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THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SECONDARY PEER
MENTORING PROGRAM

by
Derryk Sellers

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May, 2004

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved April 29, 2004

Abstract

Derryk Sellers

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SECONDARY PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

2003/04

Dr. Robert Kern

Master of Arts in Educational Administration

This study sought to help establish a peer mentoring program for ninth grade boys at Lindenwold High School. This study used twelfth grade male positive role models to mentor this group of students. Many of these unmotivated students were the cause of many disciplinary problems. School administration sought to find a way to help these young men to overcome some of the obstacles, which cause their negative behavior. The focus of the study was to help identify those young men who can be mentors as well as young men who need to be mentored. This project helped provide another way to help some of the ninth grade boys to channel their energy in positive directions to lesson discipline referrals. The findings of this study were shared with the principal, the students involved, the superintendent, and the Board of Education.

Mini-Abstract

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Chapter 1

Introduction, Focus of the Study, Purpose of the Study, Limitations, Setting, Definitions, Significance, Organization

Introduction

It was obvious after observing high school students for over twelve years that students had greater difficulty adjusting to the high school environment. This observation caused educators to find ways that students would be motivated their students to succeed in the classroom. Students were faced with a myriad of different challenges. Some of the issues that high school students in this study faced included teen pregnancy, smoking, drugs, computers, and socialization. It has been difficult for students to succeed in the classroom when they were plagued with behavior problems. Many students had a difficult time making the adjustment to the high school setting. Ninth graders in particular have faced the challenge of making the change from the middle school setting, where they were the oldest, to the high school setting where they were the youngest students in the school.

Based on personal experience, ninth grade males seemed to have the most difficult time in dealing with the transition from middle school to high school. The largest percentage of students referred for disciplinary reasons were ninth grade boys. Many of these students were going through physical as well as mental changes. This group of students seemed to be looking for peer acceptance. They were trying to fit in with their peers and attempted to develop their social standing. In a study by Noll (1997), the importance of peer acceptance was dramatic when viewing the predictive validity of

sociometric status with respect to juvenile delinquency, school maladjustment, dropping out of school, and personal adjustment difficulties in childhood and adulthood.

It was important for them to know that they had someone they can turn to for help. At the same time, administrators were able to use positive peer pressure to help motivate these students. Hence, administrators needed to foster an environment where these students became friends with positive role models in the school.

Before literature can be reviewed, it was important to help establish some background information on this problem. Many of the ninth grade boys came to high school with immature attitudes about school and what should take place there. It was important to establish a set of rules and standards for them to follow in order for them to succeed in high school. Many of the discipline infractions that these students violated were related to inappropriate language, horseplay, and other acts of immaturity.

One of the best ways that schools have involved at-risk students was to establish a dialogue with them early in their high school careers and school personnel attempted to steer them in the right direction. There were many different options available and it was the job of the high school administrator to find ways to help students improve. Based on personal experience, this was the group of students that had the most discipline infractions. They tended to call out in class, fool around with friends, and seem unable to stay quiet during class. This was usually nothing more than being mischievous during a particular lesson. It was also a way for them to gain some attention during the lesson. Often times, these students just wanted to talk to someone and they just did not know how to go about getting someone to talk to them.

During the two-year history of Lindenwold High School, the administration identified the need for some type of mentoring program. There was a large population of students that came from single parent homes, typically under the watch of their mother. The children from these homes had a strong need for a positive male role model.

This study sought to help establish a peer mentoring program for ninth grade boys at Lindenwold High School. This study used eleventh and twelfth grade positive male role models as mentors. Many of the ninth grade students involved were unmotivated in the classroom, which resulted in the typical disciplinary problems. The researcher needed to find a way to help these young men overcome some of the obstacles they face.

A peer mentoring program was established. It was important to know what was expected of those who participate. The students involved in the program were told some of the benefits of being involved in a peer mentor program. It was also important for those involved to be aware of the effort that was necessary to make the program work. It was important to understand that these students went from the oldest in the school to the youngest. This was a tough transition for some while others can just take it in stride. A whole new set of standards and rules was overwhelming for the ninth grade male student. Indeed, they found their way around a strange building and realized that building a relationship with all new teachers was going to be challenging.

Another important aspect of this type of project was that the older student who mentored benefited from it as well. Students who saw themselves in their younger peer and tried to give some examples of some of the problems they faced when they were younger. It was through these experiences that the older students were able to help steer

the younger students the right way so that one day they could mentor someone and get them directed on the right path.

Many times students would listen to someone who was their own age as opposed to someone who is older. Many students feel that the advice of their friends was always right and the things that the adults in their life were telling them were too unbelievable. This was a way to channel energy into something positive and meaningful for all involved.

In reviewing the literature for this study, it was important to look at the impact that peer pressure can have on high school age students. One of the most influential aspects of being a high school student was peer pressure. Peer pressure can be positive or negative. In most cases, peer pressure was thought of as a negative thing. Most times negative peer pressure tends to be the reason that most students make the choices they make. Their peer group easily influences most teenagers. Therefore, it was important that teachers can see students involved with negative groups and try to persuade them towards more positive groups of people.

According to (Bozza-George, 2004) peer pressure is when a peer or a group of your peers tries to influence how you act, you may want to go along in order to feel that you were part of the crowd. Just as a positive group of peers can go a long way in influencing a student towards more positive aspects of life, it is probably just as easy for a negative group to affect a person's decisions as well. In our daily fight to guide our students towards more positive avenues it was important that they experience positive role models as well as positive peers that can help influence them. In many school districts today, there were groups of students who were used to help influence others students. Also in

the article by (Bozza-George, 2004) most kids want to be accepted by friends and feel that they belong. Some worry about what others might think if they wear different clothes or listen to different music. They may feel pressured to do something they don't want to do. These groups go a long way in establishing positive peer relationships for all students. Many times, these groups were more influential on the students than anything else. Also stated in (Bozza-George, 2004) sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between what you really want to do and what you think your friend wants you to do. But more and more kids were finding out it's easier than they thought to turn down a "friend's" invitation to use drugs. It was sometimes easier for students to interact with other students as opposed to the teachers or any other adult.

There were many different ways to use peer intervention to help students have a positive self-image and to become a positive member of the school community. This group of students being studied can have a great impact of the overall discipline of the school. It was important to establish a set of standards for these students for which they were held accountable.

The focus of the study was to help identify those young men who can be mentors as well as those who need to be mentored. This project will help by establishing another way to deal with some of the ninth grade boys. The findings of this study will be shared with the principal, the students involved, the superintendent, and the Board of Education.

Focus of the Study

The focus of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a peer mentoring program for ninth grade boys. This study examined the need and influence of such a program. The program would help deal with the daily discipline of the ninth grade boys, a group known

to display some very immature behavior. The projects purpose was to decrease the amount of ninth grade boys' disciplinary referrals that were sent to the office. Peer mentoring has had a positive influence on this population in other schools because the mentor was not an adult figure, but instead someone who was close in age to the student-mentoree.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project was to study the effectiveness of a peer mentoring program for ninth grade boys. This project examined the need and influence of such a program. This program could help deal with the daily discipline of the ninth grade boys. This group had been known to display some very immature behavior in the past and this was the focus group for this study. The purpose of this project will be to decrease the amount of ninth grade boys' disciplinary referrals that were sent to the office. The number of referrals was tracked during the course of the school year. Interviews were conducted with the students, their parents, and the student -mentors. Information collected was analyzed to determine if the quantity of referrals had increased or decreased.

Peer mentoring can have a positive influence on this population because it was not an adult figure but someone who was close in age to the mentored. According to (Renkl, 2000) even a child with high academic ability can learn a lot by coaching a classmate who's struggling. This project will help arm administrators with more of the arsenal they will need to deal effectively with student discipline.

After reading this study, teachers and administrators should try to find ways to get their students involved. There were many different ways to approach this situation and

hopefully through this study, teachers and administrators can have more than one way to try to help their students be successful.

Limitations

Some of the limitations of this study included the participation from the students and their parents. There were also no definitive parameters for this study. It also can not be used for any other group based on the information that has been provided.

Setting

This study took place in the Lindenwold School District in Lindenwold, NJ. Lindenwold was located in Camden County. It was a town that was 4.6 miles square and consists of single family homes and twenty-two apartment complexes. In 2003, the population of the town was 17,414 with a median income of \$36,080 according to the Department of Labor (<http://www.wnjp.state.nj.us>). Indeed, the new high school has become a great source of pride for this lower-middle class town. The community was very supportive of education but the last two school budgets have been defeated. In recent budget elections, Lindenwold has followed closely with the voting in Pine Hill which was a bordering town.

This study was completed at Lindenwold High School. The high school was a ninth through twelfth grade school with approximately 640 students and about 75 teachers. The high school was a two year old modern facility that offers a wide range of college and career preparatory academic programs as well as a large variety of co-curricular activities. The study included a random sample of both ninth grade boys and twelfth grade boys.

Definitions

Student-mentee- The ninth grade male student who will be mentored by an older student.

Student-mentor- The older student who will serve as the mentor to the ninth grade students.

Type I referral- is the basic referral for being late to school, class, or other relatively minor infractions faculty members may at times refer to the administration for handling.

Type II referral- is a more serious offence than a type I referral. This is assigned for any act of any verbal aggression towards a staff member, as well as for excessive use of profanity. A disruptive verbal argument with another student may also result in a type II referral.

Type III referral- is more serious than both a type I or type II refracton. This is assigned to any act which involves physical aggression. Type III referrals also include all occasion of the position, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs and substances. Indeed, any activity which rises to the level of criminality and thereby requires police involvement is a type III referral.

Significance

The significance of this project was the effort of the mentors in helping the ninth grade boys through the period of immaturity by offering some leadership and guidance. This project helped meet the needs of the ninth grade boys at Lindenwold High School. This project helped by letting the ninth grade boys see someone similar in age showing exemplary citizenship in many different educational settings. This project has been very

helpful to the disciplinarian of the school as well. This will give that person additional avenues to try to reach students and modify their behavior.

Organization

The remainder of this study will be organized in the following manner: Chapter 2, Review of the Literature, Chapter 3, Design of the Study, Chapter 4, Presentation of the Research Findings, and Chapter 5, Conclusions.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Literature Review

This chapter will be a review of the literature related to this study. The rest of this chapter will be designed as follows: review of major concepts related to the problem, and conclusion.

The basic premise of any peer mentoring program is to change behaviors. The mentor serves as the model for the student-mentee to follow and base their interaction. Hopefully the behaviors will then begin to change. In the paper “Adapting the gang model: Peer mentoring for violence prevention”, the authors state, “The notion of peer mentoring is based on the observation that the behaviors of children were learned from adults and peers” (Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, and Christoffel, 1999). These learning relationships can promote prosocial behaviors. Studies in other public health areas, such as AIDS, and tobacco use prevention, have suggested that peer mentoring contributes to successful health promotion.

Another key aspect of any peer mentoring program is to work on the student-mentees self-esteem. Often times, many of the students who were being mentored suffer some deficiency in self-esteem. Therein the authors state, “Research indicates high self-esteem serves as a protective factor to youth involvement in risky health behavior. High self-esteem is associated with high academic achievement, involvement in sport and physical activity, and development of effective coping, and peer pressure resistance skills” (King, Vidourek, Davis, and McClellan, 2002). At the same time, the authors found that low

self-esteem is associated with youth involvement in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; depression; suicide; violence; early sexual activity; teenage pregnancy; and poor peer relationships. In a school environment, high levels of self-esteem increase the likelihood that youth will connect positively to peers, teachers and the school as a whole, important determinants of academic success.”

The key to mentoring is to have good mentors who can relate to those with whom they were mentoring. Mentoring is about gaining trust of the student-mentee as to be able to lead them. It is important to establish a good relationship with those involved as to help with the effectiveness of the program. According to David Chan in his study, The Development of Mentorship Programs at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, “The use of peer mentoring is based on the assumption that both mentors and student-mentees benefit from the mentoring relationship, as peer mentoring provides an opportunity for the peer mentors to exercise responsibility and practice leadership skills” (Chan 2000),

Interestingly, the work of Sally Barton-Arwood and her associates further explored this concept. According to their study, the mentoring relationship provided specific benefits. Student-mentees benefit by (a) learning and practicing new skills with a trusted friend, (b) having multiple exemplars of appropriate behaviors from mentors, (c) experiencing multiple interactions with individuals of different backgrounds and (d) learning and practicing the expected norms of the environment. In addition to the benefits that the student-mentees gain, mentors gain by (a) improved self-esteem by modeling appropriate skills and knowledge to another peer, (b) increased opportunities to interact with peers different than themselves, and (c) mastered social competence (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, and Massey 2000).

Also stated in the Barton-Arwood study were, the benefits of mentoring were as follows: (a) development of emotional supports and friendships, (b) improved self-esteem and confidence for mentor and student-mentee, (c) an increased set of knowledge and skills, (d) an improved social network (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, and Massey 2000). It is important for the students involved to be aware of the positive aspects of being in this type of program. These types of programs can be beneficial for all those involved. To see the growth in some students and to watch them mature is amazing.

As Barton-Arwood, et al. pointed out, the major concepts of this study were that the program was organized, students were willing to participate, and time was spent in following up to ensure the success of the program. Also, all students, teachers, and administrators involved understood the purpose and elements of the program (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, and Massey 2000).

In addition, the study explored the use and benefits of mentors and investigated and documented a variety of professions and populations, including numerous peer-based mentoring programs for elementary-age students. These peer-based programs, although reporting positive academic and social outcomes, had typically utilized controlled experimental procedures in manipulated settings, which called into question whether the benefits of mentoring could be generalized and maintained in real life situations (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, and Massey 2000).

To organize this type of program, it was important to research different types of programs that had been just like or totally opposite of any program that was implemented. It was important for all those involved to know the purpose of such a

program. Goals of the program were made clear to all involved. This went a long way and helped to establish a standard for the program for years.

Barton-Arwood, et al. also stated the steps to developing a mentoring program can be summarized into three key areas (Barton-Arwood, Jolivet, and Massey 2000). First, define the times within the daily schedule when mentoring could occur to help ensure regular student-mentee-mentor contacts. Second, appropriately screen and match mentor and student-mentees to prevent unsuccessful and problematic relationships. Making appropriate matches includes taking into consideration common interests, backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students. Third, train the mentors, and monitor the mentor-student-mentee interactions. No program is problem-free, but monitoring can prevent unforeseen situations from escalating into larger problems.

In researching the different types of programs that existed, the main objective for all of them was for someone who has been there to help someone who has not. It was a very basic and general concept but held true in each of the mentoring programs reviewed. A recent study by (Reiser et al. 1989) reported that the most successful mentoring relationships were structured and organized. If teachers choose to incorporate mentoring into their classrooms, several issues should be considered. These issues included (a) skills and strengths of the mentors, (b) amount and content of mentor training. (c) appropriate matches between mentors and mentees, (d) frequency of contacts, and (e) duration of interactions.

When starting this peer mentoring program, it was important to have clear goals and to have it help all those involved. It helped the student-mentees by changing some of their

behavior in the classroom and around the school. It helped the mentor by giving a student a chance to give back to another student because someone had given back to them.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study, Research, Design, Sampling and Sampling Techniques,

Data Collection, Approach, Data Analysis Plan

Design of the Study

The researcher identified the problem of high numbers of ninth grade boys referred to the administration due to behavior problems. The study required research of the literature concerning solutions to this problem and collection and analysis of ninth grade boys discipline referrals data associated.

Research Design

The design of the research was action based. The research focused on ninth grade boys discipline and strategies to reduce infractions to the discipline code of Lindenwold High School. A sample of ten students with the highest number of referrals during their eighth grade year was used for the study. The students came from a wide variety of backgrounds. None of their background information was used for this study. Only the students' number of discipline referrals was used.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The students being used for this study were picked based on their discipline log as well as interviews with the assistant principal of the Middle School. After meeting with the assistant principal and going through the discipline logs, the ten students were picked. The chosen students had the highest number of discipline referrals for the time period of this study.

Due to wide variety of infractions, there were different types of referrals; referrals were broken down into three categories. Type I was the basic referral for being late to

school or late to class. Type II is for any verbal aggression towards a staff member. Type II covered cursing or an argument with another student. Type III was anything that would involve physical aggression as well as any drug offense or activity involving the police.

Data Collection Approach

Based on these types of offenses the students' referrals were given a point value. The referrals will be divided based on the type of referral and then they will be multiplied by the type number. For example, a student has 5 Type I referrals. That number was multiplied by 1 to provide 5 points for the students' Type I referrals. Any Type II referrals were totaled and multiplied by 2. Any Type III referrals were multiplied by 3. These totals were added to come up with the point total for each student.

This system will help deal with the severity of some of the discipline referrals that a student may receive. Some actions were more serious than others and were dealt with accordingly. This system gave a higher value to a drug offense than to a student late to class. Although both were not acceptable, the student would more than likely face the judicial system for the drug offense as opposed to serving an administrative detention for the lateness to class.

The data collected for this project will be gathered from the students' discipline records, interviews with the students, mentors, parents, and the school administration. Data will also be collected through the students overall school records. This student data will include: attendance, discipline infractions, penalties assigned, prior to implementation of this program and during the program. The researcher compared the discipline records prior to and during the program of all students in the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis plan for this project was as follows. The ten students involved in the study had their attendance and discipline records from the previous year compared to the records during the school year the program was in practice. A comparison of the two years to check for a correlation between the peer mentoring program and the number of discipline referrals that the students' receive was made. The data was analyzed to see if during this same time period over the course of two school years and whether their involvement in the peer mentoring program helped decrease the number of discipline referrals the students received.

Chapter 4

Findings

Findings

In looking at the grand tour question of this research project, “What impact will the peer mentoring program have on the ninth grade boys?” Table 1 provides the distribution of referrals and points.

Table 1

Sample Group Discipline Referrals and Points

Student #	02-03 referrals	02-03 points	03-04 referral	03-04 points	Increase or decrease
1	10	16	3	3	decrease
2	5	8	1	1	decrease
3	6	11	8	12	increase
4	4	4	0	0	decrease
5	9	15	2	4	decrease
6	3	3	8	10	increase
7	6	8	2	2	decrease
8	8	10	1	1	decrease
9	5	7	5	7	same
10	5	6	2	2	decrease
Totals	61	88	32	42	

It was important to look at the data and analyze it in two ways. Based on the data gathered, there was a 70% decrease in the number of discipline referrals for the sample of students who were used. Only 3 of the students either stayed the same or increased.

Also it was important to look at the overall numbers of the study. Not only did the overall number of referrals decrease; they decreased by almost 50%. This can be looked upon as a 50% improvement in the number of referrals received by these students. It is also important to note that the number of points decreased as well. That means that the students were not only decreasing the number of referrals, but decreased the level of discipline infraction severity as well. A clear measurement of the success of this program was the number of referrals. Of the ten students in this study, seven of them decreased the number of referrals they received. Two of them increased in the number of referrals they received and one student got the same amount of referrals from the previous year.

Based on the data found in Table 1, which clearly showed that this program had a positive effect on the ninth grade male population in keeping with the findings of the Barton-Arwood study. Many of the participants decreased their bad behavior while being involved in this program. Not only was there a decrease in discipline referrals by seventy percent, but there was also a decrease in the severity of the referrals. These numbers show that this program has had an impact on the ninth grade male students as well as the older students. Indeed, just as (Chan, 2000) found in his study that both the mentors and the mentees benefit from such a program, anecdotal evidence from Lindenwold suggests that the mentors themselves developed interpersonal relationships with their charges which lead to their own growth and development.

This information is very important to this project. It validates the studies analyzed in the literature review section of this study by further showing that you can get involved with some of these at-risk students and give them different alternatives then to act out in class. The other important aspect of this project is the level of involvement of the mentors. This group of students went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that their student-mentee would show improvement. Most of them took it as a personnel challenge that the student they were involved with showed improvement.

Another aspect of this project that helped it show success was having the ninth grade boys go to class with their mentor. The ninth grade boys went to class for one day with their mentor. They followed their schedule all day. They ate lunch with them and sat next to them in all their classes. It was very important for them to see students who went to class and actually did school work. It also gave them a chance to see proper behavior for them to model.

Also to help the students with the types of behaviors that they have been dealing with, they were given a list of questions to ask the next time they felt influenced to misbehave. This check list was taken from the (Bozza-George, 2004) article: From time to time, someone will ask you to do something you don't want to – or know you shouldn't do. It's especially hard when a good friend or someone you like is doing the asking. How can you say no and not ruin the friendship? Here's what the experts recommend students do: (1) Ask question. What exactly is your friend asking you to do? Ask enough questions so that you know what you are getting into. If it's trouble of any kind, move to step two. (2) Name the trouble. As soon as you've figured out what the trouble is, name it. Say, "That's (stealing, cheating, vandalism, etc., or that's illegal, disgusting, dangerous,

stupid, etc.)” (3.) State the consequences. Say, “If I/we do that, I’ll/we’ll (get arrested, suspended, grounded for life, sick, hurt, embarrassed, etc.)” (4.) Suggest an alternative. Say no to the trouble, not to your friend. Suggest something else: “Why don’t we (shoot hoops, play a game, etc.) instead? (5.) Move it, sell it, and leave the door open. Move away from the situation, sell your new idea, and then leave the door open for your friend to join you. As you were leaving, say something like, I’ll be at the park shooting hoops if you’d like to join me. These refusal skills gave the students some help with alternatives when confronted with everyday situations.

Students were helped by a mentor with whom they met with briefly three times a day as they worked to limit incidents of poor behavior. Also in the beginning of the program, the students followed their mentors for a whole school day and saw what good behavior looked like. According to (Oswald, 2004) many times these students do not behave well because they do not know what good behavior looks like. Hence it was important for these younger students to be around older students, as it would help them to see positive behavior. The younger students would be influenced by the older students and the older students would frown upon a freshman coming into their classes and acting up.

The freshmen students met with their mentors on a weekly basis. These meetings consisted of just the basics of how things were going. They also had to address any discipline referrals that they had received. The students faced their immature behavior head on. Also, from (Oswald, 2004) as their mentor persisted in demanding proper behavior of these students their case was far more effective than if an administrator delivered the same message. This program was a very good example of the usefulness of positive peer pressure. The ninth grade boys that decreased their referrals were very

appreciative of the fact that they got a second chance to improve their behavior. Many of them remained on a zero tolerance policy as far as discipline was concerned but two of them were able to work their way off the zero tolerance list all together.

Another aspect of the program that helped the administration deal with these students was involving them in some type of after school club or activity. Because of their involvement in after school activities, it provided something that could be taken away if they did not behave properly in school. It also helped these students and their teachers to encourage them to maintain their grades since they could have their activity taken from them if they did not behave properly.

Of the students who were involved with this study, the one who increased in the number of discipline infractions was eventually expelled from school. This indicated that some of the students have deeper issues than this program can address. Many of these students in the study needed some type of counseling to help them deal with personnel issues. The student who was expelled had some family violence issues that needed to be addressed with a counselor.

Through the course of the study, it also became very important to try to meet with the parents of these students. Of the ten students involved, the school administration was able to meet with five families. Statistically, the five families that were able to meet with administrators were the families whose students showed the most improvement. This supports the idea of parental involvement. One student's parents came to school and went to each class with their child and followed him the whole day. It was very embarrassing for the student but the parent and the administration made their point.

The data collected and the outcome of this study will help administrators deal with this population. Also as stated by (Oswald, 2004) one can thus conclude that this program has not only served its purpose in helping get this group of troubled students more in line with the rest of our student population, but has also positively change the school environment and culture on a macro-scale. This study can help establish these types of programs across the country to help school administrators handle behavior problems.

Chapter 5

Conclusion, Implications, Further Study

Conclusion

This study was based on the research question, “What impact will the peer mentoring have on the ninth grade boys?” This study sought to prove that a peer mentoring program would help improve the behavior of the ninth grade boys involved. Furthermore, this study felt the impact of peer mentoring on the ninth grade boys would have a positive effect on not only the ninth grade boys but on the mentors as well. Due to the large amount of discipline referrals that this group received, this program sought to lessen this number and to provide some structure in the lives of the students involved.

Some important aspects of this study were to illicit the participation of the ninth grade boys being studied. This was relatively easy since they were given the alternative of participating in the program or face more severe penalties. Some of the alternatives would be getting placed on zero tolerance as well as facing a suspension from all school related activities. After considering the alternatives the students agreed to participate in this mentoring program. Also, a phone call to their parents helped ease the transition into the program. Many of the parents supported the program and were willing to assist in any way possible. The next concern was finding students to be mentors. This consisted of interviewing potential student leaders who had the time to assist this group of students. After meeting with them it became apparent that these were the leaders of the school. Their involvement in athletics, student government, and other school activities all pointed to the fact that they had the respect and admiration of their peers. This group had to be screened thoroughly to ensure there were not any conflicts between the students involved.

It was paramount to avoid any future problems. The mentors were selected based upon their leadership ability and also some of the mentors were picked because they had gotten into trouble in the past and improved their behavior significantly.

At the same time, the group of ninth grade boys was selected based upon the amount of discipline referrals they received during their eighth grade year. This group was basically the top ten most referred students in the school. This group was also chosen based on interviews with the vice-principal, the school resource officer, and their middle school counterparts. Once they were chosen, it was very important to meet with them in a group as well as individually. These meetings helped establish a foundation for the program to be successful. The ninth grade boys also got to meet with their mentors when they were on a tour of the high school.

Implications

The impact of this program was profound. As stated in Chapter 4, the number of referrals decreased seventy percent. Since, as previously stated, both the frequency and severity of the referrals decreased, it can be concluded that the mentoring program was a success. This program has positively affected a majority of those involved. This included the administration, the teachers, the mentors and the mentorees. The administration was able to spend time dealing with other issues in the school. The teachers were able to regain control of their classrooms. The mentors were able to positively affect the behavior of their peers. The group of ninth grade male students learned some valuable lessons about their behavior. The data collected in this study helped administrators realize their work in this program was beneficial to this population. Also, as stated by (Oswald, 2004) one can thus conclude that this program has not only served its purpose in helping

get this group of troubled students more in line with the rest of our student population, but has also positively change the school environment and culture on a macro-scale. This study can help establish these types of programs across the country to help school administrators handle behavior problems.

Although this program had a positive affect on a majority of those involved, it would be remiss if the thirty percent who did not show improvement were not mentioned. Of the three young men that fell into the non-improvement category, two of them received the same number of referrals as the prior year. One of them received far more referrals and of a more severe nature. The two young men who remained the same were placed on a zero tolerance discipline policy. That meant that any discipline referral that they received would result in an automatic three day suspension.

After several of these suspensions, discipline progressed from three to five day suspensions and then to an automatic ten day suspension for any discipline referral. Once these two young men realized that they would be treated differently than anyone else in the building, they began to test the administration. Another aspect of the zero tolerance policy is that after each suspension, the parents must accompany the student back to school. This gives the parents a stake in what is being done to discipline their child.

The one young man who got worse was dealing with more problems than the school is equipped to handle. This young man had run the gamut of the discipline policy of Lindenwold High School. He has gone from the peer mentoring program, to being on a zero tolerance discipline policy. His behavior has progressively gotten so bad that he is at the point of the ten day suspension for his behavior. This student has also been picked up

from school several times by the local and county police. At the time of this writing, this young man has been incarcerated and been ruled by a judge to be incorrigible.

This study had lead to a change in the way discipline is handled at Lindenwold High School. There was no more of the cookie cutter approach to discipline of the student received what is in the handbook. If a student was having trouble with discipline in class then that student is looked at differently in terms of dealing with daily classroom discipline. Often times the students were placed with students mentors for the day so they can see that students do come to school to learn and they do know how to behave in class. This sometimes was better than any conversation that the administration may have with the student. It empowered the administration, and gave the student a little peer pressure to behave properly in school. Students required to explain to their friends why they were not in class or at lunch for the day will often times help wondrously in changing student behavior. If the decrease in discipline infraction trend continues, it is conceivable that the mentoring program could, in the future, become so successful as to make it obsolete. This study has had great significance in the interns' ability to handle discipline. It placed the onus on the students to police their own behavior.

This project related directly to ISLLC Standard #2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

This project related to one of the knowledge aspects of the standard: student growth and development. This project planned to help the students on both ends of the program grow by seeing things about themselves that they have never seen. This project also

related to one of the dispositions of the standards: preparing students to become contributing members of society.

Further Study

Future research should include looking at the female ninth grade students as well. This is another group of students who seem to have a difficult time in making the transition to high school. Future research should also track the academic progress of the students involved in the program study. This study could also look into using some males' staff members as mentors for this group of students. Future research could also look into what happens to this group of students not only throughout high school but after they leave as well. It would be interesting to follow them through high school and see what happens to them.

In closing, it is important for the program to be functional and practical. Try not to overextend those that were involved. Know the limits of your program and your goals. Every year look at the program and improve upon it. Give it a fresh approach each school year and it will be successful in helping control the ninth grade male students in a high school setting. This study helped establish a peer mentoring program at Lindenwold High School. Hopefully this program will withstand the test of time. It was the goal of the intern to change and grow with the program. The intern helped change the behavior of many of the students at Lindenwold High School. This program helped the students involved to become better citizens in the school. Not only did it help the ninth grade boys, it gave the mentors some leadership skills that will be helpful when many of them venture off into college or the workforce. Many of the students being mentored will never be in honors classes or take the advanced placement test but they can learn some of the

skills necessary for them to be productive citizens and not have to depend on society to care for them.

The intern was very proud of the work done in this program. This project was only as successful as the people involved in it. This included the administration, teachers, staff, and students of Lindenwold High School. Hopefully through this study many doors of opportunity have been opened for students to have a chance to succeed.

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