating a high level of self-esteem falling within the normal range. Experimental Group II rated themselves lower than did the Control Group (Mean = 69.00), falling one percentage point below what Coopersmith constitutes as the normal range (i.e. 70 - 80). This placed Experimental Group I in the interquartile range. At posttest, Experimental Group I rated themselves lowest of the three groups, falling 1.6 standard deviations below the low end of the normal means given by Coopersmith. This also placed Experimental Group II in the interquartile. At posttest, the Control Group remained at the high self-esteem level and both Experimental Groups I and II ranked themselves at the high-moderate level of the interquartile range.

This same first, second and third ranking trend was found for pre- and posttest scores on the subscale General Self, pretest scores on the Social Self subscale and posttest scores on both the Home and School subscales. Posttest scores on the Social Self subscale indicated the Control Group ranked themselves highest, with Experimental Group I ranking themselves higher than Experimental Group II on this subscale. Pretest means of the Home and Schools subscales indicated that the Control

Table 8

A Comparison of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Coopersmith Student Self-Esteem Inventory for Students and t-Tests for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores		Posttest Scores			
Subscale/ Group	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	Signif.
General Self						
Experimental I	15.10	5.90	16.30	4.19	1.66	–
Experimental II	17.60	6.11	18.40	5.23	1.15	–
Control	19.70	3.60	20.40	3.44	1.35	–
Social Self						
Experimental I	5.70	1.89	5.50	1.84	0.69	–
Experimental II	5.80	1.69	4.90	2.13	1.54	–
Control	7.10	1.60	7.40	1.58	1.41	–
Home						
Experimental I	3.50	2.22	4.20	1.75	1.21	–
Experimental II	5.90	1.91	5.30	2.58	1.62	–
Control	5.70	2.31	6.50	1.96	1.35	–
School						
Experimental I	2.70	2.00	2.70	1.64	0.00	–
Experimental II	5.20	2.15	4.60	1.62	1.08	–
Control	5.20	2.15	5.40	2.32	0.61	–
Total						
Experimental I	54.00	19.46	61.40	13.53	1.29	–
Experimental II	69.00	20.21	66.60	16.96	0.71	–
Control	75.40	16.76	79.40	15.64	1.26	–
Lie						
Experimental I	2.60	1.40	2.20	1.14	0.97	–
Experimental II	2.20	1.32	2.90	1.60	1.77	–
Control	1.30	1.25	1.50	1.72	0.69	–

Total Mean 70 – 80; S.D. 10 – 13

N = 10 for each group.

Group rated themselves the same as Experimental Group II on both subscales and higher than experimental Group I at both pre-and posttest intervals.

Table 9 shows a between group comparison of means of pre- and posttest scores on the Coopersmith Student Self-Esteem Inventory among Experimental Groups I and II and the Control Group. Although paired t-tests did not reveal any significant differences in the groups after the intervention, some of the independent t-test comparisons between groups did. The groups which statistically differed on the Total SEI score were Experimental Group I and the Control Group ($t=2.63$, $p<.05$), with the Control showing a significantly higher mean at pretest. This difference was still evident after Group I received group counselling ($t=2.75$, $p<.05$). None of the groups differed on the subscale General Self at either of the testing intervals. On measures of Social Self, the groups did not differ prior to the counselling intervention offered to the Experimental Groups; however, posttest data revealed significant differences between both Experimental Group I and the Control Group and Experimental group II and the Control Group ($t=2.48$, $p<.05$; and $t=2.98$, $p<.05$ respectively). Experimental Group I rated themselves significantly lower than Experimental Group II on the Home subscale prior to counselling ($t=2.59$,

Table 9

Between Group Comparisons of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Coopersmith Student Self-Esteem Inventory and t-Tests Among Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	Pretest Scores						Posttest Scores					
Subscale/ Groups	Means		S.D.s		t-Value		Means		S.D.s		t-Value	
General Self												
Exp I & (Exp II)	15.10	(17.60)	5.90	(6.11)	0.93		18.30	(18.40)	4.19	(5.23)	0.05	
Exp I & (C)	15.10	(19.70)	5.90	(3.80)	2.07		18.30	(20.40)	4.19	(3.44)	1.22	
Exp. II & (C)	17.60	(19.70)	6.11	(3.80)	0.92		18.40	(20.40)	5.23	(3.44)	1.01	
Social Self												
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	5.70	(5.80)	1.89	(1.89)	0.12		5.50	(4.90)	1.84	(2.13)	0.67	
Exp. I & (C)	5.70	(7.10)	1.89	(1.60)	1.79		5.50	(7.40)	1.84	(1.58)	2.46	*
Exp. II & (C)	5.80	(7.10)	1.69	(1.60)	1.77		4.90	(7.40)	2.13	(1.58)	2.98	*
Home												
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	3.50	(5.90)	2.22	(1.91)	2.59	*	4.20	(5.30)	1.75	(2.58)	1.11	
Exp. I & (C)	3.50	(5.70)	2.22	(2.31)	2.17		4.20	(6.50)	1.75	(1.96)	2.77	*
Exp. II & (C)	5.90	(5.70)	1.91	(2.31)	0.21		5.30	(6.50)	2.58	(1.96)	1.17	
School												
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	2.70	(5.20)	2.00	(2.15)	2.69	*	2.70	(4.80)	1.64	(1.62)	2.66	*
Exp. I & (C)	2.70	(5.20)	2.00	(2.15)	2.69	*	2.70	(5.40)	1.64	(2.32)	3.01	*
Exp. II & (C)	5.20	(5.20)	2.15	(2.15)	0.00		4.80	(5.40)	1.62	(2.32)	0.67	
Total												
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	54.00	(59.00)	19.46	(20.10)	1.59		61.40	(66.80)	13.53	(18.96)	0.73	
Exp. I & (C)	54.00	(75.40)	19.46	(16.76)	2.63	*	61.40	(79.40)	13.53	(15.64)	2.75	*
Exp II & (C)	59.00	(75.40)	20.21	(16.76)	0.77		66.80	(79.40)	18.96	(15.64)	1.62	
Lie												
Exp. I & (Exp. II)	2.80	(2.20)	1.40	(1.32)	0.99		2.20	(2.90)	1.14	(1.60)	1.13	
Exp I & (C)	2.80	(1.30)	1.40	(1.25)	2.53	*	2.20	(1.50)	1.14	(1.72)	1.06	
Exp. II & (C)	2.20	(1.30)	1.32	(1.25)	1.57		2.90	(1.50)	1.60	1.72	0.83	

Exp I = Experimental Group I; Exp. II = Experimental Group II; C = Control Group

Total Mean = 70 – 80; S.D. = 10 – 15

* Significance $p < .05$

N = 10 for each group

$p<.05$), but this discrepancy did not exist after counselling had ended. Significant group differences on the School subscale were found between Experimental Groups I and II at pretest ($t=2.69$, $p<.05$) and between Experimental Group I and the Control Group ($t=2.69$, $p<.05$) at pretest. These differences still existed at the posttest interval ($t=2.88$, $p<.05$; and $t=3.01$, $p<.05$ respectively). Between group comparisons on the Lie scale indicated that prior to counselling, Experimental Group I and the Control Group differed significantly in the number of items scored for this scale ($t=2.53$, $p<.05$), with Experimental Group I having a higher Lie score; however, the Lie scores did not differ among any of the groups at the posttest interval. Of the eight items on the Lie scale, the mean Lie score for all groups combined was less than three, with a total group average at pretest of 2.1 and posttest average of 2.2 (Table 8).

Teachers' Ratings of Student Self-Esteem

Table 10 shows a comparison of means of pre- and posttest BASE scores and t-tests as rated by teachers for Experimental Groups I and II and the Control Group. Results indicated that teachers' observations of students' academic self-esteem showed gains for Experimental Groups I and II. Paired t-tests on BASE Total scores indicated that teachers observed a significant improvement in the self-esteem of students in

Table 10

A Comparison of Means of Pre- and Posttest Coopersmith Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) Scores and t-Tests as Rated by Teachers for Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group

	BASE Pretest Scores			BASE Posttest Scores				
Subscale/ Groups	Mean	S.D	% ile	Mean	S.D.	% ile	t-Value	Signif.
Student Initiative								
Experimental I	15.80	3.58		17.10	4.18		1.54	
Experimental II	18.10	3.51		20.10	2.77		2.74	*
Control	22.00	4.32		21.90	4.15		0.43	
Social Attention								
Experimental I	9.10	2.47		10.20	2.20		3.50	**
Experimental II	10.40	2.55		11.20	2.30		1.18	
Control	11.60	2.72		11.70	2.63		1.00	
Success/Failure								
Experimental I	5.70	2.36		6.30	1.50		1.15	
Experimental II	7.50	2.07		7.60	1.71		0.20	
Control	7.90	1.00		7.90	1.00		0.00	
Social Attraction								
Experimental I	9.20	2.40		9.90	1.97		3.28	*
Experimental II	8.00	3.06		8.70	2.16		0.90	
Control	10.80	3.36		10.80	3.36		0.00	
Self Confidence								
Experimental I	6.20	1.62		6.70	0.68		1.34	
Experimental II	5.60	0.70		6.30	0.82		1.91	
Control	7.10	1.97		7.10	1.97		0.00	
BASE Total								
Experimental I	46.00	10.88	19th	50.30	8.70	50th	3.36	**
Experimental II	49.60	6.36	30th	53.90	5.26	43rd	2.80	*
Control	59.40	12.01	63rd	59.60	11.96	63rd	1.50	

* Significance p < .05; ** Significance p < .01.

N = 10 for each group.

Experimental Group I ($t=3.36$, $p<.01$) at posttest, and to a lesser degree, yet still significant, in Experimental Group II at posttest ($t=2.80$, $p<.05$). Percentile data substantiated these findings when BASE Total scores for all three groups were compared against the averaged percentile norms for boys and girls. Comparisons of pre- and posttest percentile rankings of Experimental groups I and II indicated a 41 percentile improvement for Experimental Group I, and a 13 percentile improvement for Experimental Groups II.

Subscale analysis of the individual groups at the posttest interval indicated that Experimental Group I had significantly higher levels on the subscales Social Attention ($t=3.50$, $p<.01$) and Social Attraction ($t=3.28$,$p<.01$) than at the pretest interval. Experimental Group II had significantly higher levels on the subscale Student Initiative ($t=2.74$, $p<.05$).

Table 11 shows between group comparisons of means of pre- and posttest scores on the BASE as rated by teachers among all three groups. Comparisons of BASE Total scores before the commencement of counselling indicated significant differences between Experimental Group I and the Control Group and Experimental Group II and the Control Group ($t=2.63$, $p<.05$; $t=2.28$, $p<.05$ respectively). The discrepancies between

Table 11

Between Group Comparisons of Means of Pre- and Posttest Scores on the Coopersmith BASE and t-Tests Among Experimental Groups I and II and Control Group as Rated by Teachers

	Pretest Scores					Posttest Scores				
Subscale/ Group	Means		S D s		t-Value	Means		S D.s		t-Value
Student Initiative										
Exp I & (Exp II)	15 80	(16 10)	3 58	(3 51)	1 45	17.10	(20 10)	4 16	(2.77)	1 89
Exp I & (C)	15 80	(22 00)	3 58	(4 32)	3 49**	17.10	(21 90)	4 16	(4 15)	2 56 *
Exp II & (C)	16 10	(22 00)	3 51	(4 32)	2 22	20 10	(21 90)	2.77	(4.15)	1.14
Social Attention										
Exp I & (Exp II)	9 10	(10 40)	2 47	(2 55)	1 16	10 20	(11.20)	2 20	(2.30)	0 99
Exp I & (C)	9 10	(11 60)	2 47	(2 72)	2 16	10 20	(11.70)	2 20	(2.38)	1 32
Exp II & (C)	10 40	(11 60)	2 55	(2 72)	1 02	11 20	(11 70)	2 30	(2 35)	0 40
Success/Failure										
Exp I & (Exp II)	5 70	(7 50)	2 36	(2 07)	1 81	6 30	(7 60)	1 49	(1 71)	1.81
Exp I & (C)	5 70	(7 90)	2 36	0 99	2.72 *	6 30	(7 90)	1.49	(0 99)	2 82 *
Exp II & (C)	7 50	(7 90)	2 07	0 99	0.55	7 60	(7 90)	1.71	(0.99)	0 45
Social Attraction										
Exp I & (Exp II)	9 20	(8 00)	2 39	(3 06)	0 98	9 90	(8 70)	1.97	(2.16)	1.30
Exp I & (C)	9 20	(10 80)	2 39	(3 36)	1 23	9 90	(1 05)	1 97	(3 36)	0.73
Exp II & (C)	8 00	(10 80)	3 06	(3 36)	1.95	8 70	(10 80)	2 16	(3.36)	1.62
Self Confidence										
Exp I & (Exp II)	6 20	(5 60)	1 62	(0 70)	1.06	6.70	(6 30)	0 68	(0 82)	1.19
Exp I & (C)	6 20	(7 10)	1 62	(1 97)	1.12	6 70	(7.10)	0 68	(1 97)	0 61
Exp II & (C)	5 60	(7.10)	0 70	(1 97)	2.27 *	6 30	(7.10)	0.82	(1.97)	1.19
Total										
Exp I & (Exp II)	45 90	(49 60)	10 88	(6 36)	0.93	50 30	(53 90)	8 69	5.26	1.12
Exp I & (C)	45 90	(59 40)	10 88	(12 01)	2.63 *	50 30	(59 60)	8 69	11.96	1.99
Exp II & (C)	49 60	(59 40)	6 36	(12.01)	2.26 *	53 90	(59 60)	5 26	11 96	1.38

Exp I = Experimental Group I; Exp II = Experimental Group II; C = Control Group

* Significance p < 05, ** Significance p , .01

N = 10 for each group

these two groups with the Control did not exist after they participated in self-esteem group counselling.

On the individual subscales, teachers perceived significant differences between Experimental Group I and the Control Group on the Success/Failure category at pretest ($t=2.72$, $p<.05$) and these differences remained after Experimental Group I received counselling ($t=2.82$, $p<.05$), with the Control Group scoring higher at both test intervals. These differences were also found between Experimental Group I and the Control Group on the subscale Student Initiative both before ($t=3.49$, $p<.01$) and after ($t=2.59$, $p<.05$) Group I received counselling, with the Control Group scoring higher at both test and intervals. As evident from the alpha values, the magnitude of difference between these groups decreased; i.e, the mean discrepancy between the groups was not as favorable for the Control Group after Experimental Group I participated in group counselling. Comparisons of Self-Confidence between Experimental Group II and the Control Group indicated that teachers perceived the Control Group as having a higher degree of Self-Confidence ($t=2.27$, $p<.05$) than did Experimental Group II after counselling. This discrepancy was not evident after Experimental Group II received the counselling intervention and increased its self-confidence score.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The following section examines the results as they relate to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The results are presented categorically according to the presentation of the research questions.

Detention

Comparisons of pre- and posttest detention data revealed that after participating in group counselling, the incidence of detentions received by students who were frequently disciplined with detention for rule breaking behavior in school significantly decreased. These findings provide support for the use of self-esteem group counselling as an intervention strategy for decreasing recidivism in detention.

Self-Esteem

The children identified for Experimental Group I, i.e. children with the highest incidence of detention in grades six and seven, rated themselves as having the lowest mean self-esteem score of the three groups. The students recommended by teachers as having the potential to benefit from the group experience but who were not identified as frequent referrals for detention, i.e. Experimental group II, had the second lowest mean self-esteem score compared to the Control Group, who rated themselves as having high self-esteem. These results were expected, given the

composition of the three groups. None of the groups showed significant differences in self-esteem after intervention.

Between group comparisons on the student SEI Total score indicated differences existed between Experimental Group I and the Control Group at both pre- and posttest intervals. This was not surprising given that the paired t-tests did not prove significant changes in either of these groups at posttest. The lack of significance between Experimental Groups I and II that was present at pretest and not at posttest on the SEI Home subscale, supported the data from the Home Behavior Rating Scale suggesting that as behavior improves in school (e.g., fewer detentions), the effects carry over into home life. The significant difference between Experimental Group I and the Control and Experimental Group II and the Control at posttest on the Social Self Subscale, and between Experimental Group I and the Control Group at posttest on the Home Subscale, were surprising results which may have been due to the individual changes in group scores that were evident at posttest and/or some inconsistencies in responses due to items on the Lie scale. The pretest differences between Experimental Groups I and II and the Control Group support the findings on the BRP-2, in that Experimental Group I on most of the subscales and the Total Score rated themselves lowest of the three groups, with

Experimental Group II next followed by the Control with the highest scores.

Concurrence Between Students and Teachers on Ratings of Behavior

Teachers, like students, ranked Experimental Group I as having the lowest self-esteem, with Experimental Group II having the second lowest and the Control Group having highest overall rating of self-esteem at both test intervals. Overall, students rated themselves as having higher self-esteem than teachers perceived them as having. This discrepancy may be due to a combination of overrating on the part of students, misperceptions of teachers, or variance in the scores due to small sample size.

Efficacy of Group Counselling in Improving Self-Esteem

The results of the student SEI corresponded with the teachers' ratings of student self-esteem on the BASE, in that both students and teachers indicated improvements on the majority of scales, even though they did not reach levels of statistical significance.

The between group comparison data did provide significant support for the use of self-esteem group counselling. Reports of student self-esteem collected through teachers' observations on the BASE indicated that at pretest, Total self-esteem scores of Experimental Groups I and II did not differ from each other but did from those of the Control Group.

This was expected, as Experimental Group I members received counselling for detention/behavior while Experimental Group II members were identified by teachers as having the potential to benefit from self-esteem intervention. These differences were eliminated at posttesting. Similar gains were evident on the subscale level. On the Student Initiative Subscale, significant pretest differences existed between Experimental Group I and the Control Group; however, these differences were not significant to the same degree after Experimental Group I received counselling. Similarly, the significant difference that existed between Experimental Group II and the Control on the Subscale Self-Confidence at pretest no longer existed at posttest because of gains made by Experimental Group II members. The pretest differences that remained between Experimental Group I and the Control Group on the Success/Failure Subscale after counselling may have been due to the fact that the improvement made by Experimental Group I was not large enough to reach the same level as that of the Control Group. These results were confirmed by a similar trend in the BRP-2 Teacher Rating Scale and the School Behavior Rating Scale for Students, whereby pretest differences between these groups continued to exist even after counselling intervention was offered to Experimental Group I. The between group

comparisons on the BASE provided support for the following: (1) group counselling can promote improvement in self-esteem; and (2) teachers can identify at risk students who can benefit from formal intervention programs in school.

At pretest, Experimental Group I ranked themselves as having the poorest behavior of all three groups on all three student behavior scales. This was expected given the frequency and intensity of discipline they receive in school and the low levels of self-esteem they have. Moreover, the literature supports the fact that lower self-concept is related to lower academic achievement (Binder, Jones, & Strowig, 1970; Campbell, 1967); less persistence and motivation (Coopersmith, 1967) and being emotionally and socially maladjusted (Rogers & Saklofske, 1985).

Efficacy of Group Counselling in Improving Student Behavior

Reports that students made on their behavior at home, in school, and with peers did not reveal significant changes after counselling intervention as rated by the students themselves and their teachers. Experimental Group I, however, showed improvement consistently across all three behavior rating scales of the BRP-2. Other groups showed signs of improvement on specific subscales; however, they did not reach levels of significance. Teachers also showed an upward trend in how they rated

Experimental Group I's behavior in school.

Between group comparisons also provided support for the efficacy of group counselling as a method of behavioral change. Comparisons of behavior prior to counselling indicated that highly significant differences existed between Experimental Groups I and II, with Experimental Group II having a significantly higher mean score for the Home and School Behavior Rating Scales. The lack of significance between these two groups at posttest was due to gains made by Experimental Group I as there was no change in Experimental Group II's mean scores at posttest. Gains for Experimental Group I were also substantiated by pre- and posttest comparisons with the control group; i.e., these two groups significantly differed in their mean Home score prior to Group I receiving counselling but were eliminated at posttesting. The same trend carried over to the Peer Scale, with Experimental Group I showing significant differences from the Control at pretest but not at posttest. The gain on the part of Experimental Group II was also supported by teacher ratings of student behavior. It is likely that the group experience contributed to these gains.

Teachers reported significant differences between Experimental Groups I and II as well as between Experimental Group I and the Control Group both before and after the group intervention. The behavior ratings

of students concur with those of teachers on school behavior for both these group's pre- and post differences. Students reported significant differences between these groups at pre- and posttest; however, the degree of difference was rated higher by students than by teachers. This provides support for the usefulness of group counselling in improving student behavior, as the results show a gradual improvement in mean scores at posttest.

Teacher Identification of At Risk Students

Given the fluctuation in the scores of behavior and self-esteem for Experimental Group II, it is evident that teachers are accurate in their identification of students in need of intervention. The exact needs of this population requires further investigation in order to gain a more detailed description of its defining characteristics so that more appropriate programs can be developed to meet their needs. Teachers were also accurate in identifying differences between the three groups through their ratings of behavior and self-esteem. This provides further support for teachers' ability to identify at risk students.

Benefits of Self-Esteem Group Counselling for At Risk Students

In this study, upward trends of improvement were evident for both behavior and self-esteem for students in the Experimental Group I. These

students also showed a significant reduction in the number of detentions they received. Although the paired t-tests on the student and teacher ratings of behavior and self-esteem did not prove significant, their gains reflected in the increases in the means coupled with the reductions in the significant differences between groups at posttest, provided evidence to support the use of group counselling with at risk students.

In summary, there were some very positive changes in behavior evident in students after they participated in the group experience. Although levels of self-esteem at posttesting did not reach statistical significance, the results showed promise for similar types of programs. The following chapter provides a summary to this study as well as some recommendations for future investigation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of self-esteem group counselling in changing the behavior of students who frequently serve detentions for inappropriate behavior in school. Data were analyzed for differences in the incidence in detention, self-esteem, and behavior at home, in school, and with peers both before and after subjects participated in an eight-session group counselling experience.

The significant reduction in the number of detentions issued to students after self-esteem group counselling intervention suggests that by issuing detention as their main form of discipline, educators may be overlooking a more positive and productive method of dealing with behavior problems in schools. The results of this study question the effectiveness of using detention as a primary form of discipline in schools, especially since previous studies have acknowledged the limitations of punishment in producing lasting changes in behavior. The most commonly held view of discipline, (i.e., punishment for rule-breaking behavior), will have to change to include a more proactive approach focused on prevention of further problems through programs directed at helping

children feel better about themselves. The researcher is not implying that students should not be held accountable for their behavior in school, but rather suggests that a combination of discipline and proactive intervention programs may provide the most effective and lasting improvements in the children with chronic behavioral difficulties. Schools now more than ever must inquire into new methods of discipline if they are going to meet the needs of the present student population and begin to treat discipline as an educational problem instead of a management problem.

Given these diverse needs of children in schools today, it is imperative that schools avoid any threats to self-esteem. The relationship between punishment and low self-esteem has been well established in schools. Children who frequently receive punishment for misbehaviour in schools are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem (Ewashen et al., 1985). In turn, low self-esteem has been related to lower academic achievement (Binder, Jones, & Strowig, 1970; Campbell, 1967), less persistence and motivation (Coopersmith, 1967), and being emotionally and socially maladjusted (Rogers & Saklofske, 1985). The most frequently cited reason for students to be at risk in schools today is self-esteem (Walz & Bleur, 1992). Given these findings, it is evident that in developing proactive discipline practises that promote self-esteem, educators promote

the development of the whole child as well as promoting academic gains.

The rankings of students' behavior and self-esteem by the students themselves and their teachers were expected, based on the literature which shows that children with behavior/emotional problems have lower self-esteem (Walz & Bleur, 1992). The upward trends in the means and the reduction in posttest differences between Experimental Group I and the other two groups, prompts one to consider improved testing of the hypothesis through the following methods: (1) modifications to the group counselling program used to improve self-esteem; (2) increased duration of the program to allow enough time for self-esteem to change: and (3) increased sample size used to test the efficacy of this type of intervention in schools. Given that self-esteem is a relatively static construct (Coopersmith, 1986), and can be modified (Covington, cited in Reasoner, 1992), more than 8 weeks of time may be necessary to do so. Since the value in actively promoting self-esteem in school has been widely established, the researcher suggests that educators search for, and empirically test self-esteem programs that promote significant improvements in the self-esteem of their students.

Given that positive changes in behavior did occur in the study, in that the incidence of detention decreased, the findings of this study add

support to the use of group counselling with youth. It supports the findings of several other researchers who have shown improvements in students after they participated in group counselling. For example, Ozimo & Ozimo (1987) found significant improvements in the classroom behavior (acting out behavior, less distractibility) and social self-esteem among elementary learning disabled children. In their subsequent study using the same intervention, Ozimo & Ozimo (1987) found significantly higher self-concept scores compared to a control group on the social skills of interpersonal behavior and task-related behavior in fourth to sixth grade students. Hadley (1988) showed significant increases in academic performance following a twelve-week affective education program with second grade students. Ozimo & Ozimo (1988) found significant improvements in levels of self-esteem and moral internal locus of control after ten weekly group counselling sessions.

In conclusion, suggestions for future investigation include replicating the study with a larger sample size, a different self-esteem intervention program lasting for a longer duration. The inclusion of a control group that matches Experimental Group I of the present study in its incidence of detention without receiving group counselling intervention. By receiving detention as the only method of intervention, the researcher could examine

the issue of causality of behavioral change. A follow-up study would also be valuable to investigate the lasting effects of this type of intervention.

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APPENDIX A

SCHOOL BOARD CONSENT TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

TELEPHONE 753-8530

FAX (709) 753-8407

Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

BELVEDERE
BONAVENTURE AVENUE
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND
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1992 03 17

Ms. Judy Furlong-Mallard
Educational Therapist
St. Patrick's Hall School
Merrymeeting Road
St. John's
Newfoundland
A1C 6A6

Dear Ms. Furlong-Mallard,

Reference your letter dated March 9, 1992.

Permission is granted to conduct a research study at St. Patrick's Hall School. I understand from your letter that the principal, Brother Critch, supports your request.

May I take this opportunity to offer best wishes for success in your work.

Yours truly,

Geraldine Roe
Associate Superintendent

/msc