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ABSTRACT
              The purpose of this practicum was to effect a
substantial improvement in the academic and social profiles of 12
seventh-grade and 6 eighth-grade students with specific learning
disabilities who had been targeted as potentially high risk
candidates for dropping out of high school. Within a holistically
based intervention model, five student objectives were sought:
passing grades in at least three academic subjects, two electives,
and physical education; an attendance profile that configured to
district-based guidelines; demonstration of appropriate social
skills; and a satisfactory conduct record. The practicum comprised
such interventions and activities as self-esteem and social skill
training, career orientation, motivational techniques, peer
tutoring/mentors, a parent telephone hotline, student progress
reports, student tracking reports, and parent/teacher/student
conferences. Expectations were exceeded at both the seventh and
eighth grade levels in the areas of academics, attendance, and
self-esteem. In addition, the eighth grade conduct objective was
exceeded. The program has become an integral part of the exceptional
education program in the practicum setting. Appendices contain
several forms for use in administering the practicum. (Contains
approximately 70 references.) (JDD)

Mediating At-Risk Factors
Among Seventh and Eighth Grade Students
With Specific Learning Disabilities
Using a Holistically Based Model

by

Alice E. Buckner

Cluster 37

A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: *William C. Knowles*

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August 4, 1993
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This practicum report was submitted by Alice E. Buckner under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

_____   _____
Date of Final Approval of   Barry W. Birnbaum, Ed.D.
        Report   Advisor

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ABSTRACT

A Holistically Based Model to Mediate "At-Risk" Factors Among Seventh and Eighth Grade Students With Specific Learning Disabilities. Melbourne, FL, 1993: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Social Skills Training/ Career Orientation/ Self-Esteem Building/ Motivational techniques/ Peer Tutors/ Mentors/ Parent Involvement.

The overall purpose of the practicum was to effect a substantial improvement in the academic and social profiles of 12 seventh grade and 6 eighth grade students with specific learning disabilities who had been targeted as potentially high risk candidates for high school dropout. Within a holistically based interventional model, five student objectives were sought: passing grades in at least three academic subjects, two electives, and physical education; an attendance profile that configured to district based guidelines; demonstration of appropriate social skills; and a satisfactory conduct record.

Program components were designed to mediate deficient areas among practicum students. An integrated model, the practicum was comprised of interventions and activities that included self-esteem and social skill training; career orientation, motivational techniques; peer tutor/mentors, and parent involvement.

Excellent results were realized from the practicum effort. Expectations were exceeded for both seventh and eighth grade students in the areas of academics, attendance, and self-esteem. Moreover, the eighth grade conduct objective was exceeded. Having produced credible effects for "at-risk" students with specific learning disabilities, the program has become an integral part of the exceptional education program in the practicum setting. The presenting data suggested that an integrated learning experience, parent involvement, the development of career goals, and an interactive learning environment hold high potential to cause students to sufficiently engage in the learning experience in order to produce acceptable academic and social profiles, positive self-esteem, satisfactory attendance, and satisfactory conduct profiles.

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10/7/93	Alice E. Beecher
(date)	(signature)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

<u>Description of the Work Setting</u>

A product of a once conservative community, this
thirty year old inner-city junior high school is
located on the southeast coast of the United States.
Its surrounding population of 67,500 is a direct result
of an influx of high-tech personnel which was required
in order to build and sustain the continuous growth of
the locality's high-tech industries. An area in
transition, its diverse student population is derived
from seven elementary feeder schools of which
minorities contribute approximately 13% while whites
present the remaining 87%. Over time, a changing
socio-economic student profile has gradually developed.
Largely middle class at its origin, its construct has
become low to low-middle. At the time of the
practicum, nearly 34% of the student population
qualified for free or reduced lunch. Transported
largely by bus, students spend a minimum of 15 minutes
per one way trip with those in outlying areas riding as
long as 45 minutes. Because bus has become the primary
mode of transportation, extracurricular activities are

beyond the reach of most students.

Based on a student population of 1,340 within the practicum setting and a feeder school population of approximately 5,700, the projection for the upcoming school year was 1,450 --- a figure that exceeded recent three-year projections.

Committed to the provision of creative and innovative programs and/or interventions when addressing the individual needs of a diverse student population, all school personnel are engaged in the educational process. From maintenance personnel to the administrative quarter, the needs and best interests of students are of primary concern. A global, humanistic philosophy which is fueled by pragmatic ideology is consistently generated by the School SIC in response to input from all shareholders (i.e., parents, educators, students, school service personnel, and members of the business community).

Composed of 72 largely committed teachers who address both the academic and affective requirements of students, the faculty has developed a cohesive relationship in which to address the multi-needs of all those who have become a part of, interact with, or impact the school community. Sixty-two basic education

teachers collaborate within a team format to provide
integrative services and to facilitate the educational
experience for the vast majority of the school
population. Moreover, 10 exceptional education
teachers administer to the differentiated needs of the
better than 13% exceptional student population across
four exceptionalities: Emotionally Handicapped, Gifted,
SLD (self-contained/full time), SLD (resource/part
time), and Severely Emotionally Disturbed.

Permeating the practicum setting, holistic ideology
sets the stage for its philosophical format. Parent
and community involvement in overall school objectives
is readily apparent in the real world orientation that
characterizes the nature of activities which are
generated within a recently implemented state inspired
program. Aspiring to the high ideals of America 2000:
An Education Strategy (1991) and its state adopted
counterpart, the SIC works effectively toward reform
and accountability. Evolutionary in concept, the
committee employs a facilitative leadership style to
meet its goals and objectives. Moreover, the SIC
schedules extracurricular activities which provide
informal opportunities for committee members to gain a
broader perspective of school needs and to develop

relationships with one another that maximize the
potential for committee efficacy.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

Multi-dimensional in perspective and holistically
oriented, the writer assumes a proactive position
within both the school setting and community.
Certified in psychology, specific learning
disabilities, and gifted education, her teaching
assignment encompasses the facilitation and instruction
of Language Arts, learning strategies, and leadership
skills. Fundamental to all three areas of instruction
are the pragmatic considerations that underlie student
acquisition of marketable skills.

As a supervising instructor for a state university
and as a "Demonstration Classroom Teacher", the writer
assumes a facilitative leadership role in the interest
of intern teachers and provides on-site process
training opportunities for educators through a district
sponsored program.

At the school based level, the writer is an active
member of the school Guidance Committee, sponsor of the
National Junior Honor Society, coordinator and liaison

between parents, school, and community for the Parent
Advisory Committee, and a member of the SIC.

Proactive on the issue of educational reform, the
writer assumes the following positions at the district
level: Council for Exceptional Children (President);
Very Special Arts Executive Committee (Chair); member
of the 11th District Congressional Educational Advisory
Board; member of the Exceptional Education Advisory
Committee; member of the Alternative Education Task
Committee; member of the Task Committee for
District-Wide Testing; member of the Capital Outlay
Committee; and member of the Teacher of the Year
Selection Committee. Moreover, the writer is currently
a member of a doctoral level networking team for
American 2000: An Education Strategy and a member of
the Nova University Student/Graduate Advisory
Committee.

CHAPTER II

Study of the Problem

Throughout history, the public education system has consistently been challenged to effectively address the needs of its population in relation to rapidly changing times and conditions. While its national agenda was significantly affected by a number of socio-political issues, budgetary constraints, and the enormous power of special interest groups which impacted each decade, public education demonstrated the ability to maintain its credibility in providing quality services to American youth until the early 1980s. However, with the publication of a staggering report by the National Commission on Excellence in which pervasive incompetency among high school graduates and an alarmingly high drop-out rate was documented, came a societal loss of innocence (A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Research, 1983).

Disillusioned by the skill deficiency among high school graduates, the business sector became increasingly proactive in educational programming and decision making. Parents moved into proactive

positions within the structure of school based
management, and the national agenda was revamped to
reflect societal concern. In response, President Bush
presented America 2000: An Education Strategy to the
nation on April 18, 1991. Presenting goals and
objectives for public education which address societal
interests for the year 2000 and beyond, the initiative
set the stage for commensurate state and local action.

The most immediate manifestation of the national
ideology within statewide policy was the rapid
incorporation of SIC within the school based management
system. Comprised of a diverse membership, the
committees were mandated to include members from school
faculties, administration, classified workers, parents,
students, a union representative, and members of the
business sector. The purpose of the construct is to
facilitate the restructuring of individual schools by
providing local orientation in which all vested
interests can be efficiently addressed.

Because of the specificity of the orientation of
the proposed practicum to students with SLD, the nature
and ideology which are fundamental to both school
philosophy and the SIC are particularly important.
Thus, both the membership diversification and the

global concepts which exist within these complimentary systems are likely to serve the best interests of both regular and exceptional education students alike.

Historical Perspective

Although the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) paved the way for the provision of special services for all handicapped children within the least restrictive environment, time has provided the opportunity to develop a different perspective regarding the delivery system for special programs (Hallahan and Kauffmann, 1988).

Perhaps one of the most revealing documents to challenge the original orientation of special education programs is Madeleine Will's 1986 report to the secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Service U.S. Department of Education. Scrutinizing the traditional delivery system, Will contends that the anticipated success of segregated learning experience is often ineffective in terms of student ability to generalize skills, and the restrictive atmosphere of the learning environment itself has produced negative social results for many.

Moreover, the author contends that of the 25 percent dropout rate, "many of these dropouts are students with learning problems who have not succeeded in special programs" (p.4).

To retain the merits of special education programming, while removing the negative consequences of the foregoing manifestations, Will supports the REI in which students with learning disabilities are moved into mainstream settings where support services are provided to <u>all</u> students (regular and exceptional) who require them. According to the author, through a regular and exceptional education collaboration, the needs and best interests of <u>all learners</u> can be effectively addressed.

Following a longitudinal study relative to school programs and performance of students with SLD, Wagner (1990) maintained that the adoption of appropriate, relevant policies, programs, and interventions could actually reduce the incidence of high school dropout from 18 to one percent. Given that scenario, restructuring could present a viable option to the pervasiveness of the problem.

Problem Description

The existing problem within the proposed practicum setting was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth grade students with SLD had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on either failing grades in two or more core subject areas or excessive absences, causing the respective students to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category.

Despite numerous innovative and creative programs to enhance educational opportunities in the proposed practicum setting, the incidence of academic failure and absenteeism among SLD students had not improved substantially over time. In addition, deficiencies among this population were apparent in the adjunct areas of social and organizational skills, conduct, and self-esteem. Thus, it was apparent that there was an existing need to provide interventions and inducements for students who had been classified as "at-risk for dropout" to achieve passing grades, improve attendance habits, develop appropriate social and organizational skills, assume responsible conduct profiles, and develop a sense of heightened self-esteem.

Given the fact that the practicum school is deeply
committed to the provision of programs and services to
enhance opportunity for all students, the "Quality
Circle" convened on five occasions during the prior
school year to review policies and share ideas for
mediating the debilitating effects of the acknowledged
"at-risk" problem. Despite formidable programs and
delivery systems and numerous interventions in previous
years, the high incidence of "at-risk" SLD students was
still an enigma. Therefore, it was determined that,
utilizing the SIC as a vehicle, information would be
sought from all stakeholders. Comprised of primary and
secondary administrators, three guidance counselors,
and three exceptional education teachers, the "Quality
Circle" reviewed the resulting data and made three
recommendations: develop specific criteria to determine
eligibility for "at-risk" classification; screen the
SLD student population to determine the incidence of
the problem; and provide individual academic and social
counseling coupled with periodic parent/student/
teacher/counselor conferences to students whose
profiles matched the criteria.

Problem Documentation

While the "Quality Circle" plan was in effect for a period of five months, little improvement resulted. Most parents of "at-risk" students either failed to attend conferences or attended sporadically. Counselors reported that, during parent contacts, most appeared to be as apathetic as the students themselves. One interesting exception was noted. Two parents of the then currently identified "at-risk" students had been participants in the writer's previous practicum effort which involved effective participation of parents in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. Both were enthusiastic participants in the project and, reportedly, brought their newly acquired skills to the "at-risk" intervention. Of the two, one had a student who ultimately managed to pass the grade level for the year while the other failed. However, the intervening guidance counselor reported that the latter student had made a concerted effort to pass the grade level and failed by a substantially smaller margin than existed initially.

Given the pervasiveness of the problem and the
unsuccessful attempts at mediation within the proposed
practicum setting, the writer was committed to devising
a solution strategy to reduce the incidence of
"at-risk" factors among students who had been
classified in that category --- thereby increasing the
potential for respective students to successfully
proceed from one grade level to another without
interruption. Thus, the following procedures were
employed to determine the existence and scope of the
problem.

First, a review of year-end grade reports and
attendance records of SLD students revealed that 12
seventh grade students and six eighth grade students
failed to pass the 1991-1992 school year. Having
failed two or more core subject areas, six seventh
grade students also exceeded the allowable number of
absences and would have qualified for failure in that
area alone. However, none of the seventh grade
students failed solely on the basis of excessive
absences. Of the eighth grade students, six failed two
or more core subject areas, of whom three exceeded the
allowable number of absences and would have qualified
for failure in that area alone. However, none of the

eighth grade students failed solely on the basis of excessive absences.

Second, a review of guidance counselor reports revealed three conditions. First, all 12 seventh grade students and all six eighth grade students demonstrated behaviors that were indicative of low self-esteem. Second, poor social skills were recorded for seven of the seventh grade students and four of the eighth grade students.

Third, a review of year-end grade reports indicated that 12 seventh grade students and six eighth grade students received non-satisfactory conduct grades from a minimum of three teachers.

In establishing the selection criteria for at-risk SLD students, the "Quality Circle" established three guidelines. First, selected students must have failed for reasons other than "lack of ability". In other words, verification of appropriate academic placement must precede selection. Second, selected students must have failed for reasons other than those which were beyond their control (i.e., absenteeism because of family illness). Three, selected students must have failed for reasons that were unrelated to any other known disability.

Once the existence and scope of the problem had been established and the foregoing three conditions had been applied, selection was made based on grade retention for either academic failure and/or failure due to excessive absences.

Causative Analysis

Writer Perspective of Causal Factors

Writer experience and observation in conjunction with a preliminary review of the data suggest a number of causes that have varying degrees of potential to impact both the incidence and scope of the "at-risk" problem. Five categories are involved.

First, given the socio-economic complexities of the nineties, American families are hard pressed to meet the multi-needs which exist within their configurations. As a result, junior high school parents often fail to actively prioritize educational values and accept the responsibility for monitoring their childrens' educational progress at school and at home. More commonly, parents tend to regard the educational process from a parochial perspective. Believing that education is the fundamental and

exclusive responsibility of the public school system, there is a tendency to displace the total responsibility for the child's education to school personnel. As a result, the cohesive aspects of parent/school relationships are often deficient.

Second, deficient student self-esteem, brought about by chronic failure, frequently encourages disengagement from the learning process. Clearly, children who occupy seats in classrooms, where successful experience is elusive and failure is a frequent condition, often internalize attributions that produce a syndrome of negative consequence. As a result, students often experience embarrassment and humiliation in front of peers --- a situation that frequently leads to disenchantment and absenteeism.

Third, inadequate parent involvement during both the development of the child's IEP and in all aspects of its implementation has the potential to cause the student to attribute parent disinterest to self and to the educational process in general. Without parental interest and involvement, the child often feels devalued. Thus, little motivation surfaces to engage in the learning process.

Fourth, the tendency of some mainstream teachers to regard low achievement as the norm for students with learning disabilities often contributes to student internalization of that attribution. However inadvertent, when conveyance of a lower than norm expectation occurs, the student tends to comply with the anticipated standard --- thus preventing the overall growth and development that is critical to the learning process.

Five, failure of educators to provide multi-sensory experiences within the classroom often causes certain students to become lost in the struggle to inculcate skills. Because accessing modes differ among students, opportunity to gain information in a variety of ways is essential to efficient processing. Nonetheless, many mainstream teachers continue to maintain a primarily didactic posture in the delivery of content --- often causing non-auditory learners to disengage.

Although the practicum setting was geared to embrace a holistic philosophy with regard to the educational needs of its population, severe budgetary cuts had impacted the realization of that goal. Faced with oversized class loads and fewer resources than ever before, the ideology and methodology that normally

command teacher attention to the differentiated
qualities and needs of students was overly ambitious
given current conditions within the teaching/learning
environment. In as much, those practices and
procedures that were once commonplace became less than
feasible. For example, in the past, seventh and eighth
grade teachers collaborated within a teaming
configuration to produce integrated learning experience
for students. Originally constructed around the four
core subject areas, respective teachers had common
planning periods during which integrated planning and
parent teacher/ student conferences took place. Within
this format, the four resident teachers interacted with
elective, vocational, and physical education teachers
to provide continuity to the program and address the
individual strengths and weaknesses of students. While
teams still exist, larger class loads and student
scheduling problems have reduced opportunities for
personalization and attention to differentiation. In
as much, some "at-risk" students may go unnoticed.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

In addition to writer perspective regarding
causative applications, the literature is replete with

evidence of both the magnitude and pervasiveness of the academic failure and chronic absenteeism problem within the public education system --- two situations which have been widely linked to the eventuality of high school dropout. According to Ramsey, the U.S. Department of Education's 1992 report to Congress on Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Chapter 3, stated that "students with disabilities make up one of the largest groups of dropouts (Florida Today, August 4, 1992, p. 5D). Commenting further, the author maintained that dropout rates for this category actually exceed the 40 percent figure which is typically attributed to urban communities --- a figure that has staggering ramifications.

During the preliminary review, a number of factors surfaced which shed light on the significance of academic and social failure and its relationship to the ultimate identification of "at-risk for dropout" students.

Clearly, the "at-risk for dropout" problem which currently pervades the nation's public school system is widely documented in the literature. According to a 1987 U.S. Department of Labor report, approximately 25

percent of the nation's students ultimately abort the
public education construct and become statistical
societal victims because of skill deficiencies (Baker
and Sansone, 1990; Schauer, 1990; Strother, 1986).   In
addition to the debilitating social, economic, and
psychological effects for the individual, the
associated demand for social services cripples the
nation's economy (Gage, 1990).   Concurring, Thompson
(1986) claims that the dropout problem has reached
crisis proportions beyond the obvious social and
economic implications.

Citing the State Education Leader (a quarterly of
the Education Commission of the States), the author
maintains that students who comprise the "at-risk"
category are also a severe threat to the nation's
political composition.   Two further attestments to the
severity of the situation are evidenced in the "Section
Notes" of the June 8, 1991 and August 3, 1991 issues of
the Congressional Quarterly which indicate the passing
of the School Dropout Demonstration Assistant Act (HR
2313) of June 3, 1991 and the allocation of respective
funds to institute prevention programs.   Despite
national legislation to decrease the incidence of
academic failure among "at-risk" student populations,

more than 600,000 students continue to leave school
prior to graduation each year.

A wide variety of causes have been attributed to
the occurrence of "at-risk" students within the
nation's educational systems --- not the least of which
is directed toward family constructs. With SLD
students comprising a major portion of that group, it
is incumbent upon exceptional educators to maintain
vigilant positions in assessing the underlying causes
of academic failure and chronic absenteeism. Because
the child's education begins within the family
construct, its influence is a primary factor in
developing preschool concepts and attitudes which will
ultimately lay the foundation for formal learning.
For example, Cole's Theory of Interactivity (1987)
strongly supports the view that family conditions and
structures (or lack of them) are highly instrumental in
producing deficiencies in learning.

Demographics and Family Influences

While Tapply (1985) argues that "at-risk" students
are the products of varying backgrounds and
orientations, the incidence of poverty is a clear
indicator within urban areas where dropout rates are

frequently in excess of 40 percent (Florida Today,
August 4, 1992, p. 50; Lee, Luppino, and Plionis,
1990). Characterizing the most likely candidate for
dropout, Cook (1990) maintains that the minority
student with low socio-economic status is a natural
target. Less likely to have positive role models and
family resources to provide incentives and develop
clear rationales for acquiring an education, the child
often enters school without the mindset and motivation
that is essential to successful learning experience.
Nonetheless, schools tend to avoid early screening ---
thereby contributing to the causal elements (academic
failure and/absenteeism) that ultimately relegate
students to "at-risk" classification.

Cavazos (1989) supports the view that the major
socio-economic group to produce "at-risk" children is
that enormous faction that currently exists at the
poverty level of American society. Moreover, the
author suggests that, by the year 2000, nearly a third
of all school aged children will be "at-risk." By the
time these children enter school, it is often apparent
that they are deficient in the areas of sound health
and diet as well as in intellectually and emotionally
stimulating venture. According to the author, two

other causes are associated with the production of a

high "at-risk" profile: chronic lack of relevancy of

educational objectives to real world goals and failure

of the nation's schools to conduct early identification

procedures. More commonly, interventions to identify

"at-risk" factors do not occur until the child reaches

the secondary level.

In accord with the Cavavos (1989) position, Lee,

Luppino, and Plionis (1990) cite poverty as the major

"at-risk" indicator. Many within this population

survive on public assistance and are clearly victims of

the overall "ills of society." In a report addressing

the high ideals of the president's national agenda,

Gage (1990) maintains that poverty and cultural

differences between teachers and students are two

substantial "at-risk" factors that present high

potential for dropout. While poverty is a known

indicator, the author suggests that cultural mismatches

between the classroom delivery systems and the child's

experience level often cause the child to view the

content as irrelevant to real-world situations --- thus

creating a barrier to learning efficacy.

Commenting on the characteristics that underlie the

ideology of low socio-economic status families,

Strother (1986) contends that a disregard for the
practical values of education is often conveyed to
children prior to school entry. Because it is common
for parents themselves to have experienced a lack of
success in school endeavors, a tendency to devalue the
importance of education is quite natural. Families
that function at the poverty level have little
incentive to aspire to anything other than that which
is characteristic of the depressing conditions in which
they live on a daily basis. Thus, according to
Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986), high
educational expectation for the children of those
families is a rarity. On the contrary, most parents
from low socio-economic circumstances have not
benefited from sound formal educations themselves. As
a result, assuming an interest in and monitoring their
childrens' educations takes a low priority position.
Thus, the offspring from this group tend to have few
study aids in the home, insufficient opportunities to
participate in relevant learning experiences, and no
viable means of obtaining the social skills that are
required to establish sound peer relationships.

Mentioning such problems as learning disabilities
and academic failure, Tapply (1985) alludes to the

frustration that students experience in coping with school. Outlining a number of "at-risk" indicators, the author contends that many parents and educators fail to monitor students for signs of chronic absenteeism, academic failure, emotional problems and failure to interact with peers --- a set of conditions that are believed to impact the incidence of school dropout.

Lack of parent involvement in their childrens' educations has long since been recognized as a substantial problem. Among the restructuring efforts within the public school format is the recognition and emphasis on parent/teacher partnerships. According to Yanok and Derubertis (1989), despite the federal mandate (PL 94-142) which specifically accords parent participation rights during the development of the IEP, parents of exceptional education students are more likely to assume passive positions relative to their childrens' educational goals and more reluctant to participate in other aspects of their childrens' educations than parents of regular education students. Much of this reluctance, from the authors' perspective, stems from the failure of schools to train and encourage parents to assume equal status during

decision making activities. Thus, lack of parent participation in the overall education of their children may very well constitute a condition that catapults children with SLD into a position of "at-risk for dropout".

Concurring, Buckner (1992) stated that ineffective parent involvement may be an important factor in the high incidence of "at-risk" children in the exceptional education categories --- a condition that was substantiated during a previous practicum effort in the writer's professional environment. Directed toward increasing parent participation and involvement in the IEP process, the thrust of the practicum was predicated upon the author's belief that lack of parent involvement in their childrens' educations was a major factor in contributing to the "at-risk" profile of children with SLD.

While a consensus exists that lack of parent involvement in the global aspects of their childrens' educations is highly detrimental to successful student outcomes and, in fact, contributes to the incidence of "at-risk for dropout", still another contributing factor appears to exacerbate the situation. In studying parent impact on student success (or lack of)

patterns, Grant and Sleeter (1986) found that although educators recognize the need for effective parent participation, they frequently discourage its development within families of low socio-economic status because of preconceived expectations of inadequate performance. Yet, it is this population from which "at-risk" children are most likely to come.

Deficient Social Skills

While acknowledging the dynamic impact of both the socio-economic structure and value base within individual families on the ultimate success or failure of the student, Seidel and Vaughn (1991) maintain that "factors associated with school dropout can be grouped into several categories: demographic, family related, economic, peer-related, and student alienation" (p. 152). In a recent study, the authors investigated the importance of social alienation in connection with the potential for dropout among students with SLD. Findings indicated a strong parallel with the incidence of social alienation and high school drop out for this population. Two large contributors to this high "at-risk" factor are student inability to use effective social skills and student internalization of low

teacher expectation. Thus, social skill incompetency appears to be a primary cause of student disassociation from the educational process.

In emphasizing the critical importance of social skill deficits in terms of "at-risk" indicators for students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe (1991) studied the deficiency in light of a contextualist model rather than within the framework of the widely accepted deficit model. While the latter model supported the belief that social skill deficits and social alienation were strictly categorical products of the learning disability, the former model "perceives the problem as a function of both the child and the system" (p. 83). Therefore, the causes connected with "at-risk" factors may need to be viewed in more global and interrelated terms.

In a 1990 study by Toro, Weisberg, Guare, and Liebenstein, deficiencies were clearly documented in the areas of social problem solving skills, conduct, and family traits --- thereby offering further credence to the compelling argument that social deficits constitute a high "at-risk" factor in determining the potential for dropout. In accord with the ideology that connects "at-risk" students and social skill

deficits, Cartledge and Kleefeld (1989) maintain that social skill deficits are actually responsible for academic failure, interpersonal incompetence, and the inability to acquire marketable skills that lead to quality employment. Clearly supporting the view that students with SLD have a greater deficiency in these three areas than do non-learning disabled peers, the study gives strong support to the ideology that includes social deficiencies among the "at-risk" factors that may ultimately cause high profile students to abandon formal educational pursuit.

In assessing the nature and extent of social skill deficits among children with SLD, Forness and Kavale (1991) found that social skill development which is critical to a well rounded education is often impeded by poor self esteem which results when academic failure occurs. Although deficient social skills is by no means a condition that is reserved for children with SLD, it is widely acknowledged that this group is most susceptible to the deficiency. Asocial behavior is also evidenced in a study by Bryan, Pearl, and Herzog (1989) which indicates both a higher incidence of crime perpetration and of crime victimization than among non-learning disabled peers.

Although the acquisition of social skills is
extremely important to all students, it is particularly
critical to students with disabilities. When students
are mainstreamed, their success is clearly contingent
upon the ability to adapt to both the academic and
social demands of the setting. Peer support is an
essential characteristic of that endeavor. Still, many
students with learning disabilities are sadly lacking
in social skills and often alienate their peers rather
than foster the much needed relationships. As a
result, many become victims of an "at-risk" profile and
ultimately drop out of school (Gottlieb and Leyser,
1981).

In the final analysis, social skill incompetency is
a crippling disorder. If educators defer on this
count, multitudes of children will be relegated to the
ranks of social misfits who will enter society without
the coping strategies to effect an appropriate life
style. Johnson and Johnson (1990) speak to conditions
that currently exist within the nation's classrooms.
According to the authors, it is not uncommon for
students to be highly lacking in cooperative learning
skills and effective interaction with one another.
Nonetheless, if unattended, students will fail to meet

the societal expectation for cooperative venture --- a
situation that may preclude effective career
preparation.

Deficient Self-Esteem

Another cause that is closely related to social
skill deficiency is a sense of deflated self-esteem.
Cited as a primary cause of academic failure by
Kershner in a 1990 study, this single deficiency is
believed to underlie the occurrences of
underachievement in all categories --- thereby offering
credence to the "specificity concept." In still
another incident, low self-esteem was connected with
the "at-risk" student profile. The Moreland School
District in San Jose, California found low self-esteem
to be the culprit in the district's rapidly
deteriorating educational system. Among the results of
the deficiency were low academic achievement, conduct
problems, and low motivation, and the inability to
participate in cooperative venture (Weisman, 1991).

In an attempt to determine the cause of high school
dropout, Romanik and Blazer (1990) studied school data
for 447 "at-risk" students and 421 regular students.
Interestingly enough, "at-risk" students appeared to

have much lower self-esteem than those students who had
dropped out --- causing the authors to speculate that
removal from an environment in which students did not
experience success contributed to enhanced self-esteem.

Canfield (1990) identified poor self-esteem as a
primary cause of academic failure, absenteeism, failure
to participate in extracurricular activities, failure
to do homework assignments, and school dropout.
Concurring, Magliocca and Robinson (1991) argue that,
despite a profusion of valid literature to support the
connection between "at-risk" student profiles and
self-concept, "the need for combining academic progress
with increasing self-confidence is often overlooked"
(p.30).

School Related Causes

Schools often fail to provide productive, relevant
programs and interventions that address differentiated
student needs (Strother, 1986). It is not uncommon for
educators to wait until problems are at hand before
applying interventions. While "after the fact"
attempts at mediation may be well intentioned,
maladapted behaviors which have been integrated by the
child over a long period may require more stringent

interventions than those which can be feasibly applied
within the construct and conditions of the classroom.
Given the fact that school related causes such as
academic failure, absenteeism, conduct deficiencies,
social skill incompetency, and teacher attitude are
among the most important factors to be considered in
determining "at-risk" profiles, it is critical that
both parents and educators be mindful of the causes
which spawn and perpetuate "at-risk" conditions for
many of the nation's children --- of whom many are
learning disabled.

Among the most revealing documents to impact
exceptional education to date is The School Programs
and School Performance of Secondary Students Classified
as Learning Disabled: Findings from the National
Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education
Students (Wagner 1990). Its primary goal was to
ascertain the effects of current public school policies
and programs as they pertain to SLD students who spend
a large portion of their educational experience within
the mainstream. Findings were produced for three
categories. First, within the heterogeneity of SLD
students, a broad range of both abilities and
disabilities exists --- a condition that is not

effectively addressed within the public education
format.   Second, most mainstreaming involves only one
academic subject area with the rest in non-academic
classes.   Third, SLD students tend to perform
significantly below the national average G.P.A. of 2.8ε
for high school seniors.   In combination, these factors
weigh heavily in placing SLD students in the "at-risk'
category.

Academic Failure and Absenteeism

Widely documented at the highest levels of the
nation, perhaps no other single report has ever had the
impact as that of <u>A Nation at Risk: The Imperative
for Educational Research, 1983</u>.   Arousing a sense of
public consciousness, the document clearly establishes
the need for the current restructuring effort.
Documenting enormously high dropout rates and the
pervasiveness of skill deficiencies within the ranks of
those students who finally graduate, the report has
laid the foundation for school improvement and
accountability.   High on the list of "at-risk"
indicators are the wide scale problems of academic
failure and chronic absenteeism --- two major

indicators on which this practicum effort will be based.

According to Tapply (1985), "two-thirds of the students who dropped out of high school could be identified as risks as early as seventh grade, p. 30." Emphasizing the high potential for dropout among children who fail academically, the author notes that absenteeism is a natural coping strategy when a child's sense of self-esteem has dropped.

Citing academic failure and deficiencies in attendance as a major contributor to ultimate high school dropout, Baker and Sansone (1990) caution the educational community not to view these conditions in isolation but rather as factors that exist within a dynamic and complex context. In a study directed toward the provision of interventions to prevent high school dropout, the authors have clearly connected these two indicators with the dropout rate.

According to Maeroff (1988), schools that are located in low socio-economic areas are often major contributors to the incidence of "at-risk" factors that ultimately increase the probability of high school dropout. Often large, impersonal, and institutional by design, public schools lack the supportive

characteristics that are critical to adequately address
the differentiated needs of students. Moreover, the
expectation of teachers in relation to student
achievement is low, little relevancy is established
between classroom experience and societal activity and
expectation, school personnel are frequently ill
prepared to deal with the multi-problems that impact
disadvantagous children, and wholesale class-cutting is
rampant. In summary, the author maintains that "the
public schools often represent an integration of
society's most crippling diseases - indifference,
injustice, and inequity" (p. 634).

Early Identification

Perhaps one of the largest factors to impact the
incidence of school dropout is the pervasive reluctance
of public schools to perform early identification
procedures which could ultimately target "at-risk"
children at a developmentally appropriate time.
Failure to initiate early identification procedures for
the screening and provision of interventions for
"at-risk" students has the potential to increase the
incidence of student dropout (Cook, 1990).

Parents and educators alike often fail to recognize
early symptoms of student unrest. As a result of
failure to identify on a timely basis, the child is at
higher risk for dropout. Under these conditions,
academic failure and absenteeism are encouraged by
allowing the child time for a chronic pattern to be
established (Tapply, 1985).

Teacher Disinterest

Apathy among teachers, according to Wehlage and
Rutter (1986) and Maeroff (1988), is a school related
cause associated with the ultimate incidence of high
school dropout. Failing to take an interest in the
differentiation among students, teachers are often
oblivious of the multi-factors that impact student
learning. While the authors recognize that many
teachers are over burdened with large class loads, that
condition fails to justify impersonal teaching and the
lack of commitment to link content with real-world
objectives.

In terms of the effects of teacher attitude on
students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe
(1991) argue that this population is highly susceptible
to both peer and teacher rejection.

In keeping with the concepts of A Nation at Risk:
National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983),
Jackson and Hornbeck (1989) alluded to the
peculiarities of the middle school construct in terms
of the need to restructure. Emphasizing not only the
astonishing absence of educator support but of the
multi-support systems that have high potential to
mediate "at-risk" factors (i.e., parents, teachers,
health care providers, and social agencies).
Overall, the authors suggest that the lack of support
services to address the multi-problems which develop
during the middle/junior high school period is a
condition that actually contributes to the "at-risk"
profile.

Conduct Deficiencies

Arguing that children with SLD are major targets
for classification in the "at-risk" category, Margalit
and Almougy (1991) found a dominant interrelationship
between school conduct, family circumstances, and
hyperactivity. For example, family values and teacher
attributions may have considerable impact on the
internalization patterns of the child. Finding that
many parents of students with SLD tend to place little

emphasis on leisure activity and more on achievement,
the child may feel less competent because of the over
compensation. Moreover, teachers tend to convey a low
expectation of students with SLD --- particularly in
the areas of creativity, independence, and cognitive
ability. In addition, when the learning disability was
accompanied by hyperactivity, children were found to be
more hostile and less social. Thus, co-mingling of the
three interrelated indicators increased the "at-risk"
potential for the student.

In connection with conduct orientation, Bender and
Smith (1990) undertook to review 25 studies in
connection with classroom behavior of students with
SLD. Finding significant behavioral deficits among
this population, the authors delineated a number of
behaviors (i.e., hyperactivity, disruptive off-task
modes, and aggression) that typify profiles of students
in the "at-risk" category.

While Cornwall and Bawden (1992) conducted a study
to ascertain the effects of reading disabilities on
aggression, there was not sufficient evidence to
establish that reading deficiencies cause aggression.
However, there was evidence to suggest that aggression
may be exacerbated by the reading disability because of

the frustration that surfaces when students do not have the ability to successfully cope with their learning environments --- another condition that increases the potential for "at-risk" classification.

Impact of Suspension and Expulsion

Clearly, school conduct is a major concern for the public school system. Parents and teachers within the practicum district are alarmed about the infiltration of serious offenses (i.e., fighting, drugs, and weapons). A recent publication in a local newspaper indicated that one out of every nine students registered in the district was suspended during the prior school year for a period of from one to 10 days. Hard pressed to contend with the situation, administrators have frequently employed suspension and expulsion to ameliorate anxiety oriented situations. While suspensions are normally considered "home time outs", with specific guidelines applied to the number of days involved, the effect of the intervention is virtually the same.

In a 1988 study, Rose found suspensions and expulsions to be counter productive to the student in most cases. Finding these procedures to be in conflict

with the objectives of exceptional education students,
the author suggests that they actually encourage
disassociation from the academic and social constructs
of the learning experience. The problem in many
schools, the author suggests, is that administrators
encourage discipline problems by failing to establish
consistent discipline policies which clearly delineate
the expected behaviors and commensurate consequences.

Impact of Suspension and Expulsion

One of the most widely accepted practices within
the public education arena today is the retention of
students who demonstrate a lack of basic skills and/or
those who have demonstrated consistent patterns of
absenteeism.

Business Connections with At-Risk Problems

The business sector has become increasingly
concerned regarding the high incidence of student
dropouts and its relativity to sustaining viable world
markets (Justiz and Kameen, 1987). Currently, the
public school system is failing to produce workers who
have inculcated skills that are commensurate with the
high-tech requirements of American industry. Even at

the lowest entry levels, where only basic skills in
comprehension and computation are required, employers
frequently have to establish in-house programs to bring
their employees to base level literacy. As a result of
the "at-risk" position in which the nation's
corporations find themselves, greater interest in the
causes that create an "at-risk" profile is evidenced
by the myriad of support systems that have emerged from
the business sector.

Despite substantial investments by government and
American corporations, "at-risk" students continue to
surface in increasing numbers. Often too large to
address the individual needs of students, schools find
themselves hard pressed to cope with the burdens of
educating a large body of students while attempting to
manage the business aspects connected with operations.
As a result of inadequate accountability procedures for
expenditures, resource distribution often takes place
on an inequitable basis (Thompson, 1986).

Summary

During the literature review, a number of topical
areas relative to factors that are indicative of
"at-risk" positions among students with and without SLD

were explored : the intervention of American
government; investment in public education by the
business sector; the procedures and policies of public
education; the impact of socio/economic and cultural
orientation; and family values as they relate to
educational pursuit. Thus, the complexities and
ramifications which surround the topic of successful
school orientation and the manifestation of its
counterpart, "high school dropout", are multitudinous.

In summary, the incidence of the "at-risk for
dropout" student is clearly impacted by multi-factors
that frequently interrelate to produce insufficiencies
in the areas of academic achievement, social skills,
self-esteem, attendance patterns, and conduct. As a
result, the nation is currently experiencing the
debilitating effects of a better than 25 percent high
school dropout rate --- with occurrences in excess of
40 percent in some low socio-economic urban areas.
Thus, it would appear that the Vaughn, McIntosh, and
Spencer-Rowe (1991) "contextualist model" is an
appropriate vehicle within which to summarize.
Alluding to the global aspects of the environment, as
well as to the child's affective situation, the model
accommodates the ideology that both the child's

demeanor and the setting in which the child must cope
are highly influential in determining reactions. Thus,
throughout the review, it was apparent to the writer
that all researchers supported the view that none of
the currently accepted "at-risk" indicators are
produced in isolation. Thus, the causes of the
problems and the associated interrelationships which
ultimately produce "at-risk" profiles remain highly
complex.

CHAPTER III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

In accord with the precepts that underlie the
Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142),
writer expectation was predicated upon devising an
interventional program which had the potential to
mediate "at-risk" factors among certain seventh and
eighth grade students with specific learning
disabilities. The primary goal of the proposed
practicum effort was to substantially increase student
grades and to effect acceptable attendance records for
the proposed practicum participants. The following
goals and objectives were projected for this practicum.

Behavioral Objectives

Objective I

    A. At the end of the eight month project,
       at least two of the 12 seventh grade
       practicum students who failed the prior

school year based on grades will achieve
passing grades in three core subject areas,
two elective subject areas, and physical
education. Measurement will be effected
by writer review of grade reports.

B. At the end of the eight month project,
at least one of the six eighth grade
practicum students who failed the
prior school year based on grades will
achieve passing grades in three core
subject areas, two elective subject
areas, and physical education. Measurement
will be effected by writer review of grade
reports.

Objective 2

A. At the end of the eight month project, at
least three of the six seventh grade
practicum students who qualified for
failure due to absences during the prior
school year will achieve attendance records
that conform to acceptable standards
according to district level guidelines.
Measurement will be effected by writer review
of school attendance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the three eighth grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year will achieve attendance records that conform to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines. Measurement will be effected by writer review of school attendance records.

Objective 3

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

Objective 4

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the seven seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the four eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

Objective 5

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at

least two of the six eighth grade practicum
students who demonstrated non-satisfactory
conduct grades will receive satisfactory
conduct grades. Measurement will be
effected by writer review of grade reports.

Measurement of Objectives

Grade Reports

To address the first and fifth objectives, year end
grade reports were referenced. This evaluation method
was selected because of its direct symbolic
representation of both academic achievement and the
mode of conduct. By obtaining and comparing year end
grades and conduct data from the grade reports for 1992
(baseline data) and 1993 (terminal data), the
differential in academic performance and conduct could
then be determined for each of the practicum
participants.

Although the conduct data is recorded as
satisfactory (S), nonsatisfactory (N), or
unsatisfactory (U) respectively, a computerized program
allows for the accessing of specific information
relative to the specific behavior, the number of
incidents, and the administering teacher/administrator.

Thus, comprehensive data are available. As a result, both parents and relevant school based personnel are privileged to the data at all times.

Attendance Records

The second objective was addressed by a discrete review of school attendance records in order to determine the appropriateness of student attendance in relation to district level guidelines. This method of evaluation was selected because it is the most direct indicator of attendance performance. By obtaining and comparing year end attendance records for 1992 (baseline data) and 1993 (terminal data), the differential in school attendance patterns could then be determined for each of the practicum students.

Guidance Counselor Reports

Guidance Counselor Reports of behavioral observations in interactive sessions served as the evaluation method for objectives three and four. This method of evaluation was selected because it was the only available information that provided both baseline and terminal data within the configuration of the school year. Although observations were conducted on an individual basis, all baseline observations were

completed within the first month of the practicum and
all terminal observations were completed within the
eighth month of the practicum. Each was scheduled to
approximate the relevant calendar positions within the
first and eighth months. By obtaining baseline and
terminal data, a differential in self-esteem-oriented
behaviors could then be determined for each of the
practicum students.

CHAPTER IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The existing problem within the practicum setting
was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth grade students
with SLD had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on
either failing grades in two or more core subject areas
or excessive absences, causing the respective students
to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category.
So pervasive is the high school dropout problem that
Tapply (1985) admonishes middle and junior high school
parents and educators to become more vigilant regarding
warning signs. According to the author, the provision
of structured, caring environments is essential in
mediating the situation. In as much as the nature of
the problem is highly complex, and interventions to
rectify the situation at the practicum setting met with
limited success, the writer conducted a comprehensive
literature review in order to seek solution strategies
that had the potential to encourage the participating
students to reinvest in the totality of the learning
process.

Strategies to Discourage the Incidence of Retention,

Suspension, and Expulsion

Although the practicum setting tends to be highly
humanistic, the policy of retaining students for
failing grades and excessive absenteeism is still in
effect because of a district wide policy.   In accord
with the Koretz (1991) study, which found a 10 percent
increase in attendance among "at-risk" students when
strict attendance laws were in effect, the practicum
environment extended full support to the mandated
attendance policy but added reinforcing modules to
provide incentives for students to remain in school.
Despite that effort, far too many students with
"at-risk" profiles continued to surface --- a very
great number of which were students with SLD.

However, it is a widely acknowledged fact that
retained students are often highly prone to behavioral
problems and loss of self-esteem.   Feeling short
changed by being relegated to classes with younger
students, and which are no longer attended by their
friends, students frequently act out in inappropriate
and non-productive modes.   Although PL 94-142 allows
for up to 10 full days of out-of-school suspension and
even longer for dangerous situations, Rose (1988)
questions the practice.   Clearly, a preponderance of

studies indicate that both school suspensions and expulsions pose severe consequences. Rose, citing Chobot and Caribaldi (1982), contends that "negative consequences of out-of-school suspensions may include loss of instructional time, isolation from peers, encouraging dropouts, decreasing parental and community support, and an increase in daytime juvenile activity" (p. 231).

In order to ascertain the impact of school suspensions and expulsions, the author conducted a survey of 371 principals over 18 states. Results of the survey suggested that a wide variety of practices were employed to accommodate individual school environments. Moreover, there was strong indication that students with handicaps were often unsure of rule expectations and of their specific consequences. In light of the data, the authors presented a three-fold strategy. First, positive discipline practices should be employed whenever practical. Second, behaviors and related consequences should be clearly delineated. Third, comprehensive teacher training in behavior management should be undertaken to provide for consistent applications.

As an alternative to the pernicious effects of retention, suspension, and expulsion, a Baltimore,

Maryland junior high school implemented a multi-
dimensional program which included token economy
orientation, parent involvement, small classes,
attention to student differentiation, and early
release. Results of the study indicated substantial
improvement in both academic and behavioral profiles
which caused far fewer occasions in which discipline
interventions were required for students who
participated in the in-school comprehensive program.
Apparently more program students entered high school
where they remained longer than control students.
Nonetheless, the author reported that program students
were unable to sustain the profile for long periods ---
a circumstance that was documented by high dropout
rates during the first year of senior high school
(Safer, Heaton, and Parker, 1991).

Acknowledging the gravity of the problem, the
practicum state Department of Education has published a
manual which addresses alternatives to suspension. A
variety of strategies were presented (i.e., Saturday
detentions and work details, collaboration of teachers
and parents, and community based service). Clearly,
the need for alternatives is widely accepted. Aspiring
to the need for more global objectives within a rapidly
changing economy, educators are seeking more

appropriate interventional methods to obsolete policies
that have long since lost relevancy.

Restructuring Oriented Programs

Perhaps the most well known educational strategy
to surface of late is that of the president's widely
publicized educational plan. Addressing the nation on
April 18, 1991, President Bush unveiled the America
2000 plan --- a management system that is intended to
improve education for all American students. Funding
an alternative school for each congressional district,
the national agenda supports six goals which are backed
up by implementation strategies and a comprehensive
accountability package. Similar to the ideology
supporting parent and community involvement at the
practicum setting, partnerships between educators and
business lie at its conceptual base, and an ideology
supporting involvement of all vested parties is an
essential construct. However, Long (1991), cautions
that great care needs to be taken to ensure that
"at-risk" students will ultimately benefit from its
lofty objectives.

To address the situation, the Los Angeles Board of
Education designed a program to identify "at-risk"
students and provide individual counseling as well as a

variety of educational resources to students with attendance or behavior problems. Based in 24 schools, the program was intended to establish a connection between school, home, and community. The purpose was to devise a support system that was reality based in order to encourage student continuance through graduation. An adjunct advantage to the participating schools is the fact that all data can be processed on the statewide computer system --- an option that does not exist for educators within the practicum setting (Strother, 1986).

Given the economic climate that currently pervades the nation's educational arena, Feldman (1992) contends that "these goals seem like a mockery to many American teachers striving to do the best they can for their students in schools that are overcrowded, under-equipped, and, all too frequently, unsafe as well" (p.9). Citing the tragedy of underfunding as the culprit that relegates the nation's children to mediocrity, the author speaks of crisis conditions in which educators rise to the challenge of meeting childrens' multi-needs on a daily basis. Thus, it is the author's position that a financial investment in the public education system is absolutely critical to the ultimate realization of the American dream --- a

free, _appropriate_, public education. Despite the
cohesive efforts of educators, parents, and community
to solve the problems that were associated with
"at-risk" students within the proposed practicum
setting, it was apparent that funding is an essential
consideration.

Moving into the streets where poverty has set the
pace for many of the nation's urban children, Bill
Milliken applies "tough love" strategies in an attempt
to keep "at-risk" kids in an educational mode. His New
York based "Cities in Schools" program promotes a sense
of self worth and value. A humanistic approach, it
addresses the total needs of teenagers who have dropped
out and for those who have the potential to follow.
Sponsored by corporations, the schools provide career
preparation opportunities, interventions, and
prevention programs for teenage mothers and drug
abusers. Guided by personal spiritual goals, Milliken
emphasizes the need for increased awareness,
communication strategies, and the development of
quality relationships. While a humanistic approach is
in practice within the practicum school setting, there
has not been a substantial improvement in the profiles
of currently "at-risk" students (Thompson, 1986).

In another move toward strategic intervention,
Grannis (1991) speaks of a New York city dropout
prevention program which included 13 high schools and
29 middle schools between 1985 and 1988. Encompassing
a student "at-risk" population of 24,077 which was
funded to the extent of 40 million dollars, the Dropout
Prevention Initiative (DPI) "was meant to combine seven
components of service to students: project
facilitation, attendance outreach, guidance and
counseling, health services, middle school/high school
linkage, alternative educational programs, and
increased school security in most of the high schools"
(p. 144). However, many of the services were not
rendered on the basis intended and the program was
discontinued. Although there were some limitations on
services and all students did not necessarily receive
the battery, the alternative education plan addressed a
wide variety of needs. Ultimately, a great deal was
learned from the experience. The project laid a
formidable foundation on which to launch later programs
which were geared to support shorter term objectives,
accountability, and total school restructuring. Thus,
the DPI provided a knowledge base on which to construct
future policies and procedures for alternative learning
experience.

In a study to determine the effectiveness of
certain interventions for "at-risk" students, Baker and
Sansone (1990) examined data from interviews and school
records to determine the effectiveness of a staffing
committee in devising school-based interventions. The
outcome suggested that alternatives for "at-risk"
populations are likely to be well devised through the
efforts of school-based personnel. Aside from the
advantage of cost efficacy, the human resources within
the school itself are inclined to have personal
commitments to the local student population which lends
itself to meeting the best interests of the student ---
a situation that is clearly evidenced within the
practicum school environment.

Alluding to the 1983 publication of A Nation at
Risk (National Commission on Excellence), Jackson and
Hornbeck (1989) suggest that the middle grades were
virtually left out --- a condition that suggests
pernicious effects for both the children within those
levels and for the nation as a whole. Thus, the
publication failed to address a large segment of the
student population that is expected to fuel the
nation's economy within a few years. Focusing on the
need for developing high order thinking skills among
adolescents, the author calls for a restructuring of

America's middle schools in order to contend with the
impact of rapidly changing demographics and societal
expectations in terms of the creation of relevant value
systems and work oriented skills.

In a recent commentary, Greer (1991), directs
attention to a large body of students who are simply
moving from one grade level to another out of control.
Failing to acquire skills, these students comprise a
large portion of the "at-risk" population. Speaking of
it as the "fast lane", the author admonishes educators
to present challenging experience to students in order
to gain their attention and develop a rationale for the
acquisition of a sound education. As part of the
overall presentation, the author supports the use of
collaborative venture between special and regular
education teachers. Greer's focus dictates the
provision of quality interventions with value-oriented
strategies that have high potential to ultimately
effect student achievement. Although a number of
strategies have been implemented in the practicum
setting to reduce the "at-risk" factors associated with
high school dropout, no substantial improvement had
been realized.

In speaking to the national problem of high school
dropouts, Cook (1990) refers to them as "drop offs"

because they comprise a population that habitually
fails to work at a level that is consistent with the
American dream and generally becomes a societal
responsibility. Advocating a "select and defend"
approach, the author emphasizes the critical need for
early identification of "at-risk" children and the
application of immediate and appropriate interventions.
Referring to a South Carolina high school which had the
highest national dropout rate in the country during
1987-1988, Cook directs attention to the personal
approach to supporting "at-risk" students which was
undertaken by a committed faculty to ward off the
incidence of dropout. Highly successful, Club 2000 had
the lowest dropout rate in the country within a year.

Alternative Approaches

To address the woes of the nation's public
education system, numerous alternative education
programs have surfaced throughout the country.
Many arise from needs that are peculiar to specific
school districts (i.e., teen pregnancy, substance
and/or child abuse, and illiteracy). Others are more
global in perspective. Arguments for and against
alternative education are commonplace, and the very
nature of its meaning and orientation are subjected to

constant scrutiny in the ongoing struggle to provide
quality education to American youth.   So critical is
this issue that it underlies the decision making
process of the SIC at the practicum setting.   Therefore
the outcome of this dispute is likely to dictate the
orientation of the overall educational delivery system
for some time to come.

To address specific educational needs within its
jurisdiction, a Missouri based alternative education
program was devised under the auspices of an advisory
committee which was comprised of both school based
personnel and members of the community.   Predicated
upon the premise that "at-risk" students respond more
positively to elective rather than core subject areas,
the Career Exploratory Program (CEP) was designed to
identify "at-risk" students according to nationally
specified criteria, provide pre-vocational educational
opportunities, and provide interventions that had the
potential to encourage graduation.

Provided with opportunities to participate in
classes with "hands-on" orientation which were selected
by and were of interest to the particular student,
greater relevancy of school programs to real world
activity was discovered.   In addition, lesson plans
were designed on a competency based ideology.   As a

result, student success generalized to traditional
classes as well. Overall, it was determined that the
CEP was highly successful in preparing students not
only for graduation but for assuming their rightful
roles in the work place and in society in general
(Dorrell, 1989). Thus, the program was considered to
be a viable tool in addressing the dropout prevention
goal of President Bush's national agenda.

But the actual realization of that goal, according
to Woodring (1989), would be tantamount to constructing
a colossal societal nightmare. Maintaining that there
is no evidence which supports the view that additional
years in school will produce more skills or that crime
will be reduced by keeping juvenile delinquents within
the walls of the public education system, the author
suggests that reaching success in that area would
simply be an open invitation to increased crime within
schools themselves. To restructure and provide
credible alternative education, Woodring believes that
solution lies in environmental change. Recommending a
reconstructed version of the Civilian Conservation
Corps (CCC) of 1930s vintage, Woodring favors removing
unsuccessful youth from present situation in which
there is an acknowledged lack of success, putting them
to work on behalf of national interests by day (i.e.,

building roads and bridges) and providing educational
opportunities in evening programs.

Deborah Meier's alternative approach is deeply
seeded in the provision of educational opportunity
according to Barko (1991). Several components underlie
this unique program: parent choice and involvement;
schools with a student population of less than 500;
interesting, integrated curriculum; critical thinking
skill orientation; two-hour block scheduling; and
exploration of the affective profile within the
configuration of support groups. Humanistic in every
respect, the program invites student participation and
belonging. Within this forum, students are encouraged
to interact with both the teacher and peers in order to
broaden their horizons and develop productive thinking
skills. Although some educators have espoused concerns
about Meier's departure from the more traditional
models, the four alternative education schools in East
Harlem currently enjoy an extensive waiting list, and
Meier's penchant for developing "thinking citizens" (p.
83) is widely applauded by both parents and
professionals.

In connection with choice ideology, Shapiro (1991)
speaks to Lamar Alexander's position which supports the
view that parental choice is not only expedient but

that it illustrates the best of American philosophy.
Predicated upon the Bush concept which suggests that
free enterprise will spark competitive interests to
upgrade services and offer stimulating educational
opportunities for the nation's children, the idea of
choice is intended to provide a quality solution to the
pervasive national problem of educational inefficacy.
Nonetheless, Shapiro expresses concern that the concept
may very well produce a barrage of inequities and
relegate the public schools to conditions that will
preclude their ability to provide relevant, quality
educations to American students. According to the
author, the solution lies in keeping the integrity of
funding within public jurisdiction and allocating it on
an equitable basis so that global improvement in the
educational delivery system can be achieved. Removing
resources from the system has the potential of
relegating the public education to chronic mediocrity.

An aspirant of the ability of the public school
systems to provide quality services to American youth,
Young (1991) advocates alternative education within the
public structure as a viable method of addressing the
goals of student achievement and educational excellence
while, at the same time, preserving equality for all.

However, certain parameters and expectations are
integral to successful operations: small schools, a
holistic approach, a warm, supportive environment, and
the linking of educational objectives to community
experience.

In reviewing the reform efforts of the past,
Albert Shanker (1991) alludes to the successes and
failures of the past and addresses the two basic reform
movements within the nation today. The first has been
evidenced over a period of time. Its orientation was
clearly positioned to upgrade academic standards and
improve competency. Guided by traditional concepts
that protect the interests of administrators and
teachers and armed with a management module which
espouses top down management, the movement has produced
upgraded results for 10 to 20 percent of the nation's
students, according to Shanker. However, it failed to
address the interests of the other 80%. Thus, a second
front, which is strongly supported by the author, has
surfaced.

Addressing the needs of the majority of children
who have become disenchanted with education because of
ineffective methods that fail to establish educational
relevancy, teachers are given opportunities to design
and implement alternative experiences within the

collaborative efforts that underlie the teaming
concept.   Teacher choice is critical to the alternative
concept --- as is adjunct cooperation from
administrators and non-participating teachers.
Although teacher assignments to the alternative program
are strictly voluntary, a support structure which
involves all school based personnel is essential.
Based on a "school within a school" concept, Shanker
maintains that this alternative approach offers the
best solution to the nation's huge "at-risk"
population.

While Shanker (1991) is a proponent of limited
choice within the configuration of the public school
system itself, Seymour Fliegel supports the concept of
independent environmental choice. As an acknowledged
architect of the alternative school concept, Seymour
Fliegel (former deputy superintendent of New York
City's 4th District) created 24 alternative education
schools that aspire to an ideology which suggests that
learning takes place in a wide variety of modes and
that people should have a discrete educational choice.
Although magnet schools present opportunities for
diverse orientation and improved educational quality
because of competitive forces and accountability, some
argue that inequities dominate the construct.   Alluding

to the fact that there is some competition to gain
entrance, Fliegel claims that the benefits of the
alternative system far outweigh the small disadvantages
(Brandt, 1991).

Aspiring to the ideals that dictate educational
decency, Herbert Kohl parallels his philosophy with
that of the national educational agenda. Abhorring the
term "at-risk", this leading educator maintains that
it has pathological implications and is racist in every
respect. Though he prefers not to use the term
"alternative education", Kohl's concepts and methods
are clearly indicative of an alternative approach to
traditional methods. Taking a jaundiced view of
corporate influence within the public school system,
Kohl espouses the belief that corporations do not want
high skilled workers but rather workers who are
satisfied to occupy low level positions at minimum or
minimum wages. In responding to the issue of "at-risk"
children, the celebrated educator maintains that
society should address the issue of poverty --- for it
is his conviction that poverty underlies the "at-risk"
problem. Thus, it is the eradication of poverty,
according to Kohl, that is the critical element in
providing solution to the "at-risk" condition (Nathan,
1991).

Widely acknowledged that successful educational opportunity is dependent upon the total revamping of management systems, progressive educators are rapidly moving toward the integration of leadership skills and strategic planning (Manske, 1987; Benne and Tozer, 1987). To address that end, Mecca and Adams (1991) discuss the ED QUEST model. A strategic planning process, it provides for environmental scanning, trends analysis, and forecasting in order to predict future scenarios. Headed by a planning team, ED QUEST is a highly sophisticated mechanism in which futuristic techniques and divergent thinking underlie the process. Its ultimate goal is to derive and analyze strategic goals with accompanying strategies for successful integration.

So significant is the incidence of high school dropout that both educators and parents have become increasingly alarmed with the progression of time and unanswered questions. Along with the foregoing concepts and constructs, a myriad of discrete alternatives have arisen to meet the differentiated needs of "at-risk" students.

Learning Styles

Selected on the basis of failure in two core areas
and in or below the fifth stanine, ninth grade students
from a New York high school were placed in an
alternative program which was founded by the Dunn and
Dunn learning style model and block scheduling.
Exposed to a variety of learning experiences, students
became the beneficiaries of collaborative teacher
planning which produced strategies and interventions
that were designed to address the differentiated needs
of the "at-risk" population. Results were significant
in the areas of academic achievement and self-esteem.
Moreover, with the incorporation of learning style
theory and practice came professional satisfaction for
the teachers involved in the program (Perrin, 1990).

Parent Participation

Perhaps no other single ingredient is as critical
to the maximization of student potential than that of
quality parent involvement. Buckner (1992) reported
that, following a practicum interventional program
which was designed to improve communication skills
between teachers and parents in order to facilitate
effective parent participation during the IEP process
and to provide interactive experience within workshop

settings, a substantial increase in both parent
attendance and quality participation in the decision
making process was realized. Thus, the author has
concluded that effective parent participation is a
vital link in establishing rationales for students with
SLD aspire to educational objectives.

In a comparative study, Yanok and Derubertis
(1989) found that parents of both regular and special
education students placed considerable significance
on their roles in the educational process. The results
were comparable for both groups --- thereby suggesting
that the issue of parent involvement is widely
acknowledged and is global in perspective.

Extending the concept further, Guralnick (1991)
argues that the realization of educational objectives
is dependent upon the stabilizing factors that exist
within the family construct --- particularly where
children with disabilities are concerned. According to
the author, the first line of defense lies in the
reinforcement of parent-child relationships. The
second concern is to strengthen family structures
themselves by increasing their ability to make good,
independent decisions regarding daily living. Finally,
parent/school partnerships should be established which
address students needs in light of family

considerations --- rather than addressing them as a single entity.

Social Skills

One of the foremost concerns of American educators is the interrelationship between social skills and the incidence of high school dropout. Widely acknowledged that deficient social skills is indicative of many "at-risk" students, it is even more abundantly documented for students with SLD. Clearly, the problem of deficient social skills is a major factor in producing a sense of helplessness in students with SLD at the practicum setting.

Upon reviewing 22 studies, comprising 572 children with SLD, on the impact of social skill training on the development of effective social behavior, McIntosh, Vaughn, and Zaragoza (1991) found that results were disappointing. No empirical evidence was derived to suggest better peer acceptance. Although positive change was documented for many students, it was not uncommon for both peers and teachers to overlook the change.

Nonetheless, the authors found value in that the results of the studies defined and designated discrete characteristics that are considered to be effective to

the overall inculcation of successful social skill
training (i,e,, the selection of students with
deficient peer relationships, the application of a
cognitive-behavioral model, and small group
orientation). Thus, the authors recommend that future
research should utilize these findings as a basis for
enhancing upon the parameters so that the social
climate is addressed in addition to particular
behaviors and tasks. In as much, the authors see value
in incorporating other aspects of the child's profile:
academic, physical, and psychological --- a integration
effort that is essential from the writer's perspective
of conditions within the practicum setting.

Because peer rejection is a major "at-risk"
indicator for students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and
Spencer-Rowe (1991) conducted a 20 week intervention
which included seven male and three female student in
third grade. Using a contextualist model, the authors
sought to provide strategies to encourage social skills
that would ultimately encourage peer acceptance.
Results of the study indicated that increases in peer
acceptance were greater for males than for females,
that (although insignificant) perception of peer
acceptance increased, and that no significant
differences were obtained between teacher and student

perception rating. Speculating that longer
intervention periods may have produced more definitive
results, the authors challenge others to undertake
research opportunities to seek alternatives to the
debilitating effects of peer rejection --- a condition
that, if unaltered, may have life long effects.

In another approach, Cartledge and Kleefeld (1989)
designed a communication based instructional model to
improve the social skills of children with handicaps.
Recognizing the pervasive nature of the problem for
this population, the authors devised a comprehensive
program to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate
social skills. Several components underlay the effort.
First, specification of the discrete skills to be
taught was undertaken. Second, an assessment module,
which included a monitoring system, was employed to
address differentiation. Third, a training delivery
system was designed which incorporated rationale
development, modeling, controlled practice, and
maintenance and generalization procedures. Specifying
certain activities and procedures, the authors suggest
that the model has the potential to establish social
communication skills that will ultimately enhance
student relationships on a global basis --- an
interesting concept in light of social skill

deficiencies which existed in the practicum setting.
While a district adopted learning strategies program
was employed to provide social skill training, students
continued to fail in generalizing discrete skill
inculcation.

"The inability and sense of helplessness in many
students to establish satisfying social relationships
may be related to social alienation and eventual school
dropout" (p. 152), according to Seidel and Vaughn
(1991). Undertaking a study to determine
dissimilarities between students with SLD who graduate
from high school and those who drop out, the authors
conducted a survey of 37 male subjects (17 of whom
dropped out and 20 who remained in school). The
primary indicator which was scrutinized in the study
was social alienation. Results produced several
interesting facts. First, student perceptions of
social alienation were varied. Second, students who
ultimately dropped out were found to be far more
alienated than those who remained in school.

Given the results, the authors suggest that future
research should focus on the development of a model
which has the capacity to target SLD students who are
"at-risk for dropout." Moreover, the authors expressed
concern that, because exceptional education teachers

are often involved in the behavior management aspects
of the classroom, their interactions may actually
convey attributions and expectations that facilitate
eventual dropout. To mediate the situation at an
appropriate level, Seidel and Vaughn recommend the
incorporation of programs that have the potential to
increase social skill efficacy and which provide
opportunities for exposure and interaction with
students from the general population.

Noting an obvious lack of ability to demonstrate
cooperative skills within the classroom environment,
Johnson and Johnson (1990) allude to certain pervasive
student inadequacies. With the advent of group
learning came the responsibility for students to adjust
according to the orientation of the group and to
interact efficiently. According to the authors, the
elements (i.e, positive interdependence, face-to-face
interaction, individual accountability, social skills ,
and group processing) which are required to produce
efficacy are learned behaviors and do not come
naturally to children.

To address the situation, Johnson and Johnson
recommend that teachers instruct students in
interpersonal skills by developing a rationale for
skill inculcation, provide practical knowledge about

skill utilization, provide interesting experiences in which the skill can be mastered, develop a monitoring system for skill efficiency and frequency, and encourage students to sustain the inculcated skill behaviors. Suggesting bonus points as an incentive for students to use cooperative techniques, the authors maintain that cooperative communication (social) skills should be taught with the same emphasis and frequency as the core subjects. Given that scenario, students will become the prime beneficiaries of cooperative techniques that have the potential to enhance relationships, career opportunities, and provide an overall sense of well being.

Self-esteem

Although the acquisition of self-confidence is an acknowledged essential in the adoption of successful learning patterns, it is often side stepped by educators who concentrate heavily on academics, according to Magliocca and Robinson (1991). As a result, many "at-risk" students continue on a destructive path without intervention until they are finally targeted as "at-risk." However, successful interventions are available. Orientations such as the

"I Can" program, which has integrated proven strategies
within the framework of Mediated Teaching and Learning
Strategies, a federally funded project, is providing
relevant opportunities for regular education teachers
to intervene on behalf of "at-risk" students.
Predicated upon principles and practices from special
education, the program concentrates on strategic
applications to encourage children to participate
through the development of certain techniques (i.e.,
successful response patterns during reading, successful
response patterns to questions, the willingness to take
risks during learning experiences, and the ability to
participate in group oriented activity). Although the
"I Can" program has been adopted at the elementary
level, it holds high potential to increase
self-confidence at all levels of educational pursuit

According to Weisman (1991), no other single
ingredient is as important to the overall educational
process as that of high self-esteem. Discussing a
top-down approach to esteem enhancement, the author
speaks to an approach which was used by a San Jose,
California superintendent of schools. Beginning at the
top, teachers were provided with opportunities to
heighten their self-esteem and, in turn, encouraged the
same result from students. Involving students in the

decision making processes of the school, many

opportunities were presented in which a strong sense of

self could be realized: cooperative decision making;

performance based grading patterns; and student

engineered discipline policies. Following the release

of a report by the California Task Force to Promote

Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility

which documented the success of the program, numerous

other counties and states rushed to implement similar

programs.

Based on a philosophy that suggests that substance

abuse rises from the need to reach a particular area of

fulfillment within the individual (i.e., the need to

feel good about self or the need to feel connected with

peers), a two dimensional California based alternative

education program was devised for eighth and ninth

grade students. Two orientations were employed. One

group of students engaged in cross-age tutoring of

elementary school children for four days a week. The

other operated a campus store. The object was to

involve students in meaningful work, giving them the

opportunity to learn and employ skills which would

enhance self-esteem and ultimately replace the need for

artificial reinforcement. Although the program was

highly rated by its participants, upon evaluation,

Malvin, Moskowitz, Schaps, and Schaeffer (1985) found
that the "Alternatives" program produced no significant
results regarding student attitudes toward self or
school.

In still another attempt to increase student self
esteem, Canfield (1990) delineated a ten step
procedure. Alluding to the complexities of society,
the author maintains that nurturing qualities on which
children depend are currently in short supply. To
counter the pernicious effects of that scenario,
schools have a heightened responsibility to create
positive environments in which students can
successfully grow and develop emotionally. Calling it
a "10-step model to help students become winners in
life" (p.48), Canfield outlines the following steps:
children must assume 100 percent responsibility for
their own learning; focus must always be on positive
experience for students; convey a sense of worth to the
child; use peer support groups to prevent alienation;
identify student strengths; focus on the personal
vision; establish goals; utilize visualization
techniques to increase and sustain motivation;
encourage students to take positive action; and
challenge students to respond positively to feedback
and sustain the desired behavior. In conclusion, the

author maintains that positive outcomes are derived from continued teacher use of the program.

Mentors

As the national interest has turned to the restructuring of public education, there is an increasing awareness that new strategies are desperately needed in order to reduce the appalling high school dropout rate. Glass (1991) speaks of the community based mentor program --- an intervention that has gained broad acceptance as the business sector and the general community has moved to address educational issues that impact society as a whole. Two such programs are the subject of the author's writing: 100 Blackmen of Atlanta and Mentors, Inc. The Atlanta organization adopted a homeroom class at Archer High School. Aside from providing consistent personal support through the provision of several mentors, presenting numerous cultural and educational experiences, the organization also offered college tuition money to students who invested themselves in college preparation activities.

In the case of Mentor, Inc., a Washington D.C. group of concerned adults who joined forces to provide support structures and opportunities for "C" students.

Its underlying concept is predicated upon the belief that average students require a "boost" in order to place themselves in a mindset that will lead to successful educational outcomes. To address this need, volunteer mentors (who contract for two-and-one-half years) are paired with students in order to establish meaningful relationships in which students will set goals that are success structured. Currently serving 350 students in ten local high schools, the program has a success rate that indicates that twice as many students who participate in the program go to college as those who do not.

Peer Mentors

Increasing evidence has surfaced to support the ideology that peers can be extremely influential in creating a support system for one another. In a study conducted by Campbell, Brady, and Linehan (1991), substantial gains were documented for three nine year old students in the areas of capitalization rules and capitalization accuracy in connection with letter writing techniques following peer teaching. Although response generalization with regard to story writing left something to be desired, it is important to note that the orientation of the generalization response was

different for students being instructed and the peer

tutors. In the case of student participants,

generalization was defined as "potential response." In

the case of peer tutors, generalization was evaluated

on the basis of the effect the instruction had on the

student participant. While student participants

produced mixed results, the peer tutors' skills

generalized substantially. Consequently, the authors

maintain that the study produced strong evidence that

substantial gains can be realized in the area of

written language skills for students with learning

disabilities.

While Campbell et al. (1991) found significant

benefits in skill acquisition for peer tutors,

Beirne-Smith (1991) did not. In a study conducted to

determine the effects of peer tutoring during single

digit addition inculcation for primary SLD students,

two results were significant. First, peer tutoring was

highly significant in increasing the ability of SLD

students to compute single digit addition facts.

Although two different orientations (sequential and

random) were undertaken, there was no significant

difference between the two. Second, there was

significant evidence that no increase in competency

took place for peer tutors. Though Campbell and

Beirne-Smith are very much in accord with regard to
peer tutor efficacy for tutees, they are at odds on the
subject of tutor benefits.

Obtaining similar results to those of Campbell et
al. (1991), Vaughn, Lancelotta, and Minnis (1988)
conducted a study to determine the effects of social
skills training on a fourth-grade, white female student
when given the opportunity to interact with a highly
regarded peer. Based on a cognitive behavior approach,
the ten week intervention consisted of the subject and
her high status peer teaming with a trainer to comprise
a problem solving team. Problems were generated by
students in the participants' classrooms who were
encouraged to place them in a shoe box. Thereafter,
the trainer would read the problems to the class with
both the subject and her high status peer standing
along side. As time progressed, more responsibility
and interaction opportunities were provided for the two
participating students. Upon completion of the
intervention, the two participants were reinforced by
being presented with certificates and badges and were
given recognition by having their pictures in the
school newspaper. While a number of questions emerged
as to whether males would react to the intervention in
the same manner and whether or not males are as

susceptible to peer alienation, the results of the
study were indicative of positive peer perceptions of
the subject immediately following the interventional
application. Moreover, a one year follow-up determined
that the behavior had been successfully sustained.

In still another orientation, Lee, Luppino, and
Plionis (1990) cite a dropout prevention program in
Washington, D.C. in which peer tutors are an integral
part of the program. Trained in strategies to aid
students in improving their status, under graduate
students from Catholic University interact with
students to encourage regular attendance habits, school
continuance, and the development of marketable skills.
To achieve this end, peer mentors and employment
training were used as the primary incentives. Backed
by the Marriott Corp. and numerous local businesses,
students were provided with real-world opportunities to
develop career skills. The duration of the program was
two years. Ninety-seven students (94 black, two
hispanic, and one Asian) ranging in age from 12 to 15,
participated in the program. Follow-up data indicated
that 10 dropped out, and 87 students participated
throughout the practicum. Although truancy had been a
major problem, attendance was very high for the project
participants. It was concluded that the quality

relationships that had been established between project participants and peer mentors were the motivating factors in keeping students in school and encouraging them to acquire career oriented skills.

Stainback, Stainback, and Wilkinson (1992) speak to the issue of peer alienation and feelings of isolation in connection with mainstreaming. In order to provide a successful transition to the regular education classroom, interpersonal strategies are required. Aside from utilizing teacher adopted techniques to deal with differentiated needs, the authors maintain that students should be taught specifics with regard to positive interaction, seeking common interests, appreciating the experiences and thoughts of others, sharing, loyalty, and conflict resolution. Above all, according to the authors, global classroom emphasis should be place on celebrating differences among students and providing support without being overbearing or intrusive.

Finally, Chrisco (1989) discusses peer assistance from a professional perspective. Over a two year period, the English department at Brattleboro Union High School in Vermont began an exploratory process that was to culm late as a peer assistance program.

A slow starting, voluntary program, it enjoyed total
support of the administration. During the first year,
discussions of evaluation and assistance ensued.
Clearer definition of what the terminology meant to
professionals in that setting was established, and a
goal which was predicated upon professional growth was
established.

Thus, it was determined that each teacher would
observe one other teacher as well as being observed by
one in a non-threatening environment. The second year
brought about the opportunity for teachers to learn a
word processing program, use it for inter and
intra-classroom activity and instruction, and provide
feedback on its effectiveness in computer output form.
The result of the venture brought about integrated
learning opportunities for students. The result was
the documentation of three areas of success: quality
communication between department members; the adoption
of pre-conference, conference, and post conference
methods; and mindfulness of one's own professional
strategies and techniques in order to continually
reassess their value and efficacy given differing
circumstances.

Career Orientation

Citing Mithaug, Martin, and Agran (1987), Rau,
Spooner, and Fimian (1989) contend that most students
with handicaps are traditionally unsuccessful in
sustaining both jobs and relationships. Thus, a survey
of 1,826 North Carolina special education teachers and
administrators was conducted. Its purpose was to
determine both the extent to which education skills
programs should be taught and the degree of
availability of such programs within the schools
surveyed. Results indicated that all participants
perceived the use of career oriented knowledge to be
less than their personal assessment of need, males
indicated that they were more inclined to address
career goals than females, and most respondents
reported that their schools had no coordinator for
career education focus. In summary, the authors
maintain that the solution to the "at-risk" indicators
that plague handicapped populations is dependent upon
further research in career preparation.

Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) undertook a study to
determine the incidence and quality of post high school
employment and of the degree of sat'sfaction regarding
the social life of students who had graduated high

school from self-contained programs. Sixty-five
randomly selected students were chosen for a survey.
Data were subsequently collected via personal and
telephone interviews. Results indicated that 78 % were
currently employed --- with the majority working on a
full time basis with a pay rate of minimum wage or
more. In evaluation of social perceptions, the task
was more complex. Because handicapping conditions vary
considerably, certain variables might have been better
determined given a comparison group according to the
authors. However, based on criterion that considered
"positive life adjustment" (p. 218) in terms of being
employed and having satisfying relationships with
family and friends, sixty percent of the group
qualified. In view of the multi-variables that exist
for students with handicaps, the authors recommend that
the solution to mediating the "at-risk" factors among
this population lies in further research.

The Role of Motivation Strategies

Perhaps the most widely acknowledged
characteristic of "at-risk" students is that of lack of
motivation. For whatever reason it exists, this single
deficiency is an enigma that consistently challenges
educators. Its lack has crippling consequences. While

motivation strategies are integral to many of the
foregoing solution strategies which incorporate
rationale delivery, self-esteem enhancements, mentors,
career incentives and the like to address individual
differentiations, Rosenbaum (1989) holds quite a
different perspective of its origin. Alluding to
successful educational interventions that are used by
the Japanese, the author suggests that lack of
motivation is actually engendered in American students
by current public school philosophies and practices
which focus on grades as a measure of success without
providing services to access jobs that are commensurate
with the obtained grades.

The solution strategy, according to the author,
lies in the Japanese approach. In the Japanese system,
high schools form partnerships with employers for the
purpose of placing students in jobs immediately
following graduation. Recommendations to prospective
employers are made by teachers who heavily rely on
grades in making appropriate placement determinations.
According to the author, students are motivated to
achieve high grades because their success or failure in
that regard is directly linked to real-world
opportunity.

Evaluating the difference between learning and
motivational problems for mildly handicapped students
is essential, according to Rousseau and Poulson (1989).
Presenting a model which is based on the concept that
motivational problems can be rectified by identifying
individual reinforcers and applying them on the basis
of performance, the author delineates a three step
contingency approach to determine whether the origin of
the problem lies in a lack of motivation or whether it
constitutes a learning problem. First, teachers
establish a "work attempted" (p.18) baseline. Second,
a menu of appropriate, individual reinforcers must be
determined. Third, emphasis is now placed on work
quality rather than work output based on the
contingency reward. In the event that the quality is
not improved, it can be assumed to be a learning
problem. On the contrary, if it is improved,
motivational problems can be assumed. Thus, the model
has potential for effective screening.

District Adopted Programs

In addition to solution based strategies which
were presented in the literature, the practicum setting
district has adopted numerous programs which are
calculated to decrease parent apathy, facilitate home

learning, integrate community involvement in school
oriented venture, and provide interesting school-based
work for parents which is commensurate with both their
interest and ability levels. Replete with strategies
to realize these objectives, the information is
incorporated in a handbook that is available to all.
During the research phase of the practicum, three
district level programs with differing orientations
were reviewed and considered: a career development
project; a mentor/social skills program; and a
community based project.

School A

A three year project, funded by a private grant,
this dropout prevention program is based at a local
high school with similar socio-economic and demographic
considerations as those of the proposed practicum
school. Addressing the needs of 16 students who were
originally targeted as "at-risk for dropout" at the
beginning of tenth grade, the career development
program is geared to encourage students to maintain
high school status in order to acquire marketable
skills, graduate, and assume positions in the workplace
that are commensurate with both their skill and
interest levels.

Comprised of three components, the program requires students to participate in activities for two 50 minute periods per day in addition to periodic block scheduling that allows for field trips. The first component is addressed within one of the daily 50 minute periods. The module was primarily designed to provide rationales for skill inculcation, to engage students in problem solving techniques, and to provide frequent opportunities for students to interact with guest speakers from the business sector. The second component addresses the individual vocational interests of the student. Individual education plans have been devised for each participant in the area of choice. Each student has a volunteer career mentor from the business community who monitors student progress on a weekly basis. The third component consists of "career shadowing" which is accomplished during pre-scheduled blocks --- generally half or whole days on a once-a-month basis.

Students are provided with tools and materials that parallel those which are currently used in their chosen career field. After two years of implementation, derived data indicate that 12 of the original 16 have remained in school. While nine of the 12 have been twice promoted, two were retained at the tenth grade

level and one was retained at eleventh grade. All nine
are actively involved in career pursuit and maintain at
least average grades in low phase classes with
acceptable attendance records. Of the three retainees,
the two tenth graders have attendance problems that
continue to hamper skill acquisition, while the
eleventh grade retainee is currently failing in all
areas because of chronic absenteeism. Although
project administrators continue to express enthusiasm
for the program, concern is mounting that the grant may
not be renewed in light of severe budgetary
constraints.

School B

Another program that is geared to identify
"at-risk" youth and provide interventions to discourage
dropout is currently in place at a local junior high
school. Identifying "at-risk" students in the seventh
and eighth grades, the program is comprised of three
components: educational counseling; parent involvement;
and career preparation. Intermodular in the respect
that all three are addressed within the same daily,
two-hour block period, the program is administered by a
teaching team.

The first half hour is devoted to educational counseling wherein the two participating teachers and a guidance counselor alternate individual counseling sessions with the provision of programs which have been designed to motivate students toward defining and setting goals. The next hour engages students in activities which involve the participating parents. Parents and students works together in groups to solve problems (i.e., student curfews, family responsibilities, and educational objectives). The last half hour involves students in career preparation activities which include guest speakers from the business sector. Although administrators of this school funded program are optimistic about its eventual outcome, there are no available data relative to the one year old project at this time. Furthermore, future budget allocations will be the determining factor in program continuance.

School C

The third program for "at-risk" youth is also located at a junior high school within the district. Its orientation is toward connecting the educational format with real world objectives through a Mentor Program. Importing volunteer mentors from the business

and general community, the one year program is intended
to provide students with a trained, caring, individual
mentor who will facilitate the transition from student
apathy to educational re-engagement. The twice-a-week,
two hour block allows for mentors and students to
engage in off campus activity (i.e., to a local
business, out to lunch, or to visit a local vocational
facility). Of two year duration, this school and
community funded program has enjoyed wide community
support. Data suggest that 71 % of the selected
students finished the program. Of those who finished,
62 % are demonstrating the ability to cope with their
continuing educational responsibilities at an
acceptable level (i.e., appropriate attendance, passing
grades in all subject areas, and no serious rule
infractions). Program continuance is anticipated.

Summary of Literature Based and Field Based Solutions

Miscellaneous Alternative Strategies

In response to the pervasiveness of the "at-risk"
factor that currently plagues public education, a
number of solution strategies which are relevant to the
restructuring of American public schools were
presented. For example, Long (1991) challenges
educators to be certain that "at-risk" students are not

disregarded during implementation of the national initiative. In a different vein, Thompson (1986), emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in mediating the conditions that characterize the incidence of "at-risk" students. While Feldman (1992) is in accord with the foregoing position, the author maintains that an infusion of money is equally essential to rectifying the incidence of "at-risk". On the other hand, Baker and Sansone (1990) view the solution in terms of conservation (i.e., devising school-based strategies to produce cost efficacy and relevancy to student needs). From still another perspective, Grannis (1991), Jackson and Hornbeck (1989), and Perrin (1990) each present program orientations to offset the current mindset of "at-risk" students.

While Cook (1990) views early identification to be essential to mediating the at-risk" problem, Dorrell (1989) believes that the same goal can be accomplished at the secondary level through the Career Preparation Program. Though in accord with Dorrell's concepts, Woodring (1989) favors a total environmental change which would remove "at-risk" students from mainstream education to work on community based projects (i.e.,

building roads and bridges) and pursing educational

objectives in a night time school setting.

In keeping with policies that underlie the national

agenda, Barko (1991) addresses the benefits of the

Deborah Meier schools of choice in which parents have

the right to remove both their children and the

associated educational funding in order to enroll them

in other schools of their choosing. Concurring, Brandt

(1991) presents Fliegel's view that parent choice is a

desirable concept that produces a wide variety of

educational opportunities for children and youth.

However, Shapiro (1991) expresses grave concern that,

in allowing parents to choose other schools, there

could be a serious depletion of funds which has high

potential to relegate many schools to perpetual

mediocrity and create conditions of inequity. While

the foregoing authors see parent choice as the most

viable approach to educational deficiency, Young (1990)

and Shanker (1989) strongly support the idea of

devising alternative education programs within

individual public schools themselves --- a "school

within a school" concept that would embrace a

non-traditional approach to mediating the "at-risk"

problem.

From a management point of view, Mecca and Adams (1991) maintain that the quality of the management style lies at the basis of relevant educational constructs. Therefore, it is the authors' belief that the answer to educational deficiencies is dependent on management systems. Alluding to the need to set goals and standards, the concept is based on effecting a strategic plan that will guide all personnel toward clearly designed objectives.

Finally, Nathan (1991), relative to Kohl's position, maintains that defining "at-risk" criteria, identifying students who fit the pattern, and applying interventions is not the answer at all. Rather, the author views educational deficiency as a product of societal poverty and it is clearly to that issue that resources should be directed.

Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

Speaking to strategies which are geared to offset the pernicious effects of widely used suspension and expulsion policies, several were presented. Koretz (1991) advocates strict attendance policies, while Rose (1988) emphasizes the need to employ positive discipline practices which clearly delineate the consequences of actions. On the other hand, Safer et

al. (1981) believe that the answer lies in programming
and environmental situations (application of positive
teacher expectation, student centered environments,
token economies, and community involvement). Finally,
state adopted programs strongly support parent/teacher
collaboration and community based service programs.

Parent Involvement

Buckner (1992) and Yanok and Derubertis (1989)
maintain that effective educational outcomes for
"at-risk" students is positively linked to quality
parent participation in their children's educational
process. While Guralnick (1991) agrees that parents
are critical to effecting successful outcomes, unlike
Buckner and Yanok and Derubertis, the author does not
place emphasis on the parent influence alone but rather
on the varying influences of all family members ---
each having the potential to impact the individual
child or youth.

Social skills deficiencies is another issue of
broad interest in connection with "at-risk" children
and youth. Cartledge and Kleefeld, 1989 and Johnson
and Johnson (1989/1990) presented a comprehensive
instructional models to address the social deficiencies
among this student population while Seidel and Vaughn,

1991 support the view that successful social skill acquisition is not only dependent upon student exposure to effective programming but also with interacting with the general population. However, in reviewing 22 studies in which social skill training was applied to "at-risk" populations, McIntosh et al. (1991) and Vaughn et al. (1991) found little to no evidence which established positive, sustained academic benefits as a result of social skills training.

In another area of widely acknowledged deficiency, self-esteem was addressed by Canfield (1990) and Magliocca and Robinson (1991) who maintain that a well devised program (i.e., the federally funded "I Can" project) which incorporates processes and strategies such as those of exceptional education is effective in mediating the "at-risk" problem. However, Malvin et al. (1985) found no significant results from self-esteem training in connection with effecting positive academic change --- despite program popularity with student participants. Finally, Weismann (1991), from quite a different perspective, maintained that esteem building should be built in at the top of an organization where it will have the capacity to trickle down to students. In a program that was devised to boost the esteem of all school based personnel, the

author contends that the effect of teacher esteem has an enormous capacity to approach esteem building from quite a different approach.

In a community based approach to providing solution strategies to the "at-risk population, Glass (1991) lauded the benefits of community based volunteer mentors programs. Citing two of note, the author maintains that they represent a powerful interventional approach. On the other hand, Campbell et al., (1991) found significant positive outcomes during peer tutoring for both tutors and tutees in a study which involved language skills. Interestingly enough, Beirne-Smith (1991) produced mixed results (i.e., benefits for tutees only) from the same effort which involved single digit addition. Furthermore, Vaughn et al. (1988) produced positive results for both tutor and tutee in a social skills cognitive approach. Although, Lee et al. (1990) did not seek to establish benefits for peer mentors, the author found very positive results relative to keeping students in school when peer mentors interacted with "at-risk" students. However, it was Stainback et al. (1992) who found positive results for exceptional education students to mainstream environments when peers are taught specifics relative to sharing, conflict resolution, and positive

interactions. Finally, Chrisco (1989) presented a
strong case for the employment of peer assistance at
the professional level. Maintaining that the effective
sharing of talents and knowledge is essential to
positive educational outcomes, the author presents a
successful program as a solution strategy to
environmental inefficacy.

Career orientation was discussed by Rau et al, 1989
and Scuccimarra and Speece, 1990. Although there has
been a great deal of emphasis placed on career
development, the authors are in accord that results are
not definitive and more research is in order.

Addressing the motivational aspects of mediating
the "at-risk" problem, Rosenbaum (1989) contends that
the answer lies in the willingness of nation's public
school system to adopt the Japanese philosophy which
links the acquisition of grades to the acquisition of
commensurate jobs. However, Rousseau and Poulson,
(1989) maintain that successful intervention can be
found in applying an assessment technique which is used
to determine the difference between learning
difficulties and the lack of motivation. Having
determined the orientation, a variety of interventional
strategies can be employed.

District Based "At-Risk" Programs

Although School A presented data that suggest a high degree of success with its three component, grant funded, interventional program, there is considerable skepticism regarding its refunding. Given the extreme budget cuts that are currently impacting both the educational and social service systems, it appears unlikely that the program will be refunded at this time.

Whereas School A presented documentation to support its enthusiasm for the "at-risk" program, School B had none. Still, the program enjoys broad support within both the school and local communities, and its continuation appears to be a foregone conclusion.

School C, on the other hand, has documented a two year success track relative to specified criteria: acceptable attendance and grade profiles and no serious conduct deficiencies. Program continuance is guaranteed.

Description of Selected Solution

A myriad of solution strategies which were designed to address the issue of "at-risk" children and youth surfaced during the literature review. Given the nature and complexity of the pernicious effects of high

school dropout on both the individual student and on society itself, it is the writer's opinion that there is an incumbency on the part of educators to continue to seek viable solutions. To that end, the following orientations and strategies bore relevance to the practicum effort.

Self-Esteem and Motivation

Underlying the ability to self-motivate is the human need to feel a sense of self-worth (self-esteem). Without it, there is no incentive to struggle (motivate). Deeply intertwined, the dynamics of these two factors hold the potential to either enhance or cripple human endeavor.

According to Weisman (1991), a critical component to the educational process is the element of self esteem. Introducing the philosophy of a California based movement which has earned broad recognition, the author contends that this single value is the most basic to all life's functioning. Concurring, Magliocca and Robinson (1991) applaud the success of Mediated Teaching and Learning Strategies, a federally funded project.

Moreover, Rousseau and Poulson (1989) note the importance of motivation to the educational process in

the presentation of a program which places particular emphasis on distinguishing between learning problems and motivational problems prior to applying interventional strategies. Rosenbaum (1989), on the other hand, presented a Japanese educational concept which seeks to establish a direct relationship between school effort and real world goals in order to motivate students. Despite the different approaches, a consensus exists regarding the critical need to utilize strategies that have high potential to cause students to self motivate. Thus, the writer was convinced that self-esteem and motivation were two essential components to the practicum format.

Social Skill Training

Although the McIntosh et al. (1991) review of 22 studies regarding the incidence and degree of peer and teacher acceptance following social skills training was disappointing, it provided foundational information for future research. Despite the limitations of the findings, a successful rate of skill acquisition was documented. Moreover, it has been the writer's experience that social skill training is essential to effective communication in interactive situations.

Therefore, social skill orientation was perceived to be invaluable to the practicum objectives.

Peer Tutors-Mentors

The benefits of peer tutoring for student tutees were clearly established by Campbell et al. (1991), Beirne-Smith (1991), and Lee et al. (1990). Many students find it less threatening and more informative to seek and receive information from a peer than from an authority figure. Because it is not uncommon for "at-risk" students to have become alienated from authority figures, it was the writer's opinion that the peer tutoring concept held high potential for the inculcation of skills in the areas of academic achievement, communication, and socialization. In that light, it was perceived to be an essential ingredient to achieving a successful practicum outcome.

Parent Involvement

Given the tenor of the restructuring effort which lies at the basis of the nation's educational system, parent involvement in the education of their children is believed to be critical to student success. For example, Yanok and Derubertis (1989) found that parents who participated in a study relative to parent roles in

connection with their childrens' educations believed
them to be highly influential in achieving successful
outcomes. Buckner (1992) agrees. In addressing both
the qualitative and quantitative aspects of parent
participation during the IEP process, the author found
that parents, who engage in activities that convey the
message to their children that educational pursuit is a
highly valued family construct, are far more likely to
witness successful student outcomes. Therefore, parent
connections to school objectives was regarded as an
essential element to the practicum effort.

Career Orientation

Rau et al. (1989) emphasized the need to engage in
more research for the purpose of determining the
vocational needs of handicapped students. Surveying
1,826 North Carolina educators, the authors sought data
regarding the extent of vocational orientation and the
quality of existing programs. Though the results were
not definitive, they provided a background for further
studies. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that
"at-risk" children in general and handicapped children
in particular are dependent on the acquisition of basic
skills that will allow them to engage in meaningful
work. Therefore, career orientation was considered a

vital element in addressing current goals and paving
the way for the establishment of future goals for the
practicum students.

Given the profusion of information which clearly
establishes both the pervasiveness of the "at-risk"
problem and the associated incidence of high school
dropout, it was the writer's intention to create a
holistically based model to provide interventions that
had the potential to offset the impact of maladapted
patterns among certain seventh and eighth grade
students with learning disabilities who had recently
been classified as "at-risk". Grounded in a pragmatic
philosophy which embraces the ideology that a
connection must be established between daily school
experience and the ultimate acquisition of meaningful
work, the writer designed a multi-component,
interactive program.

Entitled "A Holistically Based Model to Mediate
"At-Risk" Factors Among Seventh and Eighth Grade
Students With Specific Learning Disabilities", the
practicum program was comprised of interventions and
activities that included social skills training, career
orientation, self-esteem building, motivational
techniques, peer tutor/mentors, and parent involvement.
The practicum held high potential for "at-risk"

students to reengage in the learning process.
Although conduct deficiencies are characteristic of the
"at-risk" population within the practicum setting, it
was the writer's position that these deficiencies were
simply a manifestation of frustration that resulted
when failure was routinely experienced. In as much, it
was believed that those deficiencies would abate as
patterns of success were established. Therefore, it
was not the intention of the practicum to treat conduct
as a discrete entity.

Permission for practicum implementation, as well as
full administrative support of the goals and objectives
attributed to the practicum, was obtained on August 1,
1992. Moreover, full resource allocation was
made with an additional provision clause which was
intended to provide supplemental resources as
unanticipated needs arose.

In addition to the writer, who bore total
responsibility for practicum implementation, several
other professionals interacted with its participants,
goals and objectives, and adjunct organizational
structures (i.e., SIC and Parent Advisory Committee).
While the two grade level guidance counselors had
occasion to interact with students and parents relative
to all practicum characteristics, the "Quality Circle"

acted as a monitoring body and assumed an advisory position relative to all practicum objectives and functions.

Comprised of both the primary and secondary administrators, three guidance counselors, the attendance dean, guidance clerk, two parents, and two teachers, the reorganized "Quality Circle" met informally on a request or need basis. In addition, each will assumed discrete responsibilities relative to the program. For example, grade level guidance counselors interacted with students to administer to differentiated academic and affective needs. The attendance dean monitored practicum participant attendance profiles on a daily basis, called parents to follow up, and provided the writer with timely reports. The guidance clerk scheduled testing, processed related paperwork, and provided relevant reports to the writer. All interacted with adjunct practicum personnel when appropriate (i.e., Peer tutor/mentors, parents, and career specialists). Moreover, the writer assumed a full leadership position throughout the practicum; assumed an active position on all relevant committees; generated all advisory updates to the "Quality Circle", SIC, and Parent Advisory Committees; assumed full

responsibility for all scheduling; and coordinated all
practicum activities.

Report of Action Taken

The primary objective of the practicum was to
mediate the "at-risk" factors that are frequently
characteristic of students who ultimately drop-out of
school (i.e., academic failure, chronic absenteeism,
lack of self-esteem, deficient social skills, and
unacceptable conduct). Therefore, the practicum
practicum provided numerous interventions to aid
students in developing acceptable profiles in these
areas. In as much, no standardized grades were issued
for student performance within the interventional
programs. However, the direction and type of
application within the interventional program often
depended upon the information that was provided on the
Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A) which were
generated by both basic and exceptional education
teachers.

Practicum implementation transpired over an eight
month period which commenced on November 2, 1992 and
terminated on July 2, 1993. For the purposes of the
practicum, the 18 practicum students have been
identified as Students 1 through Student 12 for seventh

grade participants and Students 13 through 18 for
eighth grade participants. Sixteen males and two
females comprised the group.

A number of constants were put in place at the
onset of the implementation period: the Parent
Telephone Hotline, Student Progress Reports, Student
Tracking Reports (see Appendix A), comprehensive writer
review of Student Tracking Reports, writer
(mentor)/student conferences, parent/student/writer
conferences, and Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions. All were
foundational to the communication aspects of the
practicum.

Parent Telephone Hotline

The hotline was intended to provide instant contact
with the school environment to access current
activities information, to schedule either a school
based conference or a teleconference, or to speak with
any person connected with the project. At the onset,
three parent volunteers manned the hotline. All had
been inserviced in the proper procedures during the
week prior to implementation. However, within a short
period, the hotline became a controversial issue
because of two parent complaints that volunteers were
rendering opinions and engaging in the discharge of

advice relative to areas in which they had no expertise. Immediately following the complaints, the volunteers were inserviced again to delineate the nature and scope of the information delivery and to emphasize the need for discretion and confidentiality. Nonetheless the behavior continued and, after discussing the matter with parents, it was decided that the writer would assume sole responsibility for the hotline. Writer responsibility for the intervention commenced at the beginning of the sixth week of the practicum.

As a result of the unique features of voice mail, parents had the opportunity to leave messages and receive updated information regarding activities. The writer was able to access messages on a remote basis and return most calls within four school hours. In addition, all parents and students had ready access to the writer via the same method during after school hours. Although this avenue suggests a highly labor intensive mode, in actuality it was not. Parents and students called with no greater frequency than that prior to initiation of the hotline. While parents initiated few calls, all expressed satisfaction with the fact that the resource was available to them.

Therefore, the Parent Telephone Hotline continued to be a viable intervention throughout the practicum.

Student Progress Reports

Progress reports were sent home at the end of each week to keep parents continuously informed of student status. Students bore the responsibility for having them signed and returned on the following Monday. Bonus points were issued for timely returns. The points were ultimately redeemable for items and activities that were part of a student created menu (i.e., free milk shakes, candy bars, early lunch passes, and free time). While four parents objected to the frequency of the reports and that parent signatures were expected, the remaining parents expressed appreciation for the practice. Still, many were unreliable with regard to signing and returning the forms. Of the 18 participating parents, four remained disinterested throughout the project, seven returned the forms on a fairly reliable basis, and seven returned the forms on a sporadic basis. Nonetheless, the positive feedback from the group as a whole was substantial enough to continue the practice throughout the practicum period.

Student Tracking Reports

On a weekly basis throughout the practicum, Student
Tracking Reports (see Appendix A) were sent to
participating teachers. The purpose was to gain
information regarding each student's current status in
order to provide immediate interventional services to
encourage positive outcomes in all designated areas.
While most teachers returned the reports on a reliable
basis, three of the exceptional education teachers were
erratic in that regard. Within a few weeks of
practicum implementation, it became apparent that the
tendency had become habitual. Therefore, the writer
determined that a less formal medium was in order and
relied on informal conversation to obtain updated
student information. Highly satisfactory, the mode
appeared to be a more comfortable medium for teachers,
and it was continued throughout the practicum.

Comprehensive Writer Review of Student Tracking Reports

Monitoring the academic, social, and behavioral
profiles of the practicum students was done on a weekly
basis by the writer. Weekly tracking reports,
attendance records, and discipline referral records
were scrutinized to determine if a need existed for
interventional applications. Where necessary,

expeditious interventions were instituted (i.e.,
parent/student/writer conference, student/mentor
conference, collaborating with and providing assistance
to classroom teachers, classroom modifications, and the
provision of materials to address differentiated
needs). Moreover, a comprehensive review was conducted
on Weeks 5, 10, 14, 19, and 25. During Week 32, data
collection and analysis took place. Thereafter,
dissemination took place via written report to the SIC
--- the school based governing body. In addition,
copies of the report were prepared for review by the
Quality Circle and the Parent Advisory Committee during
the August meeting.

Parent/Student/Writer Conferences

Two types of conferences were held throughout the
practicum. Because it is writer's view that quality
parent/student involvement is critical to successful
outcomes, parent/student participation was encouraged
through all phases of the practicum effort. While some
parents were able to participate in school based
conferences, others were not. In the case of the
latter, teleconferencing was utilized both as a means
of informing parents of current student status and as a
conduit through which important information could be

gathered from the family environment. Both types of conferences occurred whenever necessary.

Writer/Mentor Student Conferences

Although it was originally intended that trained, county provided mentors from the business sector be included in the program, budget cuts precluded the inclusion of that component. Nonetheless, the ideological orientation was continued in the practicum project via writer assumption of the mentoring role. Therefore, writer/mentor student conferences were held on a weekly basis during planning periods or after school. The period was used to develop and maintain appropriate career goals within the interest, skill, and ability levels of the student. Further, the session provided the opportunity for students to express feelings regarding daily family or school related events. Students were encouraged to call the writer at home if a need arose. Ultimately, mutual respect was established between the student and the writer/mentor which allowed for continuous communication throughout the practicum.

Peer Tutor/Mentor Sessions

Another mentoring approach occurred within the peer tutor/mentor sessions wherein close relationships were established between the peer tutor/mentors and the practicum students (tutees). Over time, open channels of communication were established, and tutors and tutees often conversed by telephone when a need emerged. Although the primary purpose of the program was to offer tutoring services to practicum students in the four academic areas, students often confided in the tutors regarding other matters, and it was not unusual for them to ask for advice. This intervention provided still another avenue for communication throughout the practicum.

Weekly Workshops

Given the holistic nature of the practicum effort, three basic themes provided the foundation for the fifty-minute three-time-a-week workshops which were conducted by the writer: self-esteem/motivation building; social skill development; and career orientation. Facilitating the learning experience, the writer integrated the three themes in real-world activities for the purpose of enhancing student opportunity for skill generalization. Emphasis was

placed on problem solving and collaboration. Working both individually and within group format, students were introduced to self-esteem building strategies which had the potential to translate into social skill acquisition and, finally to the application of skills within career focused goal setting. Thus, the themes were presented in three weekly workshops throughout the practicum: Self-Esteem Workshop; Social Skills Workshop; and "Choices Jr." Workshop.

Week One

Events and Activities

During the orientation week, all shareholders in the practicum effort were provided with a rationale for implementation of the practicum. Practicum objectives, individual and group roles, and responsibilities were discussed at length. All were encouraged to contribute to the eight month endeavor in any way possible (i.e., input, feedback, or the assumption of additional roles). It was the intention of the writer to provide and facilitate a format in which all factions could informally interconnect on a regular basis.

An evening meeting was held at which the writer addressed the SIC. Roles, responsibilities, and projected outcomes were discussed following rationale

development. In as much as the SIC is the governing body for all school-based activities, the writer's presentation delineated the various practicum objectives as each related to school philosophy. Members were encouraged to take active roles in any and all project activities. Following the presentation, a brief discussion was held which high-lighted the continuing commitment of the SIC to ameliorate the plight of "at-risk" students.

The Quality Circle orientation was held following the close of a school day. Three members were unable to attend because of schedule conflicts but were updated by the writer on an individual basis within the same week. During the session, members were apprised of program objectives, roles and responsibilities were discussed, and format and scheduling considerations were weighed in light of recently adopted schedule changes. However, because the new schedule no longer provided for common planning periods, the committee determined that formal meetings were not a viable means of communication. Thus, it was decided that connections would be accomplished informally (i.e., writer or other practicum personnel making direct contact with one another). Further, it was determined that either a request by any shareholder or a pressing need would

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constitute sufficient reason to hold a special
after-school meeting.

The parent orientation was held at an evening
social during which parents had the opportunity to
connect with practicum personnel and to receive
information about upcoming activities which would occur
over the eight month period. It was emphasized that
the development of solid parent/school relationships
was not only welcome but critical to the provision of
positive conditions that hold high potential to foster
motivation among "at-risk" students. A number of
components were discussed in depth including:
recognition of "at-risk" characteristics, the use of
simple strategies at home to aid students toward
academic and social success (i.e., creating a quiet
place and setting a time for study, expecting
reasonable manners in addressing family members, and
the assumption of responsibility for simple home
chores), and parent roles relative to overall practicum
objectives and projected outcomes. In addition,
parents were informed of the "Parent Telephone Hotline"
from which activity information could be obtained and
school-based or teleconferences could be scheduled.
The session was well attended. Only two of 18 parents

were absent. On the following day, non-attending
parents were updated by telephone.

In as much as practicum participants commonly spend
from two to four academic periods a day with an
exceptional education teacher and the balance with
regular teachers, teacher orientation included both
factions. Because, prior to practicum implementation,
the academic and behavioral status of students had
normally been determined at the end of the nine week
grading period, a sound rationale for the use of
flexible scheduling was developed. Teachers were
advised of the practical aspects of changing or
modifying schedules whenever it was deemed to be in the
best interest of the student. Thus, during the
practicum period, schedule changes were made as a
student need arose. In addition to the foregoing, both
REI and the concept of inclusion were discussed at
length, and teachers were provided with updated
information on relevant county policies. Moreover, a
time line was presented, practicum expectations were
discussed, individual and group roles and
responsibilities were clearly defined, and weekly
"Student Status Reports" (see Appendix B) were
introduced.

Objectives

1. All participating groups were apprised of the
   underlying goals and objectives of the program.

2. All group members demonstrated an awareness of
   their own roles and responsibilities as well as
   those of other participating members.

3. All individuals associated with the practicum
   made a categorical commitment to practicum
   objectives.

4. Parents were advised of the hours of availability
   and of the required procedures to access
   information from the Parent Telephone Hotline,
   request a conference, or speak with project
   personnel.

5. Both the SIC and members of the Parent Advisory
   Committee were apprised of practicum ideology
   and methodology.

Materials

1. Handouts.

   A. Role definition and responsibilities of all
      participating members (see Appendix A).

B. Roster of participating students, respective parents, and telephone numbers (see Appendix C).

C. County provided parent handouts relative to parent involvement (see Appendix D).

D. Student Status Report (see Appendix B).

2. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

3. Telephone 'Iotline Log (see Appendix E).

4. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

5. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

Week Two

Events and Activities

During practicum student orientation, which took place within a Self-Esteem Building and Motivational Workshop, students interacted with the writer in developing clear rationales for participation in the practicum description. In addition, a complete practicum description was provided, roles and responsibilities were defined, expectations were discussed, and emphasis was placed on shared decision making as it related to practicum student interaction

<u>with</u> teachers, counselors, and peer tutor/mentors.
Emphasis was placed on abilities rather than
disabilities and upon disowning past failures in order
to set the stage for positive growth and development.
At the end of the session, participating students
completed individual student profile forms to aid in
peer tutor/mentor-student pairing. The format of the
workshop was highly positive and supportive while
upholding the pragmatic considerations that underlie
the quest for educational success.

All but two practicum students (Students 3 and 7)
were attentive and focused during the session.
Interactive in every respect, students were largely
enthusiastic about the opportunity to overcome
previously failure-ridden profiles. Student contracts
were introduced and rights and responsibilities were
discussed in depth. Parent information letters were
distributed for students to deliver. Students were
requested to take contracts home and to sign and return
them on the following day. All students attended.

Following the session, the writer contacted the
parents of the two non-participating students and
scheduled a parent/student/writer conference. Each was
held separately on the following day. A procedure
similar to that of the group orientation was employed

--- with the exception that each student was treated in
a manner that was commensurate with individual
personality characteristics as well as differentiated
skills and interests. At the onset of the conference,
students were given the opportunity to leave the
practicum without prejudice. Ultimately, neither
student accepted the option. Instead, each responded
with enthusiasm.

Two days following the Self-Esteem Building and
Motivational Workshop, a one hour Social Skills
Workshop was held. As in the previous orientation,
students interacted with the writer to develop a
rationale for social skill acquisition. Guiding the
process, via the theme "Social Skills for Everyday
Success", the writer role modeled several skills. Cue
cards describing specific social situations were used
to elicit student involvement (i.e., What is an
appropriate greeting to a visiting state senator?).
Highly interactive, all students competed for
opportunities to act out in response to the cue cards.
At the conclusion, students completed activity sheets
describing their "all time favorites" in a variety of
situations (i.e., T.V. show, singer, actor, or
dessert). The purpose of the activity was to provide
an opportunity for student collaboration for the

purpose of reaching a consensus as to which "favorites" should ultimately represent the group as a whole. Demonstrating enthusiasm and cooperation, all students attended the interactive session.

Although it was the original intention of the writer to obtain community based mentors for each of the practicum students, the district found itself in still another budgetary crisis. In its aftermath, mentors who had been screened and trained by a district/state compact program, for the purpose of providing services to "at-risk" students, were not as readily available as in the past. Instead, specific schools were targeted for services, and the practicum school was not in that category. In lieu of this planned component, the writer decided to provide two types of school-based mentoring opportunities --- peer tutor/mentor and writer/mentor services. In the former approach, only students who were able to attend after-school tutoring sessions had the opportunity to work with peer tutor/mentors throughout the practicum experience. In the latter approach, the writer connected with each student on a weekly basis (i.e., during planning periods and before or after school). In addition, students were able to access the writer via telephone during non-school hours.

Another departure from the original plan related to
the intended role of guidance counselors. An
unexpected school based budget cut caused the
reassignment of both the media specialist and
counselors to the In School Suspension Center. As a
result, counselors were no longer available for adjunct
services. In as much, it became necessary for the
writer to assume the responsibility for baseline and
terminal students observations. Thus, a baseline
observation was completed for each practicum student
during an interactive educational experience.

At the beginning of the week, the writer conducted
a brief inservice for prospective peer tutor/mentors
and accepted applications from the general student
body. Entry level criteria for selection was
predicated upon an average of B or better in one or
more of the four academic subject areas, a satisfactory
conduct record, the ability to remain after school for
at least two days a week, teacher recommendation, and a
personal interview with the writer to establish
sufficient interest and motivation.

Objectives

1. Students acquired an understanding of practicum
   objectives, individual responsibilities, roles,

and privileges.

2. Students demonstrated a thorough knowledge of
   practicum objectives, expectations, and activities
   during written test format.

3. Students made a commitment to practicum objectives
   by signing a contract stating same.

4. Prospective peer tutor/mentors were inserviced on
   practicum objectives as each related to the
   Peer Tutor/Mentor application.

5. The writer completed baseline observations for each
   of the practicum students.

6. Students role played appropriate social behaviors
   under the guidance of the writer during the Self
   Esteem Building Workshop.

7. Program letters were sent to parents.

Materials

1. Teacher developed test to determine student
   knowledge of practicum objectives, roles,
   responsibilities, expectations, and privileges.

2. Practicum Student Contract (see Appendix H).

3. Self-Esteem Worksheet Unit 1, I3 (see Appendix I).

4. Social Skills Worksheet 13a (see Appendix J).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Application and Schedule (see Appendix K).

6. Student Tracking Report (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Observation Checklist.

Week Three

Events and Activities

After examination of entrance criteria, 25 students were accepted for training in the Peer Tutor/Mentor program --- 12 permanent tutor/mentors and 13 to provide back-up services. While there were 18 practicum students in the program, not all availed themselves of peer tutor/mentor services during the practicum experience. In as much as the program was extracurricular and most students relied on school bus transportation, four practicum students (Students 1, 6, 9, and 13) were unable to attend because of lack of transportation and three were able to attend only when parent provided transportation (Students 4, 16, and 18) was available. Thus, 11 students attended on a fairly

regular schedule, three attended when convenient, and four did not attend at all. However, in cases where students were unable to remain after school, the writer provided in-class assistance by teaming the student with a compatible, skilled peer. The practice continued without incident throughout the practicum.

Although it was originally intended that a school based committee select the peer tutor/mentors, budget cuts and uncommon planning periods hampered the selection process. Moreover, budget cuts and staff reduction at the district level precluded the involvement of a resource specialist in the initial training of the tutor/mentors. As a result, the writer selected the peer tutor/mentor participants according to preestablished criteria and facilitated the training procedures. In as much as the writer's proficiency in peer tutor/mentor ideology and methodology was on a par with that of the specialist, the absence of the specialist was not a handicapping condition. Thus, in a writer conducted two-hour orientation workshop, peer tutor/mentors were trained in the proper ideology and methodology. Role play activities were employed to demonstrate discrete communication strategies. Twenty-one students were in attendance while four were

absent. The absentees were later briefed by the writer at a separate after school session.

Hosting an evening session of the Social Skills Workshop under the auspices of the writer, practicum students demonstrated newly acquired social skills. Students assumed the responsibility for appropriate dress, greetings, and serving. All parents expressed interest and appreciation, and rapport was established between the attending parties. However, only 11 of the 18 participating parents and students attended. Student/Parent teams 2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 16, and 18 were absent. Four of the seven non-attending parents maintained that work schedules precluded attending evening sessions. Non-attending parents were updated by the writer via telephone, and handouts from the social were sent home.

At midweek, the writer addressed the SIC and updated members regarding current activities. An avid interest in the Peer Tutor/Mentor Program surfaced, and a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the possibility of broadening the program in the future. It was determined that, in as much as the practicum was in progress, it would be more expedient to delay further discussion until results became available.

In addition, the writer updated members of the Quality Circle regarding practicum progress. The issue of parent difficulty in attending evening meetings was discussed informally. Although a brainstorming session produced a few alternatives (i.e., keeping parents informed by teleconferencing, scheduling Saturday morning breakfast meetings, or offering an alternative evening to those whose schedules could not be accommodated at regularly scheduled meetings), it was determined that changes in schedule or format would have been premature at that time. Thus, the writer continued according to the practicum calendar.

Objectives

1. Following a review of the applications, peer tutor/mentors were selected by the writer.

2. Peer tutors/mentors were apprised by the writer of roles and responsibilities as each exists within peer tutor/mentor configuration.

3. The Quality Circle and SIC were apprised of current practicum activities by the writer.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Handouts: Students with SLD (see Appendix D).

3. Refreshments for social.

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

Week Four

Events and Activities

During the fourth week of the practicum, a two hour evening workshop was held to provide parents with information concerning Parent Telephone Hotline guidelines and with a comprehensive knowledge base relative to parent involvement in student education. Parents were presented with a menu containing a variety of school functions, activities, and jobs (i.e., classroom aide, office assistant, club co-sponsor, sports co-sponsor, or committee member). To the extent possible, each was asked to choose one or more of

particular interest. All five of the attending parents
chose at least one item from the menu.

Although invitations had been sent two weeks in
advance and follow-up calls were made to confirm, only
five parents attended (three seventh and two eighth).
However, information pertaining to the workshop was
sent home, and non-attending parents were contacted by
the writer on the following day. In all cases, work
and family related problems were cited as a major
problem in attending evening sessions. As a result,
the issue was re-examined by the Quality Circle. After
a review of parent comments and much discussion
relative to after-school and Saturday morning sessions,
these alternatives were discounted because of the
potentiality to interfere with family and work related
responsibilities. Therefore, it was determined that
parent/school communications be conducted via
individual school based conferences, teleconferencing,
and printed materials.

Practicum students participated in a one hour
Social Skills Workshop in which social emphasis was
placed on school functions (i.e., concerts, athletics,
or dances). Fifteen students attended. Students were
expected to view school in a social context. Role
modeling, participative interaction, role playing, and

activity sheets aided in creating appropriate student
perspective. Three students were absent (Students 4,
8, and 16). Each completed activity sheets and was
briefed on the following day by an attending student.

In after school sessions on Monday and Tuesday, a
one hour training session for peer tutor/mentors was
conducted by the writer. Role modeling and role
playing highlighted both sessions. Procedures were
discussed and tutor/mentors were assigned to particular
practicum students based on orientation and expertise.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was mailed to
participating parents.

Objectives

1. Parents were provided with a knowledge base
   regarding practicum objectives relative to student
   deficiencies, the importance of parent roles to
   educational outcomes for their children, and the
   need to become involved in a school based project
   of interest.

2. Students were provided with the opportunity to
   discover the value of presenting one's self in a
   positive light after observing writer role
   modeling of positive self-presentation techniques.

3. Peer tutor/mentors were trained in appropriate techniques that held the potential to enhance practicum student learning.

4. The Quality Circle was updated on current activities and issues.

5. The monthly newsletter was mailed.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Handouts: Parent Involvement (see Appendix D).

3. Social Skills Worksheet 15a (see Appendix J).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Newsletter and postage.

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Five

Events and Activities

A writer conducted workshop was held to provide specific information and activities to aid students in

organizational development. Personal habits,
environmental conditions, and student attitude were
explored in depth. Role modeling and role playing
marked the activity base for the session. Although it
was originally intended that parents participate, the
experience was limited to student participation because
of parent inability to attend during work hours. With
the exception of Student 5, all students participated
in a cooperative manner. However, Student 5 was upset
about an argument with another student during lunch and
refused to participate on that basis. Shortly
thereafter, the student was referred to a counselor for
appropriate intervention. At the end of the school
day, Student 5 approached the writer to make up the
activity schedule. Thus, all students were ultimately
involved in the workshop.

In addition, the one hour weekly Self-Esteem
Workshop was facilitated by the writer. Students 4 and
13 were absent. Emphasis was placed on abilities
rather than disabilities and students participated in
an interactive session in which brainstorming
activities were utilized to highlight individual
abilities. Interest Inventory Activity Sheets were
used to enable students to define and record specific
areas of interest and ability. Aside from the absence

of two students, all were highly cooperative and participative. Although Student 4 completed the assignment on the following day, Student 13 refused to do so --- an incident which characterized the first formidable departure within the highly cooperative group. An immediate parent/student/writer conference was held to further delineate program expectations and provide positive support for the student. Following the conference, Student 13 completed the assignment.

Emphasis on appropriate social posture as it relates to a variety of school functions was continued in the Social Skills Workshop. Role playing and positive feedback were used to provide further definition to social presence. Students collaborated to produce a profile of social acceptability in a variety of school related circumstances. Students 9 and 13 were absent. Both made up the assignments within the week. However, Student 13 complied only after a student/mentor conference session during which the student was encouraged to take an active interest in the program.

Peer Tutor/Mentor training sessions were conducted by the writer in accord with the prior week activities.

While a comprehensive review of practicum student progress was to have been completed by the Quality

Circle, members were unable to convene at a common time. Thus, the periodic review was undertaken by the writer. Following a comprehensive writer review of Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A), Quality Circle members were apprised of student status, current events, and trends. Because Students 6, 9, and 13 were each currently failing one academic area and each had conduct deficiencies, it was suggested that the writer conduct in-class observations to determine the most appropriate intervention. Parents were contacted and urged to provide transportation so that students could take part in after school tutoring sessions. All agreed. After completing observations, the writer suggested a number of interventional techniques (i.e., seat changes, more tactile experience, and rapport development). Although Students 9 and 13 did attend the first tutoring session and Student 13 attended the second, none of the three attended any of the sessions thereafter. Despite reminders of the benefits to students by the writer, there was no further parent attempt to either encourage student attendance or to provide the promised transportation.

Objectives

1. Students acquired a working knowledge of "how to"

effect positive learning by adopting appropriate
organizational skills.

2. Students defined specific interests and skills
during the Self-Esteem Workshop.

3. Students learned to differentiate between
appropriate and inappropriate social behavior
in terms of school activities and events.

4. Peer tutor/mentors were trained in appropriate
techniques that held the potential to
enhance practicum student learning.

5. The Quality Circle was apprised of current
activities and events.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Workshop materials:

A. "How to Organize Your Bedroom as a Study
Center" (see Appendix D).

B. "Organizers - The Notebook Way to Go."

3. Self-Esteem Worksheets 116 (see Appendix I).

4. Social Skills Worksheet 19 (see Appendix J).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

Week Six

Events and Activities

As usual, both the Self-Esteem and Social Skills
workshops were held. In the former, emphasis continued
to be placed on abilities and disowning past failures.
A motivational film was shown, and interactive dialogue
followed. In the latter, school environment as it
relates to social posture was the theme for ongoing
activities. All students participated in the Self-
Esteem Workshop while only 16 attended the Social
Skills Workshop because Students 9 and 13 had been
suspended for three days for continued conduct
infractions.

In addition, a workshop was conducted to introduce
students to the purpose and use of "Choices Jr.", a
career oriented computer program. Program specific
worksheets were used to provide relevant input. An

interest/ability/skill inventory was provided to each
student for the purpose of defining individual
characteristics. Demonstrating the use of the
real-world based software, the writer continuously
linked academic pursuit with career preparation.
Excepting Students 9 and 13, who were absent, all
demonstrated a high degree of interest.

During this week, the Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions
began. Held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after
school, they were monitored by the writer and parent
volunteers. Eleven students attended the session.
Students were cooperative and events were unremarkable.

The SIC was apprised of ongoing events and issues
by the writer.

Objectives

1. Following a motivational film, students
   demonstrated the capacity to focus on their
   own individual abilities.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to
   differentiate between appropriate and
   inappropriate social behavior in terms of
   school activities and events.

3. Students gained career development information

during a demonstration of the "Choices Jr."
career oriented software.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The writer updated the SIC on current events,
   issues, and activities relevant to the practicum.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. VCR and monitor.

3. Film: Jonathan Livingston Seagull (motivational).

4. Self-Esteem Worksheet I17 (see Appendix I).

5. Social Skills Worksheet I8 (see Appendix J).

6. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity
   sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report Form
   (see Appendix G).

8. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

9. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

10. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Seven

Events and Activities

Both the Self-Esteem and Social Skills workshops
continued to bolster student emphasis on abilities and
to adopt appropriate social skills within the school
context respectively. During the Self-Esteem Workshop,
the motivational film and accompanying activities were
continued. Predicated upon a theme surrounding the
holiday dance, the orientation of the Social Skills
Workshop centered on student utilization of individual
skills which were used to create and make decorations,
sell tickets, design posters, and to adopt a set of
standards for appropriate behavior at a formal dance.
Highly enthusiastic, all students participated in both
workshops with the exception of Student 2 who was ill
during the first and Student 13 who was suspended for
the second time because of serious conduct infractions
during the second.

The "Choices Jr." Workshop continued to review both
the purpose and use of the career oriented software.
After a brief demonstration by the media specialist,
students were given an opportunity to use and observe
the use of the program. Using previously completed

Interest Inventories, Students 1, 8, 9, 11, 15, and 16 actively engaged in the use of the software while all others observed. Following the interactive experience, the media specialist answered questions and developed ideas. All attending students were highly participative. Students 6 and 13 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer and parent volunteers, the session was unremarkable. Nine students attended. Two back-up peer student/mentors were employed because of absences among the first string recruits. Both practicum students adapted well to the new tutors. All were cooperative.

At an evening session, the Parent Advisory Committee was updated by the writer relative to project goals, objectives, expectations, role and responsibility definitions, project activity description, and current status of participating students. A question/answer session followed. In addition, members of the Quality Circle were updated. Both events were unremarkable.

Objectives

1. Following a motivational film, students demonstrated the capacity to focus on their own

individual abilities.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to
   differentiate between appropriate and
   inappropriate social behavior in terms of
   school activities and events.

3. Students gained career development information
   by reviewing individual Interest Inventories and
   interacting with or observing during a "Choices
   Jr."software demonstration.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. During a writer delivered presentation, the Parent
   Advisory Committee was given the opportunity to
   gain a clear perspective of project goals,
   expectations, roles, and responsibilities,
   activities, and current student status.

6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated
   relative to student status and program efficacy.

   Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. VCR and monitor.

3. Film: Jonathan Livingston Seagull (motivational).

4. Self-Esteem Worksheet I30 (see Appendix I).

5. Social Skills Worksheet 64 (see Appendix J).

6. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity
   sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).

7. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix K).

8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

10. Quality Circle Status Report Form (see Appendix F).

11. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix N).

Week Eight

Events and Activities

Continuing emphasis on individual abilities as they
relate to real-world experience during the Self-Esteem
Workshop, the writer began to integrate the career
orientation unit. Students engaged in a cooperative
learning project wherein brainstorming techniques were
used to link motivational aspects of the film, career
orientation, and real-world activity. The attending 14

students remained enthusiastic and productive throughout the session. Students 1, 6, 13, and 15 were absent.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students interacted with the writer during role play activities. Adopting appropriate social postures for a Speech and Drama Club presentation, students assumed both active and passive roles. Following the activity, a cosmetician from a local cosmetic company addressed practicum students on the subject of "High Tech in the Cosmetic Industry." Throughout the presentation, students were expected to demonstrate acceptable social skills. Of the 18 attending students, all presented excellent social skills in both active and passive modes with the exception of Student 9 who was rude to the presenter and was subsequently sent to the dean and Student 3 who put his head down during the presentation. As a result, writer/student conferences were held to encourage positive student participation. Student 9 left the conference defending his position to act in any manner he chose. Student 3 apologized and responded positively.

Further exploration of career opportunities through software related activity sheets was the focus of the "Choices Jr." Workshop. Seventeen students

collaborated to discuss individual characteristics, interests, and skills in relation to specific jobs (i.e., law enforcement officer, lawyer, forest ranger, or secretary). Student 1 was absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer and parent volunteers, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to act appropriately given specific conditions during role play activities.

2. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills when interacting with a guest speaker.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to use "Choices Jr." effectively in order to derive career development information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet I41 (see Appendix I).

3. Social Skills Worksheet 65 (see Appendix J).

4. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity
   sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).

5. Podium and public address system.

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Nine

Events and Activities

Given the fact that mid-term exams and a student
holiday were at hand, only two events were scheduled
during this week. First, a community sponsored
shopping trip to purchase gifts for a local children's
home was held. Two parent volunteers provided
transportation. Given a budget of five dollars, each
student was expected to exhibit appropriate social
skills during interaction with store personnel while
purchasing a gift. Only eight students participated in
the event. Student 13 was expelled for possession of a

weapon. Students 6 and 9 were on suspension for
conduct violations. Students 1, 4, 5, and 8 were ill,
Students 2 and 3 were absent without excuse, and
Student 7 was on a field trip. Parent/student/writer
conferences were scheduled where necessary. However,
all participating students were very enthusiastic and
demonstrated outstanding social skills. Following the
shopping event, presents were delivered to the
Children's Home by the students. Each expressed a keen
interest in revisiting.

Following the event, the writer held an in-class
"Holiday Break Party" during which gifts from local
business concerns were distributed. All eight
participating students expressed excitement and
appreciation.

The monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated excellent social skills while
   interacting with shopping mall and children's home
   personnel.

2. Students demonstrated appropriate manners and
   dress during both the shopping trip and the
   "Holiday Break Party."

3. The monthly newsletter was sent home to parents.

Materials

1. Gifts.

2. Refreshments.

3. Party paper goods.

4. Newsletter (see Appendix C).

Week Ten

Events and Activities

During the tenth week, students continued to develop individual abilities in the Self-Esteem Workshop format. Following a writer presentation on positive affirmations, students generated individual lists. Activity sheets were utilized to acquire background information for each student. Writer facilitated, the session allowed for interactive communication and ideological development within group format. Of the remaining 17 student participants, 16 were in attendance. Student 9 was on suspension for conduct violations. With the exception of Student 4, all worked together efficiently. Refusing to cooperate with members of his group Student 4 continued to

irritate respective members until he was ultimately
excused from the exercise pending a
parent/student/writer conference. On the day following
the conference, Student 4 made a voluntary apology to
his group. Responding positively, the group accepted
the apology without note.

The Social Skills Workshop provided the opportunity
for students to send thank you notes to area business
concerns that provided gifts for both the Children's
Home visit and for the practicum students.
Following a writer demonstration, all 14 attending
students completed a rough draft. Students 1, 6, and 9
were absent. However, Students 1, 3, and 7 expressed a
disinterest in the exercise. Nonetheless, after
rationale development during a routine mentor/student
conference, each verbalized an understanding of the
social responsibility.

In preparation for individual interaction with the
software, career orientation was continued during the
"Choices Jr." Workshop. Vocational inventories were
used to stimulate student interest and draw a parallel
between classroom experience and real-world job
applications. All 17 students actively participated in
the session.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Wednesday
and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the
writer and parent volunteers, the session was
unremarkable. Ten students attended. All were
cooperative.

As part of the community service orientation,
Students 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, and 16 participated in a
week-end beach clean-up project which was chaperoned by
parent and teacher volunteers. All expressed
gratification after the effort. Bonus points were
earned in the social studies program for participation
and a brief written summary of the event.
Parent/student/writer conferences were arranged, and
parents were counseled regarding positive strategies
that had the potential to reinforce the learning
experience (i.e., the provision of a supportive,
structured, responsibility oriented environment at
home).

A comprehensive review of Student Tracking Reports
(see Appendix A), attendance records, and dean
referrals was undertaken by the writer. At that time,
Student 6 was failing three academic subjects and one
elective. Deficiencies in two academic areas were
recorded for Students 1, 2, 9, and 14. Social skill
deficits were indicated for Students 1, 3, 6, and 9,

and Students 1, 3, 6, 9, 14, and 17 had
non-satisfactory conduct reports. Interventions were
provided on a differentiated basis. For example,
because Student 6 demonstrated an area of strength in
one elective (wood working shop), he was given the
opportunity to work in a school based grant program
that was oriented toward school and community
beautification. On the other hand, there was some
indication that Student 9 might benefit by taping
science and social studies lectures. Thus, taping
capabilities were provided.

Following the review, both the SIC and Quality
Circle were apprised of current student status. At the
end of the 10 week period, 17 students still remained
in the program --- 12 seventh grade and five eighth
grade students respectively.

Objectives

1. Following a writer demonstration on constructing
   written positive affirmations, students wrote
   five which were unique to their individual
   characteristics.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to construct
   a thank you note according to defined parameters.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to produce a primary career choice and two alternatives after interacting with "Choices Jr." career related materials.

4. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer regarding student status and program efficacy following a comprehensive review of relevant student records by the writer.

5. The writer provided a written report to inform the SIC of current student status and program efficacy.

6. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

7. Students effectively participated in a beach clean up project.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet III, 11 (see Appendix I).

3. Writer designed transparencies for thank you note format.

4. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity

sheets (see Appendix M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Beach clothing and sunscreen.

9. Large plastic garbage bags and ties.

10. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

11. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see
    Appendix C).

Week Eleven

Events and Activities

During Week Eleven, Student 9 was expelled for
attempting to deal illegal drugs on the school campus,
leaving 16 of the original 18 students remaining in the
program.

Positive affirmation development was continued in
the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students traded positive
affirmation sheets within a group configuration.
Sheets were read aloud by a "buddy" and short letters

of appreciation were prepared by each student for
respective buddies. Following the exercise, students
responded with positive feedback. All 16 remaining
students worked cooperatively within groups.

A brainstorming activity was the focus of the
Social Skills Workshop. Groups competed to produce the
maximum number of uses for bricks. The purpose of the
exercise was to produce competitive environmental
conditions under which appropriate social skills were
demonstrated. Although Students 1, 4, and 8 refused to
participate, all other students worked enthusiastically
and effectively within group format. Apparently
threatened by the competitive nature of the exercise,
the three dissenting students were agreeable to
producing their brainstorming ideas on the computer.
Given the alternate opportunity, all three displayed
the same enthusiasm and effected similar outcomes as
those of students in group configuration. Fourteen
students attended. Students 1 and 6 were absent.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, an input
demonstration was undertaken. Following a writer
demonstration, students took turns at information input
on the computer. All students demonstrated enthusiasm.
Although Students 2, 8, and 14 became impatient while
awaiting turns, the incident was insignificant. All 16

attending students were generally efficient and cooperative.

Addressing students on the topic of "Opportunities - A Recession Proof Career Choice" during the second half of the class, a local paramedic defined and described career opportunities within the medical field. Thirteen students attended the session. Students 3, 6, and 15 were absent. All attending students actively participated in the question/answer session that followed. Speaker emphasis was placed on the direct correlation between academic pursuit and career success.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Only four students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively interact with others in group format while sharing positive affirmations.

2. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills during a guest speaker presentation and interaction.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively
   interact with the "Choices Jr." software.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

   Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Student affirmation sheets (student generated).

3. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity
   sheets (see Appendix M).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Twelve

   Events and Activities

   A student-made film, delineating specific
characteristics of positive affirmations and feedback,
was presented during the Self-Esteem Workshop. The
film provided an opportunity for students to
participate in the creation of their own learning

experience. Adopting both active and passive modes, all 16 attending students participated in the activity with enthusiastic response.

Continuing to produce appropriate thank you notes to area merchants who provided student gifts, final drafts were generated following a teacher demonstration during the Social Skills Workshop. All students completed acceptable thank you notes.

No "Choices Jr." Workshop was scheduled because the equipment was reserved for another project.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

A written report relative to student status and program efficacy was prepared for the Parent Advisory Committee meeting.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to provide and gain information by constructing a film.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to complete the final draft of a thank you note after witnessing a teacher demonstration on correct procedures.

3. The writer provided a written report to update the Parent Advisory Committee on student status and program efficacy.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets (see Appendix M).

3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

6. Parent Advisory Committee Advisory Report (see Appendix N).

Week Thirteen

Events and Activities

Establishing academic goals was the thrust of the Self-Esteem workshop. Concentrating on short term goals, students worked individually to develop two. A

brainstorming session followed during which short term goals were shared with group members. Students provided positive feedback for one another and worked efficiently within the group structure. Fourteen students participated. Students 1 and 4 were absent.

All 16 students attended the Social Skills Workshop. Students selected elementary school pen pals from a menu of individual profiles. Facilitating the session, the writer guided students in developing the concept of "Pen Pal." To further develop the idea of communicating with an unknown person, the concept of making assumptions about others was explored.

In as much as the "Choices Jr." program was still unavailable, students divided into groups for a brainstorming session. The topic of exploration was "What If I Were a -------"? Thirteen students attended, and all worked together effectively. Students 1, 4, and 8 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

During this week the writer held a meeting with peer tutor/mentors for the purpose of obtaining knowledge based feedback. Eighteen members attended.

Twelve perceived the program to be highly effective for both the tutees and for themselves. Four reported that tutees often took advantage of them to complete homework assignments. However, two of the four had recently spoken to the tutees regarding the situation and felt that the issue had been resolved. The other two decided to do the same. One tutor was of the opinion that the program was beneficial for the tutee but not for the tutor, and one had no opinion.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to establish and write two academic goals.

2. Each Student selected an elementary school "Pen Pal."

3. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively interact within group format during brainstorming activities.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. A Peer Tutor/Mentor meeting was held by the writer to obtain feedback from tutors regarding program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet II-1 (see Appendix I).

3. Social Skills Worksheet I-67 (see Appendix J).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Fourteen

Events and Activities

Goal development continued during the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students worked in groups following a writer presentation on "how to" reach specific goals. Role modeling brainstorming strategies, the writer demonstrated the thinking process aloud. Students followed suit in interactive mode. Thirteen attended. Student 6 was on suspension for conduct violations, and Students 3 and 5 were absent. All participated effectively in the exercise.

The creation of a personal characteristics list highlighted the activity during the Social Skills

Workshop. Writer facilitated, the exercise was intended to develop a personal inventory list from which students could draw when writing to "Pen Pals." However, Students 3 and 8 had difficulty in creating a personal list. Each was paired with a compatible student and ultimately completed the assignment. Fifteen students attended. Student 6 was still on suspension.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop brainstorming activities were continued. Students chose a career title and worked toward generating the maximum number of relevant, attributable adjectives. Groups competed to produce the highest number. Winning group members earned "early lunch passes." Thirteen students attended. Student 6 remained on suspension, Student 10 was absent, and Student 4 transferred to another school within the district when his family moved.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

A comprehensive review of current student progress was completed by the writer. Despite the dynamics of ongoing interventions which were intended to maximize student potential to achieve in the areas of academics,

attendance, social skills, and conduct, Student 6 continued to fail three academic subjects and one elective. Student 1 was failing two academic subjects, and Students 2, 11, and 14 were failing one each. Students 3 and 6 had unsatisfactory conduct and social skills deficiencies. Furthermore, unsatisfactory conduct was reported for Students 5, 7, 11, and 14. Interventions were applied on an individual basis. For example, behavioral contracts were entered into which allowed students to choose from an incentive menu whenever appropriate behavior was sustained for one week. In addition, conferences, the peer tutor/mentor program, and the in-class peer tutor program were ongoing interventions which were employed to bolster academic and behavioral areas. With the exception of Student 6 who chose not to sign the contract, all students responded positively to the interventional methods.

Despite numerous requests by the writer for a school based conference, Student 6's parent declined. During a teleconference, the parent maintained that the school experience had always been a negative factor for all family members. Moreover, the expectation was expressed that Student 6 would follow in the family footsteps and drop-out of school as soon as the age of

16 was attained. Verbalizing the same view during writer/student conferences and both guidance and dean interactions, Student 6 continuously alluded to "drop-out" as the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, the writer continued to communicate with both the student and with relevant teachers in order to provide services within the full scope of the practicum effort.

Following the comprehensive review, the writer submitted an updated report to the SIC regarding student status and program efficacy. Moreover, members of the Quality Circle were also apprised of current student status.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to comprehend "how to" establish specific short term goals by writing two well defined goals.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to adequately describe themselves in written language to newly adopted "ren Pals."

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact effectively with group members during "Choices Jr." activities.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring

sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. Both the SIC and members of the Quality Circle
   were updated by the writer in order to provide
   current data relative to student status and
   program efficacy after a comprehensive review
   of relevant student records.

6. The writer completed a comprehensive review of
   student status.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet III-58 (see Appendix I).

3. Social Skills Worksheet II-14 (see Appendix J).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

7. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

8. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see
   Appendix G).

Week Fifteen

Events and Activities

Although a Parent/Student Workshop had been
scheduled for Week Fifteen, the event was cancelled
because of a change in schedule which provided for
school-wide student conferences during the same week.
Instead, the writer held teleconferences with parents
to reinforce the importance of homework in relation to
student ability to inculcate and generalize skills.
Conferences were held with 11 of the 15 parents. The
other four parents were unavailable by phone. Three
telephones had been disconnected with no forwarding
information, and one parent did not return any of four
calls. Written communication followed to all parents.

Within the context of the Self-Esteem Workshop, the
writer demonstrated the 5WH Strategy (Who?, What?,
When?, Where?, Why?, and How?) as it related to goals
and objectives. By asking each question in relation to
pre-defined statements, students were able to establish
whether the statement was complete. Fourteen students
participated. Student 7 was absent. All were
cooperative and effective with the exception of Student
6 who became verbally offensive when group members
refused to accept the idea of dropping out of school.

as a viable educational goal. Following the incident,
the writer assigned an alternate activity on the
computer.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students
utilized personal characteristic lists to write a
paragraph which included a main idea, three detail
sentences, and a summary statement. Twelve students
participated. Students 5, 6, and 14 were absent.
Although Students 3 and 7 had some initial difficulty
in constructing detail sentences, each was successful
after the writer reviewed the concept of adjectives in
relation to the personal characteristic list. All
students completed the task with efficiency.

Although a local florist was scheduled to conduct a
flower arranging demonstration during The "Choices Jr."
Workshop, the event was cancelled because of a death in
the florist's family. However, materials were
delivered, and instructions were provided for the
writer. Thus, modeling simple flower arranging
techniques, the writer guided students during the
creation of their own individual flower arrangements.
Career opportunities in floral design were discussed.
Fifteen students attended. With the exception of
Student 6, all participated effectively. Each
expressed the desire to repeat the activity.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Seven students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively utilize the 5WH Strategy.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to write a paragraph according to pre-defined parameters.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with a presenter during a floral arranging demonstration for the purpose of creating their own floral arrangement.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Personal Characteristics List.

3. Floral arranging materials (florist provided).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see

Appendix L).

5. Student Goal Sheets (see Appendix O).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Sixteen

Events and Activities

Because of budget cuts which required reassignment
of the social agency representative who had agreed to
conduct an interactive session within the context of
the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer assumed the
responsibility. Students were exposed to positive
feedback strategies in relation to self-esteem
building. Following writer role modeling, students
engaged in interactive role playing. Thirteen students
and one parent attended. All were highly participative
and worked efficiently with peers and adults. Students
1 and 6 were absent.

Letter writing techniques were continued within the
Social Skills Workshop format. Following a writer
demonstration, students constructed a rough draft of a
three paragraph writing. Student progress was
monitored by the both the writer and a visiting parent.

Fourteen students attended. Student 6 was absent. All were productive.

Because of a Language Arts field trip, the "Choices Jr." Workshop was cancelled. Moreover, only the Tuesday Peer Tutor/Mentor session was held for the same reason. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Nine students attended. All were cooperative.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Four students attended. All were cooperative.

Members of Quality Circle and the SIC were updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy. Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to give and accept positive feedback.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to engage in effective writing skills by generating a three paragraph rough draft according to specified criteria.

3. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

4. Members of the Quality Circle and SIC were updated by the writer regarding current student status and program efficacy.

5. The monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 1 (social agency provided).

3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

8. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

Week Seventeen

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer
introduced problem solving strategies which were to be
used in conjunction with positive feedback. Having
observed the writer in a role modeling mode, one member
of each group defined a school-based social problem
(i.e., girl rejects boy), examined possible solutions
to the problem with other members of the group, weighed
the consequences of each, and chose one that best met
the current need. Throughout the decision making
process, supporting members of the group provided
positive feedback to the problem solver. Twelve
students participated with enthusiasm and efficiency.
Students 1, 5, and 14 were absent. Although Student 6
had long since demonstrated behaviors that indicated
disassociation from the learning process, the student
was highly participative, focused, and cooperative
during the exercise.

Editing and writing the final draft of the
introductory "Pen Pal" letters was the thrust of the
Social Skills Workshop. Armed with characteristic
lists and a list of adjectives which provided
description for each, students chose colored stationery

constructed the final draft, and mailed the letters.
All fifteen students completed the assignment.
Although Student 6 complied with the general criteria,
the content of the product was unacceptable. A
student/writer conference produced an apathetic student
response. Thus, the letter was not forwarded to the
elementary school "Pen Pal." Instead, a class letter
was written to the child.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students began
researching current career choices. For a period of
three weeks, commencing with Week 17, each student had
the opportunity to use the "Choices Jr." software for
one hour. Using previously constructed input lists,
students entered personal data relative to discrete
questions which had been generated by the software.
Upon completion, a printout was generated which
specified general career orientations that were
compatible with the individual student's skills,
interests, and abilities. Moreover, the printout
contained information relative to other aspects such
as: job availability in the area where the student
lives; salary ranges; job description; and
prerequisites for obtaining the position. Students
took the printouts home to share with parents who had
been encouraged by the writer to interact with the

student in exploring future possibilities. All 15
students participated with a high degree of
cooperation.

While one student interacted with the "Choices Jr."
software, the remaining students worked in groups in a
continuing exercise to role play specific job
descriptions which were provided by the writer. As
one student took on the career role, others became
supporting players (i.e., one student became an office
manager and another group member became the office
workers). All students completed the input over a
three week period and engaged in the role play
activity. Of all practicum activities to date, this
was clearly the one to which all students responded
with enormous interest and concentration. Each
expressed behaviors that indicated a real-world
connection to the learning experience.

Although a guest speaker had been scheduled for
this session, the event was postponed until the
following week.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and
Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the
writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students
attended. All were cooperative.

Invitations to a Parent/Student Workshop were
mailed.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to use
   problem solving techniques in conjunction with
   positive feedback strategies.

2. Students demonstrated effective organizational
   skills by independently completing and mailing
   "Pen Pal" letters.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact
   with the "Choices Jr." software for the purpose
   of obtaining relevant career opportunity
   information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Stationery, pens, and postage.

3. Positive Feedback, Sheet 2 (social
   agency provided).

4. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix
   M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Invitations and postage.

Week Eighteen

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer
introduced and role modeled appropriate negative
feedback procedures which were used in conjunction with
positive feedback and problem solving techniques.
Following the demonstration, students interacted within
groups under the supervision of the writer and a
visiting parent. Thirteen students participated. All
worked enthusiastically with the exception of Student 6
who refused to work with other group members. An
alternate computer activity was assigned and completed.
Students 1 and 8 were absent.

The Social Skills Workshop presented another
opportunity to brainstorm ideas. Students explored

themes for an upcoming school dance and created a chart
listing relevant tasks and responsibilities for the
sponsoring group. Fourteen students attended. Student
6 was in the in-school suspension program. All
participated enthusiastically.

"Choices Jr." activities continued as planned.
Nothing remarkable occurred. Thirteen students
participated. Students 6 and 15 were absent.

The intended guest speaker postponed for the second
time.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and
Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the
writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students
attended. All were cooperative.

The SIC was updated by the writer relevant to
current student status and program efficacy.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate
   between positive and negative feedback during
   problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop,
   and organize a school dance.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with

"Choices Jr." software for the purpose of obtaining relevant career opportunity information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The SIC was updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 3 (social agency provided).

3. Negative Feedback, Sheet 1 (social agency provided.

4. Dance Planning Organizational Charts.

5. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix M).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Nineteen

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, students continued to improve skills which connected positive and negative feedback to real-world problem solving situations. The same format as that of the previous session prevailed. Thirteen students participated. Students 2 and 11 were absent. All worked cooperatively within groups to produce relevant outcomes. Student 6 was cooperative and productive throughout the session.

During the first half of the Social Skills Workshop, students continued to work in group format to delineate organizational requirements for the upcoming school dance. Eight students attended. All were cooperative and productive. However, during the second half of the session, an instructor from the air conditioning and refrigeration vocational department at a local community college addressed students in connection with educational requirements for job entry in that field. Although students demonstrated excellent social skills during the presentation, little interest was expressed. Because of a school sponsored field trip, Students 1, 2, 5, 8, and 10 did not

participate, and Students 3 and 7 were absent.

"Choices Jr." activities continued as planned.
Nothing remarkable occurred. All 15 students
participated. All were cooperative and productive.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and
Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the
writer, the session was unremarkable. Three students
attended. All were cooperative.

Following a writer-generated comprehensive review
of current student status, attendance, and discipline
referrals, members of the Quality Circle were updated
relative to student status and program efficacy.
During the review, it was determined that Student 6
continued to fail three academic areas and one
elective. Two academic failure areas were recorded for
Students 1 and 2, and one area of academic deficiency
was reported for Students 7, 11, and 14. Social skill
deficiencies were noted for Students 2, 3, and 6, and
conduct deficiencies were indicated for Students 3, 5,
6, and 11.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to
parents.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate

between positive and negative feedback during

problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop,

and organize a school dance.

3. Students demonstrated effective social skills when

interacting with a guest speaker.

4. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with

the "Choices Jr." software for the purpose of

obtaining relevant career opportunity information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring

sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the

writer relative to student status and program

efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive and Negative Feedback Sheets

(continued from previous workshop).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and

parent chaperone list.

4. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix

M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Twenty

Events and Activities

Positive and negative feedback continued to be
interlaced with problem identification and solving
techniques in the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students
were instructed to identify classroom problems and
determine appropriate solutions (i.e., teacher blames
student for actions in which the student was not
involved). The focus was on appropriateness --- given
current district and school guidelines. Fourteen
students participated. Student 6 was absent. All
remained focused and cooperative with other group
members. Although closely monitored by the writer,
students demonstrated significant progress in the
delivery of negative feedback. However, Students 1, 3,
and 11 entered a defensive mode when receiving same.

During a brief writer/student conference, rationales were developed for maintaining appropriate behavior, and each student made adequate progress during the rest of the session.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students continued to work in groups to define roles and responsibilities with regard to the upcoming school dance. A materials section was added to the chart, and students began to deal with quantity and price information as it pertained to decorations, food, and beverages. Fourteen students attended. All were highly enthusiastic and participative. Student 6 was on suspension for conduct violations.

Having completed individual interactions with the "Choices Jr." software, all students returned to the group format during the "Choices Jr." Workshop. In the first of five sessions, groups discussed the career goals of each member. Taking turns, students provided other group members with information concerning their selection. The object was to share and gain information regarding a variety of career orientations. Thirteen students attended. Students 2 and 6 were absent. Although all were participative and cooperative, Student 7 expressed displeasure with the career choice indicated on the printout. After a

student conference, the writer scheduled an additional
input appointment.

A Parent/Student Workshop was conducted in an
evening session. Its purpose was to emphasize the
connection between educational environment and
real-world opportunity. A guest speaker from the
business sector clearly linked current educational
vocational opportunities within the practicum district
with local job opportunities. Entrance criteria was
defined, and an interactive discussion took place.
Attending parents and students were highly interactive
and participative.
All demonstrated a keen interest in vocational
opportunity. Numerous, relevant handouts were provided
by the guest speaker. Ten parent/student pairs and
four teachers attended the session. Parent/student
pairs 1,3,6,7, and 10 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and
Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the
writer, the session was unremarkable. Three students
attended. All were cooperative.

At a presentation to both the SIC and Parent
Advisory Committees, during which the writer updated
both bodies relative to student status and program
efficacy, feedback was sought. A question/answer

session followed. In both cases, committee members were highly complimentary of the program and expressed a keen interest in final results. Continuance of the program without alteration was recommended. In the case of the SIC, a specific interest in the Peer Tutor/Mentor Program was expressed. Although two members objected to the concept of peer tutoring, based on a perspective which suggested that students should accept responsibility for their own learning without depending on adjunct resources, the ideology was not broadly shared within the group.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate between positive and negative feedback during problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop, and organize a school dance.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with group members during a career orientation sharing session.

4. Students demonstrated socially appropriate interactions with parents, a guest speaker, teachers, and other students during a Parent/

Student Workshop.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

6. The SIC was updated by the writer relative to
   student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 4 (social
   agency provided).

3. Negative Feedback, Sheets 2 and 3 (social
   agency provided.

4. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and
   parent chaperone list.

5. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix
   M).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see
   Appendix G).

8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

10. Handouts for Parent/Student Workshop (see Appendix D).

Week Twenty-One

Events and Activities

Quite unexpectedly, a guest speaker became available to present at the Self-Esteem Workshop. A registered nurse with a degree in psychology, whose specialty is pediatric/geriatric connections, spoke with the students about self-esteem in connection with relationships. Focusing on the benefits of intergenerational connections, the presenter emphasized the need to broaden the individual perspective of daily living by including persons of all ages among one's circle of significant people. A question/answer format was employed. Although numerous types of relationships were discussed, the most popular subject was that of grandparents. Of the 15 participating students, only two were proximate to a grandparent. Six students did not know their grandparents, and seven saw grandparents infrequently or not at all. Strategies to connect with absent grandparents were discussed. All students attended, and all participated effectively.

During the Social Skills Workshop, the writer modeled behaviors that would be considered appropriate for dance personnel (i.e., ticket salesperson, refreshment server, parent chaperone, and D.J. assistant). Role playing took place within groups. All 14 attending students were highly participative and creative during the process. Student 7 was absent.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students moved toward developing interim objectives which held high potential for goal realization. The object was for each student to enlist the aid of others in brainstorming ideas that would help in the construction of a specific objective (i.e., in order to reach the goal of entering a vocational program in graphic design, one objective might be to take a basic computer prep course). Twelve students participated. Students 5, 6, and 14 were absent.

Although an evening workshop had been planned to express appreciation for the efforts of the peer tutor/mentors, it was rescheduled as an after school event because parent response was so poor. Many of the peer tutor/mentors were involved in evening sports. Thus, a short social was held following one of the regularly scheduled tutoring sessions. Soft drinks and donuts were served. The benefits of the program were

discussed on an informal basis, and all six attending

peer tutor/mentors expressed enthusiasm for the program

and spoke of personal satisfaction that was derived

through interaction with others.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and

Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the

writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students

attended. All were cooperative.

Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the

writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent home.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated effective social skills
   while interacting with a guest speaker.

2. Students demonstrated continuing proficiency
   in organizational planning by appropriately
   acting out specified roles as each pertains
   to the upcoming school dance.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to construct
   relevant objectives in connection with specified
   short term goals.

4. The writer held a social for peer tutor/mentors
   to express appreciation for their contributions

to the program.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the
   writer relative to student status and program
   efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and
   parent chaperone list.

3. Dance materials (tickets, decorations, food,
   monopoly money, a parent chaperone roster, and
   cash boxes).

4. Donuts and soft drinks.

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

9. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

<u>Week Twenty-Two</u>

<u>Events and Activities</u>

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, students were given 10 minutes to construct an outline on a topic of choice (i.e., sports, T.V. programs, or films) according to the 5WH method. Beginning with this session, and for two sessions thereafter, each student gave a three minute oral presentation on the topic. Students who were not involved in the presentation were expected to maintain eye contact and assume an alert posture according to the principles of positive self presentation. Following each presentation, a two minute positive feedback session took place. Thirteen students participated in the interaction. Students 1, 3, 7, 8, and 10 presented while Students 2, 5, 11, 12, and 14, 15, 16, and 17 listened and provided feedback. Students 6 and 18 were absent.

Making final preparation for the "Spring Dance" during the Social Skills Workshop, students interacted with two visiting parents who aided with activity coordination and completion of the organizational charts. All parties were highly participative, enthusiastic, and excited about the venture. Thirteen

students attended the session. Student 6 and 17 were on suspension following a lunchtime fight with one another.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students entered a phase of reevaluation. Quietly reexamining goals and objectives in relation to career choices, students were instructed to list as many feelings as possible within a 10 minute period and to write one sentence stating whether or not the career choice was still acceptable. Although 13 students attended the session, only 12 participated because Student 7 was interacting with the "Choices Jr." software to produce an alternate career choice. Students 6 and 17 were on suspension. All other students still expressed satisfaction with the original career choice.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated characteristics
   related to positive self-esteem during oral
   presentations.

2. Students demonstrated he ability to give

effective positive feedback to presenters during oral presentations.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to use social and organizational skills while coordinating final plans for the "Spring Dance."

4. Students demonstrated the ability to reevaluate career objectives and goals, to express feelings in relation to the overall career choice, and to determine the feasibility of the choice as it related to abilities, skills, and interests.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and parent chaperone list.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, a "You Won An Award for What?" party was held. Individual Student Characteristic Lists were used to create positive, humorous, framed award certificates which were presented to each student in the practicum project by the writer. Although parents were invited, only one was able to attend. Refreshments were served and all 13 participating students expressed enjoyment. Students 6 and 15 were absent, and respective certificates were mailed home.

Previously scheduled activities for both the Social Skills and "Choices Jr." workshops were cancelled to allow students to attend the school-wide, "Career Day." program which took place over a two day period. Choosing from a comprehensive menu of career alternatives, students had the opportunity to select those which were of most interest to them. A broad slate of activities and interactions were available as a result of the business sponsored event. Students had the latitude to enter and leave programs at will. Although the writer monitored the logistical process,

no other intervention was made. The event was intended
to be an enjoyable experience during which students
could establish a connection between the educational
format and real-world activity. Other than attending a
writer delivered orientation, relative to the purpose
of the career event, there were no other expectations
of students. All students attended the event. Even
though Students 6 and 17 had earned two and three day
in-school suspensions respectively, both were released
to participate in "Career Day" events.

In addition, the peer tutor/mentor sessions were
cancelled because many career events continued on after
normal school hours and the facilities which were
normally used for tutoring sessions were not available.
However, in two cases, peer/tutor mentors volunteered
to work via telephone to assist tutees.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to employ
   positive self presentation skills when interacting
   with others during the social event.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to gain relevant
   career information during the "Career Days" event.

Materials

1. Framed award certificates.

2. Refreshments.

3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Twenty-Four

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, oral presentations were continued. Students 2, 5, 6, 11, and 12 presented. Although Student 6, refused to comply at the onset, the student was ultimately cooperative. All 15 practicum students were in attendance.

The formal time slot for the Social Skills Workshop was changed to the evening on which the "Spring Dance" was held. With the exception of Student 6, all participated in the event. Despite the fact that discrete roles had been previously defined, in actuality, there was an interchanging of roles in response to situational events. For example, when Student 5 (the ticket agent) needed to make an emergency trip to the restroom, Student 18 (the D.J. assistant) covered the ticket receiving station. All

students demonstrated outstanding social skills while hosting the event, and all expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the event.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, and using the 5WH format, students constructed written summaries relative to individual experiences during the "Career Day" event. Twelve students attended. All were cooperative and participative. Students 6, 15, and 18 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

Seeking feedback from the SIC, the writer updated the committee relative to student status and program efficacy. All feedback was extremely positive.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated characteristics related to positive self-esteem during oral presentations.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to give effective positive feedback to presenters during oral presentations.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to employ

socially app_opriate skills while
interacting with all parties connected
with the "Spring Dance" event.

4. Students demonstrated the ability to make
   effective use of the 5WH method while
   generating a short, written summary of
   "Career Days" events and activities.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

6. The SIC was updated and feedback was sought by the
   writer during a student status and program
   efficacy report.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts, parent
   chaperone list, school map, tickets, cash,
   cash box, decorations, cleaning supplies,
   food, and beverages.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

Week Twenty-Five

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, Students 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 presented oral reports, while all others listened and provided positive feedback. All students attended the session. Although Student 6 attempted to sleep during the first two presentations and was finally sent to the in-school suspension center, all other students were highly participative and cooperative. An excellent interactive session followed these presentations. Students sought information from the presenters in an effective and relevant manner. Excepting Student 6, all attended.

In addition to wrap-up activities during the Social Skills Workshop (i.e., paying bills and returning materials to the proper parties), a full exchange of ideas was generated during a brainstorming session. Concentrating on how to make the next event even better, students cooperated to produce a list of goals

for future dances. Twelve students attended the session. Student 6 was in the In-School Suspension Center, and Students 1 and 17 were absent. Although a mild argument occurred between Students 11 and 13 concerning the time frame for dances, it was quickly remedied within the group format. All attending students were highly participative and cooperative.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students were instructed to use the 5WH method and individual lists of feelings to write a short report under the title "Why I Want to Be a -------." Only nine students participated in the event because of a social studies field trip. Students 1, 5, 8, 16, and 18 had excused absences. Student 6 was absent. Absentees did the assignment for homework. All were cooperative and participative except Student 6 who chose not to do the make-up assignment.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

Seeking feedback from the Parent Advisory Committee, the writer updated members relative to student status and program efficacy. Other than complimenting program characteristics, there was no

feedback. In addition, the Quality Circle was apprised of current student status following a comprehensive review of weekly reports, attendance records, and discipline referrals. In summary of the information, Student 6 was failing all subject areas, Students 1, 2, and 14 were failing two academic subjects, and Students Students 5, 7, and 11 were failing one each. Social skill deficiencies were recorded for Students 1, 3, and 6. Unsatisfactory conduct was reported for Students 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, and 14. In addition, Students 1 and 6 were failing on excessive absences. Utilizing all available resources, contracts were adjusted and interventions were applied according to individual need.

Finally, invitations were mailed for the upcoming Parent/Student Workshop.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to continue to maintain positive self-esteem during the the oral presentation experience.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to maintain a high degree of social presence while bringing "Spring Dance" activities to a successful close.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to complete
   a well constructed summary of the career
   orientation experience.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring
   sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The Parent Advisory Committee was updated and
   feedback was sought by the writer during a student
   status and program efficacy report.

6. The Quality Circle was update relative to student
   status following a comprehensive review of student
   records by the writer.

   Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Organizational Charts.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

5. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix
   N).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix

F).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

9. Invitations, envelopes, and postage.

Week Twenty-Six

Events and Activities

During this week, the primary activity for the
Self-Esteem Workshop was a student sponsored pizza
party for a local children's home. Although it was
scheduled to have been a picnic, inclement weather
prevented the outdoor activity. Thirteen students
participated and six parents participated. Students 6
and 16 were absent. However, Students 7 and 11 argued
constantly during the trip. Despite a strong request
from the parent volunteer driver, the behavior
continued to be unacceptable. Upon arrival, both
students were removed from the festivity and not
allowed to participate.
Letters of apology were written to the parent driver.
All other students were highly participative and
cooperative.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students began a 250 word written exercise which was titled "How I Contributed to Making the "Spring Dance" a success. Outlines and paragraph schematics were completed during this session. However, the activity was continued as a home assignment. Parents were encouraged to interact with students for the purpose of aiding in highlighting the major contributions. With the exception of Students 6 and 16, all completed the essays within set parameters. Moreover, students expressed feelings of accomplishment and social success. All students attended the session.

Oral reports were the focus of the "Choices Jr." Workshop. Configured in four groups, students entered into a brief discussion of representative career choices and chose one presenter who gave a brief summary of job descriptions of each member. The object was to integrate the overlapping roles by interconnecting them in a real world scenario. For example, one presenter related the roles of a fireman, secretary, doctor, and air an conditioning repair person. With the exception of Student 6, all students attended. However, Students 1 and 7 were not at all cooperative within respective groups and were ultimately sent to the dean for interfering with group

goals. Thus, phone conferences were held with parents of Students 1, 7, 8, and 11. Ultimately, uncooperative students wrote notes of apology to respective group members. Although the behavior of the other students was not up to par, they were reasonably participative and cooperative.

Peer tutor/mentor activities did not occur during this week because of conflicting after school sports events.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to maintain high self-esteem while assuming a leadership position during the local children's home pizza party.

2. Students demonstrated effective social skills when writing an essay on the topic of the "Spring Dance."

3. Students demonstrated the ability to summarize job descriptions and to integrate the roles of each as it occurs in real-world activities.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Pizza and soda.

3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see
   Appendix L).

4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

6. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

Week Twenty-Seven

Events and Activities

The highlight of the week was a Parent/Student
Workshop. Conducted by the writer during an evening
session, parents and students were apprised of current
educational resources within the community, of district
policy regarding vocational education, of scholarship
opportunities for higher education in connection with
"at risk" factors, and of the upcoming field trip to
the community college vocational center. A highly
interactive session, parents were extremely
participative, generated numerous questions, and
expressed appreciation for the practicum project.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable, productive
event for all. Eleven parent/student teams attended.

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the students
listened to a motivational tape which inspired high
self-esteem through positive affirmation. Upon
completion of the tape, students configured in groups
to practice making positive affirmations and to discuss
the benefits of same. Thirteen students attended.
Students 3 and 8 were absent. With the exception of
Student 6, all were highly participative, cooperative,
and relaxed throughout both the delivery process and
the group interaction phase. However, Student 6 left
the premises without permission and was sent to the
in-school suspension center.

Although the thrust of the Social Skills Workshop
was to prepare students to assume host/hostess
positions for Awards Night, the original date was
changed because of facility problems. While some
students did volunteer in that capacity some weeks
earlier, preparation for the role did not specifically
occur within the practicum project. Thus, this session
was dedicated to enhancing student opportunity during
final exams by exposing them to motivational tapes for
that purpose. Therefore, the format for this workshop
was identical to that of the Self-Esteem Workshop. The

only departure was the tape itself which was oriented
toward the reduction of test anxiety by relieving
stress. Excepting Student 6 who was absent, all
students were participative and cooperative.

The "Choices Jr." Workshop provided the opportunity
for a year end wrap-up party. Students had been polled
to determine the type. Ultimately, it was decided that
a film would be shown. Candy, popcorn, and soda were
served. Students were very participative, cooperative,
and relaxed. Twelve students attended. Students 1, 6,
and 17 were absent.

The final peer tutor/mentor session was poorly
attended because of a number of school sponsored field
trips, award events, and performances. Although a
social was originally intended to honor peer
tutor/mentors, too few were able to attend to warrant a
gathering. Therefore, the writer conveyed appreciation
for outstanding performance and awarded community
service hours to all participants. In addition, all
were publicly commended via the school media system.
Throughout the program, only four became disinterested.
Overall, the tutors performed with dedication, empathy,
reliability, and responsibility.

Having submitted a written report relative to
current student status and program efficacy to the SIC,

the writer sought feedback from the committee.
Expressing appreciation for the holistically based
practicum intervention, the committee was highly
supportive of the ideology and methodology. In
addition, Quality Circle members were briefed to the
same extent.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to listen
   attentively to motivational tapes, to configure in
   groups, and to discuss the benefits of tapes in
   terms of self-esteem.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with
   others in a socially appropriate mode during a
   school party.

3. The writer provided valuable community resource
   information to parents and students in order to
   enhance educational opportunities for practicum
   students.

4. The writer expressed appreciation, awarded
   community service hours, and publicly commended
   peer tutor/mentors for outstanding service.

5. The SIC was updated and feedback was sought by the

writer during a student status and program efficacy report.

6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated relevant to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Motivational tapes - "Think Positive" and "Stress Relief" (see Appendix Q).

3. Film - "E.T."

4. Popcorn, candy, and soda.

5. Paper goods for party.

6. Community Service Awards.

7. Handouts: Current community educational resources.

8. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

9. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

10. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

11. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Twenty-Eight

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, concentration centered on motivational tapes which were used to encourage high motivation and produce self confidence during final examinations. Students were exposed to ideology that supported positive thinking. Following the tapes, groups convened to discuss the benefits of the motivational messages. An exchange of ideas occurred within the group configuration and all attending students were mutually supportive and cooperative as a rationale was developed for approaching exams with a positive attitude. Fourteen students were in attendance. Student 18 was absent. Test taking strategies were introduced and modeled by the writer during the Social Skills Workshop. Designed to provided students with efficient techniques in choosing correct answers on objective tests, the focus was on using a three step approach to educated guessing when encountering unknown material. After the presentation, students entered into an interactive phase wherein each participated with the writer in

applying the strategy. There were no absences. All students were responsive and cooperative.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, "Nursing as A Career Choice" was the topic presented by a guest speaker. A nursing student in her final year, the speaker delineated the criteria for entrance to the R.N. program and, using a flow-chart, outlined the various career tracks that could be accessed within the field of nursing. Particular emphasis was given to the opportunities for males within the field of nursing. An interactive session followed. There were no absences. All students were highly participative and responsive to the speaker.

Individual observations for each of the remaining 15 practicum students were completed during this week. Although guidance counselors were to have conducted the observations, their reassignment to the In-School Suspension Center precluded their participation in that regard. Therefore, the writer completed terminal observations for each of the remaining practicum students within an interactive educational environment.

Because of final exams, the Quality Circle decided that peer tutor/mentor sessions should be terminated during the prior week. Therefore, the writer continued

the tutoring sessions within exam week to aid and support students during the exam period. Only three students attended.

Apprising the Parent Advisory Committee via written report, the writer presented a brief account of program components and activities. In addition, a schedule indicating when terminal data would be presented was included.

Objectives

1. Students listened attentively to motivational tapes and interacted efficiently within group configuration to provide rationales and apply benefits to the tape experience.

2. Students interacted with the writer during application of test taking strategies.

3. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

4. The Parent Advisory Committee was updated relevant to a summary of program components, activities, and the expectation of finalization of terminal data.

5. The writer completed terminal observations for each

of the practicum students within an interactive

educational environment.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparency, and pens.

2. Motivational Tapes - "Think Positive" (see Appendix Q).

3. Positive Self-Presentation, Worksheet 1 (see Appendix I).

4. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix N).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

7. Observation Checklist.

Week Twenty-Nine

Events and Activities

During the final weeks of the practicum effort, the

object was to provide for effective transition for

practicum participants and to aid them in maintaining

newly developed career goals. While 11 of the 15

remaining practicum students attended school-based
summer instruction, Students 12, 15, and 17 took part
time jobs and Student 10 babysat for two younger
children in the family. However, all participated in
practicum activities in one degree or another for the
duration of the practicum effort.

It is important to note that practicum students
attended summer instruction for differing reasons.
Some attended because of academic deficiencies (i.e. Fs
or Ds). However, most attended because of the
philosophy within the practicum setting which supports
the view that uninterrupted services should be provided
to students with exceptionalities to maximize the
potential for maintaining academic and social skill
levels. While formal school-based instruction was
considered a viable educational intervention for some,
it was determined that a more appropriate educational
alternative for others was founded in accommodating to
individual family lifestyles and differentiated student
needs. Therefore, a variety of practicum based
services were provided by the writer during the
transitional phase of the practicum.

Various interventions were applied according to the
needs and best interests of participating students.

For example, in order to provide a continuum, the
writer monitored off-campus student activities.
Encouragement and support for both parents and students
was a key factor to maintaining the connection between
educational and real-world objectives. The chosen
method to accomplish the task was to provide relevant
materials to student interest and need and to maintain
continuous open channels of communication (i.e., school
based and telephone conferences). Moreover, two career
oriented field trips were planned during this period.
In the aftermath of final exams and in preparation for
summer school activities, the Self-Esteem Workshop
focused on upcoming activities. Stress relief was the
subject of the motivational tapes. Ten students
attended following summer school registration.
Strategies to relieve stress were discussed following
the tape. Students grouped to discuss current methods
of relieving stress and how the tape strategies could
be incorporated into present methods. Much of the
group discussion centered on the relief students felt
following exams. Students 1, 2, and 6 expressed
frustration and resentment with being remanded to the
summer school experience by parents and teachers. On
the other hand, Students 8, 11, 14, and 16 maintained

that summer school presented exciting social
opportunities. Students 3, 5, and 7 remained neutral.
Student 18 was absent. Following the discussion, the
writer guided students in physical exercises that have
a tendency to relieve stress (i.e., deep breathing and
progressive relaxation techniques). All attending
students were highly participative and cooperative.
Following the exercises, coke and potato chips were
served.

While a "Pen Pal" picnic at a local park had been
previously scheduled for the Social Skill Workshop, the
event was cancelled because too few parents and
students from participating schools expressed an
interest in attending.

As a transitional intervention, student/writer
conferences were held on an individual basis throughout
the week to provide opportunities for students to
review previously established goals in light of
appropriateness. Writer facilitated, goal review and
development included completing Student Schedule
Request Forms for Summer School, the development of an
IEP based on academic need and student interest,
appraisal of past goals, the establishing of new ones
in light of educational objectives for the summer, and

writing simple, short terms objectives and strategies to accomplish the projected outcome. All students participated in one of two modes. Conferences for Students 1, 2, 8, 11, 12, and 14 were conducted by telephone because of transportation problems. All others were school based. With the exception of Student 6 who remained apathetic throughout the conference experience, all students were enthusiastic, cooperative, and relaxed.

Objectives

1. Students listened attentively to motivational tapes and continued to interact efficiently within group configuration to discuss the benefits of same.

2. Students actively participated in individual transitional student/writer conferences for the purpose of review and development of goals, objectives, and strategies.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Motivational tapes (see Appendix Q).

3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Thirty

Events and Activities

At the onset of summer instruction at the practicum
school, the writer worked with respective teachers and
aides to provide appropriate processing and
motivational materials, instructed teachers in the use
of learning strategies, and offered consult assistance
for the duration of the summer session. Summer
teachers were thoroughly apprised of practicum
objectives and the associated activities in which
practicum students had participated during the regular
school year. Particular emphasis was placed on the
career orientation program, "Choices Jr." Workshop,
during which students had gained specific, career
information relative to individual abilities, skills,
and interests. Moreover, for the four students who did
not participate in the summer classroom experience, all
practicum services continued on their behalf.

Because counselors were overwhelmed with scheduling
problems which came as a result of increased student

population for summer services, the writer interacted
with students to set transitional academic goals and to
help students relate practicum experiences to real
world goals. All students participated. Individual
sessions were held.

In addition to the provision of direct classroom
interventions for those students whose best interests
could be addressed within a formal educational setting,
other practicum services remained in effect throughout
the summer program. The writer continued to monitor
both on and off campus activities and the individual
progress of practicum students. Parents and students
continued to have access to the writer by telephone.
Moreover, writer provided tutoring services were
available upon request, and preparation and
coordination of activities for the field trip to the
local junior college vocational center continued. All
practicum efforts were continued in an informal,
relaxed mode to accommodate to the tenor of the summer
program. Classroom services were provided only when
requested by summer instruction teachers, and
continuous monitoring of student progress continued.
This approach was adopted as a facilitative, rapport
developing overture to ensure the best opportunity for

students to successfully adapt to the summer
environment.

Because so many teachers and parents were
unavailable on a regular basis during the summer, all
committee meetings were cancelled until the week prior
to the onset of the next school year. Therefore, with
the exception of the terminal report which was
submitted in written mode, no further presentations
were made to the Quality Circle, SIC, or Parent
Advisory Committee.

Objectives

1. Supplemental materials to aid students in
   maintaining successful patterns during summer
   school were provided to summer school
   teachers by the writer.

2. The writer inserviced summer school teachers
   in the use of strategies in the exceptional
   education classroom and provided relevant
   information regarding practicum objectives
   and previous student orientation.

3. Students participated in individual interactive
   sessions with the writer for the purpose of

developing transitional academic goals which would connect to real world careers.

4. The writer continued to make preparation for upcoming field trips.

5. The writer continued to monitor and interact with practicum students who did not attend summer school.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Classroom materials (i.e., learning strategies, motivational films, etc.).

3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Thirty-One

Events and Activities

Activities were continued from the previous week. Summer school students attended school from 8:00 A.M. to 12:45 P.M. on Mondays through Thursdays. Weekly progress reports indicated satisfactory academic and

behavioral reports. Although processes were monitored by the writer, no direct classroom intervention was necessary.

Ongoing communication and activity monitoring for the four non-attending students took place. While Student 17 had a minor misunderstanding with the manager of a fast food establishment regarding his rate of pay, the matter was amicably resolved after writer intervention which simply required an explanation of the student's handicap which led to the misunderstanding in the first place. The other three students were coping well with current responsibilities. Otherwise, nothing remarkable occurred.

Objectives

1. Supplemental materials to aid students in maintaining successful patterns during summer school were provided to summer school teachers by the writer.

2. The writer continued to make preparation for upcoming field trips.

3. The writer continued to monitor and interact

with practicum students who did not attend
summer school.

Materials

1. Classroom materials (i.e., learning strategies,
   motivational films, etc.).

2. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

3. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Thirty-Two

Events and Activities

Two field trips were scheduled within the final
week. The first was a trip to a famous high-tech
facility. Fourteen students and three parents
attended. Student 10 was ill. Geared to provide a
glimpse into the future as it related to careers in the
year 2000, the event took place over a five hour
period. A facility guide narrated the event and
answered student questions throughout the tour.
Students were provided with resource materials which
mapped career opportunities with specific educational
tracks. With the exception of Student 6 who refused to

get out of the van when the group reached the tour
area, all students displayed excellent social skills,
and all were highly attentive and participative.
During the first hour of the tour, a volunteer parent
remained with Student 6. Thereafter, the student
decided to join the tour and, although he was never
very participative, he was generally cooperative.

The second field trip was attended by 13 students.
Students 8 and 11 were absent. Two parent chaperones
were in attendance. A long awaited trip, the students
were highly enthusiastic about the tour of the local
junior college vocational facility. A personable,
young tour guide provided highly relevant information
about job opportunities within the local area.
Visiting a placement office on the campus, the guide
showed students the current lists of jobs that had just
come in by computer. During the tour, all students
participated in hands-on experience within the many
vocational classrooms. Scholarship criteria was
discussed at length as well as the dual placement
program which currently gives students the option of
attending the vocational center during the afternoons
while attending high school. Practicum students were
impressed with the idea of acquiring credits which

could be applied to both a high school diploma and toward college credit. Although the trip was to have occurred over a four hour period, students were so interested in the presentation that the tour extended one hour beyond the scheduled time.

During the process, a field representative from a local high-tech corporation addressed students on the subject of marketable skills as prerequisite to job acquisition. Using the topic "Education - Your Ticket to Autonomy", the presenter developed a clear rationale for obtaining a quality education. All students were very participative and interactive.

Following both trips, summer instruction teachers used writer-provided goal seeking activities to reinforce the field trip experience and establish a direct line between current educational objectives and real world career opportunities. With the exception of Student 6, all students maintained high interest throughout the follow-up activities. In addition, the writer worked with students in an informal mode to update career goals.

A classroom party was the final student-based practicum activity. Its purpose was to provide a sense of closure to the formal eight month experience and to

present a rationale for continued goal direction and
periodic reassessment relative to student skills,
aptitudes, and interests. Although all parents and
students were invited to participate, Students 10, 15,
and 17 were unable to attend because of work schedules,
and no parents were able to attend. Soft drinks,
candy, and popcorn were the highlight, and the mood was
relaxed and informal.

Finally, data collection and analysis was completed
by the writer during the final week. The 1992 baseline
and 1993 terminal year end grade reports were compared
to determine the differential in both academic
performance and conduct for each of the practicum
students. In addition, attendance records were
scrutinized for the purpose of determining the
differential in school attendance patterns for each.
Moreover, baseline (first month of practicum) and
terminal (last month of practicum) behavioral
observations during interactive sessions for each of
the practicum students were compared to determine the
differential in self-esteem-oriented behaviors.

In as much as the SIC had cancelled summer
sessions, upon completion of the data analysis, a
comprehensive written report was prepared by the writer

and submitted for review during the next regularly

scheduled meeting. Moreover, parents were apprised of

current student status in all areas of practicum

orientation (i.e., academic, behavioral, self-concepts,

social skills, and career orientation). Both school

based and telephone conference methods were employed.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills
   when interacting with guest speakers and tour
   guides during field trips.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with
   summer teachers and the writer during goal seeking
   activities.

3. The writer completed practicum data
   collection and analysis.

4. The writer prepared a comprehensive written report
   which was submitted to the SIC for review at the
   next regularly scheduled meeting.

5. The writer provided parents with final practicum
   data as it related to all objectives of
   the practicum effort.

<u>Materials</u>

1. Writer-provided goal seeking activities.

2. Parent Permission Forms for student field trips.

3. Refreshments and party materials.

CHAPTER V

Results, Discussion and Recommendations

Results

Given the nature, complexity, and pervasiveness of
the high school drop-out situation, educators
throughout the country have become more involved than
ever before in the provision of interventional programs
and services to mediate this national crisis. Despite
some outstanding efforts, escalation continues.
Although certain socio-economic dynamics appear to be
characteristic of the typical "at-risk" student, the
risk factor is greatly enhanced when that student also
has a learning disability. By the time high school is
reached, the student has all too frequently
disassociated from the learning process while awaiting
the opportunity to drop-out at the age of 16. Thus, it
is apparent that interventional methods need to be
implemented much earlier.

Ideally, identification of students with "at-risk"
profiles and the employment of appropriate
interventional methods should take place at the
elementary level. However, as a nation with a problem
that has reached epidemic proportions, a reluctance to

address the tragedy on a nation-wide basis still exists. As a result, "at-risk" students often remain unidentified until strong evidence of global academic failure surfaces. More often than not, this scenario is evidenced at the middle/junior high school level.

Clearly, the "at-risk" problem was no stranger to the practicum school. It was particularly evident among students with learning disabilities. More specifically, the existing problem within the proposed practicum setting was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth-grade students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on either failing grades in two or more core subject areas or excessive absences, causing the respective students to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category. Despite numerous efforts to intervene, many of these students continued to demonstrate academic and social behaviors that were highly characteristic of the typical high school drop-out. As a result, sufficient evidence was present in the practicum environment to suggest that an interventional strategy was needed.

Because the writer is committed to the goals, objectives, and underlying ideology of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), it was

essential that the interventional strategy be designed
to embrace the philosophy of that landmark legislation.
After reviewing the literature, it was determined that
a holistically based strategy would be employed to
encourage students to achieve passing grades, improve
school attendance, develop appropriate social and
organizational skills, demonstrate responsible conduct
profiles, and develop a sense of heightened
self-esteem. In the best interests of students, it was
determined that these specific behaviors be integrated
with real-world career goals in order to aid in the
development of marketable skills.

Objective I

> A. At the end of the eight month practicum,
> at least two of the 12 seventh grade
> practicum students who failed the prior
> school year based on grades will achieve
> passing grades in three core subject areas,
> two elective subject areas, and physical
> education. Measurement will be effected
> by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original 12
seventh grade practicum students, who failed the prior
school year based on grades, three achieved passing

grades in three or more core subject areas, two
elective subject areas, and physical education by the
end of the eight month practicum.

> B. At the end of the eight month practicum,
> at least one of the six eighth grade
> practicum students who failed the
> prior school year based on grades will
> achieve passing grades in three core
> subject areas, two elective subject
> areas, and physical education. Measurement
> will be effected by writer review of grade
> reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six
eighth grade practicum students who failed the prior
school year based on grades, two achieved passing
grades in three or more core subject areas, two
elective subject areas, and physical education by the
end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 2

> A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at
> least three of the six seventh grade
> practicum students who qualified for
> failure due to absences during the prior

school year will achieve attendance records
that conform to acceptable standards
according to district level guidelines.
Measurement will be effected by writer review
of school attendance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six
seventh grade practicum students who qualified for
failure due to absences during the prior school year,
four achieved attendance records that conformed to
acceptable standards according to district level
guidelines at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at
least two of the three eighth grade practicum
students who qualified for failure due to
absences during the prior school year will
achieve attendance records that conform to
acceptable standards according to district
level guidelines. Measurement will be
effected by writer review of school
attendance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original three
eighth grade practicum students who qualified for
failure due to absences during the prior school year,
three achieved attendance records that conformed to

acceptable standards according to district level guidelines at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 3

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem, four demonstrated appropriate levels of self-esteem at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem, three demonstrated appropriate levels of self-esteem at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 4

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the seven seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original seven seventh grade students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills, three demonstrated behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the four eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture.

Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original four eighth grade students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills, two demonstrated behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 5

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original twelve seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades, four received satisfactory conduct grades at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory

conduct grades. Measurement will be
effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six
eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated non-
satisfactory conduct grades, three received
satisfactory conduct grades at the end of the eight
month practicum.

Discussion

Excellent results were realized from the eight
month practicum effort. In all cases, practicum
objectives were realized. However, in the areas of
academics, attendance, and self-esteem, practicum
expectations were exceeded for both seventh and eighth
grade practicum students. Moreover, the eighth grade
conduct objective was exceeded. Thus, a substantial
improvement in student performance was evident.

As a result of the practicum experience, a number
of implications have surfaced. First, it is apparent
that the collaborative effort that characterized the
eight month practicum effort holds high potential to
aid "at-risk" students with learning disabilities in
the development of appropriate motivational profiles.
Serving as a monitoring and reinforcing system which
served to integrate the holistically based practicum

infusion of creativity and innovation. Parents,
students, educators, and representatives from the
community coalesced to provide real-world connections
to school based activities. Highly diversified,
shareholders consistently provided differing
perspectives that had the capacity to constantly
rejuvenate the practicum experience and provide
opportunities for all to share in the day to day
operations. Clearly, students benefited from the
positive attitudes of practicum personnel, from the
confidence that was consistently displayed in student
abilities, and from the level of respect that was
generated within the learning environment itself.

Second, parent involvement appears to have a
substantially positive influence on student motivation.
Witnessed in a previous practicum effort by Buckner
(1992), the author noted that quality parent
involvement is a critical factor in the ultimate
educational success of students with SLD --- a high
"at-risk" population. Further indication of the need
for parent involvement was evidenced throughout the
literature. For example, Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and
Rock (1986) speak to the debilitating effects of
lacking parent involvement among socially and
economically deprived children. Moreover, Tapply

(1985) expressed concern about evidence that suggests that many parents (and educators) display a certain apathy regarding academic failure, absenteeism, and social deficiencies among students with SLD. Clearly, where quality parent involvement took place during the practicum, students were better able to cope with problems and work toward effective solutions.

Relative to career orientation, Rau et al (1989) found that addressing the vocational needs of students held high importance for educational success. That ideology was highly supported within the practicum effort in that the highest observed area of student interest occurred within the career orientation component where relevancy between real-world activity and educational expectation was established. Thus, from the writer's perspective, implications for the development of positive student motivation through career oriented activity are extremely strong.

Although a few unanticipated events occurred throughout the eight month practicum, each presented interesting opportunities to provide for parallel experience and none compromised the best interests of either students or practicum objectives. First, a change in teacher/staff schedules because of budget cuts precluded a common meeting time during what had

been previously scheduled as a common planning period.
However, adaptation to the situation was readily
accomplished, and the writer connected informally with
individual members throughout the practicum. Other
than the fact that the mode was a bit more labor
intensive for the writer, there was no impact.
Actually, the teachers involved welcomed the informal
approach because of the increase in duty schedules
following the unanticipated budget cut (i.e., hall and
cafeteria duty).

Another unanticipated event, which was a direct
result of the reduced budget, occurred when guidance
counselors were expected to take on new roles.
Required to assume additional duties on campus (i.e.,
monitoring the In-School Suspension Center), counselors
no longer had the time to complete classroom
observations or to work on individual career goals with
practicum students. Although general counseling
services continued on a regular basis and students
benefited substantially from them, the writer assumed
the total responsibility for observations and career
development counseling. Similar situations were
experienced in cases where resource persons from the
district level had been scheduled to provide
school-based training sessions and human resources.

For example, when certain staff level jobs were cut to cope with the financial crisis, the previously available district-trained mentors from the compact program were no longer available. Thus, the responsibility of providing parallel experience was assumed by the writer.

While the situation required a higher level of application on the part of the writer, the overture provided the opportunity to integrate practicum components and activities to a greater degree. Ultimately, the situation allowed for more consistent monitoring and was a decided advantage to overall practicum objectives. Another unanticipated event occurred that involved parent involvement. Originally intended to involve parents in a meaningful way, the Parent Telephone Hotline was to have been facilitated and monitored by trained parent volunteers. However, some volunteers took liberties that caused concern for both student confidentiality and for the integrity of the hotline component itself. Although parent volunteers were retrained in appropriate procedures, it was only a short time until the writer assumed total responsibility for the service because another complaint was lodged regarding the same circumstance.

However, service was continued without interruption, and there were no negative consequences.

To summarize, the unanticipated events actually presented exciting challenges and positive opportunities to accommodate to practicum objectives in a parallel mode. Given the fact that the field of education is an evolutionary process and budget constraints continue to disrupt previously planned programs and services, it was only fitting that the practicum would be geared to operate effectively when the need arose. Therefore, all adjustments were constructed to address practicum objectives and to provide quality parallel services. Thus, these few unanticipated events were actually symbolic of real-world situations and, as such, contributed positively to the overall practicum effort.

<u>Recommendations</u>

1. In schools where low to low-middle socio-economic status is common, it is recommended that parents be polled to determine the most appropriate times to schedule parent oriented gatherings and activities.

2. Because budget cuts have recently become a common event within the educational arena, it is

recommended that back-up resources be planned to accommodate unanticipated events and ensure program continuation.

3. In as much as parents from low to low-middle socio-economic environments often do not work within the conventional 40 hour five day week, it is recommended that creative scheduling be utilized to allow meaningful parent participation which is relevant to their differentiated needs (i.e., working on projects at home, participating in week-end activities as chaperones, or in providing services on a flexible schedule).

4. It is recommended that all advice notices and summaries to school based committees and personnel be accomplished in a concise, brief, informal mode in order to foster the continued interest and participation of all shareholders in practicum objectives and activities.

Dissemination

1. The writer will publish a handbook containing information relevant to practicum objectives, program description, and applicational strategies which will be distributed through

numerous professional organizations in which

the writer either holds the chair or occupies

a position on the Board of Directors.

2. The writer will be available to provide training

   opportunities for educators to avail themselves

   of strategies and techniques for mediating the

   "at-risk" profile of students with SLD,

   developing quality parent/school relationships, and

   providing relevant career planning opportunities

   within schools that have limited resources.

3. The writer has offered professional services

   to the new district adopted alternative education

   program in order to foster the interests of "at-

   risk" students with SLD. Serious interest in

   practicum results has been expressed by numerous

   educators, and the writer will continue to

   disseminate information relevant to the practicum

   to all interested parties.

4. The writer will seek opportunities to present the

   practicum at local, state, and national conferences.

5. The writer will continue the commitment to the

   precepts that underlie the Education for All

   Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) while

disseminating practicum information, providing
services, and enhancing educational
opportunities for "at-risk" students with
SLD.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
STUDENT TRACKING REPORT

STUDENT TRACKING REPORT

Dear Teachers:

The following student is participating in an "at risk program". Knowing your avid concern as an educator, the School Improvement Committee requests that you complete the following information at the end of each school week and direct it to the "at risk" coordinator and director.

Thank you for your continued interest.

Student Name -

Date -

Subject Area -

Current Grade -

Absences to Date -

Conduct Grade -

APPENDIX B
STUDENT STATUS REPORT

STUDENT STATUS REPORT

1. Student 1.

    Name

    Grades

        Math -

        Science -

        Social Studies -

        Language Arts -

        P.E. -

        Elective 1 -

        Elective 2 -

    Absences

    Conduct   Yes   No

        Positive Performance

        Negative Performance

APPENDIX C
PRACTICUM STUDENT/PARENT ROSTER

PRACTICUM STUDENT/PARENT ROSTER

SEVENTH GRADE

NAME	GRADE	PARENT	PHONE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.,			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

EIGHTH GRADE

NAME	GRADE	PARENT	PHONE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

APPENDIX D
WHAT'S WORKING IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

WHAT'S WORKING IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A pragmatic expose of parent involvement in the educational process, the monthly newspaper has broad appeal for both parents and educators. Its format is dedicated to the provision of school and home based methodology and increasing communication between school and home to enhance student opportunity.

County provided, the paper is under a 1992 copyright to the Parent Institute. Permission has been granted to the county school system to disseminate information and distribute the newspaper at will.

APPENDIX E
PARENT TELEPHONE HOTLINE LOG

PARENT TELEPHONE HOTLINE LOG

STUDENT NAME -

PARENT NAME -

DATE -

TIME -

NATURE OF CONTACT

INFORMATON GIVEN -

INFORMATON RECEIVED -

DISPOSITION -

REFERRED -

APPENDIX F
QUALITY CIRCLE STATUS REPORT

QUALITY CIRCLE STATUS REPORT

Date:

By:

1. Current Program Status:

2. Current Student Status Report (attach Student
   Status Sheet for each student):

3. Unusual circumstances which have the potential to
   impact program or student development:

4. Current Outlook: .

5. Recommendations:

APPENDIX G
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

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APPENDIX H
PRACTICUM STUDENT CONTRACT

PRACTICUM STUDENT CONTRACT

DATE:

In consideration for the opportunity to become the best that I can be, I agree to attend school on a regular basis, bring my materials to class, participate with the teacher and other students during the learning process, complete assigned homework, become involved in project activities, cooperate with all persons connected with the project, and fully invest myself in having fun during the learning experience.

I willingly enter into this contract because I'm worth it!!!

_____

Student Signature

_____

Project Director Signature

APPENDIX I
STAGES ACTIVITY SHEETS

STAGES ACTIVITY SHEETS

A series of worksheets have been designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop goals and objectives based on real-world orientation. The Stages program provides worksheets which were developed to address a specified goal and purpose. Assessment procedures are provided (Ann Arbor School Board of Education, 1989). Permission has been granted to the practicum school system to use or reproduce at will.

APPENDIX J

FAME WORKSHEETS

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FAME WORKSHEETS

A series of worksheets have been designed to provide
social focus with the setting. Integrated learning
activities underscore the program. Activities
are based on real-world orientation. Worksheets, materials,
procedures, and wrap-up activities are clearly delineated
(Alachua Counlty School Board Gainesville, 1984). The
program has been granted to public domain.

APPENDIX K
PEER TUTOR/MENTOR APPLICATION AND SCHEDULE

PEER TUTOR/MENTOR APPLICATION AND SCHEDULE

Date _____

Applicant Name _____

Grade _____

Subject Area of Interest _____

After School Availability:

    Monday:

    Tuesday:

    Wednesday:

    Thursday:

    Time:

      From:

      To:

First Teacher Reference:

Second Teacher Reference:

Third Teacher Reference:

Schedule

Day	Time	Weekly	Bi-weekly

APPENDIX L
PEER TUTOR/MENTOR SUPERVISORY REPORT

PEER TUTOR/MENTOR SUPERVISORY REPORT

Peer Tutor Name _____

Grade _____

Tutee _____

Grade _____

Subject Area _____

Day _____

Time _____

Supervisor Name _____

Phone _____

Summary of Daily Session:

Recommendations:

Next Scheduled Session:

APPENDIX M
CHOICES JR. COMPUTER PROGRAM

CHOICES JR. COMPUTER PROGRAM

On loan from a two year college in the practicum school
district, the career preparation program allows students to
explore vocational career opportunities in a "hands-on"
mode. Interacting with the software, students may select
from a variety of menus which address student skills,
aptitudes, and interests in numerous vocational
orientations. Ultimately, a comprehensive printout is
produced to be used as a foundation instrument in the
student's ongoing growth and development as each relates to
career preparation. Interacting with the software, students
may select from a variety of menus which address student
skills, aptitudes, and interests in numerous vocational
orientations. Ultimately, a comprehensive printout is
produced to be used as a foundation instrument in the
students' on going growth and development as each relates to
career preparation.

Although permission has been granted for its use, it has not
for material reproduction.

APPENDIX N
PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

Date:

By:

1. Current Program Status:

2. Current Student Status Report (attach Student
   Status Sheet for each participant):

3. Unusual circumstances which have the potential to
   impact program or student development:

4. Current Outlook:

5. Recommendations:

APPENDIX O
STUDENT GOAL SHEET

STUDENT GOAL SHEET

Student Name:

Date:

GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Daily Goal:

Rationale:

"How to":

Expected Outcome:

APPENDIX P
ORAL REPORT FORM

ORAL REPORT FORM

Develop your oral report from a newspaper or periodical.
Use the following questions to present complete and accurate
information:

1. Who?

2. What?

3. When?

4. Where?

5. Why?

and

6. How?

APPENDIX Q
MOTIVATIONAL TAPES

MOTIVATIONAL TAPES

A series of motivational tapes to encourage the development of high self-esteem, increase concentration levels, reduce stress, and allow students to gain information through an auditory mode were used. Designed by Advanced Learning Systems, Inc., the tapes are under a 1983 Copyright, Dept. 1, 13906 Ventura, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.