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THE AFFECTIVE EFFECTS OF A NEWLY CREATED ADVISORY PROGRAM ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

by
Jacqueline Seidman

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
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Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved 5/8/01

THE AFFECTIVE EFFECTS OF A NEWLY CREATED ADVISORY PROGRAM ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of newly created advisory program on a population of middle school students at a Suburban middle school. Three different instruments were used to assess the subjective affective responses of thirty middle school students ages ranging from 11 to 13. These instruments were a student Quarterly Self-Report Scale, administered twice, a Advisory Assessment, scale and a formal interview.

The results reflected no difference between male and female students regarding their attitudes toward the advisory process. There was also no statistical difference between student evaluation of the advisory process over time. The interview yielded results that indicated that while male and female students liked the advisory experience equally they did so for different reasons.

THE AFFECTIVE EFFECTS OF A NEWLY CREATED ADVISORY PROGRAM ON MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mini-Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess students' subjective evaluations of the success of an advisory program, using three evaluation methods: Quarterly Student Self-Reports, Advisory Assessment Scales, and interviews. Results indicated there were no gender differences in attitude toward the advisory experience. Results also indicated no change over time in assessment of the advisory program. Interview results indicated there were gender differences in advisory activity preferences.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Dr. Klanderman for introducing me to this fascinating project and providing me with much needed guidance throughout this project. I would also like to thank Dr. DiHoff for helping me with my statistical nightmares.

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Introduction

"The most significant development in school guidance over the past decade has been the rapid emergence of teacher-based programs, usually referred to as advisor/advisee (A/A), home base, or advisory programs" (Mauk & Taylor, 1993, p.6). The premise behind teacher-advisor programs is that guidance is everyone's responsibility, due, in part, to the fact that there are inadequate staff to handle all the counseling needs of the students (Galassi &Gulledge, 1997). The goals of these programs span the social, affective and academic domains. In a review of school counseling literature, Borders and Drury, (1992) found that, " school counseling interventions have a substantial impact on students' educational and social development" (p.495). For this reason, teacher-based counseling programs (TAP), have been endorsed by both the National Middle School Association and the National Association of Secondary Schools (Galassi & Gulledge, 1997).

The need for counseling programs that deal with the affective as well as academic development of adolescents has received a great deal of media attention within the past few years, due to recent outbreaks of violence at schools around the country. Programs such as TAP attempt to provide middle school students with a forum for "the development of a strong, positive relationship with a caring school adult" (Hutley & Lustbader, 1997, p. 524). Such relationships in middle school may provide a buffer for the sometimes traumatic shift between elementary school where "students have a close relationship with one teacher, who is with them most of the day... and high school, [where] students are expected to function independently and exercise self-control" (Galassi &Gulledge, 1997, p.55).

Purpose

Because of the dearth of data on the subject of guidance of students at the vulnerable age of early adolescence, the researcher decided to examine one such experimental advisory program at a suburban middle school in South Jersey. This study seeks to examine the effects of advisory programs on students' assessment of the benefits of advisory on their achievement and affiliation with the advisory group. Using self-report, as well as student interviews, the researcher gathered students' impressions of the advisory process.

Hypothesis

It is the contention of the present work that middle school advisory programs are not an opportunity for parents to pass off the responsibility of tending to the emotional development of their children, but that advisory programs provide students with a unique opportunity to form supportive relationships with a caring adult, as well as, providing students with a basis for forming intimate friendships with peers. This study seeks to examine the effects of a recently implemented advisory program in a single middle school by contrasting students' responses on a self-report test given in the first month of advisory, with students' responses to the same questions at the end of the first year. The two research questions are as follows:

1. Does the advisory experience raise students' expectations of academic achievement?
2. Do students feel that the advisory experience increased their opportunity for forming close relationships with their advisors and advisory peers?

It is the hypothesis of the researcher that the advisory program under consideration will have raised students' assessments of their achievement and have provided valuable emotional support in terms of affiliation with the advisory group itself.

In chapter two, previous research will be reviewed regarding the effectiveness of advisory and similar programs. Chapter three will describe the methods used to obtain the opinions of the students as well as the interview protocol. Chapter four will provide an analysis of the results of the study. Finally, in chapter five the conclusions will be summarized and discussed.

Theory

The history of advisory programs stems from the middle school movement begun in the late 1970's. One of the features that distinguish middle schools from elementary and high schools is the focus on the affective functioning of students in transesence (Galassi & Gulledge, 1997). This period is considered an especially vulnerable time in the lives of students because they are expected to achieve a greater sense of autonomy. Middle schools should provide a bridge between the contained atmosphere of the elementary school classroom and the independent environment of high school.

It is with this goal in mind that advisory programs were introduced into middle schools across the country. According to Zeigler and Mulhall, "the function of advisory groups is to promote students' educational, personal, and social development, ...emphasizing issues of personal growth and social importance to students" (1994, p.42). Because it is a practical impossibility for guidance counselors to provide every student with the personal support needed for children at this vulnerable age, advisory programs which involved other staff members, particularly teachers, evolved. The theory behind

teacher involvement in student guidance is that if guidance is everyone's responsibility, every student will receive some level of support on a regular and consistent basis; providing help before, not after, the problem starts.

Definitions

Advisor: a teacher or caring school adult who functions in a guidance capacity during regular sessions with a group of students

Advisory Program: "regular meetings between a teacher and a small group of students to discuss academic, social, and personal concerns, cultivating a sense of social affiliation between a teacher and students" (Hagborg, 1995, p.46)

Middle School: encompasses grades 6 through 8, with students between the ages of 10 to 14

Transesence: "the stage of development which begins before the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence" (Eichorn, 1966, p.3)

Assumptions

There were several assumptions made regarding the both the population of students and the advisory experience itself. The first was that the sample was normal. The second was that the sample was random, namely, that this middle school is an accurate reflection of the students within the entire school district. Most importantly, we assumed that the data collected was an accurate reflection of the students' opinions. We also assumed that all students had a comparable advisory experience in terms of the quality and skill of the advisors, the number of advisory meetings, and the number of students in each advisory group.

Limitations

One of the largest confounding variables effecting this study was the lack of a control group. Because the entire class of sixth grade students participated in the advisory program, there is no way to be sure that any changes in the attitudes of the students participating in the program were due to the advisory program. Other variables, such as the new school building itself, may also be responsible for an attitudinal shift. Another limitation of this study is that it may be difficult to generalize the results of this study because it focused on a middle class, suburban school district in the Northeastern U.S. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to urban or rural populations.

Overview

This study will explore the perspectives of students' regarding the effect of an advisory program on academic achievement and their ability to form intimate friendships with peers in the advisory setting. Chapter two will focus on the previous research done on advisory programs and the effects of these programs on early adolescents. Chapter three will provide a detailed explanation of the methods used to assess the students' satisfaction with advisory and the overall design of the study and the interview protocol. Chapter four will provide an interpretation of the results of the pre- and post-test results as well as a summery of the main conclusions drawn from the interview. Finally, in chapter five, the study will be summarized and suggestions for further research will be provided.

Chapter 2

Summary of the Literature

The history of formal advisory programs is a short one. It began with the Middle School Movement in the late 1970's. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, research began to highlight the importance of improving the learning environment in junior highs and middle schools. It became clear that the transition from elementary to middle school tended to be traumatic both emotionally and academically for many students. According to the research done by Galassi and Gulledge (1997), there were significant declines in academic achievement, self-concept and self-esteem among students transitioning from elementary to middle school.

In accordance with these findings, measures were taken to ease the transition. The Middle Years Programme, spearheaded by the IBO, was designed for students between the ages of 11-16. The approach advocated by this program is unique in that while there is a heavy concentration on academics, the curriculum is based on a holistic view of knowledge where social development is seen as an interregnal part of the learning process.

This chapter will present a review of the literature pertaining to three broad areas. The researcher will begin by reviewing the relevant studies on the goals of middle school education. These include; academic competence, self-esteem and school affiliation. The second major area will be a review of the literature of Advisory programs and will include how they are designed, what purpose they serve, and how successful these programs have been in achieving their goals. Lastly, there will be a comprehensive review of the

literature pertaining to the special advantages and disadvantages of experimental schools, particularly as they pertain to student adjustment.

The transition to middle school from elementary school has long been considered a problematic period for early adolescents. Research has shown that there is a significant decline in the quality of relationships with peers and teachers as well as deterioration of academic work (Edelin & Midgley, 1998). MacIver and Epstein (1998) conducted a study analyzing data obtained from "Education in the Middle Grades", a national survey of practices and trends "using a representative sample of principals in public schools" to obtain information regarding the perceived effectiveness of responsive practices with 7th grade students. Responsive practices include such activities as interdisciplinary teacher teams, remedial instruction programs, school transition activities, and group advisory programs. The principals reported an overall stronger school program when they invested heavily in responsive practices. This assessment was made on the grounds of drop out rate and the number of students who need to repeat the grade immediately following the transition.

Similar findings were obtained by Midgley and Edelin in their study of early adolescent well being. According to their findings, middle schools have attempted to address the decline in the quality of relationships by creating a more caring school community. This was achieved through the use of reforms such as, keeping students with the same teacher and same peer group for several periods during the school day, dividing schools into smaller units, and developing advisory programs.

These reforms attempted to address the growing awareness that students experienced a "deterioration in perception of self, affect, motivation, and performance

during early adolescence" (Edelin and Midgley, p.195, 1998). One of their most interesting findings was that the timing of the transition to middle school, while rendering early adolescents extremely vulnerable, also offered an unusual opportunity for positive growth. They found that the greater sensitivity of early adolescents to interpersonal influences made it possible to have a positive impact on self-esteem and school performance. They found that middle schools that initiated reforms involving class size reduction and advisory groups were more likely to be seen by students as supportive environments. Teachers characterized students at these schools as "for the most part, warmer, friendlier, more relaxed, and more respectful" (Edelin and Midgley, p. 197, 1998).

A study by Lucinda P. Hurley and Laura L. Lustbader (1997) on Project Support, a program designed to help engage children and their families in the educational process, showed that "a triumvirate of support - from the family, the school, and the community - is necessary to engage children in the educational process (p. 523)." Project Support is a federally funded five year program for adolescents at risk which is focused on alcohol, drug, and dropout prevention in high-minority public schools, as well as a school-based mentoring program designed for middle school students. They found that the students who participated in this program had a greater sense of achievement, better bonding abilities, and achieved greater success. These findings were confirmed by administrators, evaluators, parents, and other observers.

One of the most salient findings concerned parental involvement. High parental involvement correlates positively with both children's attitudes toward school and their performance. This, however, is not enough. They found that a caring relationship in

school with an adult helped to develop strong positive relationships and was critical in how an adolescent perceives his or her school experience. Such a caring adult can become an effective link to the child's family. Project support was designed to provide a mediating role in the lives of middle school children. The goals of this program were to promote academic achievement, healthy living, and personal self-worth to children at a stage which "is considered a potential risk factor." Small groups met for activities that focused on discussion, interaction, attendance, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, refusal skills, and communication skills. The combination of academic and affect-related programs helped to ensure students' success.

The same can be said for the multimodal model of learning developed by Lazarus in 1995. He created a model of learning and psychological functioning called BASIC ID, which stands for behavior, affect, sensation imagery, cognition, interpersonal relations, and diet-physiology. Proponents of this approach believe that learning and cognition cannot stand alone, but function as part of the lives of children. Other domains of the psyche such as behavioral problems, emotional disturbances, interpersonal conflicts, or any number of physical or psychological problems can create learning problems.

In a study conducted by Edwin R. Gerler Jr. And Eleanor Yoder Herndon (1993) examining the effectiveness of such a multimodel approach on middle school students, they found that 'school counseling interventions have a substantial impact on students' educational and personal development. Individual and small group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation activities seem to contribute directly to students' success in the classroom and beyond' (Borders and Drury 1992, p.495). They cited several case studies, including the one just quoted, to as evidence that such programs have

demonstrated substantial positive effects on the social and emotional development of adolescents, as well as, increased performance on a variety of school-related tasks.

In a group guidance unit, consisting of 104 students in grades 6 through 8, counselors conducted ten 50 minute sessions. Each session focused on a different school related skill, including, being comfortable at school, being responsible in school, listening in school, and asking for help in school. In order to measure the results on the program they used a measure called Learning How to Succeed in School, which was based on the Miller Attitude Toward School Test. The results indicated that there was a rise in the Learning How to Succeed in School Instrument among most of the students. The greatest increases, however, were to be found in the girls that participated in the program. There was a statistically significant increase in all measures, including a 60% increase in awareness of how to succeed in school.

Similar results were obtained in a study conducted by Winston J. Hagborg, in 1993. In his study of high school perceptions and satisfaction with group advisory, he found that the more satisfied students were female. They rated their advisory groups as more cohesive and viewed their teacher advisor as more caring less directive, more engaging, and less superficial. He found that students' satisfaction with advisory hinged on their attraction to fellow students, the perceived usefulness of the meetings, and comfort in risk-taking. Other significant factors included, the teacher being a caring leader, the less frequent use of directed group activities and student verbal freedom. All these factors seemed to contribute to more meaningful discussion and less boredom and student disruption.

The biggest problem facing these advisory programs appeared to be the teachers. Many teachers indicated a lack of enthusiasm, and reported feelings of frustration and inadequacy. This was primarily due to being "placed in a demanding situation without adequate training and support" (Hagborg, 1993, p. 50).

Chapter 3

Sample

The intention of the present research was to examine the effects of a newly created advisory program on a group of thirty students. The subjects, whose ages ranged from 11 to 13, were randomly selected from a population of 151 sixth grade students participating in a school-wide advisory program. The group was comprised of students attending a suburban middle school in Southern New Jersey. The socio-economic status of the group ranged from middle to upper-middle class students and was chosen from a racially and sexually integrated population. The interview group was comprised of 13 males and 17 females.

Method

In an effort to determine student assessment of the relative affective value of the advisory program, a Quarterly Student Self-Report was administered twice (see appendix A), once in December of 1999 and again in May of 2000. All 151 students completed these reports. Thirty of these completed reports were randomly selected as representative of the general population being assessed. The first Student Self-Report was comprised of twelve questions, only those six questions related directly to affective functioning were used in the study, however. The second Student Self-Report, comprised of twenty-four questions, including the twelve questions asked on the previous self report, asked the students to elaborate on their impressions of the advisory process. Out of the twenty-four questions asked, thirteen questions were selected as most useful in describing student perceptions of the advisory experience.

Out of this group, thirty students were selected to be interviewed. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) was created on the basis of interviews conducted with two separate focus groups comprised of seven students each, and conducted by two different interviewers. All of the students participating in the focus groups were excluded as potential interviewees to avoid bias. The resulting ten question interview lasted approximately twenty minutes, and consisted of the questions derived from the analysis of the responses obtained in the focus groups. The formal interviews were conducted in January of 2001, when all of the subjects were in the seventh grade.

Testable Hypotheses

There were two broad hypotheses used to guide the choice of questions analyzed from the two Quarterly Student Self-Report questionnaires.

1. Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference between the perceptions of males and females of the advisory experience.

1. Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a difference in the perceptions of the male and female subjects of the advisory experience.

2. Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test regarding student attitudes toward the advisory experience.

2. Alternate Hypothesis: The results from the post-test will reflect more positive attitudes toward the advisory experience then the results of the pre-test.

The hypotheses made concerning the interview were related to the data obtained from the pre-test/post-test material. They are as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis: There will be no positive correlation between attitudes expressed toward the advisory experience by individual students in the pre-

test/post-test data, and the attitudes expressed by the same students in the interviews conducted the following year.

1. Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a positive correlation between attitudes expressed toward the advisory experience by individual students in the pre-test/post-test data, and the attitudes expressed by the same students in the interviews conducted the following year.

2. Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference in the attitudes of males and females toward the advisory experience.

2. Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a difference between the attitudes of males and females toward the advisory experience.

Analysis

In order to test the data obtained from the Quarterly Self-Report, the researcher used the a comparison of the mean scores of the males and females regarding attitudes toward advisory to determine whether there was a gender based difference. To test whether there was difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of attitude toward advisory the mean scores of both were compared. The comparison of mean scores was deemed to be the simplest and most accurate way of determining change of attitude over time.

The comparison between the results of the pre-test/post-test data and the interview, however, was a little more complex. Because the responses obtained during the interviews provided rich but highly varied data, there was no way to analyze the results statistically. Therefore, each student's responses on the pre-test/ post-test data had to be compared subjectively by the interviewer to the interview data. The responses were not

coded by categories because they were so varied. In addition, trends found in the answers of both male and female students were compared on the basis of both similarities and differences.

Summary

The Quarterly Student Self-Report scales were used to determine differences in male and female perspectives of the advisory experience, as well as, to establish a change of attitude from the onset of the advisory program in the sixth grade, to the end of that year. The interviews were conducted in order to establish both a correlation between attitudes toward the advisory experience in sixth grade with the attitudes of the same students in seventh grade. The interviews were also used to determine the specific causes, if any were found, of attitudinal differences toward the advisory program of males and females.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Results

The intention of the present research was to reflect, as accurately as possible, the subjective responses of early adolescents to a newly incorporated advisory program. Two instruments were used to obtain this information. The first was a Quarterly Student-Self Report given at the end of spring and fall semesters of the same school year. The second was a formal interview consisting of questions related to the affective functioning of students in the school setting, and how the advisory program had contributed to the school environment.

The two hypotheses related to the Student Self-Report where as follows:

Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference between the perceptions of male and female students to the advisory program.

Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a difference between male and female students to the advisory program.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no difference between the results of the pre-test and post-test regarding student attitudes toward the advisory program.

Alternate Hypothesis: The results of the port-test will reflect more positive attitudes then the pre-test toward the advisory program.

The Hypotheses concerning the results of the interview were related to the hypotheses made regarding the pre-test/post-test data. Again, it was hypothesized that there would be a difference in male and female subjective responses to the advisory program and that those responses would be consistent over time. The hypotheses briefly stated are:

Null Hypothesis: There will be no significant difference between the attitudes expressed by males and females towards the advisory program.

Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a significant difference between the attitudes of male and female students toward the advisory program.

Null Hypothesis: There will be no correlation between attitudes expressed by individual students in the Quarterly Self-Reports and the attitudes expressed in the interviews toward the advisory program.

Alternate Hypothesis: There will be a positive correlation between the attitudes expressed toward the advisory program by individual students in Quarterly Self-Reports and the interviews conducted the following year.

Results

The results of the first hypothesis regarding the difference between male and female responses toward the advisory program showed that there was no significant difference between male and female students (see figure 1). The results of the pre-test/post-test data reflected that females consistently rated the experience just as positively as their male counterparts. The seven questions evaluated on the second Quarterly Self-Report also reflected no significant gender difference.

The questions were evaluated as follows: The first three questions were evaluated on a three point scale, 3 representing the most positive evaluation, and 1 the least. The fourth question concerning in-school resources could only be answered as a yes or no question, so that 2 represented yes, and 1 no. The fifth question, which concerned the likelihood of seeking out an advisor for guidance was scored on a three point scale, 3

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and results of t-tests for gender differences in the Quarterly Student Self Report on pre and post-tests.

Test	Question	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Pre-test	Openness	Male	2.62	0.51	0.65	.523
		Female	2.47	0.72		
	Awareness	Male	2.46	0.52	1.05	.304
		Female	2.24	0.66		
	Socialization	Male	2.62	0.51	0.15	.886
		Female	2.59	0.51		
	In-School Resource	Male	1.92	0.28	-0.19	.853
		Female	1.94	0.24		
	Adult Connection	Male	1.85	1.07	-0.39	.698
		Female	2.00	1.06		
	Academic Expectations	Male	2.31	0.75	0.95	.353
		Female	2.06	0.66		
Post-test	Openness	Male	2.31	0.63	0.50	.621
		Female	2.18	0.81		
	Awareness	Male	2.23	0.73	0.19	.848
		Female	2.18	0.81		
	Socialization	Male	2.54	0.66	0.27	.790
		Female	2.47	0.72		
	In-School Resource	Male	1.77	0.44	-0.35	.728
		Female	1.82	0.39		
	Adult Connection	Male	2.38	1.26	0.72	.480
		Female	2.06	1.20		
	Academic Expectations	Male	2.08	0.64	-1.29	.211
		Female	2.35	0.49		

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and results of t-tests for gender differences in the Advisory Assessment Test.

Question	Gender	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Self-expression	Male	2.91	0.94	0.43	.674
	Female	2.76	0.74		
Self-acceptance	Male	3.73	0.47	0.43	.668
	Female	3.65	0.49		
Self-evaluation	Male	3.09	0.54	-0.53	.601
	Female	3.24	0.90		
Popularity	Male	3.18	0.98	-0.49	.633
	Female	3.35	0.79		
Contentment	Male	2.45	0.82	-1.13	.271
	Female	2.82	0.88		
Friendship	Male	3.09	0.83	0.278	.784
	Female	3.00	0.87		
Importance	Male	2.82	0.87	0.623	.539
	Female	2.59	1.06		

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and results of t-test for differences in pre and post-tests for Quarterly Student Self Report.

Question	Test	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Openness	Pre-test	2.53	0.63	1.73	.095
	Post-test	2.23	0.73		
Awareness	Pre-test	2.33	0.61	0.85	.403
	Post-test	2.20	0.76		
Socialization	Pre-test	2.60	0.50	0.68	.501
	Post-test	2.50	0.68		
In-School	Pre-test	1.93	0.25	1.68	.103
Resource	Post-test	1.80	0.41		
Adult	Pre-test	1.93	1.05	-0.88	.386
Connection	Post-test	2.20	1.21		
Academic	Pre-test	2.17	0.70	-0.44	.662
Expectations	Post-test	2.23	0.57		

representing advisor, 2 other school personnel, and 1 no in-school personnel. The sixth question was scored in the same manner as the first three questions.

The second hypothesis regarding the Student Self-Reports, concerning a change over time regarding attitudes toward the advisory experience, showed no significant difference between the pre-test, given in December, and the post-test, given the following May (see figure 2). In fact, the scores on the test in May were actually somewhat lower than those in December.

The results of the interview were somewhat more promising, however. In a one to one analysis of interview responses compared with the seven question Advisory Assessment Scale (see figure 3) responses it was found that the higher the overall scores of the Advisory Scale, the higher the satisfaction reported in the interview with the overall school environment, including the advisory program. Obviously, there were questions related to the aspects of school life, in the interview, that may not have been related directly to the advisory program itself. Perhaps the most interesting finding related in the interviews, was a marked difference in the response of male and female students to the advisory program. While the Quarterly Student Self-Reports and the Advisory Assessment Scales did not show any significant gender differences, the interviews yielded greater in depth responses. These responses indicated that the male students valued the freedom to pursue activities outside the normal purview of the academic environment, while the female students placed greater value on the openness and communication permitted in the advisory program. So while the scores may seem similar, the reasons behind the students' satisfaction with the advisory program seem to divided down gender lines.

While there was no significant differences between the responses to the Quarterly Self-Report questionnaires, there were some interesting correlations that were noteworthy between several of the questions asked. There seems to be a strong correlation (.603) between feeling known by the advisor (question 1) and the feeling that the advisor has been open about him or herself (question 2). There was also a correlation between question 1 and question 3, that was related to socializing with other students in the advisory program at the .374 level.

Summary

It was hypothesized that the Quarterly Student Self-Reports would reflect a difference in the perceptions of male and female students. On the basis of the data collected, however, this hypothesis was rejected. The second hypothesis concerning the results of the Quarterly Student Self-Reports was that the post-test would reflect more positive attitudes toward the advisory program then the pre-test, this hypothesis was also rejected.

The hypothesis made regarding the Advisory Assessment Scale and the interview that their would be a positive correlation between the attitudes expressed on the scale and those expressed in the interview was rejected on the basis that the interviews expressed more positive attitudes toward the advisory program then those expressed on the assessment scale. The final hypothesis made regarding expressed gender differences toward the advisory program during a twenty minute was accepted on the basis of several questions concerning the preferred activities and interests expressed by the students.

Chapter 5

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of students' regarding the effects of an advisory program their ability to form friendships with peers and establish an intimate relationship with an adult in the advisory setting. Because there was very little research done on the effectiveness of advisory programs in the past this study was set out to determine, on an intimate level, what it made such a program a successful in the eyes of the students who participated in it. While there was no significant differences found in either the perspectives of males and females within this group or differences in pre-test/post-test results, there were some very interesting findings related to the interview material.

Conclusions

It is difficult to determine why the results of the pre-test/post-test-data were not significant, but there are some environmental factors that may have contributed to the results. The first is that the school in which in the advisory took place was in its first year of operation and there was some hesitation about what such a new program should entail among both the advisors and the students themselves. There was also an insufficient distinction made between the advisory program and some of the other unique aspects of the IBO project. At the end of the school year in May, in particular, there were several research projects that the students were engaged in that often replaced the time spent on other activities during the advisory period. Therefore, many of the students began to associate the advisory experience with the work of the research project. In fact, during the interview, several students thought the purpose of the advisory program itself was to help with the end of the year research project.

The lack of significant results might also have been due to the fact that there was no control group with which to compare the affective adjustment of those students involved in the advisory program with students who did not participate in an advisory program. Another limitation of this study was that the questions that would have given a better indication of gender differences among the reactions of males and females to the advisory experience were not included in the Student Quarterly Self-Reports or the Advisory Assessment Scale. It was only in the interview, were specific preferences could be stated, that such differences became apparent.

Discussion

There were several assumptions that were made about he sample population that may have been problematic. The most important was the assumption that all of the students, who had participated in twelve different advisory classes had received the same quality of experience. During the interviews, however, there were many indications that this was not the case. Several of the students indicated that their advisor was unsure about how to proceed during the advisory setting. While other students stated the their advisor was full of activities and ideas about what should be done during the advisory period. Even though the students were speaking entirely subjectively, the researcher was forced to conclude that the dynamics were very different between one advisory and the next, both in terms of the preparation of the advisors for their task and also the willingness of the advisors to participate in the program objectives themselves.

Implications for further research

The inconclusiveness of data obtained from the Quarterly Student Self-Reports and the Advisory Assessment Scale indicate that there is a need for revised instruments to

evaluate the effectiveness of the advisory programs. In this regard, it might be wise to administer an affective evaluation scale before and after participation in the advisory program. Further research is also indicated for the assessment of the readiness of individual teachers to participate in the advisory program. In the interviews it was indicated that the single most important factor in student satisfaction with the advisory experience was the perceived openness and involvement of the advisor.

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Appendix A

Quarterly Student Self-Report
First Quarter

NAME _____DATE_____ADVISOR_____

My favorite activity this quarter was_____

_____

One thing I learned in advisory this quarter was_____

I feel that my advisor is getting to know me better not much about average a lot

I feel that I am getting to know my advisor better not much about average a lot

I feel that I am getting to know the students in my advisory better

not much about average a lot

I can think of at least one adult who I can go to for help. Yes No
If Yes, please circle from the list below:

Teacher Advisor Counselor Nurse Administrator Other

My grades for this progress report period are:
About what I expected Better than I expected Worse than I expected

As a learner, I am doing well in the areas of:
1.
2.

I DID DID NOT meet my goal for this past quarter.

My goal for the next quarter is

_____

Second quarter

Name _____ Date _____ Advisor _____

My favorite advisory activity this quarter was _____
_____

I enjoyed this activity because _____
_____

One thing I learned about myself this quarter was _____
_____

I feel that my advisor is getting to know me better not much about average a lot

I feel that I am getting to know my advisor better not much about average a lot

I feel that I am getting to know the students in my advisory better

not much about average a lot

I can think of at least one adult in my school who I can go to for help. Yes No

This adult is my advisor. Yes No
If your answer was no, which adult would you go see? Please circle one from the list below.

Teacher Counselor Nurse Administrator Other

My grades for this progress report are:
About what I expected Better than I expected Worse than I expected

As a learner, I am doing well in the areas of:
1.
2.

Advisory has helped me to do well in these areas.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

Appendix B

Advisory Assessment Scale

In advisory, I always have something to say.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

I like being myself and accept the way I am.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

I think that what I have to say in advisory is important.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

I think that students in my advisory like who I am.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

I think that advisory is important, and it makes me feel better.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

Students in my advisory have become my friends.

1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

School would be more difficult for me without advisory

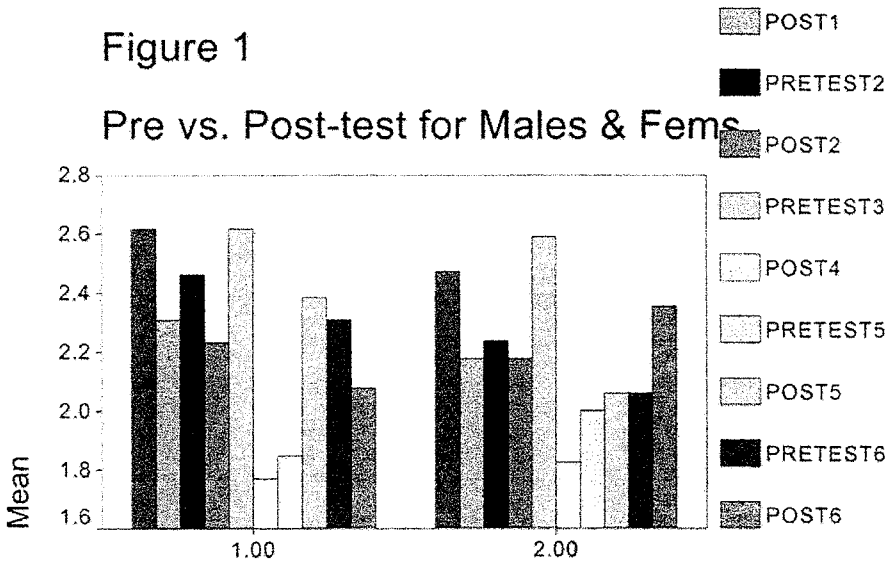
1	2	3	4
not at all			a lot

Appendix C

Interview protocol

1. What do you think is the purpose of the advisory program?
2. Do you think that the goals of the advisory program were reached?
3. If not, what could be done to reach those goals in the future?
4. Did you feel that your advisor knew what the goals of advisory program where?
5. Do you feel that you are able to connect personally with your advisor?
6. Do you feel that the social environment is better than it was prior to advisory? For example, is there less teasing, more tolerance, etc.?
7. Did you learn anything in advisory that you used in other areas of your life?
8. Did the advisory experience help you to clarify your goals and help you learn more about yourself?
9. What did you like the most about your advisory experience?
10. What did you like the least about your advisory experience?

Figure 1



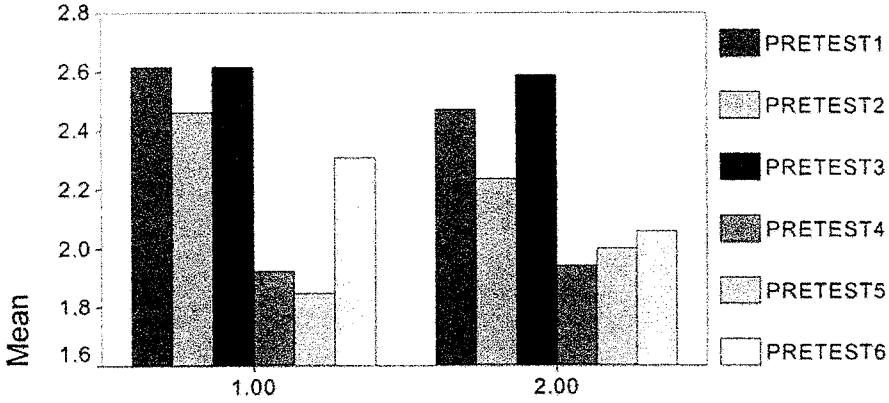
GENDER

1 = males

2 = females

Figure 2

pretest results



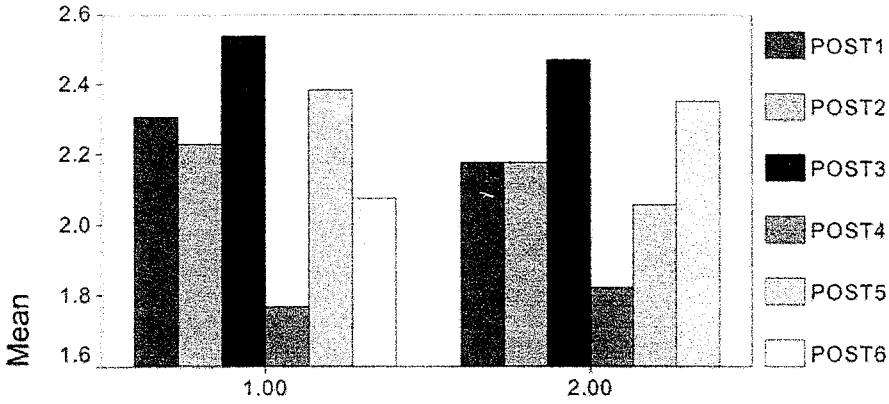
GENDER

1 = males

2 = females

Figure 3

post-test results

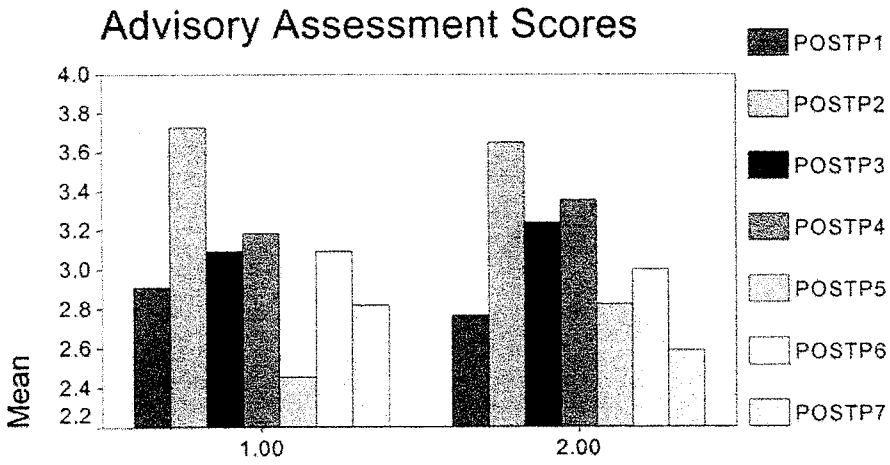


GENDER

1 = males

2 = females

Figure 4



1 = males

2 = females