

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF  
PARENTAL GROUP COUNSELING  
ON THE ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE  
EIGHT UNDERACHIEVING  
STUDENTS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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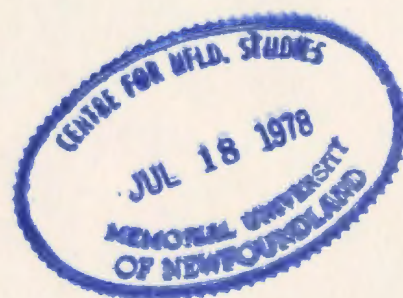
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**A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL GROUP COUNSELING  
ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE EIGHT  
UNDERACHIEVING STUDENTS**

**A Project  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Graduate School  
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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education**

**by**

**Alfred Berkley Wareham  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to determine the effect of a specific model of parental group counseling on the grade point average of underachievers.

Actual determination of underachievers was made by using grade point averages for mid-term school examinations in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography. The grade point averages were compared with scholastic aptitude as indicated from scores received on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test. The sample of 36 students was drawn from a total grade eight population of 149 and randomly assigned to each of the following four groups: Instructional Counseling Group, Subject Information Group, Sensitization Group, and Control Group.

The program used in this study consisted of activities designed to teach skills that could be used by parents in the home to assist their child with homework and thereby enhance the scholastic achievement of their child.

The June grade point averages were compared with the Mid-term grade point averages, using a univariate analysis of covariance. The analysis of covariance showed no significant differences between any of the groups in the study.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables .....	vi
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Purpose .....	1
Rationale of the Study .....	1
Definitions .....	4
Hypothesis .....	7
Limitations of the Study .....	8
Summary .....	8
 II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH .....	10
Underachievement .....	10
Home Influence .....	13
Parental Group Counseling .....	17
Importance of Parental Involvement in Homework .....	23
Summary .....	27
 III METHODOLOGY .....	28
Selection of Sample .....	28
General Description .....	28
Selection of Underachievers .....	29
The Instrument .....	31
Grading System at I.J. Samson Junior High School .....	32
Selection of Subjects' Parents .....	33
The Program .....	34
Instructional Counseling Group .....	35
Subject Information Group .....	35
Sensitization Group .....	35
Control Group .....	36
Statistical Procedures Used in Analysis of the Data .....	36
Summary .....	37



CHAPTER		Page
IV	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION, .....	38
	Results .....	38
	Research Hypothesis .....	38
	Discussion .....	40
V	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PROJECT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
	Summary .....	43
	Conclusion .....	44
	Recommendations for Further Study .....	44
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	46
	APPENDICES .....	50
A.	Script Used in Parent Counseling .....	50
B.	Training to Record .....	66
C.	Weekly Chart .....	68
D.	Studying Check List .....	70
E.	Unsolicited Parents' Reaction to the Group Counseling Sessions .....	72
F.	Mean, Standard Deviation for Each Group and the Combined Groups on Each Subject Area .....	77

## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLE

### Page

1	Means and Standard Deviation of Age and IQ of Subjects by Group .....	30
2	Number and Sex of Students; Number of Parents Contacted and Parental Attendance by Group .....	34
3	Pre and Post Observed and Estimated GPA Means and SD for Each Group .....	39
4	Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Post GPA .....	40



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a statement of the purpose, the rationale, operational definitions, hypotheses, and the limitations of the project.

### STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effect of a specific model of parental group counseling on the grade point average of underachievers attending I.J. Samson Junior High School in St. John's, Newfoundland.

### RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The expressed view of administrators, fellow teachers, counselors, and parents is that some students with apparent high scholastic ability do very poorly academically, while others with mediocre ability do well. It appears that, in many instances, the underachiever has not developed sound study habits, positive attitudes toward work, teachers, peers and indeed toward self, and that the underachieving student might often lack self-confidence. Furthermore, since the home is a significant factor in attitude development, it seemed logical to assume there might be a relationship

between parental attitudes, other family conditions and underachievement.

Underachievement is both a problem to the individual who may suffer from a sense of failure, and to society which loses a potential contribution of many of its members. It limits employment opportunities, causes dissatisfaction in life, may lead to crime as a way of getting ahead when other doors have been blocked, and to a tragic loss of self-fulfillment or "self-actualization....of not becoming the person one could have been" (Miller, 1961). Logically, then, anything which could be done to reduce underachievement would contribute to individual and societal growth and well being.

Fine (1967); Raph, Goldberg and Passow (1966) pointed out that approximately 50% of all students might be classified as underachievers. If this statistic was even partially correct, there would appear to be a major problem in education.

Researchers had not, as yet, determined all the causes of underachievement. It seems clear, in reviewing the literature, the family is a very important factor (Bell & Stub, 1962; Duff, 1972; Gilmore, 1969, 1971; Glasser, 1969; Hilliard & Roth, 1969; Kurtz & Swenson, 1951; Langdon & Stout, 1969; McCowan, 1964; Miller, 1971; Morrow & Wilson, 1961; O'Donnell, Taylor & McElane, 1962; Perkins & Wicas, 1968; Shaw & Rector, 1966; Swift, 1966). Although many studies have been done on the various areas of underachieve-



ment few could be located that specifically dealt with parent intervention programs and none could be found that had been undertaken in Newfoundland.

It has been stressed (Bricklin & Bricklin, 1969; Gilmore, 1969; Hilliard & Roth, 1969; Miller, 1971; Pigott & Gilmore, 1968) that motivational and attitudinal factors are highly influenced by the home and contribute greatly to academic success and personal adjustment. Despite this seemingly general consensus on the significance of the home, much of the counseling has been done with the individual student on a one-to-one basis, thus recognizing only the child's contribution to the underachieving behavior. Interestingly, very little counseling has been provided for parents of underachievers.

As was pointed out by Perkins and Wicas (1971) few group counseling studies have utilized parents in treatment although the need for these studies has been recommended (Cohn, 1967; Shaw & Warsten, 1965). They also cite Gazda and Larsen's (1968) survey which showed only 5% of group counseling studies in the 1938-1967 period involved parents. This is surprising in view of the argument that parents are "significant others" (Mead, 1934; Sullivan, 1947) capable of shaping their children's attitudes and self-concepts. This point was supported by Brookover (1962) who found parents were consistently identified as significant others by 95% or more of the students at each grade level, seven through ten.

Based on the review of the literature in Chapter II and personal experience, it appeared to the researcher that parents were important individuals in affecting the school performance of their children and thus a key group with whom to work. Parents of underachievers do not deliberately neglect their children but they may not have sufficient 'tools' with which to assist them. It seemed reasonable to conclude that taking time to work with a student's environment would not only be worthwhile but, in some cases, preferable to working with students individually.

This project was initiated on the basis of these issues and concerns.

#### DEFINITIONS

The following operational definitions of terms were used in this study:

1. Underachiever referred to students in I.J. Samson Junior High School who met one of the following two criteria:

- 1) A student who obtained a score of 84 to 99 inclusive on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, but who was achieving equal to or less than a mean score of 15 out of a possible score of 30 on teacher-made tests for English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography as calculated from the school mid-term examination results.

- 2) A student who obtained a score of 100 or greater on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test ( $\bar{X} = 100$ ), but who was achieving less than a mean score of 20 out of a possible score of 30 on teacher-made tests for English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography as calculated from the school mid-term examination results.
2. Group Counseling referred to counseling sessions in which mothers and/or fathers of the experimental group met together weekly for five weekly sessions with the school counselor who taught them specific educational remediation techniques (Appendix A).
3. IQ referred to a student's intelligence score as measured by the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test administered prior to the study in March, 1976.
4. Mid-Term GPA referred to grade point average based on mid-term school examinations using teacher-made tests with the maximum possible score for I.J. Samson School being thirty. The grade point averages were calculated from scores received in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography.
5. June GPA referred to grade point average based on June school examinations using teacher-made tests with the maximum possible score for I.J. Samson School being thirty. The grade point averages were calculated from scores received in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History,



and Geography.

6. Treatment I (T<sub>1</sub>) referred to the treatment condition in which parents of underachievers participated in group counseling.

7. Treatment II (T<sub>2</sub>) referred to the treatment condition in which parents of underachievers were given information by the school principal concerning the outline and objectives of the various subjects taught at I.J. Samson School.

8. Treatment III (T<sub>3</sub>) referred to the treatment condition in which parents were informed by telephone, by the school counselor, that their child was an underachiever and asked if they would encourage their child's achievement. No further contact was made with these parents during the duration of the study.

9. Control Group (T<sub>4</sub>) referred to a group of underachievers whose parents did not receive any treatment.

10. Achievement referred to a student's average score obtained in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography as calculated from teacher-made tests.

11. Homework referred to activities a student was required to do at home in preparation for examinations, tests, next day's work and/or the day's work covered in class.

12. Teacher-Made Tests referred to questions made up by teachers on work covered during a term. Tests were completed, under supervision, in a set time and place without having direct access to text books or notes.

# HYPOTHESES

This study was designed to test the following research hypothesis:

Students whose parents received group counseling would show a significantly greater increase in grade point averages than students in any of the other three treatment groups.

If significant differences had been found, the following hypotheses would have been tested:

1. Students whose parents received group counseling would show a greater increase in grade point averages than

- a) students whose parents were given only information by the school principal pertaining to school subjects being taught in school;
- b) students whose parents were sensitized to their child's achievement through a telephone call;
- c) students whose parents were not contacted.

2. Students whose parents were given information about school subjects by the principal would show a greater increase in grade point averages than

- a) students whose parents were contacted only by telephone;
- b) students whose parents were not contacted.

3. Students whose parents were contacted only by telephone

would show a greater increase in grade point averages than students whose parents were not contacted.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Interpretation of the results of this project were undertaken with the following limitations in mind.

1. The study was conducted late in the school year, perhaps minimizing any treatment differences.
2. Since the researcher was, in fact, the group leader it became difficult to separate his influence from the chosen intervention.
3. Although attendance at all group sessions by both parents was strongly emphasized, practical problems did not permit this to occur thus, perhaps, minimizing the effectiveness of the intervention.
4. Five weekly meetings might have been insufficient time for the parents to learn the new methods of coping with study problems.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the importance of teaching parents an educational intervention method to assist under-achieving students. The researcher raised the question: Does a student indirectly get a greater return on counselor time through parental group counseling than individual

counseling? Furthermore, it was assumed that underachievement, for a child with average or better intelligence, represented a symptom which might be suggestive of some need in the home. Exploration and clarification of this may yield beneficial results to underachievers.

Chapter II will present a review of related literature.



## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter presents a review of the literature as it relates to underachievement. More specifically, it is concerned with the influence of the home and parents on academic achievement. The chapter is divided into four sections: Underachievement, Home Influence, Parental Counseling, and Importance of Parental Involvement in Homework.

## UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Although there seems to be no accepted standard definition of underachievement among educators, most agree it involves inferior academic performance on the part of potentially capable students. Fine (1967), for example, inferred the majority of people thought underachievement simply meant a student had sufficient intelligence to be at the top of his class, but his performance was mediocre or worse.

Raph, Goldberg and Passow (1966) seemed to agree with Fine as they maintained underachievers showed above average ability on intelligence and aptitude tests but did not develop these abilities in their daily life.

Goldberg (1960) also offered a very broad definition by labeling the underachiever as one who differed from the

achiever in self-concept, school attitudes, and out of school pursuits. She postulated, in a later study (1961), that a broad definition of underachievement would probably include most gifted students in school, even the high achievers. They might have been receiving very good grades, but, because of the lack of challenge in the classroom, simply were not reaching their highest potential. Goldberg believed most schools showed concern with the top ten or fifteen percent of the intellectually superior students who performed below the normal grade point average for their peer group.

Powell and Jourard (1963), however, defined underachievement as simply the discrepancy between intelligence test scores and grade point averages.

In an attempt to be more precise, Wellington and Wellington (1965) converted ability test scores and grades in school to stanine scores and then compared the two. Underachievers were classified as students whose ability test stanine scores in two or more courses fell three or more stanines below their IQ.

Although Farquhar and Payne (1963) emphasized the great need for standard definitions of procedures used by researchers to identify underachievers, this has not been what has occurred.

Shaw (1961) concerned himself with the underachievers being those in the upper 20% or 25% of the class in regard to intellectual ability but who performed below

the class average on test scores. Gilmore (1971) designated underachievers as ninth graders whose academic averages for the previous year were C and whose IQ scores ranged from 110 to 125; 110 being the average, at the time, for Meadowbrook Junior High School in Newton, Massachusetts, where the study was conducted. Rouzie (1971) did research with boys only in the Advancement School in the State of North Carolina, a residential school designed to conduct research on underachievement. To be eligible, a boy had to have average or above average ability and had to be achieving one or more grade levels below his regular school grade. Ability and achievement were determined by standardized test scores, academic records, and teacher ratings.

Ohlsen (1964) selected for underachievers, fifth graders who, as a group, received IQ scores of 125 or higher on the California Test of Mental Maturity, and whose grade point average for basic school subjects (reading, spelling, language, arithmetic, and science) for the second semester of the fourth grade was 3.50 (A = 5.00) or lower. Although the reason was not stated, it was later necessary to consider every fifth grader for whom language and non-language scores exceeded 116 and whose achievement test scores were at least one grade below his expected level and whose grades were B or less.

Shaw (1964), in picking comparison groups of achievers and underachievers, considered underachievers to be those who attained an IQ of 110 or over on the Language

section of the California Test of Mental Maturity and who performed at the minimum level or higher and who had achieved a cumulative high school grade point average of 2.7 or below on a 4-point scale. Similarly, Perkins and Wicas (1971) defined underachievers as those who had minimum Otis-Beta IQ's (Otis, 1954) of 110 and mid-year cumulative grade point averages of 2.25 or less on a 4-point scale.

In short, there was very little agreement among researchers on a definition for underachievement. Accordingly, almost all definitions were based on student grades or achievement scores differing from tested ability scores. The current review of the literature indicates a certain amount of confusion as to exactly who underachievers are, and how best to identify them. Some uniformly accepted definition and uniform way of identifying underachievers, would make research more valuable and its findings more applicable in overcoming underachievement.

None of the methods for defining underachievers found in the literature were used for this study. This researcher decided to use IQ scores as measured by the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test and scores received on mid-term teacher-made tests. Further elaboration is presented in Chapter III.

#### HOME INFLUENCE

Many attempts have been made to identify and clarify the relationship between the home, parents, and underachieve-



ment. For example, Robinson and Pettit (1966) argued:

".... we must involve somehow the party of the third part, the parents of the children who are suffering academic difficulties, if we are ever to effect a truly ameliorative program of remedial instruction. For they, the parents, set the emotional climate in the home whence cometh the negative attitudes. There, in any case, in the hottest of all crucibles, such attitudes are often brought to a bright boil! How to involve the parents....who are at once our hiatus and our hope? How to equip the parents with the Promethian spirit? Ay, there's the rub! For, ever since the Smith College Studies of the thirties, we have known empirically, that parents' attitudes toward their children are touchy and insulatable, particularly if their children are faced with academic problems". (p. 1)

Bricklin and Bricklin (1967) hypothesized "that parents can raise the child's self-confidence by setting forth the psychological conditions allowing the under-achiever to relax to a point where he can accomplish more" (p. 7). John V. Gilmore (1969) conducted a four-year research program based on the premise that change in the parents' fundamental attitudes toward their children would help to transform underachieving students into highly motivated productive ones. Not only was the premise shown to be affirmative, it was also found improvement continued during the following year, especially among students of junior high school age. Unlike the writer's project, issues concerned with homework directly, were not discussed.

Miller (1971) considered the parent-child relationship to be very important. His study included investigating which aspects of social and personal adjustment of children were most associated with academic success and failure?

The questionnaire method was used with the entire population of the top primary class of ten schools (489 children) in two contrasting suburbs of Middlesex, England. The findings of the study indicated some adverse effects of parent-child interaction on children's educational opportunity and suggested other forms which encourage educational progress. Several pointers were suggested, among which were the following:

"Children who gain most educational opportunity tend strongly to come from homes where independent thinking and freedom of discussion among all members is the rule; there are values conducive to intellectual effort and enterprise, and the children's curiosity and academic aspirations are supported and encouraged by parents. The parents do not over-indulge them; the children themselves are confident in their intellectual skills (the opposite to being anxious); and they perceive harmony between the values of their home and those of the school.

On the negative side, children who gain the least educational opportunity tend strongly to come from homes where their thought is dominated by their parents, and the children themselves accept this as reasonable. There is a climate of general deprivation, with elements of social, cultural, intellectual and emotional deprivation. Parents are punitive and autocratic, and make their children feel inferior to other children. They also tend to overprotect them, yet the children do not feel that their parents are as accessible as they would like them to be. The children also tend to have uneasy peer relationships." (pp. 109-110)

Miller aptly referred to the difficulty of changing attitudes but strongly recommended some attempt be made to educate parents or, at least inform them, of facilitating and inhibiting factors that could exist in the family situation. Some of Miller's ideas have been incorporated into the counseling procedures used in the present study.

Swift (1966) and Kurtz and Swenson (1951) postulated parental encouragement had an important bearing upon school motivation and performance. Swift pointed out that children, particularly boys, did much better at school if their parents were interested in their progress. Kurtz and Swenson showed, in general, the home conditions of high achievers seemed more favourable in that the atmosphere was pleasant, parents showed affection, interest, and pride in their children, while the children responded by being happy and eager to please their parents. On the other hand, low achievers' homes appeared to be somewhat unpleasant, the children appeared unhappy and were not eager to please their parents.

Among the data reported on the family relations of bright high school boys making good grades as compared with bright high school boys making mediocre or poor grades, Morrow and Wilson's (1961) results concurred with the above studies. They stated that good or high family morale fostered academic achievement among bright high school boys by fostering positive attitudes toward teachers and toward school and interest in intellectual activities.

The results of Hilliard and Roth's (1969) investigation of the relationship between the mother and child, and academic achievement, indicated achievement and underachievement were related to maternal attitudes. Both of the above studies further supported the idea that it appeared important to attempt to influence these attitudes in a positive way.

The studies referred to below emphasize how the home has a major influence upon the education of the child. Prominent writers such as J.I. Goodlad, a contributor to Kneller (1963), claimed a child's learning was affected more by the experience encountered at home than that from the school itself.

Furthermore, Miller and Woon (1970) stressed:

"An even more hopeful position may be stated in this way: Family and personal factors correlate so well with school success primarily because the school does little to change the odds for those children who come to it with background handicaps. If it made a strenuous effort to compensate for those deficiencies, instead of routinely accepting them, the picture would change." (p. 205)

Fullmer and Bernard (1968) postulated the work of the school and the home were inseparable. Both were concerned with the direct learning processes of the child. In their view it was no more excusable for the school to sidestep the effects of inadequate learning models in the family than it was to ignore slow learners, partially sighted children, or cerebral-palsied individuals by saying these were medical problems. In other words, one should attack the problem in the setting where it had occurred.

#### PARENTAL GROUP COUNSELING

The advantages of group counseling with parents of underachievers as seen by Esterson (1975) included the following:

"More people could be helpfully served and, therefore provide an economical means of intervention in the treatment of the underachiever. Parents would not seem so singled out by the seeming failures of their own children. Parents could be singularly empathetic and useful to each other and gain insight, support and reassurance in the group process. Parents, while achieving some better understanding of the specific under-achievers, might also develop better insight into their own behaviour and the behaviour of other children in the family. This would obviously be a beneficial side effect." (p. 80)

John V. Gilmore (1969) postulated change in the parents' fundamental attitudes toward their children would help to transform underachieving students into highly motivated productive ones. He said:

"An improvement of family environment through parental counseling will bring about not only an improvement in academic work but also an overall betterment in the family functioning." (p. 1)

Gilmore (1971) conducted a four-year research program and counseled parents of unproductive students on an individual basis at Meadowbrook Junior High School in Newton, Massachusetts. Meetings with parents, excluding students, were held one-half an hour each week for a total of fifteen weeks. Initially, fifteen letters were sent to parents of ninth graders, whose academic averages for the previous year had been C, inviting their participation in the project. The first six who indicated interest were chosen as the experimental group. The IQ scores of the students ranged from 110 to 125, 110 being the average for the school at that time. At the end of the year, the students of the counseled parents had an average of B in all subjects, while the



students in the control group still had an average of C. Gilmore reported this difference to be significant at the .01 level. The experiment was repeated at the same school during the following year, involving both eighth and ninth graders and additional counselors. Comparable results were obtained. Gilmore also reported improvements occurring in academic achievement in both older and younger siblings as well as in the child selected. Parents also reported improvements in the child's participation in extracurricular school and community activities. The unsolicited observations and comments from teachers, students, neighbors and friends reportedly revealed personality improvement of the children whose parents had been involved in the family counseling program. Two of Gilmore's suggestions were incorporated into the present study. First, part of the structured program was adapted from Gilmore's work and, secondly, it was decided to hold general discussions after each session.

Assuming benefits would accrue to students if their counselors could work with parents, Pigott and Gilmore (1968) initiated a system-wide Parental Counseling Program in the Lexington, Massachusetts, Public School. The parents of the underachievers were counseled in pairs for approximately seven and one-half hours weekly. It was suggested to parents they suddenly and drastically cut down on criticism and punishment, even that concerning non-school related behavior. Several suggestions were discussed and some were

used in the present study. For example, parents were asked to look for opportunities to praise and compliment their child. They were asked to express verbally an interest in their child's activities in and out of school. They discussed motivational issues such as the use of praise, parent time, sporadic and spontaneous concrete rewards as reinforcers of desirable behavior. Moreover, they talked about the benefits of family conferences, meetings with teachers, and concern for reading at home. The results indicated that when all twenty-six students had been considered, 54% of the group whose parents were counseled, improved one letter grade in one or more courses, while in the group whose parents had not been counseled, only 19% improved one letter grade in one or more courses. In the experimental group, only 23% lost one or more letter grades during the year, when they were compared with the previous year. However, 50% of the twenty-six students in the control group dropped by one or more grades. The greatest gains were found in the seventh grade. Accordingly, the results were particularly encouraging for Junior High School.

In another study, McCowan (1964) hypothesized parent and student participation in counseling sessions would be even more effective in producing positive changes in under-achievers and improving their personality adjustment, study habits, and academic status, than would either student or parent counseling alone. He used the following four groups:

- 1) a control group;
- 2) a parents only counseling group;

3) a students only counseling group, and 4) a group in which both the parents and the students participated in counseling sessions. Each experimental student group was given forty-five minute group counseling sessions for twelve weeks. The major objective was to assist underachievers in dealing effectively with the problem of low academic achievement. The parents (mother and father) were given sixty-minute group counseling sessions for twelve weeks. In relation to the present study, the most significant finding of his work was that counseling with parents was more effective in improving the achievement of students than counseling with students themselves. Free discussion with other adults whose children possessed similar problems seemed to help the parents understand better the complex personality pattern of underachievement and enabled them to cope more effectively with it.

Perkins and Wicas (1968) also investigated the use of group counseling with underachievers. Small groups of bright, underachieving ninth-grade boys and/or their mothers were the focus of the study. Subjects were drawn from five junior high schools in Rhode Island during the 1968 academic year. Five counselors were involved and each randomly established four groups in his school. One difference from the current study was no formal structure or topic for the sessions was used. Concentration centered on building a climate for introspection and attitude change through an emphatic, accepting relationship and a judicious use of

facilitative interventions. The results indicated:

"The nature of the between-treatment variance for grade point averages showed underachievers who received Treatment I (group sessions with boys), Treatment II (group sessions with boys and mothers), and Treatment III (group sessions with mothers only) had significantly greater grade point averages after treatment ( $p < .05$ ) than students in the control group (Treatment IV) who received no group counseling." (p. 275)

Because Treatments I, II, and III did not differ significantly among themselves, no one experimental group was found to be superior to the other in significantly improving grade point averages. In relationship to the present study one should note that when the counselors worked only with mothers, the effect on grade point averages was just as great as when they worked with boys alone or with a boy and mother combination. Also, both groups involving mothers produced significant improvement in underachiever's self-acceptance. On the other hand, when counselors worked with students only, the effect on self-acceptance was no greater than that of the control group. Consequently, the fact that mothers participated in group counseling seemed to be necessary to modify indirectly the behavior and attitudes of their sons. Perkins and Wicas further suggested the foregoing was particularly true when personally sensitive variables such as grade achievement and self-acceptance were at stake.

The present study, as with most of those reported, held the counseling sessions outside the home. It should be noted, however, that Duff (1972) visited homes and taught

a selected number of behaviors to parents of underachieving elementary school students in an economically deprived area. He, then, tested whether such intervention in the home enhanced the scholastic achievement of the underachieving child. The study succeeded in showing parents could be taught to help underachieving students in an economically deprived area. He found, for example:

"Parent-education can take place; that parent's behaviour can be measurably changed and that classroom scores can be improved and subsequent teacher satisfaction with the child's performance significantly increased." (p. 146)

Many of the behaviors taught by Duff have been incorporated into the present study.

In reporting on parent participation in group counselling, Shaw and Rector (1966) stated the large majority of parents perceived group counseling to have been helpful to them. Over 95% of parents who participated indicated they would recommend a similar experience to their friends.

The above research findings suggest a prime relationship between parental counseling and helping the underachiever.

#### IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN HOMEWORK

There appears to be a need for parents to become more involved with the child's education, especially homework. Langdon and Stout (1969) believed parent involvement in homework was necessary because it entered into family



living and affected the learning process of children. For Langdon and Stout, homework meant any work related to school learning done outside the classroom, outside the regular school hours, not under the immediate and direct supervision of the teacher, and presumably done at home or under the jurisdiction of the home.

Glasser (1969) described the effects of homework and indicated a need for understanding this aspect of school. He stated:

"In my experience, working with many intelligent adolescents, school and especially homework has become the single most serious cause of tension between parents and teen-agers." (p. 74)

With Langdon and Stout's definition and Glasser's opinion in mind let us turn to those parent behaviors recommended in the literature as being positively related to increasing scholastic achievement. The following section states some specific approaches to dealing positively with the homework area and then reporting various authors' research and opinions on each area.

#### Arrange a Favourable Place for the Child to Study

Glasser (1969) emphasized the importance of making arrangements for a favourable place in which to study.

He stated:

"A separate problem concerning homework is that many students in the central city have less than ideal conditions at home in which to work. They are likely to be in a crowded home with TV and radio blasting and people running in and out. To expect students to overcome these

obstacles two hundred nights a year is to expect too much." (p. 75)

Some of the students' homes in the present study fit this description.

O'Donnell, Taylor, and McElaney (1962) listed several recommendations for an acceptable study area:

1. Face his desk away from the window.
2. Only a lamp and his equipment should be on his desk.
3. Make sure there are no toys, models, etc., nearby.
4. See that the room is properly heated and ventilated.
5. See that there is excellent lighting at his desk.
6. See that his chair is comfortable but firm.
7. Keep all noise and distraction to a minimum." (p. 49)

However, they neglected to say how such recommendations could be adopted in the home environment where appropriate facilities do not exist.

#### Never Interrupt Homework

Ginott (1965) stated that:

"Parents of scholastically successful students often make it a rule never to interrupt the student's homework time. Errands and chores should be planned for other times or, if necessary, excused completely." (p. 91)

### Encourage Children to Show and Explain Homework

When parents put emphasis on homework, the child will more likely realize the importance of his studies. The child also can be made to feel his parents have an interest in the homework if they request he show and explain it to them. Doing this may also help him to clarify and organize his work (Langdon & Stout, 1969).

### Use of Rewards

With the use of substantive rewards, positive reinforcement could be a motivating factor for doing homework. Bell and Stub (1962) postulated that to be most effective the reward should be given immediately after the completion of a task. In difficult cases the studying may be rewarded at progressive stages, thus shaping the completion of the homework task. A reward can be anything desired or needed by the student. Duff's (1972) survey of parents revealed such typical rewards as: "watch TV;" "go next door and play;" "go out and ride his bike;" "money;" and, "extra play time." The use of social rewards such as approval, praise and recognition may also shape behavior. The child should know for what behavior he was being rewarded.

### Discussion of Possible Ideas for Future Vocation

Glasser (1969) stated the desirability of linking what the child is learning now to his future activities:

"We cannot assume that children know why they are in school, that they understand the

value of education and its application to them. From kindergarten through graduate school, we must teach or help them discover for themselves, the relationship of what they are learning to their lives. Our failure to do so is a major cause for failure in school. ....We err seriously if we take for granted that students can see the relevance in certain material just because we can." (p. 54)

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has presented a review of the literature as it relates to underachievement. It has also shown the influence that both parents and the home can have on the academic achievement of students, particularly underachievers. The studies reported indicated there is a relationship between the home and underachievement. Throughout the literature parents were a most important factor in a child underachieving. The various propositions put forth by the different theorists showed the importance of parents becoming involved in their child's homework. Many of the parent-behaviors discussed above were incorporated into the group counseling sessions with parents in the present study. In Chapter III the writer will discuss the sample, the instruments, and the methodology used in the study.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a description of the sample, the specific structure of the program, and the statistical analysis used in the study.

#### SELECTION OF SAMPLE

##### General Description

The data for this project were collected in May 1976 at I.J. Samson Junior High School -- operated by the Avalon Consolidated School Board -- in St. John's, Newfoundland. School records indicated approximately 90% of the students in the school live in the Western region of St. John's in an area typically considered to be middle class. The school had an enrollment of 450 students distributed through grades seven, eight and nine. There was a teaching staff of 21 and a janitorial staff of two.

The 1975-76 eighth grade was selected because the researcher did not know these particular students at the time the research was undertaken. It was felt that by not knowing the students, the researcher would have had fewer contacts which might have influenced the results of the study. The sample, drawn from a total grade eight population of 149, consisted of 36 grade eight students between the

ages of 12 and 16. The mean age of the 12 females and 24 males was 14 and the mean IQ, as measured by the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, was 101.42 (see Table 1). Table 1 also provides the means and standard deviation of age and IQ of subjects in each of the four groups. The four groups do not appear to be significantly different on either of these variables.

#### Selection of Underachievers

Actual determination of underachievers was made by using grade point averages for mid-term school examinations in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography, and scholastic aptitude as indicated from scores received on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test (Intermediate Level) administered in March 1976 to all grade eight students in I.J. Samson Junior High School.

The Otis-Lennon was written in the students' regular school classroom. The homeroom teachers were trained to help administer the test. Standardized instructions were given to the students one day prior to the testing. On the day of the test, directions for administration were given by the researcher from the main office through the inter-communication system. The tests were also scored and tabulated by the researcher.

For this project, underachievers were designated as the 36 students who met one of the following criteria:

- 1) A student who obtained a score of 84 to 99



TABLE 1  
Means and Standard Deviation of Age and IQ of Subjects by Group

	G R O U P								
	T <sub>1</sub>		T <sub>2</sub>		T <sub>3</sub>		T <sub>3</sub>		
	N = 9		N = 9		N = 9		N = 9		Combined
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean
Age	14.44	.88	13.89	.33	14.00	.50	14.00	.71	14.08
IQ	101.11	8.75	102.56	8.10	101.89	9.29	100.11	11.78	101.42

inclusive on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, but who achieved equal to or less than a score of 15 out of a possible score of 30 on teacher-made tests as calculated from the school mid-term examination results.

- 2) A student who obtained a score of 100 or greater on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test ( $\bar{X} = 100$ ), but who achieved less than 20 out of a possible score of 30 on teacher-made tests as calculated from the mid-term examination results.

This group of 36 students were randomly assigned to each of the following four groups: Instructional Counseling Group ( $T_1$ ), Subject Information Group ( $T_2$ ), Sensitization Group ( $T_3$ ), and Control Group ( $T_4$ ).

Students were not informed about the program by the researcher and were only aware of it, if and when their parents told them. Teachers were not aware of the students who had been selected as underachievers. The principal, who was involved in Subject Information Group, gave his cooperation in keeping the students' names confidential for the duration of the study. Only the researcher was aware of the total number of students chosen for the study and their distribution in the four groups.

#### The Instrument

The instrument chosen for this project was the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test, Intermediate Level, Forms J and K. The Manual for Administration states the following:

"The Otis-Lennon Deviation IQ (DIQ) is, in effect, a normalized standard score with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 16 points. The DIQ is an index of the pupil's relative brightness when he is compared with pupils of similar chronological age, regardless of grade placement. The Otis-Lennon DIQ reflects at a given point in time, the pupil's ability to deal with abstract relationships involving the manipulation of ideas expressed in verbal, numerical, figural, or symbolic form." (p. 15)

The Manual also reported the total split-half reliability as .95. For the grade eight group it was also .95 (p. 20). In comparing this with other similar group measures it seemed to be as reliable and served the purpose of this study well.

John E. Milholland in Buross (1972) stated:

"The validity research was wide ranging, and abundant data are provided. The test correlates adequately with educational criteria, and with other measures of general scholastic aptitude. The Otis-Lennon should perform well the functions it is intended to serve." (p. 691)

The stated purpose of predicting academic success was further supported by Arden Groteluescher in Buross (1972) when he stated "the Otis-Lennon gives ample evidence for predicting scholastic success." (p. 693)

#### Grading System at I.J. Samson Junior High School

Knowledge of the grading system at I.J. Samson was based on information gathered from the principal of the school and previous experience of the researcher. It appeared examinations were consistently marked. When teachers corrected June examinations they were not specifically aware of what students had achieved in the first term. The maximum

percentage of 30 for the June examinations was the same as the maximum percentage for the mid-term examinations for respective subjects.

#### Selection of Subjects' Parents

After the subjects were selected, parents of Groups  $T_1$ ,  $T_2$  and  $T_3$  were each contacted once by telephone, by the researcher. The first two groups of parents ( $T_1$  and  $T_2$ ) were briefly told about the project and appointments were made for parents to meet at the school. The first group met with the researcher while the second group met with the principal. The importance of attendance was stressed as was the importance of not informing their child until after the first or second meeting. Parents were asked to cooperate in not discussing their program with other parents or students until after completion of the study. The only contact made with parents of  $T_3$  was by telephone and no contact was made with the Control Group ( $T_4$ ).

Table 2 shows the number and sex of students in each group, the number of parents who were contacted by the researcher, the attendance record of the counselled group ( $T_1$ ) and the attendance record of the group ( $T_2$ ) who met once with the principal. The table also indicates that in  $T_1$ , seven parents attended all sessions, one attended the first session and one did not attend. In  $T_2$ , three of the parents contacted did not attend the meeting.

TABLE 2

Number and Sex of Students, Number of Parents Contacted,  
and Parental Attendance by Group

Group	STUDENTS			PARENTS		
	N	Sex		N Contacted	N Attended All Sessions	N Attended Two Sessions
		M	F			N Attended No Sessions
T <sub>1</sub>	9	3	6	9	7	1
T <sub>2</sub>	9	4	5	9	6	0
T <sub>3</sub>	9	3	6	9		
T <sub>4</sub>	9	2	7	no contact made		

#### THE PROGRAM

The program used in this project consisted of activities designed to teach skills that could be used by parents in the home to assist their child with homework and thereby enhance the scholastic achievement of their child. This program was adapted from one by Duff (1972) and uses a behavior modification approach (see Appendix A). The program was used because it was structured and enabled the researcher to consistently present it to the participants. It, also, could be easily replicable. Following each structured session parents, at their request, stayed for a general discussion. The following groups were developed:

T<sub>1</sub> (Instructional Counseling Group)

The parents of these students attended the school for group sessions one night per week for five weeks. Sessions were held on Tuesday nights and lasted approximately 60 minutes. Sessions were conducted by the researcher, the purpose being to suggest specific things to parents which they could do to assist their child with homework. A script of each session is contained in Appendix A.

T<sub>2</sub> (Subject Information Group)

The parents of this group visited the school for one night at the beginning of the program and were given an overview by the principal concerning the subjects being taught in school and what was being required from students. Parents were given an opportunity to discuss the respective subjects with the principal. The principal was asked to reflect back questions which parents asked concerning suggestions for them to assist their child academically. He was asked to respond in the following way:

"I can understand your concerns, but tonight I am going to discuss goals and objectives of the various subjects being taught in this school. Perhaps, at a later date, we may discuss techniques to assist parents."

The meeting lasted for about an hour and one-half.

T<sub>3</sub> (Sensitization Group)

Parents of students in this group were telephoned by the researcher. They were thus sensitized and asked if they



might be able to do some things to help their child achieve better. No further contact was made.

In the telephone conversation, parents were told that, as the School Counselor in I.J. Samson Junior High School, the researcher was concerned about the academic achievement of students. As a result, he was trying to assist any students who seemed to be achieving below their potential. In the course of the conversation, the parents were asked not to over-pressure their child but to do anything they thought necessary to help their child improve his achievement. When suggestions were solicited by parents, the following response was made:

"Do what you feel is best. I'll probably get back to you at a later date, at which time we will discuss it further."

#### T<sub>4</sub> (Control Group)

The parents of students in this group did not receive any treatment or contact. No one, except the researcher, was aware of the students in this group. Neither the parents nor the students experienced anything other than what would have normally occurred to all students, during the duration of the project.

#### STATISTICAL PROCEDURES USED IN ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Descriptive statistics were obtained from the SPSS Computer Program (1976).

Data were further analyzed by the Univariate and Multivariate Analysis of Variance, Covariance and Regression Program developed by National Educational Resources, Inc., 1972.

Memorial University's IBM 370 Computer provided the hardware.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has described the location of the study, the sample, the program and the statistical analysis used. The following chapter will present and discuss the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results obtained in the project and a discussion of these results.

## RESULTS

Research Hypothesis

Students whose parents received group counseling would show a significantly greater increase in grade point average than students in any of the other three treatment groups.

A univariate analysis of covariance was performed on the post grade point averages (as given in Table 3) using the pre grade point averages as a covariate to account for any initial differences in student GPA in each of the groups. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4.

Since the ANCOVA analysis found no significant differences between any of the groups in the study, no further analysis was conducted and the research hypothesis was rejected. A discussion of the possible reasons for the findings is presented below.

TABLE 3

Pre and Post Observed and Estimated GPA Means and SD for Each Group

Variable	G R O U P							
	T <sub>1</sub>		T <sub>2</sub>		T <sub>3</sub>		T <sub>4</sub>	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<u>Observed</u>								
GPA pre	14.33	2.40	15.33	3.71	15.67	2.00	15.78	2.11
GPA post	14.44	2.88	15.00	3.87	16.44	2.96	16.11	2.52
<u>Estimated</u>								
GPA post (adjusted)	15.38		14.96		16.08		15.57	

TABLE 4

Univariate Analysis of Covariance for Post GPA with  
Pre GPA Scores as Covariate

Description	Hypothesis Mean Square	df	Univariate F	p <
GPA (adjusted) post	1.8859	3,29	.4286	.7341*

\*not significant

#### DISCUSSION

This discussion is presented in terms of possible confounding variables of the project. The results indicate that parental group counseling had no significant effect on the academic achievement of the students in this study. Furthermore, the effects of the other treatments were also insignificant. These findings would suggest that parental counseling is an ineffective intervention for effecting changes in the academic achievement of junior high school underachievers. However, such a conclusion should be viewed with caution since there appears to be a number of other explanations as to why the group counseling intervention with parents failed to affect the GPA of students in this study. There appears to be at least four reasons why the treatment has no effect on GPA.

Firstly, a lack of significance may have been because of the time of the school year in which the research was

conducted. Students were actually at the beginning of June examinations when the program was concluding. If parents had received constructive help from the group sessions, they may not have had sufficient time to implement the suggestions.

Secondly, not only was the project conducted very late in the school year, it extended over a short period of time. Although a review of the literature pointed out a variety of program lengths (Gilmore, 1971; Piggott & Gilmore, 1968; McCowan, 1964; Perkins & Wicas, 1968; Duff, 1972), the program may have yielded more positive results if it had been used over a much longer time. It may, in fact, require a longer time period for parents to consolidate and practice the skills learned during the group sessions, and it may take even longer before any new parental behavior patterns begin to affect children's motivation or attitude towards homework.

Thirdly, since parents were not evaluated, one does not know how much, if anything, they actually gained from the sessions. However, their unsolicited positive comments (see Appendix E) indicated they did benefit.

Fourthly, the reaction of students involved in the study was not evaluated. Therefore, even though parents showed a positive reaction, there was no indication of the students' reaction.

In retrospect, it might have been important to measure systematically both parents' reaction to the group counseling as well as any perceived changes which their children might have reported.



Through observation, it appeared that a meeting of the parents with the school principal on the goals and objectives of subjects being taught in school had no more effect on students' GPA than informing parents that their students were underachievers.

It also appeared that an elaboration of goals and objectives of various school subjects was of no benefit. Neither was it of benefit to tell parents their children were underachievers. If there was an effect on parents' behavior, the results indicated it was not carried over to the students' academic achievement.

In general, it was expected the GPA of  $T_1$  would increase significantly more than the GPA's of  $T_2$ ,  $T_3$ , and  $T_4$ . It was apparent the major procedure applied, as well as the two secondary procedures used, had no significant effect upon the GPA's of the students.

## CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PROJECT  
WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations which follow from the project.

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effect of a specific model of parental group counseling on the grade point average of underachievers attending I.J. Samson Junior High School in St. John's, Newfoundland.

The sample was drawn from a total grade eight population of 149. Actual determination of underachievers was made by using grade point averages from mid-term school examinations in English, Mathematics, French, Science, History, and Geography. The grade point averages were compared with scholastic aptitude as indicated from scores received on the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test (Intermediate Level) administered in March, 1976, to all grade eight students attending I.J. Samson Junior High School.

Thirty-six students were selected and randomly assigned to each of the following four groups: Instructional Counseling Group ( $T_1$ ), Subject Information Group ( $T_2$ ), Sensitization Group ( $T_3$ ), and Control Group ( $T_4$ ).

The program used in this project consisted of activities designed to teach skills that could be used by parents in the home to assist their child with homework and thereby enhance the scholastic achievement of their child.

Descriptive statistics were obtained from the SPSS Computer Program (1976). Data were further analyzed by the univariate and multivariate analysis of Variance, Covariance and Regression Program developed by National Educational Resources, Inc., 1972.

#### CONCLUSION

The ANCOVA analysis found no significant differences between any of the groups in the project.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following recommendations are made by the writer based upon the research findings:

1. It is recommended that future studies be undertaken with similar samples of students and parents earlier in a school year to determine long term effect.
2. It is recommended that a larger population be used so the sample could be stratified according to sex, grade, socio-economic level and educational level of parents.
3. It is recommended that a program be used with students

during the school day and a follow-through program with parents at night.

4. It is recommended that a formal evaluation be made of the program, effects of the program on students, and effects of the program on parents.

5. It is recommended that an investigation be made into the effectiveness of the type of program, i.e., formal versus informal; group versus individual; and school setting versus home setting.

6. It is recommended that the program be extended over a longer period of time than five weeks, for example, a full scale program throughout the year.

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APPENDIX A

SCRIPT USED IN PARENT COUNSELING

## SESSION I

Goals: Introductions  
Discuss outline of the program  
Introduce the idea of recording  
Train parents to keep score  
Introduce the behaviors to be charted this week

Allow a few minutes for "breaking the ice" conversation. Accept any comments parents may make and add your own. Mention any difficulty in finding the school and room, comment on the weather, etc.

Parents will be reminded of the purpose of the program which is to suggest some things they can do that will help their child. Parents will be asked to volunteer and make a commitment to seriously participate. Discuss appropriate night for meetings. For the first session, parents will be asked to keep track of certain things during the week. It should be remembered that parents are not being trained to do this behavior, merely record when it happens. It will be emphasized that parents should feel no compulsion to place a mark in every place on the chart. It needs to be stressed that parents are not being asked to use the behaviors during this base period.

## Training to Record

## Phase I

On a sheet (Appendix B) you will see some numbers. We will pretend that parents are keeping score of how many

television shows they watch in one week. Some television shows will be named for this week and parents will be asked to make a mark for each one.

On Monday we watch The Edge of Night on Channel 8  
 On Monday we watch Front Page Challenge on Channel 8  
 On Monday we watch W-5 on Channel 6

On Tuesday we watch News Cavalcade on Channel 6  
 On Tuesday we watch Ryan's Fancy on Channel 8

On Wednesday we watch Here and Now on Channel 8  
 On Wednesday we watch Question Period on Channel 6

On Thursday we watch Excuse My Friend on Channel 6  
 On Thursday we watch Here and Now on Channel 8

On Friday we watch the Edge of Night on Channel 8  
 On Friday we watch As the World Turns on Channel 6

Parents need to observe how carefully their scoring is checked so that they get the idea that accurate marking is important.

## Phase II

This second exercise is very simple and some parents may think it too simple -- but it is important. It is called 'Touching Chin and Touching Knee' exercise. On the sheet (Appendix B) will be seen two boxes. Parents are asked to watch the researcher for the next few minutes. Every time his knee is touched, parents are asked to put a mark in one of the boxes. Every time his chin is touched, a mark is to be put in the other.

"All right, now let's start. Some people (chin) think this kind of thing is very funny, and (knee) they laugh a lot. I had one parent who laughed so much that (chin) she

could hardly do it. But it is surprising what good comes of (chin) a little practice. You know the old saying, 'Practice makes perfect' (chin). Really, watching people do things (knee) is not easy, because when you least expect it you may miss something (chin). But keeping score is really fun (knee) and I bet you will be very good at it (chin). Pause. (chin). Pause. (knee).

If all the parents did not get all the marks in the right place, run over the exercise again and this time try to notice when and where marks are made.

Ask parents if they would like a five-minute break.

Script: "Here is a chart (Appendix C) for this week which I want you to take home. You can see that certain things are being asked about homework."

Rule: (Read the behaviors aloud, and then give examples of each one. Here again, parents are not being trained to do these, just recognize them well enough to record their occurrence).

Script: "Do you have any questions about these?"  
Pause. "Please remember, I am not looking for a lot of these things to happen -- I would like a record of how many times they have been happening all along." Pause.

Rule: (Remind parents not to tell their children about this program until after next session).

Script: "I'll be looking forward to seeing you all next week."

## SESSION II

Goals: Go over last week's recording on chart  
Distribute definition of homework  
Setting a definite time for homework to begin  
Arrangements for study in the home

Rule: (Go through the usual pleasantries, "breaking the ice" remarks). Discuss definition of homework. Activities a student is required to do at home in preparation for examinations, tests, next day's work and/or the day's work covered in class.

Script: "Do you have any comments about last week's chart?" Pause. "May I have them, please?" Pause.

"Now this week is going to be the same, except for one thing. I want you to try your hand at doing some of the things we have been talking about. One of the most helpful things a parent can do for the child is to help with homework. The teaching is done in school, of course, but the practice and encouragement can be done at home. It is felt that time spent with children

at home can have a very strong effect upon their academic achievement. They tend to do much better." Pause.

Rule: (The last paragraph may need to be read again).

Script: "What I would like for you to do this week is to encourage your child to decide very seriously on a time and place for doing homework." Pause. "The first is the idea of setting a definite time for homework to begin. It has been found that if the child forms the habit of always doing a task at the same time each day, it is much easier to get started." Pause. "You see, when there is no set time for getting down to work, the child has the problem of putting it off -- they know it is there -- and when they finally get to it, they may feel bad about having to do it. Having a regular time set aside for homework may be difficult, but once the child gets used to it, a habit is formed and the old problem of 'Have you done your homework yet?' is solved." Pause. "What time in the afternoon or evening would you think best for your child to do homework? Discuss this with your child and agree on a definite time for each day."

Rule: (Note the various responses. If some parents



have two or three possible ideas, help them explore the advantages and/or disadvantages of each. Encourage them to talk with their child and settle on a definite time for each day. The weekly chart (Appendix C) includes Friday, Saturday and Sunday -- settle on one of these three days. If some parents think that it will be difficult to come to a decision, encourage them to select one and try it for a week to test the effect).

Script: "Now, how are you going to get your child to do this until they form a habit, and does it automatically?" Pause. "Sometimes it is enough just to tell him/her that you would like them to do it at that certain time. You may remind them: 'It's \_\_\_ o'clock, homework time!' and give praise and approval when they do it." Pause. "Now, I would like to discuss where your child likes to do his studying. Is there a regular place?"

Rule: (Look at the Check List re: Studying (Appendix D). Give a copy to each parent and ask them to make a check mark for each item that is already in effect).

Script: "Well, that's fine. You already have some arrangements set up."

Rule: (Read off the items. If parents seem doubtful,

ask for their views. If some appear not to understand, explain as necessary. The items are self-explanatory and logical.

✓ Explain how each one is important.

Distribute the chart (Appendix C) for the coming week. ✓

Use any phrase that expresses positive feelings about these sessions).

Script: "Well, that does it for this week, see you next week at the same time."

### SESSION III

Goals: Introduce rewards

Script: "Well, how did things go last week? Were you able to keep record all right?" Pause.

✓ "Do you have any suggestions about how to do recording better?"

Rule: (Take a note of each suggestion or comment that the parents make concerning the sessions. As before, take the chart without looking at it).

Script: "The main thing I want to talk about tonight is reward. Last session, we referred to giving your child a reward each time homework was started at an agreed hour. In talking

about reward, we are going on the idea that children will do far more of what we want them to do, if we reward them for their trouble." Pause. "You know, this is one reason why grownups work all week. They don't necessarily do it because they are 'good' or obedient -- they do it because they get a reward for their work; they get a paycheck." Pause. "Now the child will not be given a paycheck, but rewards can be given in many ways. For instance, if homework is completed, a treat may be given, or may get to watch TV a little longer before going to bed.

What kind of rewards do you like to use with your child when he/she is good?

What kind of rewards does your child prefer?"

Rule:

(Give parents time to think up some rewards and others may be suggested. The reward may be anything that is desired by the child.

Some suggestions:

Watch TV	
Extra piece of pie or favourite cake	
Money	
Candy, coke	
Promise of Saturday movie	} if homework
Promise of spending week-end	} is completed each
with friend	} night during week

Script: "You might also try (Read items from the above list that have not been suggested).

Do you know a good time to give the reward?" Pause. "As soon as your child has finished what you want him/her to do?" Pause. Let's try it out and I will give you an example of how it works. Let's pretend that I am the mother and \_\_\_\_\_ be the child for a moment."

Rule: (Carry out role-playing. It is to be done easily and in as relaxed manner as possible, even if the parent is hesitant or timid. Use one of the rewards that a parent has mentioned as effective with her child).

Script: "Let's take a five-minute break."  
Break.

Script: (A) "We have been talking about rewards as a way of helping your child complete homework. We talked about the different things that you could give for doing homework especially well. Now, we are going to talk about something very much like that. Instead of giving some thing -- you tell your child something that is good for him/her to hear. You may say, 'That's good!' or 'I liked the way you did that!' in a way that is the same as giving something as a reward. Do you see what I mean?" Pause.

Rule: (If all the parents are able to catch on to

this concept easily, skip the next paragraph. It is designed to clarify further the idea that social rewards can be used to motivate).

Script: "Do you feel good when someone says 'That was a good piece of cake' or 'The living room looks really nice since you rearranged it this way' or 'The car sure shines since you've cleaned it' or 'I like the color you've put on your house' or 'Your shirt and pants match nicely!'"

Well, this good feeling you get is a reward for doing something." Pause.

Rule: (At this point, make a judgement as to whether the parent has understood fully. If not, go back to (A) and work through it slowly, again. If the parents seem to be following satisfactorily, proceed).

Script: "What sort of things do you say to your child when he/she does something that you want him/her to do?" Pause.

Rule: (Make a note of the phrases used).

Script: "This week, in addition to what we talked about before the 'break', you are asked to practice a lot of this kind of reward. You can even do more than this. Sometimes a smile, a look of approval, a hug or a kiss, can have the same effect. So you can use

all of these." Pause. "This is called 'praise'. The child is rewarded for doing homework, with praise." Pause. "A little while ago we talked about when is the best time to give the reward. Do you remember?"

Rule: (Don't put the parents on the spot with this. If they have forgotten, it won't improve the situation by making them feel bad about it).

Script: "Well, I think we decided that the very best time to give a reward is ..... [Emphasize] .... as soon as the child has completed doing the work. Another good time is when he/she is in the middle of doing it. Also, he/she should know why a reward is being given. If you do this as soon as your child finishes homework, he/she will be more likely to work the same way the following night." Pause. "Well, that's all for this week." "Here is the Chart (Appendix C). You are asked to do it as you did last week. Put a mark for each appropriate block. Keep careful check all week."

#### SESSION IV

Goals: Briefly discuss last week's chart  
Encourage child to show and explain to parents.

what the teacher has given for homework. Give child some clear idea of why there is a need to know things.

Script: "Well, let's talk about last week's chart. Did you have any trouble keeping a record of what was happening?" Pause. "Do you have the chart?"

Rule: (Take note of any comments. - Rewards and praise were covered and it may be helpful to have the parents go over some things and phrases suggested, so that they will continue to use the same or similar reinforcers).

Script: "So your child is rewarded for starting homework at an agreed hour and completing it well, by your approving looks and good things you say. But suppose your child doesn't want to get started at the same time agreed? How can we get a habit started unless he/she tries it a few times?"

Rule: (If the parents mention using substantive rewards to foster the child's behavior, congratulate them. If not, review the use of this concept [something that the child really wants, administered at the time or immediately after desired behavior takes place and the child knows for what he/she is being rewarded]).

Script: "After a week or so, perhaps the reward will not be necessary, or can be transferred to the



end of homework, for having completed it well."

Pause. Is this clear?"

"Tonight, I want to refer to two more things.

First, I want you to encourage your child to show you what his/her teacher has given for homework each day. Very often children do better work if they feel that their parents are interested in what they have to do."

Pause. "Ask your child to explain to you what he/she is going to be doing. See if they can do this. It will help your child understand it better, too." Pause. "Explaining it to you help get it clear in your child's own mind. After it has been explained to you, give some compliment."

Rule: (Role-play may help).

Script: "The second thing I want you to try this week is something that parents very seldom do. Perhaps you have? Children sometimes work much better in school if they have a fairly clear idea of why they need to know all the things they are being taught in school." Point (A) "For instance, to be able to fix cars, an expert mechanic needs to read instructions and to do arithmetic well. If a child is interested in cars, this kind of conversation will help him to be a little more interested in doing well in

these subjects. Have you talked with your child about what he/she thinks they might want to be when they grow up?" Pause.

Rule: (If some or all parents say, "yes", congratulate them. If some or all parents say, "no", discuss ways in which they could do this (B) comfortably with their child. Role play with a parent acting as a child and the researcher as the parent).

Script: "And so, at some convenient time this week, you are being asked to talk with your child about what he/she thinks they would like to do when grown up -- and then suggest ways in which present school work will be useful." Pause.

Rule: (If parents seem comfortable with this, continue. If there is any doubt about them having grasped exactly what I wish them to do, repeat from (A) and, if you think necessary, include more role-playing at point (B).

Script: "Fine, now here is the chart (Appendix C) for this week. Please continue recording as before. Next week, we will meet informally at the same time. Perhaps, at that time you will tell me what you have thought about these sessions. Maybe you can give me some suggestions that will help me do them better with another set of parents."

Rule: (Don't burden parents with the fact that there will be a list of questions like a test. Strongly urge all to attend next week).

#### SESSION V

Social gathering for parents.

Express appreciation for parents' participation and cooperation. Promise them feedback on the effects, if any.

Evaluation and Recommendations

## APPENDIX B

TRAINING TO RECORD

Practice in Scoring

## Phase I

6	8

## Phase II

Chin Touch	Knee Touch



## APPENDIX C

## WEEKLY CHART

WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

Please record the following information where and when it is appropriate.

	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
When does child begin homework?							
When does child end homework?							
Does child complete homework?							
Estimate how much							
Does child show you his work at the end of homework time?							
Does child talk with you about homework?							
If so, how long?							



## APPENDIX D

### STUDYING CHECK LIST

1. Is there a private place for your child to do homework? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does he/she have own desk? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does he/she have a place at a table? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is the lighting good? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is the room properly heated and ventilated? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is the chair comfortable but firm? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is the noise level kept at a minimum, with few distractions? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there toys, models, or play things on the table, or within reach to distract child? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does he/she have a bookcase, shelf, or special place for his/her things (books, pencils, erasers, paper)? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E****UNSOLICITED PARENTS' REACTION TO  
GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS**

June 17/76

Dear Sir:

Firstly may we thank you for the interest you have shown our son in particular and all the other students in concern.

The ideas of holding these sessions with the selected parents has proven in our case to be very worthwhile and even if our son do not pass it did prove to us that with help and encouragement he showed a great deal of interest in his studies, and we sure hope it wasn't too late.

It is our feelings that the program should be continued in future years, but starting possibly before the mid-term exams and continuing until the finals. We do not think it necessary to hold weekly meetings if the program is started early, our suggestion would be a monthly get-together until about one month before exams and then change to weekly sessions. You could even have letters typed up and give to each student to bring home to parents and then if a parent knows his or her child is having a problem and he or she takes interest they will come to your get-togethers. This would take care of all the telephone calls.

We feel that the program should be used and be continued without change. Once again our sincere thanks.

P.S. When and if boat completed I will arrange a fishing trip.

1976

Dear Sir:

I found the 5-week programme very helpful.

- 2) The homework chart is an excellent idea for parents and the pupil.
- 3) Pupil more enthusiastic about homework.
- 4) Child's cooperation regards homework greatly improved.
- 5) I think it should be continued next school year and as early as possible.
- 6) I would like to see closer communications between school and parent.

June 30, 1976

I attended the sessions held by you during the last school term concerning homework. I think it had very helpful ideas. However, I think the program should begin in the early grades and at the beginning of the school year.



Sorry I couldn't attend tonight.. I feel both Craig and I have benefited from those meetings. I have spent more time discussing his lessons whereas before he was left on his own..



## APPENDIX F

MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH GROUP AND THE  
COMBINED GROUPS ON EACH SUBJECT AREA

Mean, Standard Deviation for Each Group and the Combined Groups on Each Subject Area

Variable	G R O U P									
	T <sub>1</sub>		T <sub>2</sub>		T <sub>3</sub>		T <sub>4</sub>		Combined	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<u>English</u>										
pre	16.2	3.60	18.9	4.96	19.2	3.70	17.2	2.73	17.9	3.87
post	14.7	3.32	16.8	4.92	18.3	4.00	16.0	3.87	16.4	4.12
<u>Mathematics</u>										
pre	15.1	3.49	15.4	4.77	15.9	2.61	14.4	4.95	15.2	3.93
post	13.2	3.23	13.4	5.57	13.9	5.06	15.4	6.37	14	5.04
<u>French</u>										
pre	13.3	6.40	15.7	4.82	13.4	2.79	12.5	3.54	14.2	4.44
post	13.3	6.13	13.1	6.36	13.2	3.11	8.0	8.49	12.6	5.60
<u>Science</u>										
pre	14.2	3.53	13.9	5.80	14.3	4.44	13.6	2.13	14	4.02
post	13.8	3.97	15.0	7.14	14.1	6.49	12.4	5.50	13.8	5.90
<u>History</u>										
pre	12.5	3.96	13.0	3.96	14.7	3.57	17.0	3.63	14.3	4
post	16.9	4.05	16.4	6.37	20.0	3.97	19.5	4.14	18.3	4.70
<u>Geography</u>										
pre	13.8	.99	15.4	2.57	16.1	3.02	17.6	3.58	15.9	3.01
post	14.9	2.48	16.1	4.26	18.7	1.70	18.2	3.99	17.1	3.54
<u>GPA</u>										
pre	14.3	2.40	15.3	3.71	15.7	2.00	15.8	2.11	15.3	2.60
post	14.4	2.88	15.0	3.87	16.4	2.96	16.11	2.52	15.5	3.08





