AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROPOSAL OF

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Title: Co-curricular Activities: An Element of Solution-Focused Oriented Interventions for Middle School Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students.

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Ken Winograd

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students. Co-curricular activities are any school-based activities that give students an opportunity to blend the various aspects of their academic learning with personal actions.

This was an action research study conducted in a middle school special education program. The participants were 10 middle school students identified as seriously emotionally disturbed. These students participated in the planning and evaluation of their involvement in co-curricular activities during this year long study.

Participant observations, interviews, student and staff journals, and documentary evidence provided data for the development of case records.

The study generated the following results:

Participation in co-curricular activities increased the sense of belonging for these students at this middle school.

Seriously emotionally disturbed students reported that adult mentors significantly influenced their level of success.

Seriously emotionally disturbed students had higher grade point averages and better attendance and fewer disciplinary issues during this study.

During co-curricular activities, these students demonstrated leadership, thinking, communication, and cooperative learning skills that were not apparent in the regular classroom settings.

Seriously emotionally disturbed students responded favorably to a solution-focused model of education.

Parents reported that their students engaged in more leisure activities involving peers outside school, and were easier to live with at home.

Students identified the privilege of participating in co-curricular activities as motivating them to minimize their past use of

counter-productive social strategies during interactions with peers and adults.

Latino students found it difficult to participate in activities with Anglos if other Latinos did not view the activity as acceptable.

The primary implication of this research for schools is that co-curricular programs appeared to increase the sense of belonging for middle school SED students which influenced more positive social and academic behaviors.

Co-curricular Activities: An Element of Solution-Focused Oriented Interventions For Middle School Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students

by

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Clifford W. Stevens, Author

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Co-curricular Activities: An Element of Solution-Focused Oriented Interventions for Middle School Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The central purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students. Consequently, I conducted an action research study of the work related to implementing a program of co-curricular activities for middle school SED students. This study took place in the context of one middle school special education program. Data collection occurred during the 1995-96 school year, from early September to the end of May. I collaborated with students, parents, and other professionals in designing, implementing and evaluating the progress of SED students as they participated in co-curricular activities.

My personal interest in the participation of middle school seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) students in a co-curricular program arose from my experiences as a classroom teacher. When I began a literature search, I started by reading information about co-curricular activities (Holland & Andre 1987; Kleese, 1994; Kleese & D'Onofrio, 1994); educational service models for SED

students (Berg, 1992; De Shazer, 1988; Hunt, 1991; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989; Wong, 1991); and emotionally and behaviorally disordered students (Jones & Jones, 1990; Kauffman, Lloyd, Hallahan, & Astuto, 1995; Smith & Luckasson, 1995). I came to share Lipsky's (1992) view that SED students are served primarily through a *deficit* educational model. In this model, the problems reside with the SED students. Schools tend to focus on the SED students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical "deficits," and the students' lack of skills that match the educational requirements of the school. In response to SED students' actions, school interventions often use a variety of discipline strategies that have questionable, if not harmful, effects. Of special concern to the present research are those disciplinary strategies that result in varying forms of exclusion for SED students, these include strategies of isolated educational placements, in-school and out-of-school suspensions, home-bound instruction, shortened school day, referral to alternative schools, and ignored truancy (Grosenick, 1991).

Instead of studying the problems related to SED students. This research examines those "solutions" that make a positive difference for SED students.

The Problem

With the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) in 1975, and later amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, attention focused on providing appropriate education for students with special needs. In spite of this, significant numbers of seriously emotionally disturbed students (SED) are currently dropping out of middle and high school. In 1992, the "real" drop out rate for SED students was 61.4 percent. Included in these numbers are age-out, dropout, and unknown exit students. The problem seems to be worsening. By 1994, the percentage had increased to 64.4 (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Seriously emotionally disturbed students, on the average have the highest absenteeism (18 days per year), and the highest likelihood of failing a course (44 percent)(U.S. Department of Education, 1992). The cycle of failure and frustration for SED students appears to begin in the early grades, continue through the adolescent years, and culminate with their involvement in the juvenile and then adult legal systems after dropping out of school.

From 1989-1996, over 60 percent of the South Middle School (a pseudonym) SED students dropped out of East Valley High School by the end of their sophomore year. Each year, SED students graduated from South Middle School

after meeting and sometimes exceeding the district middle school standards in the areas of grades, attendance, and disciplinary issues. It became apparent after observing and discussing the dropout rate of these former SED students with the SED students themselves, East Valley High School staff members, and their parents that these SED students experienced significant negative social relationships and educational experiences almost immediately upon entering East Valley High School. At the time of dropping out, these SED students could identify few people they could describe as "friends." Supportive relationships with teachers were almost nonexistent. Also, each SED student participated in no co-curricular activities at the high school. Gillingham (1964) showed that 91.9 percent of all dropouts in Dade County, Florida did not participate in co-curricular activities at the time of withdrawal. I found that 100 percent of the former SED students from East Valley High School did not participate in co-curricular activities at the time of their dropping out of school. Students who do not feel they belong are less apt to participate in the total life of the school. The SED dropouts, unfortunately, seemed to feel this way.

The role of co-curricular activities is to encourage the inclusion of all students. According to Kleese and D'Onofrio (1994) co-curricular activities enable the

at-risk student to cross over to a place where he or she can learn pro-social behavior, a new level of self-esteem, a feeling of adequacy and belonging, and a place where solutions are found to problems.

These SED students did not feel a part of East Valley High School, and they believed they could not succeed in high school. The consensus of the SED students was that they had no social reason to attend school. Activities that did attract them were the illegal activities and their participants who did not attend school. Every SED student who dropped out had been identified by the local Youth Services Team (YST) as being involved in one or more illegal activities such as gang affiliation, substance abuse, vandalism, and crimes against people at the time of dropping out of school. In addition, two SED girls were pregnant and three SED boys were involved with pregnancies prior to the end of their sophomore year of school.

Research Questions

The central research question considers the effects of co-curricular activities on SED students. How does the experience of a sustained experience in co-curricular activities either enhance or impede the academic and social development of middle school SED students? The specific research questions are:

1. How does participation in co-curricular activities influence the SED students' ability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and adults?

2. How does participation in co-curricular activities influence the SED students' academic performance, including their grades and attendance?

Researcher Background

I currently supervise and teach in a county special education program called a Structured Learning Program (SLP) located at South Middle School. The SLP provides services to students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Students are referred by their home school districts to a county placement committee, made up of county-wide district special education directors, which makes the final decision about the placement of SED students in the SLP. Typically, the students placed in the SLP are those SED students who have exhausted the professional capabilities or resources of their home school districts. Four other SLPs are distributed throughout the county.

These middle school students with emotional and behavioral disorders are seldom viewed with affection by anyone: peers, teachers, siblings, and sometimes parents. Sadder still, they often do not even like themselves

(Heward, 1996). A student with behavioral disorders is difficult to be around and attempts to befriend him may lead to rejection, verbal abuse, or even physical attack (Williams et al., 1989). With some emotionally withdrawn students, overtures or approaches seem to fall on "deaf ears."

Personally, I find working with this group of students both exciting and energizing. I have spent 20 years as a regular and special education teacher working with and studying students identified as seriously emotionally disturbed. I believe the work done with SED students can be some of the most meaningful and rewarding work at the middle school level, because of the SED students' ability to progress from negative behaviors to successful behaviors in a short period of time. As I work with SED students, they cause me to discover skills and strengths unknown to myself. I have learned that I must model and demonstrate reasonable ways to handle frustration, anger, and affection. At all times, I must show a respect for the SED students as people and a sense of hope, no matter what the situation. At other times, I love the work and curse the problems. Ideally, under no circumstances should I create or replicate the patterns of negative interactions with adults that characterize many of these SED students' earlier development.

If successful, SED students have the potential to make a dramatic change in their personal lives and in their relationships with people in their worlds. Ultimately, they are able to avoid following the traditional path of SED students which is to drop out of school, and become involved with the juvenile and, later, the adult legal system.

The main reason for my enthusiasm in working with middle school SED students is the success of former and present SED students while attending South Middle School. The SLP, in conjunction with South Middle School, appears to make a significant difference in the lives of these SED students. For seven years, the South Middle School staff, the parents of the SED students, and the SLP have worked in unison to accomplish these changes. These accomplishments include the following: declassifying individual students as SED; dramatic behavioral and academic progress; and decreasing the average time SED students spend in self-contained special education placements from approximately 90 percent to approximately 15 percent. In addition, other SLPs from around the county have referred some of their more difficult cases to the SLP at South Middle School.

Working with middle school SED students is anything but routine or boring. People ask how I can work with this group of students. I reply, "How can I not?"

Biases

As I began this study, I acknowledged personal and philosophical biases that cause me to question the current educational and therapeutic techniques and systems used by many schools and professionals. I do acknowledge that some SED students legitimately qualify and are in need of special services based on federal standards. Yet, the majority of SED students are misidentified, misplaced, and inappropriately served under the current system (Kauffman, Lloyd, Hallan, & Astuto, 1995; Lieberman, 1986). This causes me to take exception with the state of services for SED students, as follows:

1. Any person (parents, other students, uninformed staff members) walking the hallways of a middle school can identify problem students. Because of this, the information compiled to build a case against students with emotional and behavioral disorders can come from an array of untrained observers and sources. Curran and Algozzine (1980) found that teachers with varying levels of tolerance for immature or defiant behaviors differentially rated a hypothetical child's likelihood of success in the regular classroom. These studies suggest that emotional disturbance is a function of the perceiver. What is disturbance to one teacher may not be to another.

My work with 61 school districts throughout the Northwest has taught me that students are frequently misidentified and labeled as SED by their home school districts. The fact is that the majority of the students identified as SED and sent to South Middle School never exhibit the documented behaviors, or any noticeable behaviors, as described by their home school. According to federal standards, SED students should show their abnormal behavior more frequently (e.g., high rate of aggression), at a greater intensity (e.g., yelling at high decibels) or may be displayed for a longer duration of time (e.g., extremely long temper tantrums) consistently across a variety of settings (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1978). It is not unusual during our year-end team meetings regarding individual SED students to question if the student still qualifies for the SLP placement at South Middle School.

2. Teachers and schools should be proactive in their response to serving SED students. Additional training, reading relevant literature, and visiting sites with a history of successful practices should be undertaken by professional educators. This includes certified special education teachers of SED students.

The job of serving SED students appears to be overwhelming for most special education teachers because

they leave the profession, or move on to other education positions, after just over two years on the average (Lieberman, 1984).

3. My last bias is that SED students once properly served are actually some of the easiest students to teach. Most SED students encounter numerous negative experiences at school (peers who do not like them, being identified as a problem by the staff, and strained relationships with their parents). My experience suggests that once SED students have experienced success with peers and adults, the traditional measures of school success increase (attendance, grades, and disciplinary issues) and the negative behaviors begin to disappear. The behaviors SED students exhibited at their former schools were behaviors they needed and worked in order to cope with the learning and social environments there. The learning environments and the relationship between South Middle School and their parents allow the SED students to avoid using previously unsuccessfully strategies, and replace them with proactive social skills. A spiral effect takes place whereby the SED students recognize their successes and build upon them.

Overview of Research Methodology

I chose action research because it is a deliberate, solution-focused investigation that is group or personally

owned and conducted (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982). It systematically progresses through on-going cycles of problem identification, data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and finally problem redefinition (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982).

My role in the study was that of the action researcher. As Stenhouse stated, "It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it" (cited in Rudduck, 1988). I collaborated with students, educators, and parents in designing, implementing, and evaluating the co-curricular program, and concurrently, studying its effects on the SED students.

I conducted action research comparable to Lewin's model (Elliott, 1991) in a middle school special education program to increase the understanding of the day-to-day experiences of the SED students. In this model, the development of the curriculum was influenced by an action research cycle containing the following: planning, teaching, assessment, and analysis. For example, I would plan and implement a teaching strategy and then, over time, assess the effectiveness. Based on this assessment data and subsequent analysis, I then would revise the plan accordingly. In addition, I intended to design action research in order to improve the conditions that SED students encountered at South Middle School.

Origins of the Research

I chose this topic to study because SED students are an enigma to the public school system. After years of working with students identified as SED, educators still remain leery about working with or having these students in their classrooms and schools.

During the last seven years, from 1989 to 1996, the South Middle School staff documented academic and disciplinary progress made by SED students. Yet, when these students entered East Valley High School, they tended to experience trouble because of "social deficits" that undermined their prior academic successes.

Hunt (1989) defined an at-risk student as being unable to transition into successful adulthood. Sixty percent of my former SED students proved to be unsuccessful transitioning into and through the high school years past their sophomore year.

I hoped that the implementation of a systematic co-curricular activities program might provide the opportunity for the SED students to become more connected with their teachers and peers at South Middle School and ultimately succeed in high school.

Summary

This is an action research study that examines the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students.

A pattern of failure for SED students appears to begin in the early grades and culminates with their involvement in the adult legal systems after dropping out of school.

The central research question considers whether the experience by middle school SED students in sustained co-curricular activities either enhances or impedes their academic and social development.

I currently supervise and teach in a county special education program called a Structured Learning Program (SLP). I serve SED students who have exhausted the professional capabilities or resources of their home school districts.

I acknowledge personal and philosophical biases that cause me to have differences with the current state of services for SED students.

This study is based on one teacher's experience with a middle special education program consisting of eight Anglo and two Latino SED students.

I chose action research because its systematic, cyclical, and solution-focused characteristics influenced

my actions as I sought to influence the lives of the SED students at South Middle School.

Finally, I hoped this research might reveal interventions that professionals in the field of education could use to more effectively serve SED students.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed students. This chapter provides a selective review of the literature as it relates to the characteristics of SED students, the placements and services for SED students, effective programs for SED students, and co-curricular activities.

The first section of the review of literature focuses on the SED student. This section describes the common characteristics of SED students, the placement, and the services provided for these students. In addition a description of models that have been effective with SED students will be described.

The second section describes co-curricular activities as they relate to social development, academic performance, and educational aspirations, cultural issues, and adolescent disciplinary issues.

The Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Student

Characteristics of SED Students

According to Kauffman (1995) the most at-risk students in the American education system are the students identified as seriously emotionally disturbed (SED). The federal definition of a serious emotional disturbance as described by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)(PL 101-476) in 1990 was.

Seriously emotionally disturbed is defined as follows:

(i) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance.

(a) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, and health factors;

(b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.

(c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;

(d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or

(e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fear associated with personal or school problems.

(ii) The term includes children who are schizophrenic.

The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.

A report based on nationwide studies documented the following academic outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (Chesapeake Institute; Valdes et al., 1990):

1. Two thirds could not pass competency exams for their grade level.

2. Seriously emotionally disturbed students have the lowest grade point average of any group of students with disabilities.

3. Forty-five percent failed one or more courses in their most recent school year.

4. Seriously emotionally disturbed students have a higher absenteeism rate than any other disability category (missing an average of 18 days per year).

It should be noted that many of these absences are due to disciplinary incidents and the follow-up consequences. Many times SED students are suspended outside of school as part of their discipline plan.

5. Over 50 percent are not employed within two years of exiting school.

6. Their SED identification makes them ineligible to apply for military service even if they graduate from high school.

Overall, it is estimated that only 30 percent of students with behavioral disorders are performing at or above grade level (Knitzer, Sternberg, & Fleisch, 1990).

In addition to high rates of school failure and dropout (Koyanagi & Gaines, 1993), the overrepresentation of SED children in the juvenile justice system is an ongoing concern (Murphy, 1986).

Seriously emotionally disturbed students typically are lacking in the area of social skill development. This lack of social skills negatively affect their ability to cooperate with their teachers, function in classrooms, and get along with other students (Williams et al., 1989). Problems with students' social skills rather than academic difficulties may, in fact, be the reason the student is removed from the academic mainstream. The ability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships during childhood and adolescents is an in important predictor of present and future adjustment. Many SED students often experience great difficulty in making and keeping friends (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995). A study comparing the social relationships of secondary SED students with those of

same-age peers who do not have behavioral disorders reported lower levels of empathy toward others, participation in fewer co-curricular activities, less frequent contacts with peers, and lower quality relationships for the SED students (Schonert-Reichl, 1993).

Many adults believe that most students who exhibit deviant social patterns will grow out of them with time and become normally functioning adults. Although this belief holds true for many students who exhibit such problems as withdrawal, fears, and speech impairments (Robins, 1979), research indicates that it is not so for students who display consistent patterns of aggressive, coercive, antisocial, and/or delinquent behavior (Patterson, Cipaldi, & Bank, 1991; Robins, 1979; Wahler & Dumas, 1986; Walker et al., 1995). Robins (1966) conducted a follow-up study of more than 500 adults who as children had been seen by a clinic staff because of behavior problems. Robins used structured interviews to gather information such as work history, alcohol and drug use, performance in the armed services, arrest, social relationships, and marital history. A control group of 100 adults who grew up in the same communities as the subjects was used for comparison. The results were significant. Of those adults who had been referred to a clinic for behavior problems as children, 45 percent had

five or more antisocial traits. Only four percent of those in the control group showed that many antisocial characteristics. In analyzing the results further, Robins found that those who as children had been referred to the clinic for antisocial behavior such as theft, fighting, discipline problems in school, truancy, and the like had the most difficulty adjusting as adults. Furthermore, as adults, they tended to raise children who had a higher incidence of problem behaviors than normal, thus continuing the cycle. The social skills of SED students are most noticeable, but most SED students also show learning disorders, such as, cognitive disabilities and academic skill deficits. Academic achievement is typically lower than aptitude, and this discrepancy often widens through the school career (Epstein, Kinder, & Bursuck, 1989).

Annual federal counts (U.S. Department of Education, (1989) indicate that about one third of a million U.S. students (less than one percent of the school population) is identified as SED. However, because federal laws requires that special education be provided to all student students identified as handicapped, and because the definition of SED is vague, many school districts may be finding only as many SED students as can be served within existing personnel and budget limitations (Kauffman, 1982). Finally, there have been many studies of the

prevalence of emotional/behavioral problems among children and adolescents. A review of the most relevant studies suggest that about three percent to five percent of U.S. students show emotional/behavioral disorders to an extent that special education services are needed (Cullinan & Epstein, 1990).

Emotional/behavioral problems of adolescents fall into two general categories: environmental conflict (or externalizing) and personal disturbance or (internalizing) (Achenbach & McConaughy, 1987; Quay, 1986). Included under environmental conflict are aggression-hyperactivity, delinquency, and social maladjustment; and subcategories of personal disturbance, including anxiety-depression, withdrawal, and social incompetence.

Since externalizing behavioral disorders are so obviously disruptive to other people in the environment, these students are often identified more quickly in schools than disorders that are internalizing (Brophy & Evertson, 1981; Cullinan, Epstein, & Kauffman, 1984; Gerber & Semmel, 1984). As a result, students with internalizing disorders are not always identified and, therefore, do not always receive appropriate special educational services. Additional information concerning externalizing and internalizing behaviors by SED students can be found in chapter four (Portraits of the SED Students) of this study.

Another important factor is gender. Clear gender differences reflect the identification of this exceptionality: most children who are identified as having behavioral disorders and emotional disturbance are male (Edgar, 1987). In fact, some estimate that the ratio in special classes is approximately eight males to one female (Coleman, 1986). The Fourteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (U.S. Department of Education, 1992) reported that among secondary school students (ages 13-21) with serious emotional disturbance, more than 75 percent were males.

Two theoretical approaches that attempt to explain SED student's unproductive behavior follow:

First, Maslow (1968) believes that a student's behavior is a response to their basic needs not being met within the environment in which the misbehavior occurs. Maslow suggests that there is a hierarchy of basic human needs and that lower level needs generally take precedence over high order needs. His hierarchy of needs, which has been divided in a variety of ways, include these components: self-actualization, self-respect, belongingness and affection, safety and security, and physiological needs.

Maslow's theoretical position is that people are basically good and that they have an innate need to be

competent and accepted. Unproductive behavior is therefore not viewed as an indication of a bad person but rather as a reaction to the frustration associated with being in a situation in which one's basic needs are not being met. Maslow suggests that these basic needs cannot be met without assistance from other people. Only when the basic needs are met can the individual become motivated by self-actualization or the need to take risks, learn, and attain one's fullest potential.

Second, Driekurs (1972) believed that a basic need of children was to be socially accepted.

> We should realize that a misbehaving child is only a discouraged child trying to find his place; he is acting on the faulty logic that his misbehavior will give him the social acceptance which he desires. (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1972, p. 32)

Settings and Services

As I began, researchers whose material I read suggested I needed to understand the characteristics of the SED students' settings in which they received services before I sought to understand the SED students themselves (Jones & Jones, 1990; Kauffman, 1993; Lieberman, 1986; Rogers, 1993; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989).

Kauffman, Lloyd, Hallan, & Astuto (1995) write that no new setting options have been proposed and no radically different placement ideas have been formulated since about

1950. Yet, issues regarding the placement of SED students in specific classes and schools have absorbed a substantial proportion of the energy devoted to the services of these students. The buildings and classrooms to which SED students are assigned have been points of constant controversy. These placements determine in large measure what and how SED students will be taught and the peer groups with which SED students will associate. SED students challenge the abilities of public school systems and local communities to provide appropriate services for them. Evidence suggest that our current ways of providing services to most SED students are ineffective (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990; Koyanagi & Gaines, 1993). These ineffective services cause a large number of these youths to drop out of school prior to graduation (Slavin, Karwweit, & Madden, 1989). Epstein, Foley, and Cullinan (1992) surveyed teachers about their SED students. The survey indicated that teachers often have no systematic, well-thought-out, justifiable program for these students, relying instead on a conglomeration of strategies that may or may not be effective.

Our current policies concerning the education of SED students have developed over time in response to specific problems or crises, legislation, or litigation. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related legislation and regulations have, since the

mid-1970's, shaped many school districts' policies concerning SED students. Landmark litigation, Honig v. Doe et al.(1988), has shaped school policies concerning suspensions and expulsion of SED students. In most districts and schools, policy development has proceeded in a reactionary disorderly manner rather than a systematic approach (Kauffman, 1995).

Since the mid-1980's, mental health professionals, educators, and advocates have struggled with the failure of communities and agencies to meet the needs of children and youth with emotional or behavioral disorders.

Within the past few years a number of studies and reports have caused educators to reexamine the manner in which services are provided to children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders and the policies supporting current practices. Data from the 14th Annual Report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, 1992) indicate that students with serious emotional disturbances are half as likely to be accommodated in regular classes as other students with disabilities. They are also less likely than other students enrolled in special education to receive services in a resource room or regular classroom setting.

The SED students are over twice as likely to be placed in separate day schools, residential schools, and home and hospital settings as any other student with a disabling condition. Analysis of annual report placement data for youths in various disability categories over the 1977-78 to 1989-90 school years indicates a decrease of almost four percent over time in the placement of SED students in regular schools. In contrast, for that same period there was a six percent increase in placements in regular schools for all disabilities combined and varying increases for all other disabilities, with the exceptions of students with mental retardation who showed only a slight decline (Sawyer, McLaughlin, & Winglee, 1994).

Within these specialized placements, the curricula and experiences offered SED students are typically very narrow. According to Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch (1990), programs focus primarily on negative behavior management and control and devote minimal attention to building academic, vocational, or social skills. After visits to numerous sites across the United States, Knitzer and her colleagues concluded, "Too often, the classroom life is, at best barren, and at worst, punitive and not oriented toward academic or social learning (p. 116).

In 1993, the Executive Committee of the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD) met and discussed the group's position on "full inclusion." The resulting

CCBD position on inclusion of students with emotional and behavioral disorders is stated below:

> Consistent with IDEA, CCBD supports a full continuum of mental health and special education services for children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. We believe that educational decisions depend on individual students' needs. Consequently, in contrast to those individuals and groups who advocate for full inclusion, CCBD does not support the notion that all special education students, including those students with emotional and behavioral disorders, are always best served in general education classrooms. For some SED students the regular classroom may sometimes prove to be the most restrictive environment (Position Statement on Full Inclusion, 1993).

The requirements of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act are clear: A full continuum of services must be available and decisions about students' programs must be made on an individual basis (Patton, Blackbourn, & Fad, 1996).

Students with emotional or behavior disorders have been described as an underserved population of students with particularly complex needs (Walker, 1986). One of the most complex aspects of these students' needs is the determination and selection of the placements in which appropriate education and related services are most likely to occur. Students identified as SED continue to be placed in settings seen as more restrictive than their home schools and regular classes. Many conceptual models and educational programs strive with good intentions to make a difference for SED students. However, the research

documents two facts about most educational settings that provide services for SED students: First, most existing programs have only marginally positive effects on the social development and overall educational performance of middle school SED students (Heward, 1996).

Second, most educators and researchers have little confidence in their ideas and strategies regarding how to provide systematic services that make a substantial difference in the educational performance of SED students (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). Kaufmann, Lloyd, Hallan, & Astuto (1995) believe an appropriate education is extremely unlikely, if not impossible, for SED students in most current educational settings. Fragmented and crisis-oriented service systems are typical for SED students. Standardized and informal testing instruments, observation and documentary data, and anecdotal records are used to prove that the student has a problem and subsequently identified as SED. The SED student who lacks the problem solving strategies of many of his (85 percent of SED students are boys) or her peers are typically labeled and placed in potentially counter-productive and restrictive environments. During the 1992-93 school year, over 50 percent of all SED students were placed in separate classes or schools; 37 percent of school-age children with emotional and behavioral disorders were served in self-contained classrooms (e.g., classes in

which only students with disabilities are enrolled, but which are held in the same school building or campus as classes for nondisabled students); 28 percent in a resource room (e.g., programs in which students with disabilities receive special instruction outside the regular classroom on a regular basis for some portion of the day); 16 percent in a regular classroom with consultation (e.g., classroom settings in which nondisabled students as well as those with disabilities receive instruction); 14 percent in a special school (e.g., public schools that only students with disabilities attend); and five percent in a residential or home bound placement (e.g., facilities including residential treatment programs in which on-site educational services are provided) (U.S. Department of Education, 1994).

Seriously emotionally disturbed students challenge the abilities of public school systems and local communities to provide appropriate services for them. Evidence suggest that our current methods of providing services to many SED students are ineffective (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990; Koyanagi & Gaines, 1993) and that a large number of these youths drop out of school prior to graduation (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). Social, emotional, educational, and employment outcomes for many SED adolescents and young adults are dismal. Epstein, Foley, and Cullinan (1992) surveyed teachers

about their SED students. Their survey indicated that teachers often have no systematic, well thought out, justifiable program for these students, relying instead on a conglomeration of features that may or may not be effective.

Promising Practices

The literature suggests that appropriate philosophies, teaching methods, and systems to adequately provide services to meet the needs of SED students at the middle school level were lacking at most sites (Conrath, 1990; Knitzer, 1982). This said, some philosophies, teaching methods, and systems do appear to make a difference for SED students.

At the 1994 conference of The Council For Exceptional Children, the Coalition of Educational Association released its "12 Principles for Successful Inclusive Schools," as part of a comprehensive publication, Inclusive Schools: Principles of Good Practice. The twelve principles are:

1. Vision (e.g., diversity is valued)
2. Leadership (e.g., principals should involve faculty in planning and decision making)
3. High standards (e.g., focus is on student outcomes)

4. Sense of community (e.g., everyone belongs and is accepted)

5. Array of services (e.g., many varied school/community services are available)

6. Flexible learning environments (e.g., flexible groupings and developmentally appropriate experiences are provided to meet students' needs)

7. Research-based strategies (e.g., effective teaching strategies and methods support inclusive schools for all students)

8. Cooperation and collaboration (e.g., there is an emphasis on collaborative arrangements and support networks among professionals)

9. Changing roles and responsibilities (e.g., building-based problem-solving teams work on mutual problems)

10. New forms of accountability (e.g., emphasis on assessment)

11. Access (e.g., adaptations and modifications ensure access)

12. Partnerships with parents (e.g., parents are full partners.

Second, because over 50 percent of all SED students are served primarily in special classes or separate programs in their schools, a SED program that monitors the services for SED students is essential. More specifically

the work of Jones (1989) identifies the services specifically designed for the SED student. Jones describes twelve components that offer significant and long-term changes in SED students learning and behavior.

1. An entry procedure that prevents referrals by implementing pre-referral interventions.

2. A positive, caring staff that employs effective communication skills, communicates high expectations and models mature adult behavior.

3. A competency-based instructional program.

4. Consistent use of proven classroom management techniques.

5. A general behavior management program that provides uniform structure and positive reinforcement for all students in the program.

6. An individualized behavior management program for each student.

7. A behavioral counseling approach.

8. A social skills training program.

9. Consistent use of interpretive and confrontive feed-back.

10. A program for providing parents with training and support.

11. A program for providing assistance and training to regular classroom teachers.

12. A procedure for reintegrating students into their regular school program.

Larrivee (1985) conducted a large-scale correlational study based on a sample of 118 classroom teachers and selected mainstreamed students that identified effective characteristic teaching behaviors for students with special needs. The sampled mainstreamed students had a primary classification of learning disabled but also included behaviorally disordered mainstreamed students.

The final list of variables to be considered in the design consisted of sixty-eight teaching variables and six attitudinal variables. These variables included the domains of questioning strategies, teaching style, affective classroom climate, classroom management, academic learning time, and individualization.

Ultimately, a total of fifteen teaching behaviors or strategies emerged based on their relation to successful outcomes for mainstreamed students. These behaviors are as follows:

1. Frequent positive feedback to students.

2. Providing sustaining feedback to students responding incorrectly to questions.

3. Supportive, encouraging response to students in general.

4. Supportive response to low-ability students in particular.

5. Supportive response to problem behaviors indicative of a learning problem (as distinguished from conduct problems).

6. Asking questions that students answer correctly.

7. Providing learning tasks that students can accomplish with a high rate of success.

8. Using classroom time efficiently.

9. Low incidence of teacher intervention.

10. Infrequent need to discipline students.

11. Limited use of punitive interventions.

12. Minimal punitive response to students.

13. Rare criticism of student responses.

14. Little student transition or noninstructional time.

15. Low rate of student off-task time.

The descriptive profile that emerges for schools and teachers who are effective with mainstreamed students is similar to that of teachers who are effective for all students, based on the emerging body of teaching effectiveness literature (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986; Wong, 1991).

In addition to behavior management and social skills development, the teacher of SED students must be able to establish healthy student-teacher relationships. Morse (1976) believes that teachers need two important affective characteristics to relate effectively and positively to

emotionally disturbed students. He calls these traits differential acceptance and an empathetic relationship.

Differential acceptance means the teacher can receive and witness frequent and often extreme acts of anger, hate, and aggression from students without responding similarly. Of course, this is much easier said than done. But the teacher of SED student must view disruptive behavior for what it is--behavior that reflects the student's past frustration and conflicts with himself and those around him--and try to help the student learn better ways of behaving. Acceptance should not be confused with approving or condoning antisocial behavior; the student must learn that he is responding inappropriately. This concept calls for understanding without condemning.

Having an empathetic relationship with a student involves a teacher's ability to recognize and understand the many nonverbal cues that often are the keys to understanding the individual needs of emotionally disturbed student.

Kauffman (1993) stresses the importance of the teacher communicating directly and honestly with SED students. Many of these students have already had experience with supposedly helpful adults who have not been completely honest with them. SED students quickly detect someone who is not genuinely interested in their welfare.

The teacher of SED students must also realize that his or her actions serve as a powerful model. Therefore, it is critical that the teacher's actions and attitudes be mature and demonstrate self-control.

Hobbs (1966) describes the kind of person he believes would make a good teacher and model for SED students:

> A decent adult; educated, well trained; able to give and receive affection, to live relaxed, and to be firm; a person with private resources for the nourishment and refreshment of his own life; not an itinerant worker but a professional through and through; a person with a sense of significance of time; of the usefulness of today and the promise of tomorrow; a person of hope, quiet confidence, and joy; one who is committed to the proposition that children who are emotionally disturbed can be helped by the process of reeducation (p. 1106-1107).

The works of Bandura (1969) and Bronfenbrenner (1970) illustrate the social psychologists' view that students' behavior is heavily influenced by the values and behaviors modeled by individuals who are significant in their lives. Students learn a great deal by modeling others' behavior. Research suggest that students are likely to model individuals who (1) are perceived as having a high degree of competence, status, and control over resources, (2) have provided previous support and reinforcement, and (3) play a prominent role in the students' daily life.

The reverse is also true. It is possible for teachers to aggravate an emotional or behavior problem "if a teacher who is unskilled in managing the classroom or

insensitive to students' individual differences creates an environment where aggression, frustration, or withdrawal are common responses to the environment or teacher" (Smith & Luckasson, 1992, p. 315). Teachers can also increase an emotional or behavior problem by reinforcing inappropriate behaviors and ignoring appropriate behaviors, putting a great deal of pressure on the student to perform above ability levels, or adding to the student's poor self-concept by focusing on negative characteristics rather than positive traits.

Cormay (1975) studied students' feelings about schools in Pennsylvania. Cormay reports that although 64.4 percent of the kindergarten students expressed positive feelings about school, only 12.8 percent of sixth graders reported such feelings. A variety of other studies support the findings that, as students become older and progress through the grades, they often develop poorer self-esteem and less positive attitudes about school (Landry & Edeburn, 1974; Stanwyck & Felker, 1974; Yamamoto, Thomas, & Farnes, 1969). It can be argued that students simply become more critical as they grow older; but there is more than enough evidence in (Glasser, 1988; Goodlad, 1984; Purky & Novak, 1984) to suggest that a significant amount of this negativism and the associated acting-out or withdrawal behavior is a response to school settings that fail to meet student's needs.

Studies in social learning theory indicate that competencies which are not already within the SED students' repertoire can be developed with greater ease through instruction coupled with modeling (Bandura, 1974). Lovitt (1977) stated it his way: "Some students will do what you want them to if you just tell them what you want." As teachers, we must explain to our SED students exactly what social behavior is expected and acceptable. Kain, Downs, and Black, (1991) believe teachers must teach SED students that it is not wrong to disagree with someone but that there is a way to disagree appropriately. Teachers must teach these students how to get along with their teachers, peers, and people in general. If we can teach the SED students the fundamentals of social behavior they will later use these social skills to do well in college or to land jobs (Cartledge & Milburn, 1980).

In addition to teachers, students influence each other both positively and negatively with respect to values, attitudes, and social skills (Berndt, 1989). Unfortunately, the appropriate social behaviors of many SED students often limit their positive peer interactions. In these cases, students often are placed in more restrictive settings; and those placements may, in turn, further restrict opportunities for them to learn and practice appropriate interpersonal skills (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleish, 1990).

An approach to therapy and services for SED students with an emphasis on strengths and solutions rather than problems and pathology is being developed by O'Hanlon and Weiner-Davis (1989). It is called "solution-focused" therapy. O'Hanlon and Weiner-Davis contend when therapy is solution-focused, assessment techniques become deliberate interventions that often negate the need for therapy over extended periods of time. Therapists "watch their language" and direct their conversation toward change, encouraging clients to look to the future with an eye on possibilities rather than problems. This method of therapy focuses on people's competence rather than their deficits, their strengths rather than their weaknesses, their possibilities rather than their limitations (Berg, 1991).

Maslow's (1960) theories support the contentions of O'Hanlon and Weiner-Davis. He decided that psychology had been moving in the wrong direction. Almost from the start, most psychological inquires had explored and tried to understand the nature of emotional, behavioral, and psychological pathology in human beings. Maslow believed that instead we should be studying the best, healthiest specimens of human beings to learn what we want to know about people.

Co-curricular Activities

Schools are made for children and learning. This simple premise underlies what should be true about any effective middle school program (Turning Points, 1989). The role of the school has become one of providing an environment designed to permit the individual to develop "the knowledge, interests, ideals, habits, and powers whereby students will find their place and use that place to shape both themselves and society toward nobler ends" (Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1919, pp. 8-9). Most American schools exist to serve a diverse population of students. Berzonky (1981) stated that schools serve as one component in the way our society socializes adolescents and helps them accomplish the developmental tasks of adolescence. Schools help to construct self-governing adults (Holland & Andre, 1987). The academic program of the school serves some of these developmental goals (Holland & Andre, 1987). However, the school must provide far more than the academic development of adolescents, and co-curricular activities are a mechanism for accomplishing additional developmental goals (Kleese, 1994). The role of co-curricular activities can be to encourage the inclusion of all students (Barr, 1987).

Co-curricular activities can be defined as any school-based student activity that give students an

opportunity to blend the various aspects of their academic learning with personal actions (Kleese, 1994).

Those experiences, now called co-curricular activities, are also called extracurricular, extraclass, nonclass activities, school-life activities, and student activities (Graham, 1982). Despite the lack of a precise term, co-curricular activities are likely to be more student-centered than are regular classes. Such activities include, but are not limited to, athletic programs, clubs, student councils, student publications, assemblies, advisory and homeroom groups, interest groups, social events, camps, as well as artistic, dramatic, and musical organizations under the guidance of school leaders.

On all levels, several significant characteristics distinguish co-curricular activities, in theory if not always in practice, from formal classwork. In co-curricular activities, students assume responsible positions of leadership; students' spontaneous interests and immediate needs determine affiliations and experiences; and the teacher-supervisor is often a mentor or guide rather than an instructor.

Along with positive attendance records and high academic averages in core courses. Consider any list of what industry wants in new employees. The list includes people skills, the ability to accept responsibility and

follow directions, good presentation of self, and high personal ideals (Kain, Downs & Black, 1988). These are marketable skills, skills that are cultivated through co-curricular participation. In a survey of 113 corporate recruiters, grades were near the bottom of the list of skills recruiters consider most important in their final hiring decision. Instead, employers were most interested in factors like interpersonal skill, ability to solve problems, communication skills, technical knowledge, energy level, and judgment (USA Today, 1993).

Research studies have consistently shown that participating in student activities is beneficial to students (Otto, 1982; Rehberg & Schafer, 1968; Spady, 1971; Spreitzer & Pugh, 1973). Success in college (achievement) can be more accurately predicted from levels of individual achievement in such activities as debate, music, drama, and journalism, than it can from grades in high school, class rank, or ACT or SAT scores (Christensen, 1984).

Similarly, studies of school dropouts show that students who leave school prior to graduation are students who are unlikely to participate in school activities (Conrath, 1990). Co-curricular activities play a vital role. They improve school climate, teach valuable lessons in leadership, and serve as a creative outlet that cannot be attained solely inside the classroom (Kleese, 1994).

In Moral Principles in Education (1909), Dewey reasons that "learning by doing" and experiences was a necessary part of citizenship and educating the "whole child."

In Experience and Education (1938), Dewey writes:

> ...if an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future, continuity works in a very different way. Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the grounds of what it moves toward and into. (Dewey, 1938, p. 31)

Co-curricular activities are seen by their supporters as opportunities to provide this continuity and to encourage unity. Still, an experience in co-curricular activities does appear to have a positive effect on academic achievement and social knowledge.

Swanson (1924) found that athletic participants were more intelligent than non-participants. Monroe's (1929) research supported Swanson, and Monroe suggested that athletes earned better grades. Not only do students who participate in co-curricular activities do better academically, but they also develop other aspects of their personalities in the process. Self-esteem, self-confidence, social cooperation, and leadership skills are just a few of the cognitive factors that are affected. Smith (1945) concluded that athletes had better social skills and stronger self-concepts. According to research

by Snepp (1951) and Thomas (1954), there was a marked positive relationship between lack of involvement in co-curricular activities and dropping out of school.

In rural schools, Barker and Hall (1964) reported that the typical student participates in more than twice as many activities as students in larger schools. To a certain degree, as schools get larger, proportionally fewer students can be directly involved in co-curricular activities. In small schools, individuals had to participate in several activities in order to maintain the activity. In these schools, Wicker (1968) found that participants report feeling needed and challenged, having important jobs, and developing self-confidence. In small schools more than in large schools, students at risk of dropping out were more likely to be involved in school activities and were more integrated into the social activities of the school.

Co-curricular activities that "represent a rich array of opportunities and experiences" may be one of the reasons many students stay in school, and/or find personal meaning for this time in their lives (Haensly, Lupkowsky, & Edlind, 1986). Students are able to extend and enrich previously learned academic skills through competitions and by applying skills to real world simulations. In the co-curricular setting, they may also develop and practice

artistic, musical, and psychomotor talents; leadership skills; and future career and occupational skills.

Most research I found was related to high school co-curricular activities. Yet, the research showed that students in middle schools who are involved in co-curricular activities also realized a benefit in co-curricular participation, as seen in Parish's (1984) study. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of participation in junior high school co-curricular activities to academic performance and educational aspirations, and whether these relationships varied according to participants' socioeconomic status (SED), gender, ethnicity, or intelligence quotient (IQ). The subjects were a random sample of 501 eighth graders from seven junior high schools of a west Texas school district.

Parish concluded that participation in co-curricular activities was associated with high GPA and high educational aspirations. The pattern of relationships varied according to the participants' gender, ethnicity, SES, and IQ. There was no evidence that co-curricular participation was associated with lower GPA or lower educational aspirations for any group.

Students at the middle level are more likely to be involved in a wide range of co-curricular activities than were high school students. In a statewide investigation

of the relationship of school organizations, co-curricular activities, academic achievement, and attitude towards self and school of ninth grade students yielded the following results. First, ninth grade students in the middle level schools had a more favorable composite score on a survey of pupil opinion (Gifford & Dean, 1990). These variables were considered in the composite score: co-curricular activities, academic achievement, and attitudes toward self and school.

Students Who Participate

Factors that determined the reasons students participated in activities were investigated by Allen and Gansneder (1976). A sample of 50 states found that the following elements were most likely to determine the effectiveness of the student activity programs in schools:

1. Faculty commitment
2. Relevant activities
3. Student interest
4. Financing
5. Administrative support

The degree to which activities are relevant may also affect participation. Students and teachers rated the activity program of their schools as being above average in meeting youth needs pertaining to socialization, mental health, reasoning ability, guidance, and further

preparation for future education (Buser & Humm, 1980). This study found that, in general, students felt their faculty was committed to student activity programs. The students thought that although the cost of activities and distance they lived from school were not a problem for them, these things could be a problem for some students.

They did not disagree with rules for selection of memberships but they did feel that students had little power to change activities, that "cliques" in the school affect membership in activities, and that grades should not be a rule for membership in activities.

In a related study by Buser and Humm (1980), students were asked to select that which was most likely to establish status and acceptance among students at their schools. Fifty-six percent of the students indicated "active participation in co-curricular activities"; 19 percent selected "academic success by earning high grades"; and 13 percent cited "active involvement in student government."

Some other summary items from this study include:

1. There were approximately 300 activity titles reported in high schools and 200 in the junior high schools in Illinois.

2. Athletics and sports were by far the most popular co-curricular activities in both the high schools and

middle schools in both numbers and proportions of students participating.

3. Approximately one-third of the participants in athletics and sports were female in the high schools, with some-what more, 44 percent in middle schools.

4. The popularity among the activity categories was similar between the high schools and middle level school in that the most popular activities were athletically related, followed by music, and class-related clubs. The least popular, as evidenced by enrollments reported, were social-related and hobby-related activities in the high schools and social and honors-related in middle level schools.

5. Female participation was greater than male in music, drama, government, honors, service, cheerleading, publications, and the social related in both the high schools and middle level schools; the number of males exceeded that of females in the hobby/leisure related in both the high schools and middle level schools.

6. The number of high school students who participated in co-curricular activities decreased as school size increased in most categories, particularly in the athletic, music, and class related areas.

7. Team sports, typically, interscholastic, had appreciably more participants than individuals or

intramural sports in both the high schools and middle level schools.

8. The frequency of meetings was similar in the high schools and middle level schools with activity categories typically meeting weekly or more frequently.

Students in small schools perceived a greater pressure to participate and achieve success in activities. These adolescents reported they felt needed and challenged. They often felt an obligation to be involved, and many times participated in more than one school activity ranging from athletics to service-related organizations, to music and other clubs (Gaspard & Burnett, 1991). Because of their small number, students had greater feelings of alienation when they did not participate in co-curricular activities.

Non-participants and Being At-risk

Studies consistently show that students who leave school prior to graduation are students who are unlikely to participate in co-curricular activities (Biernat & Kleese, 1989; Ross, 1983; Self, 1985). Further, this research also shows a low level of participation in students activities

Of the top eight characteristics associated with at-risk students five are school related: poor academics, dislike of school, high grade retention, low participation

in co-curricular activities, and discipline problems (Self, 1985).

Ross (1983) presents a profile of at-risk students listing these characteristics:

1. A record of truancy or excessive absences
2. A low level of identification with or participation in school activities
3. Low or failing grades in two or more academic classes
4. Difficulty in communicating with teachers or other students

At-risk students view the school in the following way (Self, 1985):

1. Feelings of not belonging
2. Being a loner
3. Rejection of school and self
4. Insecure in school status
5. Feeling that they have less respect than other students
6. Feel teachers are not interested in them
7. Low self-esteem
8. Little desire for self-growth/improvement
9. Finally, when success in school no longer seems likely, removing oneself from the setting seems reasonably compelling.

A connection begins to appear in Table 1 when the observable characteristics noted by Ross are placed next to Self's emotional precursors of these behaviors.

Table 1
At-risk Students' Feelings and Behavior

At-risk Students Feel: (Self, 1985)	Observed Behavior in At-Risk Students: (Ross, 1983)
1. They don't belong	Record of truancy or excessive absences. Low level of identification or participation in school activities.
2. Loners	Low level of identification with or participation in school activities. Difficulty in communicating with teachers and other students.
3. Like rejecting school and self.	Record of truancy and many absences. Low level of

Table 1, Continued

		identification with or participation in school activities. Poor grades.
4.	Insecure in school status	Difficulty in communicating with teachers and students.
5.	They are granted less respect(than other peers)	Difficulty in communicating with teachers and other students. Low level of identification with or participation in school activities.
6.	Their teachers don't care	Record of truancy or excessive absences. Low or failing grades
7.	They are not worth much	Difficulty in communicating with teachers and other peers.
8.	Little desire to risk	Low level of identification with or participation in school activities.
9.	Like giving up	Low or failing grades.

Many at-risk students do not have the support outside school to meet their basic needs. Their home is unstable, possibly due to low socioeconomic status, or a single parent household, abuse, or alcoholism. Positive role models are unavailable and life is a constantly challenging experience, lacking security or fun. Self (1985) reports that the at-risk student often looks to the school for guidance, for help, in essence, for the fulfillment of his or her basic needs.

Student activities can be a change agent within the school to decrease the alienation that at-risk students feel. Calabrese (1989) describes solutions to the problem of unacceptable levels of alienation felt by the at-risk student. One of the solutions he suggests is the concept of bonding. Bonding is the process or uniting one person or group with another. He believes the school must encourage bonding and in a sense, become responsible for each of its students. If some adolescents (at-risk students) are not encouraged to engage in healthy, meaningful activities with other adolescents, their sense of bonding is with drugs, alcohol, and other activities outside the realm of legitimate student activities.

In a related study of migrant students, Calabrese's (1989) study suggested that the number of migrant students graduating from high school was positively associated with the following factors: student participation in co-

curricular activities; affective student measures (such as positive student attitudes toward education); bilingual instruction; Hispanic staff; and parental support education and home-school relations. The educational prospects for migrant students could be improved by undertaking such strategies as increasing parental involvement, improved staff training, setting up a student monitoring system, providing counseling, tutoring, and homework assistance, and encouraging co-curricular activity involvement (Migrant Education Dropout Prevention Project-Final Report, 1989).

Phelan (1987) believes students who do not have a feeling of belonging to the school are less likely to participate in activities associated with the school. There is little to attract or bind students to school. The lack of co-curricular activities is an additional "loosening" factor. The resulting sense of alienation is what leads to the students' disengagement from the school. Calabrese (1989) describes alienation as a sense of not belonging, a separation of the individual from the immediate environment. Alienation is normal, to a degree, and can be a source of motivation to change one's environment. Alienation becomes a problem, however, when the distance between the student and various social units widens to the point where the student establishes his or her own set of rules, seeks meaning in temporary

pleasures, rebels in a violent form, or passively withdraws. The at-risk population has an unacceptable level of alienation.

Phelan (1987) agrees with the belief that if students feel a void in their relationships within the school, then these students will turn to peer friendships and other interests to fill this void. Because at-risk students do not "belong" to the school, they develop their own norms and activities. Phelan states that social bonds to the school and its mission are necessary for successful performance. Co-curricular activities are an alternative vehicle to attract student support for at least the social amenities of attending school. Yet at-risk students are rarely involved with co-curricular activities.

Not all students will make the passage through adolescence successfully under current conditions. Many of these students will never reach their full potential. Basic human needs and caring relationships with adults, guidance in facing sometimes overwhelming biological and physiological changes, and the security of belonging to constructive peer groups are unmet at this critical stage of life. This statement is in agreement with Glasser's (1987) belief that all human behavior results from the individual's attempts to satisfy the five basic needs: survival, belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Glasser stresses that at-risk students do not have positive

pictures of school and learning, and until they do they will not feel a sense of connectedness to the school. Therefore, schools must structure their environments so that students' basic needs are met (Greene & Uroff, 1989).

Academic Performance

Students who participate enjoy their school experiences more and will be motivated to exert extra effort in earning better grades. There appears to be a strong correlation between participation in the co-curricular program and student success as evaluated by grade point averages found a positive relationship (Camp, 1990; Neish, 1993). A positive correlation also existed between the level of involvement (high, medium, and low) and the students' GPA. The conclusion of the study was that "although it cannot be concluded that participation in the activities program...will guarantee academic success, it is apparent that these programs attract motivated students (Sweet, 1986). Most co-curricular activity participants tend to make good grades. Maintenance of at least a "C" average (2.0 GPA) appears to be the common level among the academic standards schools are requiring or considering requiring for participation in co-curricular activities. The impact on participation rates is much greater for some groups of students than for

others. The situation for participants in varsity athletics is probably typical:

1. Overall, nearly seven of eight varsity athletes meet or exceed the 2.0 GPA requirement.

2. A larger percentage of female varsity athletes meet the requirement.

3. White students of high and medium socioeconomic status and academic programs meet the requirements at high rates.

4. The group hardest impacted by the requirements are black and Latino athletes. However, about two-thirds of the black and Latino male varsity athletes meet the requirement (Sweet, 1986).

Educational Aspirations

My research in co-curricular activities examined the effect of co-curricular activities participation on educational aspirations. Spady (1971) examined data that he collected from 197 male west coast seniors in 1963 and additional data gathered from the same males in 1967, four years after their graduation. He controlled for such variables as family socioeconomic status, academic ability, grade performance, and peer status. Spady concluded that co-curricular involvement during high school was the greatest contributor to college success. He also found that co-curricular service and leadership

activities, more than athletics, most strongly predicted successful realization of educational aspirations.

Otto and Alwin (1977) did a more long term analysis. Gathering their first data in 1957 from seventeen-year-old males, they followed up on the same men fifteen years later in 1972. Seeking information about achievement as measured by education, occupation, and income, their findings indicated that co-curricular participation was positively related to the educational aspirations of seventeen-year-old males and their subsequent educational attainment.

In research involving 603 females from Ohio, Snyder and Spreitzer (1977) controlled for levels of education of the students' parents, the students' grades, parental and teacher encouragement, and the educational aspirations of the students' peers. Like Spady they concluded that participation in multiple co-curricular activities was associated with the highest educational aspirations. Those who participated in only one activity had lower aspirations, and non participants had the lowest level of aspirations.

Adolescent boys were the subjects of a six-year study by Buhrmann (1972). Junior high boys who were involved in athletics were found to be more likely to have higher educational aspirations than nonathletes, particularly those students who were from lower socioeconomic homes.

Buhrmann suggested in his conclusion that "athletics may be the most important means for these lower socioeconomic students to gain social recognition and acceptance and, through it, greater academic aspirations and higher scholarship" (Buhrmann, 1972, p. 127).

These findings were further reinforced by Picou and Curry (1974). Selecting boys from both urban and rural backgrounds, they found that athletes from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who received little parental encouragement to attend college had higher scholastic aspirations than did boys from similar backgrounds who did not participate in interscholastic athletics.

Generally, there is a positive relationship between co-curricular activity participation and increased educational aspirations and attainment. Spady (1971) found that participants in service leadership activities were also likely to have college aspirations, while nonparticipants in any activities were less likely to have college aspirations (Holland & Andre, 1987). Participants in no co-curricular activities were substantially less likely than the typical student to achieve goals.

Most previous research has treated participation as if involvement in a given activity has the same effects on all participants. However, the limited available research indicates that the degree of involvement is an important mediator of the relationships of participation to

developmental variables. Stars were more likely (95 percent) than starters (91 percent) or substitutes (80 percent) to attend college. Coaches gave advice more often to stars (75 percent) than to starters (48 percent) or substitutes (26 percent). Stars perceived their coaches to be a "great" influence on them more often (79 percent) than to starters (51 percent) or substitutes (31 percent) (Holland & Andre, 1987). These studies, involving both athletic and nonathletic activities, suggest that the degree of involvement in co-curricular activities is significantly correlated with positive personality-social characteristics among secondary school students (Holland & Andre, 1987).

Studies show a significant difference between high school drop-outs and non-dropouts in the number of co-curricular activities and leadership roles taken on while in high school (Holland & Andre, 1987; Otto, 1982). The lack of participation in school activities was a significant characteristics of the high school dropout.

When examining the difference in the type of activities participated in by high achieving versus low achieving, certain trends appeared. While only four percent of high achieving students reported no participation in co-curricular activities, 19 percent of low achieving students reported no participation. High achieving students also participated in a greater quantity

of activities, while 36 percent reported more than ten activities, while only one percent of the low achieving students reported that many (Haensly, Lupkowsky, & Edlind, 1986). In each type of activity, with the exception of career activities, a greater percentage of low achieving students reported no participation than did high achieving students.

For the high achieving students, the list of benefits received from participation in co-curricular activities included (in order of frequency): meeting other people; increasing responsibility; making school more enjoyable; developing leadership abilities; broadening interests; developing self-confidence, enhancing time management; and; maintaining physical condition or health (Haensly, Lupkowsky, & Edlind, 1986). The ranked list of most frequently mentioned benefits for the low achieving students was similar: meeting other people; having a learning experience, preparing for a career; making school more enjoyable; increasing responsibility; developing a greater involvement in school; becoming more outgoing; developing leadership abilities; and increasing self-discipline.

When comparing the two groups, career preparation was more important to lower achieving students, while leadership and responsibility were not as vital.

Social Skills

The available research indicates that participation in co-curricular activities is positively correlated with desirable personal/social characteristics. Participation has also been correlated with improved multicultural relations, involvement in political and social activities as a young adult (Hanks, 1981), and lower delinquency rates (Landers & Landers, 1978).

Development of desirable social attitudes and cooperation through participation in student activities was reported by Gholson and Buser (1983). One of the objectives of co-curricular activities is to help educate young people for citizenship through experiences and insights that stress leadership, fellowship, cooperation, and independent action. In a 1973 study of 2,000 Illinois secondary school students, 49 percent stated that one reason for participating in student activity programs was "to develop leadership capabilities." In a follow-up 1975 study by (Gholson & Buser, 1983) of 2,500 students from throughout the United States, 61 percent stated that one reason for participating in student activity programs was "to develop leadership capabilities." However, participants and nonparticipants select themselves into or out of co-curricular activities. Pre-existing personality and social differences between participants and nonparticipants may account for the observed correlations

(Holland & Andre, 1987). Participation in co-curricular activities may lead adolescents to acquire new skills (organizational, planning, time-management, etc.), to develop or strengthen particular attitudes (discipline, motivation), or to receive social rewards that influence personality characteristics (Holland & Andre, 1987).

The development of desirable social skills and attitudes on the part of individuals and groups represents another basic principle of co-curricular activity programs. Cooperation and understanding among social, racial, and ethnic groups in the student body as well as in out-of-school life is another worthwhile characteristics of the activity program. A basic expectation of the activity program is the degree to which students share responsibility; and for selecting, organizing, and evaluating the program and its outcomes. Finally, the development of democratic cooperative values is a primary principle of co-curricular programs.

Interpersonal and social proficiencies that are not considered basic elements of the academic curriculum may especially be constructed through participation in co-curricular activities. Academic achievement does not ensure success in society especially if a student lacks appropriate social skills. A person's success depends in large part on social skills. In this highly technological society, however, more and more adolescents grow up

without the social skills necessary to cope in a competitive and demanding world (Cartledge & Milburn, 1980). Social behavior is an acquired skill that must be taught, learned and mastered. Social skills are, in fact, a kind of second language, a specific code of behavior to be used when interacting with other people (Black, Downs, & Kain, 1988). Studies in social learning theory indicated that competencies which are not already within our young peoples' repertoires can be developed with greater ease through instruction coupled with modeling (Bandura, 1974). Participation in co-curricular activities educate some students about the social skills that are expected and acceptable in social situations.

Maintaining one's individuality in a group, practicing appropriate adult behavior in different settings, and understanding and coping with peer pressure all contribute to the development tasks that adolescents must accomplish in order to move effectively from childhood to adulthood. Participation is particularly effective in providing a healthy setting for the task of forming new and more mature relationships with peers of both sexes, achieving an appropriate social role, accepting oneself, and acquiring a set of ethics as a guide to behavior. Adolescents will socialize with their peers whether as part of a well-planned school co-curricular program or in an autonomous peer society.

Through this socialization they will potentially enhance self-concept or disrupt it, learn what to choose and what not to choose, attain successes and achievement or failures, and most important, experience affiliation or social isolation.

Summary

This chapter provides a review of the literature as it relates to the characteristics of SED students, the placements and services for SED students, effective programs for SED students, and co-curricular activities.

The SED student's behavior can be described and analyzed as to its chronicity, frequency, and severity, and the setting events. This behavior causes the SED student to be seriously at-risk of failing within the current education system.

There is an on-going debate about the services and placements provided for SED students. The service systems for SED students are fragmented and crisis-oriented. In addition, over 50 percent of all SED students are placed in separate classes or schools.

The research does suggest that there are philosophies, teaching methods, and systems that do make a significant difference for SED students.

Co-curricular activities allow students to blend various aspects of their academic learning into personal

actions. Co-curricular activities appear to offer a rich array of opportunities and experiences that cause students to stay in school and find personal meaning. Students who participate in co-curricular activities believe they belong at their schools and feel supported by the adults of the school.

There was a relationship between the students who dropped out of school and the amount of time they participated in co-curricular activities. Students who enjoy their school experiences are motivated to exert extra effort to earn better grades. Also, a correlation between the level of co-curricular involvement and grade point averages was found.

The kinds and amount of co-curricular participation is a predictor of future educational aspirations for students.

Participation in co-curricular activities is associated with desirable personal/social characteristics. Participation appears to cause improved multicultural relations, involvement in desirable social activities, and lower delinquency rates.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this action research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students. This chapter describes my methodology, the setting, selection of subjects, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and validity and reliability.

As I began my fieldwork, I was a beginner at conducting qualitative action research. I believed Olson (1990) was correct when she stated:

> These are confident teachers who research questions that intrigue and puzzle them, who seek answers and understanding about their students' learning and their own teaching, and who strive to be more knowledgeable in their responses to the teaching/learning cycle (p. 13).

Action research is a deliberate, solution-oriented approach to research that is group or personally owned and conducted by the researcher. It is characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action, and finally problem redefinition all within the context of a natural setting. The linking of the terms "action" and

"research" highlights the essential features of this method (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1982). The prevailing focus of teacher research is to expand the teacher's role as inquirer about teaching and learning through systematic classroom research (Copper, 1990).

Yet, Elliott (1981), and the reality of beginning my research, suggested that action researchers undergo phases of anxiety, uneasiness, and feelings of being *deskilled.* I was apprehensive about opening myself and the Structured Learning Program (SLP) up to on-going scrutiny as we studied the effects of a co-curricular program on SED students for one year. Pragmatically, during the action research I aimed to counter these feelings by utilizing the following strategies: First, I sought the involvement of the most trusted and reliable members of the South Middle School staff. Together, we had created over the last seven years a SLP, that benefited the SED students, in addition, made teaching much easier for these staff members. Before I took over the SLP, these teachers dealt with extremely disruptive situations with many of the SED students in their classes. Group support and facilitation through the use of external consultants are common practices at South Middle School. These staff members are used to sharing their professional concerns and needs as a group. In addition, when requested staff members

frequently visit each others classrooms to offer suggestions for problematic situations.

Table 2 lists the teachers' names (pseudonyms), their teaching assignment, which SED student they mentored, and their advisory group (a.g.) responsibility.

Table 2
South Middle School Staff Members Involved

Pseudonym	Position	Mentee	Advisory Teacher
Mrs. Brown	librarian	Leslie	yes
Mr. Columbia	science	Jack	yes
Mrs. Ellensburg	slp co-teacher	Jesus	no
Mrs. Moxee	math	none	yes
Mr. Morrow	computers	Nate	yes
Mrs. Naches	math	Kristi	yes
Mrs. Rock	history	Shawn	yes
Mr. Stevens	slp	Keith, Roger	yes
Mr. Wenas	p.e.	Lupe	yes
Mrs. Range	language arts	Jake	yes

Second, the East Valley School District and the Yakima Educational Service District agreed to allow our school and me to have control over the course of this practice-oriented research. As long as I followed and met all special education procedural expectations for the SLP,

I was granted the professional freedom to proceed with my research and live with the effects of the study in our daily practices.

Last, I attempted to use preexisting SLP data collection systems whenever possible. The timeline of the study and the methods used to collect data are described in Appendix A. Those data collection methods already utilized prior to this study by the SLP include:

1. Every day, I, or the co-teacher (instructional assistant), visited every teacher prior to the SED students arriving for school to check on progress, assignments, and classroom expectations for the day. A sample of the sheets used to collect data can be found in Appendices B and C.
2. All SED students and their parents visited South Middle School prior to enrolling in the SLP. Questions and concerns were addressed, and a tour of South Middle School was provided for each family.
3. A document search of each student's educational cumulative student folder was completed.
4. Weekly class meetings were held to discuss individual student goals for the week and to evaluate the progress made.
5. Daily student journals were kept to aid in understanding the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the SED students. Each student had a spiral

notebook that was used for reflecting on daily events.

6. I used a computer word processing program to update daily data sheets and interventions on each SED student.

7. Daily, I used a tape recorder during my drive to and from work to record my observations about the SED students, and interventions and their effectiveness.

8. Three week progress reports were used to assess academic, behavioral and social levels, attendance, and overall progress of the SED students and communicate with their parents.

9. Every nine weeks, individual SED students, their parents, key staff members, and I reviewed grades, behavioral and social levels, attendance, and overall progress.

10. Every nine weeks, staff members rated the SED students using the Solution Identification Scale (S-Id) as described in Appendix D.

11. Every nine weeks and at the semester, report cards were used to collect data related to grades.

12. At the end of the school year, the SED students and their families, and relevant staff members participated in a transition meeting to evaluate the SED student's progress and to make recommendation for the next school year.

I chose an action research model because I am a practitioner, and I wanted to study my practices as a teacher of SED students.

Since I was new to teacher action research, I tried to research and utilize what I believed to be the important common characteristics of action research according to the authors of the methods books I read (e.g., Altrichter, 1993; Patton, 1990). These characteristics include:

1. Action research is characterized by confronting data from different perspectives. I collected data from different perspectives on the same problem or question and used discrepancies as a starting point for the development of my working theories. For example, differences of opinion concerning the level of anti-social behavior exhibited by students occurred between the SED student, parents, and the home school district. After collecting data about the SED students for three weeks at South Middle School, I was able to use data from their home schools and South Middle School to develop a better understanding of the social level of each SED student.

I attempted to create a "collaborative study" by encouraging the SED students, staff members, and the parents involved in the study to negotiate the design, interpretation, and practical development. The students had the most to gain from their involvement. They were

taught to believe at South Middle School they were the "experts" concerning their lives. They willingly accepted the responsibility of assisting in designing the scope and sequence of the co-curricular program and assisting in the interpretation of the accuracy of the findings.

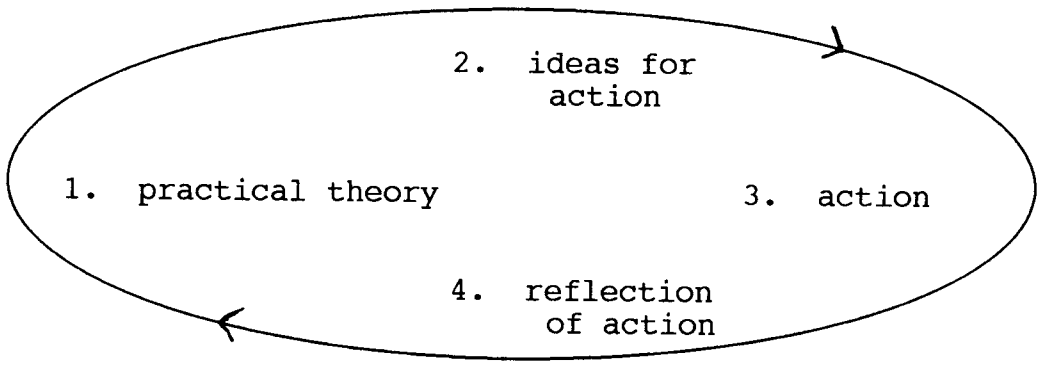
The Staff members at South Middle School decided that there was a need for a folder system for their mentees in order to better collect and provide data for my research and themselves.

The parents were willing to provide information and assist in the interpretation of the data, but their involvement in the design of the co-curricular program and the other interventions were minimal.

Action research's emphasis on the comparison of different perspectives is expressed, for example, in the procedure of triangulation which has come to be taken as typical for this type of research. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings. I sought to understand different perspectives by simulating validation strategies used in traditional empirical research by laying a second, and third, source of data on top of the original and trying to reduce discrepancies.

2. Action research is characterized by a close and on-going linkage of action and reflection as shown in Figure 1.

The "circle of action and reflection"



I tried to look back on my practice to develop explanations for what had happened to my practical theory. An example of this occurred when the Latino students were reluctant to get on the bus for our baseball tournament in the front of South Middle School, but were willing to board on the side of the building. I believed loading the bus in front of the building, which was common practice for teams leaving South Middle School, would also be appropriate for the Latino SED students. My own observations, interviews with the Latino students, and their journal entries indicated that they should load the bus on the side of the building. This allowed the Latino students to use the bus without being embarrassed

because they had to board a bus with Anglo SED students in front of their Latino peers.

Part of action research was to make sure I put these reflections into action to test my practical theory by a series of tests, and to develop and refine it in cycles of action research. According to Altricter (1990) this creates the main source of "rigor" in action research.

3. Action research is characterized by holistic, inclusive reflection. Reflective practitioners do not evaluate their practical experiments by asking, "Did we achieve the ends we set ourselves?"; rather they ask "Do we like what we got?", as Argyris et al. (1985, p. 218) contended. This seemingly vague question accounts for the fact that practitioners hold professional responsibility for the whole situation and cannot ignore side-effects they did not anticipate in their theoretical expectations. I had to appease one staff member whose name continually came up in discussions in a negative manner with the students. The staff member had a legitimate concern about her reputation, and we recognized it. The staff member did not mind being discussed as a part of the study if the student had addressed the concern with her prior to the SED students sharing the information in group discussions with other students. If staff members believed their names and actions were coming under unfair scrutiny during

the study, this could have undermined my relationship with other staff members involved in the study.

4. Action research implies research and development of one's own self-concept and competency. Action researchers do not research other person's practice but their own. By investigating a situation they themselves are deeply implicated in, action researchers also critique their own contribution to this situation and, consequently, their own competency and self-concept.

My use of solution-focused therapy during the study is an example. Solution-focused therapy has very specific terminology and techniques that appear to make a significant difference for SED students. During the study, I reviewed my solution-focused techniques and consulted with a team of professionals who practice solution-focused therapy to increase the effectiveness of my practices of this approach.

The Setting

Two educational settings provided placements and services for the SED students in this study. Before the study began these SED students attended their home schools. The term "home school" refers to the school districts that the SED students attended during the 1994-1995 school year. During this study, eight school districts referred and placed 10 SED students in the South

Middle School SLP through the county SLP placement committee. Most the SED students' home schools and South Middle School have similar facilities, the number of regular and special education teachers, training opportunities for the regular and special education staff, and support services from the educational service district (ESD). After studying the two educational settings, what differs greatly is the experience and expertise of the special education certified teachers and classified personnel, and the overall philosophy of serving SED students within each school and district.

South Middle School

First, the South Middle School SLP is located in a rural farming community of 6,500 people. The SLP has been located at South Middle School for 12 years, but it can be located at any middle school in the county. South Middle School has averaged a total student population of 370 students over the last five years. The South Middle School SLP has served 15 students on the average each of the last seven years. Thirty-three certified and classified personnel work at South Middle School. The certified teachers average 14 years experience at the middle school level.

I have supervised and taught in the South Middle School SLP for seven years. One classified co-teacher

(instructional assistant) teaches in the SLP. We have co-taught together for five years. She is capable of performing her assigned teaching responsibilities with a high degree of proficiency. At the end of the 1993-1994 school year, she was recognized by the South Middle School staff as the staff member who made the biggest difference for South Middle School students.

During the spring of 1995, I explained my study, enlisted the support of interested staff members at South Middle School and, with staff assistance, set goals for the study. During an August staff retreat, participants met to review student records, intake interview information, and student profile information provided by the staff of the home schools. We reviewed our spring goals and chose three action steps that began at the first of the school year.

On-going staff development regarding SED students and their special needs is provided on a regular basis at South Middle School. The South Middle School staff believes with the assistance of the SLP that they can help the school meet the needs of almost every SED student within the regular education classroom. Educators from throughout the Northwest have visited South Middle School and the SLP to study the systems and practices that are used to meet the needs of the SED students.

In addition to the SLP at South Middle School, four additional middle schools house SLPs in the county. The SLP at South Middle School has received transfer students from these SLPs and state-operated residential treatment facilities. The transfers have been at the request of parents and the county SLP placement committee.

The other four SLPs have similar student entry requirements, number of students served, and staff to student ratios when compared to the SLP at South Middle School. One major difference between the other four SLPs and the South Middle School SLP is the years of experience of the teachers working with SED students in their current position. Each of the other SLP teachers have been in their current positions less than three years.

Home Schools

Twenty-one home schools refer and place students in the SLP program at South Middle School. The home schools range in student populations from 58 to 517 students. The total combined certified and classified staff members at these schools range from 6 to 57.

The qualifications of the special education teachers at these home schools range from teachers with no special education training or supervision experience of special education programs to certified special education teachers. The average tenure of the special education

teachers from home schools is approximately just over two years. For example, one special education teacher, certified in regular education, was released from a local private school after a year of teaching second grade the previous year. Out of seven applicants, she was identified as the most qualified among the candidates for her current special education position. The year of her hiring for a middle school resource room special education teacher position, she had intended to quit teaching and work as a cosmetic salesperson. Because of the lack of qualified special education teachers in the area, it is not unusual for these home schools to hire uncertified special education teachers just prior to the school year to fill special education teaching positions.

The special education teachers often work with these SED students in isolation with little support from anyone other than their building principal and district special education director. Programs are often poorly coordinated with mental health and other necessary support services. The curricula and instructional methods are much like those used in general education. As I consulted with many of these teachers to help establish their middle school programs, it was not uncommon to observe similar practices of instruction occurring. First, the teachers utilized the exact curriculum of the regular classrooms or they offered vocational-based survival skill curriculums (e.g.,

how to fill out job applications). On more than one occasion, I heard these teachers state that remedial instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math was futile with these SED students because of the these students' disciplinary issues. Behavior management followed the disciplinary plan designed for the regular student body. Many SED students were suspended or expelled for days and weeks without any consideration being given to their handicapping condition as described in federal standards.

A practice at six of the home schools was for the school to assign responsibility of educating their SED students to untrained instructional assistants. The availability of instructional assistants allowed some regular educators to avoid assuming responsibility for the education of SED students placed in their classrooms. Instead, instructional assistants, who often have no more than a high school education, frequently made and implemented many day-to-day curricular and instructional decisions for these SED students. Having the assistants near the SED students for prolonged periods of time appeared to segregate these students from their peers by placing these SED students on the fringe of the class or moving them to another location completely. One student observed that his fellow students identified his assigned assistant as his "Human Airbag" because of her frequent

close proximity to him. This physical proximity of the assistants for two male students may have caused their disruptive behaviors to increase. One student identified the lack of privacy as he used the bathroom area as a reason to challenge his assigned assistant and the rules of the school. The instructional assistant waited for him outside the restroom until the SED student exited. The student was escorted every minute of the day once he entered the school building.

If the assignment of an instructional assistant to monitor the behavior of the SED student did not prove to be successful, a common intervention was to place the SED student at home to be tutored by a certified teacher. Districts offered a minimum of five hours of tutoring for these SED students. Six out of the ten parents from the study had experienced some form of home tutoring with their child over the last two years. Three parents believed this to be an unacceptable intervention, but they believed that it was easier to have their child out of school than to deal with the teachers and administrators at their home schools.

A pattern began to develop as I studied the placements of the SED students at their home schools over the last seven years. Once a SED student had been assigned an individual instructional assistant or home

tutoring, the district made a referral to the SLP placement committee within approximately two months.

Most home schools attempted to meet the needs of their SED students. Yet, in my opinion, three schools acted as if they really did not care how well interventions were implemented and monitored. One principal justified his belief about a student's placement in the SLP in economic terms. The principal stated, "It is worth the $5,000 dollars it will cost our district for a placement in the SLP if my staff and I do not have to deal with this student and his parents."

Each school in the county had access to support services for SED students from the county educational service district. These services included, but were not limited to assistance with SED evaluations, consultation, and individual and group counseling for SED students.

The home schools appeared to understand what their placement options were for SED students. However, my literature review did suggest that the philosophy, teaching techniques, and systems to adequately provide services to meet the needs of SED students at the middle school level were lacking (Jackson, 1993; Knitzer, 1982)

Participating Students

There were four problems related to the selection of the students in the study that received consideration:

the group from which to select students, the number of students to select, the type of SED behaviors, and the ethnic background of the students. The goal was to seek out and maintain diversity within the population under study. It is not always easy to obtain diversity in participants, but it is essential if a broad range of views are desired. Table 3 describes the names of the SED students, their ages (January 1, 1996), grade level, and ethnic background.

Table 3
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students

Pseudonym	Age	Grade Level	Ethnic Group
Jack	14	8	Anglo
Jake	14	8	Anglo
Jesus	13	7	Latino
Keith	14	8	Anglo
Kristi	13	7	Anglo
Leslie	14	8	Anglo
Lupe	15	8	Latino
Nate	14	8	Anglo
Roger	14	8	Anglo
Shawn	13	7	Anglo

1. Ten SED students from six other school districts were chosen because they had limited co-curricular activity experiences.

2. Ten SED students, eight males and two females, placed by the county committee were selected.

3. These SED students represented behaviors that typified the two major categories of SED behaviors - externalizing and internalizing. Seven students displayed externalizing behaviors, e.g., hyperactive, delinquent, and aggressive. Three students displayed internalizing behaviors, e.g., anxious, depressed, and withdrawn.

4. The two dominant ethnic groups at South Middle School were represented in the study. Eight Anglos and two Latinos participated in the study.

Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggest that rapport must be established with the participants in a study if meaningful information is to be gathered.

Before entering South Middle School for the 1995-96 school year, each student made one or more visits to meet the South Middle School staff, tour the building and campus, and began building their class schedules. During these visits, I collected case study data through interviews with each student and a family member(s). All students actively cooperated with the process except Leslie and Jack.

Leslie's selective-mute characteristics showed during the interview process. She was reluctant to talk at anytime. She either shrugged her shoulders or her mother answered many of her questions. Although unwilling to speak, Leslie completed all written surveys.

Jack vented his frustration about being transferred to a new school, and he did not want to complete any surveys at the time of the interview. He agreed to take all the surveys home and complete them there which he did with the assistance of his father.

In August, I met with the parents and guardians to explain the study, enlist their cooperation, and get their permission to proceed as described in Appendix E. One or more adults represented each student at the meeting. Before the meeting started, parents informally indicated that any activities aimed at developing leisure activity skills for their children would be greatly appreciated. Many of these parents were in dire need of respite care for their students. During weekends, vacations, and the summer months, these parents worried what their children might do during unsupervised times. In the past, our program has assisted the families to find leisure and vocational opportunities for their children. Families of students in our program have been very supportive of this portion of the SLP program.

I had the parents complete the student's version of the "How Are You Doing?" survey (Appendix F). This assessed their awareness of their child's sense of belonging at their school the previous year. Survey findings were valuable to a point, but the follow-up discussion it generated afterwards was more valuable. The parents began to see the commonality among their parent peers. The pain felt by these parents as they raised their children is often heart-breaking. They shared stories ranging from how their own social lives have been non-existent to how they have not been able to leave many of their children at home unsupervised, even for a few minutes. I also had the parents rate their student on the Solution Identification Scale.

During the school year, each parent received numerous telephone contacts and written communications (notes) from South Middle School staff members to establish rapport and to supply needed information.

Data Collection Strategies

Participant observation, intensive in-depth interviews with the SED students, parents, and staff members, student journals, documentary evidence, and field notes were the dominant strategies used for data collected in this study.

As the case manager of each of these SED students' individualized education plans (IEP), I had constant contact with each student, their parents/guardians, and all staff members who were a part of their IEP teams.

I was a "participant observer" in this study. A participant observer is a researcher who enters the world of the people he plans to study, gets to know, be known and trusted by them, and systematically keeps detailed written record of what is heard and observed (Taylor & Bogdon, 1984). The purpose is to establish a holistic and relatively long-term relationship with those one studies (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). It typically requires the researcher to be "in the presence of others on an on-going basis and have some nominal status for them as someone who is part of their daily lives"(Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979, p. 46). In this study, I was a *complete participant* which means the researcher is a natural participant. In other words, I was the teacher of these SED students.

Second, I was the head teacher in the special education program that offered direct services and consultative support to these students and the staff members in their regular classes.

Last, I acted as a coach in three co-curricular team sports (bowling, basketball, and softball) and helped supervise approximately 55 percent of all co-curricular activities with the SED students.

The Researcher's Journal

I kept detailed daily notes in a research journal throughout the study. The journal entries were divided into four major categories: field notes, methodological notes, theoretical notes, and personal notes. The field notes consisted of a more or less chronological log of what was happening (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). They included the following:

1. A running description (concrete and as verbatim as possible) of events, actions, people, things heard and overheard, conversations among people, conversations with people, and personal conjectures or theories.

2. Retrospective items of information not previously entered into notes, triggered by a current incident or situation.

3. Analytic ideas and inferences triggered by the observations.

4. My feelings and impressions.

5. Questions raised by observations, interviews, documentary evidence and the call for notes for further information (Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Merriam, 1988; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

In addition to a written research journal, a small portable tape recorder was used to collect data. I often listened to the tape recorder during my drive home, and to

work, to help organize and collate my thoughts and data. I transferred the main ideas and data into my research journal upon returning to South Middle School.

Observations

As mentioned previously I was a complete participant in this study. I was with the SED student during the co-curricular activities as (e.g., the bus driver, golfing partner, basketball coach, recess supervisor). I tried to stay detached so as to not over participate in the experiences of the SED students. Prior to co-curricular activities occurring I worked with the students to predict and set the rules, procedures, and routines that would be necessary for the activity to be successful for all participants. I encouraged and expected the students to create solutions when problems arose during the activities (e.g., a golfer lost all his golf balls and needed more to continue playing, a basketball player was dominating the handling of the ball). Gold (1958) calls over participation by the researcher in a study "going native." This occurs when the researcher gets so involved and active with the subjects that his or her original intentions get obscured. I tried when possible to compare my observations with other adults following co-curricular activities. During off-campus activities another adult was always along. This person and I would try to have

coffee for a few minutes once we returned to South Middle School to discuss our observations and experiences.

The only consistent time I observed students by myself was during recesses and breaks in the SLP. I relied on the students' journals and interviews to verify my observation data during these times.

Interviews

To further enrich the field note data, unstructured interviews were used to elicit rich, detailed information from the students (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

Structured interviewing was used to increase the probability that comparable data across participants would be collected. However, I tried to remain flexible and ready to modify questions in order to provide the students the opportunity to shape the direction of the content. A sample of the interview protocol appears in Appendix G. Structured interview formats were used to collect data in the areas of social skill development (Solution Identification Scale) and the student's perceived sense of belonging (How Are You Doing? survey) at their home schools and South Middle School.

Initially, I video taped Leslie's interviews, with her mother's permission. I wanted to document any conversation on her part so I could demonstrate to other teachers what they could expect of her. I stopped the

second week of school after Leslie began talking with Mrs. Brown the librarian, because Mrs. Brown was able to verify Leslie talked with teachers in a school setting.

Documentary Data

Gathering documentary data from the SED students' confidential files was a relatively straightforward task. Each SED student's file was updated and reviewed by a county placement committee and delivered directly to the SLP because I was assigned the responsibility of acting as each SED student's case manager while they attended South Middle School. The complete history of each student, e.g., disciplinary issues, attendance, developmental information, etc. was available for immediate review. From this information, I condensed the home school information into a student profile for the South Middle School staff. A sample of the student summary sheet appears in Appendix H.

During the study, documentary data were collected from the main office, the attendance secretary, and teachers' records on a regular schedule as described in Appendix A.

Student Journals

Student journals (diaries) were used on a daily routine. Kemmis (1981) suggests that keeping a diary on a continuous basis allows the teacher to compare his or her experience of a situation with that of the students. There were no required amounts of writing or specific topics to be addressed within each daily entry. Some students participated willingly (e.g., Roger worked in a sports question after his main entry), and some approached it like another classroom assignment (e.g., Jack needed the pre-writing activity of webbing to organize his thoughts before he wrote his entry in his journal). Every Friday, an 'evaluation session' was held to review diary entries. During this five minute time period, the student and I would discuss the entries to make sure I had a clear understanding of their thoughts and experiences. This was called our "down and dirty" time. In addition to discussing the student's experiences during co-curricular activities, this time provided students an opportunity to raise questions or have any other concerns addressed. This has been used by the SLP for the last five years. If additional time was needed the student and I set a time to revisit our discussion.

The Behavior Management Folder

On October 17, a behavior management level folder system was added to the mentor/mentee program that began on October 2. The mentor program was effective, but I was unable to consistently communicate with all mentors and mentees. The folder system at South Middle School had been revised and modified to create a highly systematic approach that can be facilitated by any staff member. An example of the folder system form (Daily Success) is contained in Appendix I. The folder system allowed me to focus on specific issues identified in the daily folder or look for patterns of behavior over an extended period of time.

Informal Data Gathering

Spradley (1979) believes researchers gather much of their data through participant observations and many casual, friendly conversations. The South Middle School staff enjoys socializing together. The study came up as a point of discussion during potlucks, holiday parties, and in the lunchroom at South Middle School. Teachers often discussed the study at these social gatherings. The idea for regular classroom teachers to be mentors of the SED students came out of a discussion during our staff retreat at a state park.

A visitor to our school overheard our discussion related to this study one lunch period and asked if she could offer some resources to the families in the study. Mrs. Parks had access to previously unknown leisure recreational opportunities in our portion of the state. She made copies of the updated recreational opportunities and on a monthly basis provided it to the researcher and each SED student's family. She participated in co-curricular activities as a volunteer and attended the teacher meetings related to co-curricular activities because of her interest in the lives of the SED students. She offered insights and asked different questions about the study than the teachers who participated in the study. She focused on the students' involvement in future leisure activities outside of school.

Data Analysis

The discipline and rigor of qualitative analysis depends on presenting solid descriptive data-what is often called "thick description"-in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations (Denzin, 1989; Gertz, 1973). I attempted to regularly analyze the data after reviewing my field notes, methodological notes, theoretical notes, and personal notes. I analyzed my personal notes on a daily basis. I read them prior to leaving school each day, and

then organized my thoughts using my tape recorder while driving home. Once home, I used my daily planner to write down key trends or findings. Upon returning to school, I used my notes to plan any upcoming actions for the study and discussions with the participants.

Highly systematic, consistent attention to and analysis of the data as the data are being collected is a necessity. In this way, the specific research questions and methods used are grounded in data from the empirical world (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Throughout this study I collected data as shown in Appendix A, observed emerging trends, and developed theories to progressively make sense of the data. I collated and analyzed the data according to each of the ten SED students. After reviewing the individual student's data, I organized the data based on the group trends. I was cognizant of discrepant trends. For example, the Latino students did not feel comfortable participating with Caucasian students if their Latino peers were nearby.

I requested feedback from the SED students, parents, and teachers to assess the reliability and validity of my own analyze and findings. For example, weekly meetings were held with the SED students to monitor the direction of the co-curricular program. For example, at one point in the study, I attempted to limit students outside the SLP participation in our softball tournament because of

the size of the bus available for the trip. I had talked with two SED students and made a suggestion to limit other students' participation. At a weekly meeting with SED students early in April, the other students made it clear that they looked forward to other students participating with them. Many of the SED students had already planned to ask other students. It was also pointed out that the softball tournament would not be as much fun if other students from South Middle School were not participating. After a discussion with my principal, a larger bus was found for the softball trip.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggest that data collection, organization, and analysis should occur in a pulsating fashion--first the data collection and organization, then the analysis, more data collection and organization, then more analysis and so on--until the research is completed. The analysis is *recursive*; that is, the findings are generated and systematically built as successive pieces of data are gathered (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). Teachers were asked to review my data findings every three weeks. I wrote up brief summaries of my findings and asked teachers to add or delete information prior to our meeting. During the meeting, I had ten chart-size sheets of paper, one for each SED student, that were broken down into eight categories: individual student goals, sense of belonging,

relationships with peers and adults, social skills, disciplinary issues, attendance and grade point average, and information to think about. Each student was discussed based on the eight categories. A formative record was kept by storing the charts and revisiting them the next time the team of teachers met. After reviewing individual students, the teachers and I looked for patterns based on the ten charts. Each parent was given a written description of his or her student's summary regularly. The parents were asked to review the summaries and at the nine week meetings offer their insights. These student charts were used during the transition meetings with the SED students prospective high schools, also.

As part of my normal communication routine with staff members concerning the SLP students, the co-teacher or I communicate with every staff member before school begins each day. Depending on the student and the situation, I might meet with the teacher prior to school to discuss issues or strategies, check in with the teacher at noon to check progress, and check in after school with the teacher to assess progress and plan for the next day.

With parents, the co-teacher and I call at least once a week to check with the parents about their needs or questions. During these calls, I frequently discussed the study and asked the parents to give their perception of their student's data.

The mentor/mentee daily folder system was used to analyze daily events and actions by the SED students. It offered a way to also revisit events from weeks before if a new trend developed that I wanted to assess retroactively.

At the end of the study, I compiled the data into a written summary and asked students, staff, and parents to review the data and findings. At a year end meeting, I had students, staff, and parents first meet in separate rooms to discuss the findings one last time as individual groups. Next, I brought the groups together to synthesize their analyze and observations into one final summary. Using the eight category chart-sized recording system previously mentioned in this section, I had my co-teacher record the summary of the group as I led the review session.

Validity and Reliability

Internal validity addresses the question of how one's findings match reality. However, a tenet of action research is that reality is "holistic, multi-dimensional and ever-changing" (Altrichter, 1993). Since one goal of action research was to portray the world as it appears to the people who are in it, what *seems* true is more important that what *is* true (Hood & Johnson, 1991). When reality is viewed in this manner, internal validity is a

definite strength of naturalistic inquiry, as long as the investigator presents honestly how the informants actually view themselves and their experiences (Merriam, 1988).

Merriam (1988) identifies several strategies that I used to enhance internal validity.

1. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings (Merriam, 1988). In this study, triangulation was accomplished through the combined use of (participant) observations, documentary evidence, and student, parent, and staff interviews.

2. Member checks involves eliciting interpretations from the members who participate in the study. Member checks were conducted through the use of daily student journals, researcher/student and class meetings, researcher/South Middle School staff meetings, and researcher/parent meetings. Two data collection instruments were administered every nine weeks: The "How Are You Doing?" survey to the students and the Solution Identification Scale to the parents and staff members. The students reviewed the Solution Identification Scale ratings provided by the parents and staff members. This information helped the students and their mentors set goals every nine weeks.

The "How Are You Doing?" survey was developed to assess the "sense of belonging" among the SED students.

It was not a precise instrument, but it gave indications if students were feeling left out or alienated.

The Solution Identification Scale was used to collect data related to social skill development. It was also used to reframe the way the SED students, staff members, and the parents of the SED students viewed these SED students. Instead of assessing the SED students' weaknesses or deficits the focus was on the solutions or successes the student was experiencing.

3. I conducted this study over a long period of time. The full-school year design of this study, and four month reconnaissance period before the study, allowed me to participate regularly in the entire delivery of this study.

4. The researcher's biases involve clarifying the researcher's assumptions and theoretical orientation. Researchers stress that research is, by necessity, *value bound* and that this should be understood and taken into account when conducting and reporting research results. Stainback and Stainback (1989) define *value bound* as those values which influence the researcher as he selects the problem to be investigated, frames the questions to be answered, chooses the measuring instruments and the design of the study, and analyzes and interprets the data.

Reliability refers to the extent to which one's findings can be replicated (Merriam, 1988). Reliability

and validity are inextricably linked in the conduct of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) make a case for side-stepping reliability in favor of internal validity since "...it is impossible to have internal validity without reliability, a demonstration of internal validity amounts to a simultaneous demonstrations of reliability." Additionally, Merriam (1988) suggests that reliability can be ensured through the use of triangulation, despite the fact that human instruments are imperfect and human behavior is not static.

External validity measures the extent to which the findings of one study that can be applied to other situations, or what is the generalizability of the study. This aspect of validity is a subject of considerable debate in that many argue that external validity as it refers to correlational or experimental design is inappropriate in action research (Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1980). I can, however, improve the applicability of my findings by "providing a rich, thick description so that anyone else interested in transferability has a base of information appropriate to the judgment" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary

The purpose of this action research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed middle school students.

Two educational settings provided placements and services for SED students in this study. Before the study began these SED students attended their home schools. During the study they attended South Middle School.

Ten students, eight males and two females, were chosen for the study. Eight of these students were Anglo and two were Latino.

Participant observation, interviews, student journals, documentary evidence, and field notes were the dominant strategies used for data collection in this study.

Field notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes, and personal notes were collected and analyzed on a regular basis. The SED students, parents, and teachers reviewed and offered their input related to the accuracy of my analyzes and findings.

CHAPTER 4

Portraits of the SED Student

Introduction

In this chapter, I present three descriptions of the SED student. The first description is an overview of the common characteristics exhibited by male and female SED students as they enter the South Middle School SLP. The second description is a synthesis of the ideas and descriptions contained in the professional literature. The third description is particular to the students in the present study. The purpose of this comparison representation of the SED student is to provide the reader with an understanding of this student. Hopefully, this will help the reader better understand the extended description of the curriculum and its effects on the SED students contained in Chapters five and six.

Characteristics of Typical SLP SED Students

Common behavioral characteristics appear to be present as SED students enter South Middle School. These profiles are based on discussions with home school and South Middle School staff members, the parents, my observations, and documentary descriptions.

Male

The typical SED student who enters the SLP at South Middle School is a thirteen year old male. Approximately 90 percent of all students in the SLP are male. He has exhibited severe externalizing behaviors (e.g., severe insubordination, acting out, and delinquent behaviors) at his home school. He has few friends. Other students have learned to adjust to his behavior by avoiding interactions with him. Few seek him out for activities in or out of school because of his arguing. He comes from a single parent household. The biological father is either totally absent from the student's life or a live-in male has replaced the father in the student's life. The student is involved with the juvenile legal system typically for issues related to curfew violations, acts of violence toward peers, substance abuse, and gang involvement. He is on probation for these issues and answers to a probation officer at least once a month.

In school, the student spends the majority of his day in a self-contained special education setting, an isolated room where he does his studies and eats lunch, or an instructional assistant is assigned to his regular classroom to supervise his actions. The student misses 14 days of school due to absences and suspensions. He participates in few if any co-curricular activities and does not attend any off-campus activities with his school.

At home, the student is in control of the living arrangements through physical intimidation of his mother or by avoiding her expectations by refusing to comply. The SED student dictates his bedtime, dinner time, what jobs around the house, if any, he will do, and when and if he will come to school. Also, the student is in charge of the amount and content of his TV or at-home video viewing.

Female

The typical SED female entering the SLP can be identified by two descriptors. The first is quiet. She is a student who has almost withdrawn socially from the majority of students. Other students do not purposefully seek her out socially or as a learning partner. This SED student usually matches up with students that have been openly rejected by the majority of students. She usually seeks out adult interactions at breaks and in class. Teachers like her because she tries to follow their rules and is seen as helpful if requested to do something the teacher needs done.

She is served primarily in the regular classrooms because she causes few disruptions to the learning process.

Any time spent in special education is in order to receive tutorial assistance with her regular classroom assignments.

At home, she is usually very supportive of the expectations of her mother. She lives with her single mother, and typically there is not a father or significant other who lives in the home.

The second type of female SED student can be described as socially disruptive. She is frequently in verbal and sometimes physical disagreements with other female and male students. She sees the counselor, the administrators, and her primary teachers often to complain about the comments and actions of other students toward her. The male students will get upset with her because she embarrasses them in front of their peers by her overt social greetings and signs of affection. In addition, her style of dress and suggestive clothing often alienate her from many students.

In classes, she is capable of doing the required assignments, but she is often physically upset (e.g., crying, physical ailments, disagreements with peers) which disrupts classes and office routines. She has the potential to arrive at school in what seems a normal state only to visit the office during the day with dramatic physical symptoms for something that supposedly happened at home. This student typically knows the counselors' and nurses' schedules better than most adults in the building. Teachers find that they must selectively assign this student to work with peers or they risk disrupting the

entire activity with social disagreements between this SED student and her peers. She can function academically in the classroom, but she is assigned special education resource room time because of her social interactions with peers.

At home, this SED student lives with a single parent. There is no father or second significant other in the home. She argues with her mother over small requests and is seldom left home alone unsupervised. She appears to enjoy the verbal disagreements with her mother especially if she can draw other adults into the disagreement.

Literature Related to SED Students

A generally accepted classification system for emotional or behavioral disorders describes two broad categories of behavior problems: externalizing and internalizing (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981).

Externalizing Behavior

Externalizing behavior problems include: persistent aggressive, acting out, and noncompliant behaviors. These represent the most common pattern of behavior among middle school students with emotional or behavior disorders. Most often the students exhibit such overt behavior problems as destructiveness, temper outbursts, refusal to

follow directions, fighting, verbal threats, arguing, loudness, and swearing. Others engage in more covert antisocial behaviors such as lying, stealing, setting fires, gang membership, and alcohol and drug abuse (Loeber & Schmaling, 1985). Some students engage in both overt and covert antisocial behavior. The term conduct disorder is often used to refer to students who act out, become aggressive and commit antisocial acts.

Most adolescent students exhibit aggressive and noncompliant behaviors at times. Unlike most developing adolescent students, however, SED students with externalizing problems have such a high frequency and intensity of negative behaviors that they significantly impair their everyday functioning at home, at school, and in their communities (Kazdin, 1991; McManus & Kauffman, 1991; Wahler, 1993). Students with externalizing problems are arguably at extreme risk for long-term failure in school and serious maladjustment problems in adulthood (Kazdin, 1991).

Typically, students with externalizing behavior have problems in two areas of school: teacher-related and peer-related adjustment (Walker & Bullis, 1991). Teacher-related adjustment refers to meeting the behavioral demands and expectations of teachers: for example, following of classroom rules, attending to tasks, and completing assignments. Lieberman (1984) called these

"teacher pleasing" behaviors. Peer-related adjustment refers to those skills needed to interact successfully with peers, particularly during free or unstructured times.

Some SED students with externalizing problems are rated favorably by their peers (Parker & Asher, 1987; Walker & Bullis, 1991) while others receive unfavorable ratings (Reid & Patterson, 1991). These SED students may also demonstrate more subtle behaviors that interfere with the development of friendships, such as lower levels of empathic response (Schonert-Reichl, 1993) and poor ability to evaluate the extent of peer problems (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984).

Students with externalizing behavior problems often have conflict at home, where they may engage in behaviors such as negativism, noncompliance, and destruction of property (Patterson, Reid, Jones, & Conger, 1975).

Many students who engage in antisocial and aggressive behaviors come in contact with juvenile justice system. Each year 450,000 children and youth are placed in juvenile detention centers (Leone, Rutherford, & Nelson, 1991; Margolis, 1988). A large percentage of students identified as juvenile offenders have been identified as having emotional or behavioral disorders: from 20 to 53 percent of incarcerated youths (Murphy, 1986).

Internalizing Behavior

Internalizing behavior problems include: shyness, social withdrawal, depression, and anxiety. A smaller group of students and youth also engage in obsessions, and compulsions (Milby & Weber, 1991). Obsessions are repetitive, persistent, and intrusive impulses, images, or thoughts, such as repetitive thoughts about death or illness. Compulsions are repetitive, stereotypical behaviors (for example, continued washing or checking). These various internalizing behavior problems can occur together (Strauss, Forehand, Smith, & Frame, 1986; Tankersley, 1992) or in combination with externalizing disorders.

Internalizing behaviors (which sometimes seem like a lack of behavior) typically do not place students in conflict with teachers. On the contrary, the SED students in the present research tended to have high levels of appropriate classroom behavior, reducing their chances of being identified and of receiving needed special services (Berber & Semmel, 1984; Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Kerr & Nelson, 1989). In relationships with peers, these students generally have low social status and participate infrequently in peer-controlled activities. They often seem to lack the specific social skills needed for making and keeping friends. Many times, they are often rejected by their peers (Asher & Coie, 1990).

Case Studies

I now present descriptions of the SED students who attended the South Middle School SLP. First, I include detailed description of three students.

Ten individual student case studies were completed. Three students are described in detail. Nate and Jack represent examples of students who exhibit externalizing behaviors. Leslie represents the characteristics of a student who exhibits internalizing types of behaviors.

Then, I present the results of a cross-case analysis of the ten students in the program.

Nate

Nate (pseudonym) is a 14-year-old white male from a family that lives below the poverty level. His attendance at the home school was irregular because he was suspended for numerous disciplinary reasons. He takes no medication. He is an only child in a two-parent household. Nate's birth mother and grandmother live with him. For the first twelve years of his life, Nate was led to believe his 26-year-old mother was his sister. He has never met his biological father. His grandmother retains all legal responsibilities for Nate. He lived and attended the same school, kindergarten through seventh grade, in a rural community of 542 people.

Nate was identified as a SED student as a seventh grader while attending his home school. His behavioral file describes him as someone who verbally and physically threatens staff members and as extremely disruptive during class time. When asked to describe Nate, the principal responded, "He was the most antisocial young man I have ever been associated with." Nate's behavior was so disruptive at his home school, he was allowed to remove himself from school anytime he desired and walk home. His circle of friends was entirely outside of school. School and law enforcement records report he was an active member of a local gang. His grandmother concurred with this information.

He was referred and placed in a special education program during his seventh grade year. Nate recognized the concerns of the principal and staff from his home school, and seemed to enjoy the power he possessed. During his intake interview at South Middle School, he stated, "I liked playing with their minds. They were all assholes!"

In spite of his lack of classroom participation, he was at or near grade level in all academic subjects. His sixth and seventh grade teachers agreed that he had the aptitude to do all school work.

He had not been on a school field trip for over two years. His participation in school co-curricular

activities was limited to playground activities before and after school. I asked his former teachers to describe his co-curricular participation. One teacher jokingly said, "Are you kidding? We wanted Nate out of here. We did not want to deal with him or have him influence the other kids."

His answers on the "How Are You Doing?" survey reinforced that he did not feel a sense of belonging at his home school. He identified that the staff did not like him. During a follow-up interview to analyze his answers, he did identify he had a positive relationship with one third grade teacher. This teacher acknowledged that she liked Nate, but she qualified her statement by adding, "I would not want to have him in my class at his current age." Nate believed students respected him at the school. His home school teachers found him argumentative and unwilling to follow their rules and expectations. Five teachers said he tried to purposely disrupt their teaching especially if he did not like them.

Nate's grandmother recognized that the staff and Nate had a strained relationship. She believed he did not fit in at his school. She believed that he greatly overrated his friendships with peers, because she saw few contacts with the other students outside of school. She found him to be a very considerate and loving child. She reported that the majority of the times that she had difficult

experiences with him were because of school related issues.

Nate and his grandmother arrived for their intake interview and visit during June. He presented himself as very relaxed and comfortable with the new placement at the middle school. He pointed at and joked about the amount of time he would spend in the school office. He identified that he would probably be successful at South Middle School because he would be in an eighth grade class of 175 students instead of 17 students. He felt he was a "marked man" at his old school.

During our discussion about the advisory program, he identified what type of advisory teacher he would match up with best. He stated, "Give me a dude or a chick who does not get freaked out by the small things in life." He requested Mr. Morrow, the computer specialist, as his advisory teacher. Mr. Morrow is a teacher that all students seem to like, because of his great sense of humor. Mr. Morrow and Nate's sense of humor were very similar. Later in the study, Mr. Morrow thanked me because without Nate in his class nobody would have understood some of his jokes.

Mr. Morrow's rapport with Nate was very strong. He redirected and corrected Nate without causing him to become defensive. I asked Nate during an interview session what was different about being at South compared

to his home school. He selected his relationship with Mr. Morrow as one of the key factors. He believed at South his day always started in a good way because Mr. Morrow made a point of greeting and talking with Nate. At his former school, he remembered each day starting by someone telling him what behaviors he should not be doing, and what would happen if he did break the rules.

Mr. Morrow's advisory group selected Nate to represent them at student council meetings for the first semester. The student council advisor observed that he took his job very serious especially when it came to working on the rules of the school. He always wanted to make sure they were fair.

Nate had issues following class rules during unstructured time, and he socialized too much with his peers according to some teachers. This caused some disagreements between some of the staff members and him. Nate received two disciplinary notices between September 7 and October 4. Four disciplinary notices within one semester results in a students removal from all extra-curricular activities, field trips, and school parties at South Middle School. I recommended that Nate use the building "Daily Success" folder system. Nate agreed that the folder system was needed, and identified Mr. Morrow as the mentor he desired to work with. The structure and feedback offered by the folder system appeared to make a

difference for Nate. Mr. Morrow, the staff, and I worked with Nate on the social skills of "how to accept criticism" and "how to disagree appropriately." The staff believed as he developed these social skills he was much easier to reason and work with. By the end of October, these goals were met and monitored the rest of the study.

In summary, Nate was a young man who attended a home school that provided little structure and few incentives for Nate to be successful. Nate represents many SED students that I work with. His effort to be successful by following the rules and meeting the expectations of his home school were overshadowed by his dislike for adults who he viewed as unfair and controlling. He believed he was held to different standards than other students, and received contrived consequences when he disobeyed a school rule.

Once Nate entered South Middle School he responded favorably to the clear systems used for teaching appropriate behavior and expectations. He cited his mentor as an important factor in his success. Mr. Morrow was viewed by Nate as an adult who respected and cared about him.

Leslie

Leslie is a 14-year-old white female from a family that lives below the poverty level. She misses school to care for her younger sisters if they are unable to attend

school. She takes no medication. Her personal hygiene is poor. She lives with two younger sisters and her mother. Her father, who she sees infrequently, lives out-of-state. She lived and attended the same school, kindergarten through seventh grade, in a community of 2,500 people.

She was identified as a SED student in the sixth grade. Leslie had not spoken to any adult above a whisper, while at school, during her seven years at her home school. Staff members described her as a student who did all her work, followed all rules, procedures and routines, but would not carry on a conversation above a whisper with adults and only if forced to. She would talk with other students during recess, but if an adult came near she would cease speaking. Staff members have heard her talking in the local grocery store and on phones, only to have her quit speaking once she recognized them. She remained speechless until they left her area. Prior to her attending South Middle School, I called to set up an appointment to meet with her mother. Leslie answered the phone in a full voice and continued until she understood who I was. At that point, she immediately changed into her "whisper" voice. The home school staff reported that she participated in all co-curricular activities as long as she did not have to speak while a staff member was near. If a staff member was near, Leslie would drop out of the activity and watch from the fringe. Her mother

stated that she participated in church and youth activities outside of school. Yet, Leslie was reluctant to participate in some church and youth activities if teachers from her school had students in the same activities.

School records showed that her reading, language, and study skills are at or near grade level. Her math skills were approximately two years below grade level.

Leslie was supposed to enroll at a residential treatment center during her eighth grade year, but I asked permission for her to enroll at our school for a trial period. Over the years, I have had success with other students who had been identified as selective-mutes. In each case, the students began conversing openly with students and adults.

During the first week of school, I communicated entirely with her by writing. Leslie's sixth grade teacher had informed me that Leslie wanted to be a writer. The following field notes are part of a written communication between Leslie and me, on September 5, 1995.

Prior to September 5, I had other students talk with Leslie about the changes they had made in their lives while at South Middle School. Also, I told her I understood the practices that had been used in the past to get her to talk. I assured her that we would never force her to talk. She should talk because she wanted to.

However, I informed her that talking at South Middle School would keep her out of the treatment center. Last, I described my work with three other students who did not feel comfortable talking in school. The following is a portion of a session between Leslie and me.

> S: Leslie, you wrote that you wanted to go back to your home school and you did not want to go to the treatment center. What needs to happen for you to go back to your home school and stay out of the treatment center?
> Leslie: I have to talk to people.
> S: What people do you have to talk to?
> Leslie: I have to talk to teachers.
> S: You are right. It is what will keep you out of the treatment center and help you get back to your home school.
> S: Which teachers would it be best to talk with first?
> Leslie: You (Mr. Stevens) and my advisory teacher (Mrs. Brown).
> S: When do you think you will start talking with me?
> Leslie: Right now.
> S: OK, can we put our paper away and talk?
> Leslie: Yes.

I repeated question 1, because I was trying to build upon her successful communication up until this point.

> S: What people do you have to talk to?
> Leslie: (whispering) I have to talk to teachers.

The conversation continued until Leslie identified the major goals for herself while she was at our school. First, she wanted to talk in a full voice with enough people in order to convince her home school to allow her to return. She wanted to return to her home school for her ninth grade year. Second, she wanted to avoid going into the treatment center, ever.

Leslie's level of participation in co-curricular activities was limited to shadowing the activity and the actions of other students when she first came to our school. At her former school, students knew that she would participate if they invited her. At South Middle School, she was immediately identified by the other students as someone who was different than other students. Because of this, she was avoided by the other students. In the beginning, she participated less in co-curricular activities than at her home school. She wanted to participate, but she continued her silence when staff members were near. This caused the other students to think that she was not interested in participating in activities.

Mrs. Brown, the school librarian, developed the routine of talking with Leslie at Leslie's desk. Leslie agreed to talk with Mrs. Brown, if Mrs. Brown positioned herself directly in front of Leslie's desk. This was an important step because many of the students outside our special education program thought Leslie could not speak. If Leslie was to make friends, we believed it was necessary to demonstrate her talking with people. One of our goals was to have Leslie address a teacher in a voice that could be heard across a classroom with a class of students present. Leslie moved toward this goal in the following stages:

September 5, 1995 - Whispered with Mr. Stevens in his office.

September 7, 1995 - Whispered with Mrs. Brown near Leslie's desk.

September 16, 1995 - Read a story in a full voice to other students in remedial reading class, with no adults nearby.

September 17, 1995 - Whispered to Mrs. Ellensburg. She asked for some help with an assignment from a regular class.

September 22, 1995 - Whispered to Mrs. Brown with other students seated nearby.

Her communication style of whispering with staff members was restricted to this group of educators until the first three week grade progress report period arrived September 26. Her grades were lower than what she expected. As Leslie and I analyzed her progress report, one pattern kept appearing in the report. "Leslie makes mistakes because she does not ask for help." The teachers clarified their instructions and her strategies by modeling or asking questions. She responded by listening, smiling, and attempting to do what the teacher expected. Unfortunately, especially in math, if she did not understand the skill being taught or the format of a lesson, she would do the entire assignment incorrectly. Teachers tried to compensate by having her stop after she

completed a portion of her assignments to check for understanding.

Leslie identified it was time to talk with the teachers because she wanted better grades in her classes. Students wanting to return to their home schools must maintain a 2.5 grade point average. After a team meeting, all of Leslie's teachers started using Mrs. Brown's system of communicating with her. Leslie accepted this solution of talking with her teachers to help her address the low grades. I believed the staff of South Middle School had to avoid forcing her into speaking as was tried at her other school. This made a difference during the times that Leslie did not want to talk with staff members during class. The staff responded to her silence by saying calmly, "Leslie, I'm standing here in front of your desk because you told us to do this if we felt you needed some help." Leslie, shared in her journal that the teachers at our school expected her to talk because she had made the rules. I reminded Leslie of her responsibility to keep her part of any agreements with the staff. They were all trying to help her get back to her school and keep her out of the treatment center. As a staff, we worked at building trust with Leslie instead of trying to control her into talking. At her former school, teachers had tried punishing her and the entire class if she would not talk. In the sixth grade, her teacher attempted to use

peer pressure to get her to talk. The entire class was kept in from recess until Leslie would talk. She did not talk. The students did not get recess and instead of being upset with Leslie the students got upset with the teacher. The next day, parents arrived at the school to discuss the teacher's actions concerning Leslie. The parents understood that Leslie did not talk in school, but they did not support their students missing recess in an attempt to get Leslie to talk.

Returning to her home school depended on Leslie talking with a variety of people in our school. After the first report card period, she demonstrated the ability to talk with seven out of her eight teachers in a "whisper" voice. Only Mrs. Moxee did not actively engage Leslie in conversation during lessons. This teacher felt Leslie was "playing games" with people, and would not enable her by letting her whisper in her class.

I used this grading period and the comments of Mrs. Moxee, a math teacher, to reinforce with Leslie what was needed if she wanted to go back to her home school. I asked her which of the teachers at our school reminded her most of her home school. Mrs. Moxee was the answer. Leslie did not dislike Mrs. Moxee, but she believed her expectations were similar to Leslie's home school teachers. We discussed what her voice needed to sound

like for her to satisfy Mrs. Moxee. She identified a full voice and how this was also what her district wanted.

We went into a private office to talk about her beginning to speak in a full voice. I asked her when she thought she was going to begin using a full voice. She stated she would try at that moment. She tried but choked and coughed and then broke into full tears. After she composed herself, she spoke in a full deep voice for the first time to a teacher in eight years of school. I asked what had upset her so. She stated, "I knew that if I ever talked out loud for anyone in school, I would be expected to do it from then on."

During our time together that day, I asked about her past experiences with speaking in school. In kindergarten, she stated that she wanted to talk with the class but she took too long to think of her answers, and her teacher would get frustrated with her taking so long. The teacher would place her in an open closet space because of what her teacher perceived as Leslie being resistive. When Leslie entered the first grade, she still had to think about her answers before speaking. The other students compounded the problem by telling the teachers "she does not talk in class." Leslie shared the negative consequences that her kindergarten through sixth grade teachers tried with her. They ranged from her being sent to the principal to the entire sixth grade class being

kept from recess until Leslie would talk as mentioned earlier. None of these made a difference. Leslie said she really wanted to talk many times, but she just needed time or the pressure was too great. In addition, three of her teachers reported how the other students began to isolate themselves from her. Primarily, because she would not talk she was of little assistance during discussions or completing team projects. Second, her personal hygiene had been very poor. This included wearing the same clothing day after day and not washing her hair regularly.

Leslie and I agreed to sit down with all the staff members of the study to demonstrate what her full voice should sound like. During this meeting, Leslie also agreed to increase the distance between herself and the teachers as she talked.

Teachers reported similar experiences the first time Leslie spoke in a full voice in their classes. We began to call this experience Leslie's "E. F. Hutton" moment. The other students would stop everything and just look in amazement at Leslie and the teacher. Leslie reported in her journal that she enjoyed these moments. She still had a delayed response to many of the teachers' questions. The teachers knew to give her time to answer. Some of the students commented to their teachers, "She does not talk." At that moment, Leslie would turn to the student and let them know, in a full voice, that she did talk!

After my observations and discussions with Leslie, it appeared that during classroom time she avoided talking because she did not want to give a hasty and potentially incorrect answer. Leslie and the teachers developed a routine. Leslie knew the teacher would only ask a question of her if they stood directly in front of her seat. She knew the teachers would only expect an answer when the teacher returned to a position in front of her seat.

The hygiene issue was resolved by using the other students in our school. Clothes are collected and distributed privately to those students in need of them. Second, a beautician works with the SLP students on grooming. She starts with styling everyone's hair, teaches a hair maintenance program, nail care, etc. Leslie tried to follow the personal hygiene program at home, but her family had limited resources. We eventually resorted to washing her clothes at our school to ensure that she had clean clothing on a regular basis.

Teachers reported that once Leslie started talking in her full voice some students began to accept her into their activities. During recess, she was now invited to play basketball because she would talk during the game with staff members around. Before, teachers and students would report how frustrated other students became when Leslie would not give them information verbally (e.g., who

the ball touched before it went out of bounds, whose turn it was to come into an activity).

Teachers noticed a difference in their classroom management when it came to breaking students into groups. Some teachers had shifted to groups of threes when students were editing each other's work. They did not want Leslie to feel left out or her partner to feel uncomfortable during student peer editing time. Once she began speaking, teachers were able to use one on one peer editing between her and other students.

Once she began talking in a full voice she joined in many activities. She participated in large group discussions in her Spanish interest group and presented her history project in front of the entire class. Her co-curricular activities ranged from our unified sports program to all school parties and field trips.

We did have one major setback with Leslie. She wanted to play basketball for her home school eighth grade team. I mistakenly took for granted that she was ready to make this transition. She had been speaking in a full voice with all people at our school for approximately two months.

Leslie's mother could not provide transportation to practice before school. I took Leslie to her first practice, and I knew I was in trouble the moment she got in my car. Her body language and words showed me that she

was very unsure about going to practice. Leslie shared with me that the coach with whom she had expected to work was reassigned to another team because of so many players turning out. Leslie and I had met with Ms. Berry, her intended basketball coach. Leslie appeared to feel very comfortable with Ms. Berry as we discussed this transition back to her home school. As she entered the gym for that first practice, Leslie was assigned to a team coached by one of her former teachers, named Mr. Fielding. Leslie did not want to play for this teacher. Ms. Berry and I worked with Mr. Fielding to help him understand Leslie's reluctance to play for him. He tried his best to make Leslie feel welcome by making modifications for her. After one week of practice, Leslie dropped off the team. She attended three out of four practices, but was unwilling to talk with this coach. As much as Leslie wanted to play basketball, she was unsure of her relationship with this coach.

In summary, Leslie entered the South Middle School SLP having not spoken to teachers while she attended her home school for seven years. In order to avoid being placed in a day treatment center many miles from her home, Leslie talked with the students and staff members of South Middle School during classes. Leslie progressed from talking selectively with a few teachers in private to

taking part in large group discussions and presentations in all regular classes.

Jack

Jack is a 14-year-old white male from a middle class family. He takes medication three times daily because of his attention deficit hyperactive disorder. He misses very few days of school. He lives with his younger sister, biological father, and step-mother. Jack has a history of physically assaulting his step-mother during disagreements. His father is the special education teacher at the high school in his hometown. The father and the school district special education director were at odds with each other over the special education services that Jack received in fourth through seventh grade. Jack's father believed that the services were highly restrictive and punitive. Jack had lived and attended the same school, kindergarten through seventh grade, in a rural community of 650 people.

He was identified as a SED student as a sixth grader while attending his home school. His behavioral file describes a pattern of overt resistance to authority figures, difficulty making and maintaining peer friendships, and academic performance that is well below grade level in the areas of written language and mathematics.

Jack was not allowed to attend any school parties, field trips, or sporting events unless his father was in attendance. School records included a written message that stated Jack had the potential to disrupt entire activities, and "be careful if you plan to take him off campus."

He had to be escorted directly to his homeroom by his mother or father. Jack had to move off campus within 10 minutes of the dismissal bell, at the end of the school day. Jack did participate in the community youth wrestling program which his father, the high school wrestling coach, supervised. His father reported that his participation was a cause for embarrassment and disagreements with his son. Many times, Jack's father had to physically remove Jack from the gym after Jack had lost a match or become frustrated and thrown a temper tantrum.

His mother, father, and teachers could not identify any close friends of Jack. Jack identified high school students on his father's wrestling team as friends. His father acknowledged that these students did tolerate Jack while at practice. Jack identified that he was close friends with local gang members and dressed like them whenever possible. There is no verification of gang affiliation by any people who knew Jack.

Jack was referred and placed in the SLP program at the end of his seventh grade year. His father, who has a

positive influence on his son, had convinced Jack that this placement was for the best. I had worked with his father before on county committees. He understood the scope and services of our program and believed it was the best placement and services available.

Jack enjoyed participating in all activities especially ones requiring physical activities. He brought two strengths to all activities. Jack was a very rule governed person. He liked clearly defined structure related to the rules and expectations of a class or activity. Second, he made sure everyone got a turn and participated. He always knew who had been skipped or whose turn was next.

Jack developed a distinct predictable behavior pattern as the year progressed. The teachers could tell if Jack clearly understood the structure of the activity. If Jack and the other participants knew and followed the expectations, he mingled among the other students. If the rules or activity became confusing, he would locate himself very near the leader of the activity. He also recognized this pattern in himself during activities. He became frustrated and verbally lashed out at others as activities became confusing for him. The teachers affectionately referred to Jack as their "canary" in our team meetings. Miners used canaries in mines to detect the lack of good air. The teachers knew if they found

Jack by their side they probably should check to see how other students in the classroom were doing.

Jack was placed in an advisory program with a teacher, Mrs. Rock, who had four sons attend South Middle School. She openly admits to not being very effective with middle school girls, but she loves difficult boys. She is perceived by the boys as the matriarch of the school, and she is viewed by many students and staff members as the unofficial principal of the school. Parents, staff, and students know her to be unbiased and caring in her approach when working with people. She uses the smallest intervention necessary to redirect or discipline a student.

In the beginning, Jack challenged her by refusing to follow directions, and he was unwilling to participate in activities. Mrs. Rock's approach is not to tell the student what is wrong, but to teach the correct way to do it. She has two famous sayings that all kids know her to use. First, "*The group is more important than any one individual.*" She stressed with Jack that he would know he was being successful if the group was being successful. Jack continually spoke about this phrase during interviews. He began to use it with students in our program during group discussions if they caused disruptions.

Second, *"You do not have to, you get to."* Because academic subjects were challenging for Jack, "Do I have to" was his favorite phrase when he experienced tasks that he perceived as difficult. He knew Mrs. Rock wanted him to start and try on his own. Mrs. Rock would say to him, "If you run into something difficult, you and I will find strategies that work for you." The staff found Jack to be an extremely hard worker especially if the materials and expectations were appropriate for his learning style.

Mr. Adams knew of Jack's wrestling background and asked him to assist with his wrestling interest group. Jack demonstrated the moves Mr. Adams wanted introduced each week. Jack acted as the referee during matches between students, also. Jack's dad said Jack was so proud when he came home after being asked by Mr. Adams to assist with the wrestling program. Jack and his dad talked all night about wrestling techniques and strategies. Mr. Adams learned Jack had a history at his home school of getting upset if things did not go his way. During the first wrestling class, he had Jack demonstrate the way high school wrestlers show sportsmanship before, during, and after matches, and how they appropriately handled the frustration of losing. Mr. Adams said Jack did not lose often, but when he did, it appeared that he was going to throw a tantrum. Jack knew to walk off and get a drink and mumble to himself about what had happened. He wrote

in his journal how he did not want to lose face with the other students by "losing" it in front of them. In the SLP and sometimes with Mrs. Rock, he vented his frustration about losing during the wrestling interest group.

One aspect of co-curricular activities was very important to Jack. He liked any activity that would help him to get to travel. Also, he looked forward to going out with all of us to get a hamburger or pizza. During this time, he built a strong rapport with supervisors. He received praise often from adults for his good manners and willingness to look out for the needs of others. Our staff never had to worry about the restaurant being left messy. He made sure every French fry on the ground or napkin was picked up. He knew at South Middle School the staff members enjoyed him coming on their trips. He more than any SED student realized the opportunities he had at South Middle School. He progressed from a student who at his former school had to be escorted to school by his parents to a student who attended over ten field trips while at South Middle School.

Cross-case Analysis: Similarities

I wrote ten case studies of my SED students. Based on this analysis, I determined that the majority of the participants tended to share some background

characteristics related to their personal lives and school lives. These characteristics include the following: low socio-economic status, the presence of one birth parent, involvement with the legal or Children Services Division (CSD) system, negative attitudes related to the school experience, attending a school other than their home school, and a lack of sense of belonging at their home schools.

Low Socio-economic Status

Eight of ten participants grew up or live in low-income homes. Eight students receive free lunches at South Middle School. Kristi, Nate, Leslie, Jesus, Jack, and Rogers' parents continually found work in unskilled areas. Two families have no one working. Three families did not have reliable vehicles to provide transportation. Many of the students wear clothes that are out of style. Leslie described what growing up was like:

> My mom did not even have enough money to buy the kind of food we needed. Most of our breakfasts and lunches were day old bread and pastries from the local bakery. We would go to different churches so we could get clothes. It was really embarrassing to have to continually wear the same clothes that were not in style. I grew up in a small town and some of the kids would see me wearing their brothers' or sisters' clothes.

For many of these students, the school waived entrance or required fees for co-curricular activities.

The families did not have the money to send their students to events sponsored by South Middle School.

Numerous times the mentors of these students paid the activity fee, or they had the students do odd jobs for them in their classrooms to compensate for the necessary money. Mr. Columbia had Roger bring insects and worms from his foster parent's farm to feed the animals in the science lab. In exchange for the feed, Mr. Columbia provided Roger with rocket engines for use during the rocket interest group.

In Contact With One Birth Parent

Eight of the ten students have only one birth parent who remained close to them. Four of the students have never met their fathers. Many of these students have brothers and sisters they have never met. The single parents emphasized how difficult it was to have little money, little extended family support, and have to raise students with emotional issues who experienced difficulty in school.

Children Services Division Involvement

Nine of the ten students have a history of family chemical abuse currently or in the past. Children Services Division (CSD) has been involved with both girls

and two of the boys because they've been sexually abused. Six boys and one girl had probation officers for illegal acts which included running away, curfew violations, vandalism, minor in possession of a weapon, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, theft, burglary, sex offenses, assault, gang affiliation, and fire setting.

Negative Attitude About School

According to interviews and records, eight students and all families had experiences at their home schools that caused negative attitudes about their former schools. One mother stated:

> For six years, I thought my student was the entire problem. Now, I have him in a school that knows how to work with him, and I know it was not all him. It makes me so mad because of all the guilt and frustration I felt about myself and the anger toward my son.

Another mother echoed a similar thought when discussion during a March parent meeting focused on transitioning these SED students into high schools:

> There is no way my son is going back to his home school district. He might be going into a high school building, but his home district has the same special education director and superintendent that I have dealt with for years.

Attending a School Not In Their Home Town

All ten students attended South Middle School instead of their home school. Most parents welcomed the change in

placement to South Middle School. A Latino student's mother shared with me at his intake interview that she was very concerned because all the teachers at South Middle School were Caucasian. Two months after his placement, she called me for two reasons. First, she wanted to see if Jesus could continue at the local high school instead of returning to his home school district for his freshmen year because of the success Jesus had experienced. Second, she had noticed that since coming to South Middle School, he had developed a new set of friends which included Caucasians and Latinos in South. She said he had moved away from the gang activities in his hometown. She was so relieved!

Sense of Belonging

Prior to describing the current sense of belonging, I want to share the students' observations about when and how these students lost their sense of belonging in schools.

The students all could identify when they felt school had become "disinviting." Four categories developed as the students and I discussed this during the course of the study. First, each could identify a teacher or teachers that they believed treated them unfairly. Leslie talked about being put in a closet by her kindergarten teacher for not talking. Jesus and Lupe described how the Latino

students of their schools would be suspended while Caucasian students would be given detentions for identical rule violations. Kristi remembered spending an entire year with a regular classroom teacher who never expected her to try or participate because she was a special education student. Second, third grade appeared to be a key time period for many of the boys. Team sports and activities requiring groups of students at recess were more prevalent than the earlier grades. The students described how either they did not get invited into these games or they remember always getting in trouble for arguing or not following the rules. The boys reminisced about spending more of their recess in time-out than playing.

Third, the SED students described how by sixth grade all of them began to understand that they were not part of the larger social group of the school. Kids began to single them out as being different. They were seen as liabilities as partners or as members of groups and teams. They believed they were reported to teachers unnecessarily for minor offenses. Worse, the teachers took disciplinary actions against them without seeing the infraction, and singled these students out in front of the class. Roger remembered having to sing a different song provided by his teacher, each day for one month, in front of his class. This happened because he got into a shoving match with a

girl. Each one of the students remembered teachers "losing it" with them with the class watching.

Last, the level of work was an issue for these students. Jack described how frustrated he would get when he could not understand the assignment or keep up with the work. He said it was better to be a behavior problem than be seen as dumb by the other students. Kristi remembers hating the words "high interest and low vocabulary." As regular students in the class worked out of "real" books, she was given supplemental workbooks and readers to work from. Many of the SED students could remember working by themselves on materials different from the rest of the class.

The parents identified incidents prior to entering school and in school. As these students entered day cares or pre-schools the parents recognized their students did not play, or play with other preschoolers, the same way as other students. Sharing and taking turns was very difficult for many of these students. Understanding and following the routines and expectations of supervising adults were a challenge. There was a tendency for these kids to get upset and remain upset for extended periods of time. The parents remember being called to come get their student because he or she was so upset or unwilling to follow the rules of the day care provider or pre-school.

Each parent knew one day care provider or teacher that had a special way with their student. The parents listed common characteristics about these people: they understood and respected their student, they had clear expectations with natural consequences, the students under their guidance seemed to get along, students felt competent with this person, and the environment was stimulating. In contrast, they identified the characteristics of the majority of their students' teachers: they did not understand their student, their student was a burden to the teachers, their student was singled out with rules and expectations different than other students, students with special needs were not given the same opportunities during activities, and some teachers tried to make parents feel guilty for their students' actions.

Former staff members remembered how frustrating many of these students were, how these students caused them to stay awake at night worrying, and how relaxed their classes seemed during the times these students were absent.

One principal admitted to letting Nate walk home if Nate got upset because it was easier for everyone. Two principals and some teachers suggested these students should never have been in their classrooms because, as teachers, they were not trained to work with this type of

student. Jesus, Roger, Keith, Lupe, Jack, and Nate's former teachers reported looking for reasons to send them to the office or eliminating them prior to some activities beginning to make it easier on the whole group. Long field trips seemed to be a common activity where teachers used these students' disruptive behaviors as a reason the students should not participate. One comment echoed by many teachers was "once he was out of my class, it was a night and day difference." Three teachers said it was not fair to the other students to have a SED student in their class.

Summary

This chapter presented three descriptions of the SED student. First, an overview of the characteristics of the male and female SED students as they enter the South Middle School SLP. Second, a description of a synthesis of descriptions of SED students contained in professional literature. Third, a description particular to the students in the present study.

The typical male SED student entering the SLP exhibits severe externalizing behaviors (e.g., severe insubordination, acting out, and delinquent behaviors.

The typical female can be identified by two descriptors. The first is quiet. She is a student who has almost totally withdrawn socially from the majority of

students at school. The second female can be described as socially disruptive. She has frequent verbal and some physical confrontations with female and male students.

A generally accepted classification system for emotional and behavioral disorders describes two broad categories of behavior problems: externalizing (e.g., persistent aggressive, acting out, and noncompliant behaviors) and internalizing (e.g., shyness, social withdrawal, depression, and anxiety) (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981).

Case study descriptions of three SED students from the SLP were given. Nate and Jack represent examples of students who exhibit externalizing behaviors. Leslie represent the characteristics of a student who exhibits internalizing types of behaviors.

Based on the analysis of the ten SED case studies, I determined that the majority of the participants tended to share some background characteristics related to their personal and school lives. These include: low socio-economic status, the presence of one birth parent, involvement with the legal or Children Services Division (CSD) system, negative attitudes related to school experiences, and the SED students sense of belonging.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVENTIONS

Introduction

In this next section, I describe a set of teaching interventions aimed at more fully integrating SED students into the culture of South Middle School. The key interventions include the following: an advisory program, a mentor/mentee program, a behavior management folder system, unified sports program, break buddies, social skills training, and non-competitive grouping. These interventions were selected during this action research study by students, staff, and parents as influencing the level of success the greatest for the SED students. Other inventions were tried and discounted as not significantly influencing the level of success, or proving to be unsuccessful, for the SED students. For example, two computers from the SLP were put on mobile carts and moved to the library so more students could share the machines with the SED students at lunch time. Within three weeks the SED students chose not to use the machines in the library. The SED students felt they lost control of the use of the machines with their friends as more dominate male students, not from the SLP, determined the taking of

turns and the selection of computer programs. Table 4 shows the dates each intervention was implemented.

Table 4
Dates of Interventions

Intervention	Date Implemented
Advisory Program	September 5, 1995
Social Skill Training	September 5, 1995
Break Buddies	September 18, 1995
Mentor/mentee Program	October 2, 1995
Non-competitive Grouping	October 9, 1995
Behavior Folder System	October 17, 1995
Unified Sports Program	
Bowling	October 19, 1995
Basketball	February 13, 1996
Softball	May 22, 1996
Amusement Park	June 5, 1996
Off-campus Leisure Activities	October 21, 1995

Advisory Program

Prior to school starting for the 1995-1996 year, each SED student was assigned to an advisory group. The information from the "How Are You Doing?" survey and student interviews showed eight out of the ten SED students believed they did not have a teacher they could talk to if they had a personal concern at their home school. Parent interviews also suggested that seven of

the SED students lacked a relationship with an adult regular education staff member at their home school with whom they confide in and seek assistance. The South Middle School staff recommended that the SED students should start the school day in a 30 minute advisory program class instead of the SLP special education classroom. The SED students started the day with approximately 20 students who were not part of the SLP and one teacher in a non-graded advisory class.

A key factor in building the sense of belonging for SED students seemed to be selecting the right advisory teacher. Our advisory program has existed for five years and the advisory group students evaluated their teachers each year. This information helped me create a list of teachers that have proven to be consistently successful with middle school students. Each SED student chose three teachers in numerical rank order after reviewing a summary of the personality and teaching characteristics of the advisory teachers. I tried to introduce the students to the staff members who were participating in the study prior to the SED students making their choices. The South Middle School counselor was able to provide the SED students with their first choice except two students who requested the same teachers as other SLP students. They each received their second choice of advisory teachers. Our staff believed selecting their own advisory teacher

would build a stronger sense of ownership with regular classroom teachers, students, and the larger culture of the school.

The primary emphasis of the advisory program placement was to provide an appropriate social environment for each SED student under the guidance of the advisory teacher. The advisory program was similar to the co-curricular activities of this study. It was a non-graded, student directed set of activities. Five key elements of motivation were identified and used by staff members during the advisory program with the SED students (Bandura, 1986; Brophy, 1987; Hunt, 1991). These included:

1. Success - A level of success or performance that allowed the students to feel good about or be proud of their participation and accomplishments.

2. Choices - Whenever possible the student chose the activity, materials, method of measuring outcomes, and the learning style. This was negotiated with the teacher or supervisor.

3. Friends - Participation with peers and cooperative learning situations was encouraged.

4. Active participation - Active involvement by students was built into activities, when appropriate.

5. Goal setting - Students had a clear understanding of all rules, procedures, routines, and expectations.

Each SED student helped establish personal outcomes.

Eight of the ten SED students indicated that they did not enjoy home schools because they had lost interest and were bored and isolated during lessons and classroom time. I hoped the SED students participation in the advisory program would increase their connectedness with the regular education students and teachers of South Middle School.

Mentor/mentee Program

The mentor-mentee program began October 2, 1995 as a supplement to the advisory program. During a meeting of the staff participants in the study, they recommended that regular staff members become the mentors of the students in this study. The goal was to connect these students to the larger culture of the school by having one staff member consistently monitor the day-to-day progress of each SED student. The regular staff members provided guidance to these SED students instead of the SLP staff members providing the primary mentor services for each student.

During the last four years, our school has offered a mentor-mentee program to all students in need of individualized guidance. Positive results have resulted in the areas of social interactions, collaboration between students, staff and parents, students' sense of

accomplishment and well being, higher grade point averages, and a decrease in student referrals for disciplinary action (Ferguson & Layton, 1993). The school counselor reviewed the mentor program in detail with the SED students and their parents. Each student selected a staff member as a potential mentor. The mentor, once notified of the request, had an option to accept or not. The student, parent(s), and mentor worked on determining student goals.

Administrators, certified, and classified staff members have served as mentors for students. Students have the final decision about whether or not they participate and who their mentor will be. Nine percent of all students at South Middle School are invited each year to use the mentor program. Many students request the mentor program on their own. It is an intervention viewed by students as a common learning tool at South Middle School.

Seven of the ten SED students chose their advisory teachers as their mentors. During discussions and journal entries, the students identified two main reasons why they selected their advisory teachers. First, by October 2, they had come to know their advisory teacher better than other regular staff members. Second, five students believed they further distanced themselves from being identified as special education students if they were

associated with regular education mentors instead of SLP special education teachers.

Three students did not choose advisory teachers as their mentors. Roger and Keith chose me as their mentor. Keith chose me because he had medical issues requiring medication, and he believed only I needed to be aware of his condition. While at his home school, other people learned about his autistic-like behavior and medical issues. The sharing of this information by his home school teachers during public times embarrassed him and his family. He said he trusted his advisory teacher with the information, but the physical layout of his advisory teacher's classroom did not allow private, confidential conversations. My classroom has a private office that allowed students to have confidential conversations with me and others.

I believe Roger chose me because he is a "sports nut." We constantly communicated about sports in his journal. If we had a unified sports competition against another school or a leisure activity coming up, he would predict his bowling scores or his golf score, etc. As he checked in and picked up his folder each morning, we would quiz each other on the sporting events from the previous day. Sport information was also our way of reconnecting with each other if we had experienced a stressful time because of his actions in regular classrooms.

Jesus chose Mrs. Ellensburg, the co-teacher in the SLP. The two of them have become quite close since Jesus entered the SLP. At the onset of the program, it was difficult to imagine them selecting each other. His home district expelled Jesus a year earlier because he had threatened Mrs. Ellensburg by saying that he had a gun in his pocket and she should "watch out." There was no gun, but because of this incident, Jesus's gang behavior, and other documented school disciplinary issues, his school expelled him. Once Jesus entered our program, he established a close relationship with Mrs. Ellensburg. He sought out Mrs. Ellensburg for extra help on assignments or to check on his grades and progress in classes. When I asked Jesus about the gun incident with Mrs. Ellensburg, he said it was his way of joking with Mrs. Ellensburg.

Jack did switch his mentor in October. This change had nothing to do with personalities. In his journal and discussions, he indicated that if he switched mentors he would be able to accomplish two things. First, this allowed him fifteen uninterrupted minutes with the fish and other lab animals and Mr. Columbia, the science teacher, before school started. Second, he did not have to wait in the main hallway with all the other students, before the morning bell.

These SED students have experienced numerous negative, confusing, and stressful relationships with key

adult figures in their lives. The mentor-mentee program allowed the SED students to experience high expectations, honest, positive invitational responses, and consistency from a teacher who worked with them the entire time of the study.

Behavior Management Folder System

On October 17, a behavior management folder system was added to the mentor-student program (Ferguson & Layton, 1993). The folder system at South Middle School is a systematic approach to monitoring the social skill level of individual SED students. The folder system can be facilitated by any staff member. Seriously emotionally disturbed students suffer from low self-esteem and often mistakenly believe they can obtain a sense of competence and power only through acting-out behavior (Bandura, 1969). Compared to their peers, the SED students frequently fail to understand the school environment and often find it difficult to see benefits associated with the self-restraint required to complete academic tasks or follow the expectations of other students. The folder system was designed to provide clear, understandable information regarding academic and social progress. An example of the folder system monitoring "Daily Success Form" is shown in Appendix I. The folder system is part of the overall building-wide discipline management plan

and the SED student's individualized education plan (IEP) goals.

The key elements of the program are:

1. Targeted behaviors from the SI-d checklist were discussed and identified by the student, parents, and mentor.

2. The students completed a Student Reinforcer Survey which assisted in the identification of co-curricular activities to be used as reinforcers.

3. A personalized plan to meet the needs of each student is assembled for daily use.

4. Daily points were earned for each "Yes" circled on the Daily Tracking Form and for checking in and out with the mentor.

5. Daily point totals determined the next day's level. Consequences were based on the level of the student's behavior. The first negative consequence for most disciplinary issues was to practice the replacement social skill. Positive consequences were related to co-curricular activities participation.

6. Every three weeks the plan was reviewed by the student, the parents, and the mentor.

I stress the importance of tracking success versus catching the students being inappropriate. Typically, the students' home schools tracked what they did wrong on a daily basis and stressed their problem areas. South

Middle School tracked what the SED students were doing well. South teachers looked for patterns of success and constantly set new goals to continue the success and remediate areas that were not making satisfactory progress.

Homework was also monitored through this behavior folder system. The SLP staff monitored this portion of the folder system. The key components of the homework system follow:

1. All assignments and materials needed to do the homework would be in a backpack when they left South Middle School each day.

2. Along with the homework came a homework summary sheet in a folder that described the assignments for the day. No homework went home that had not been explained and started at school. On those days when the students had a large amount of homework, the students selected those assignments they thought they could complete at home. The students were not expected to complete work at home that they had not started at school. This allowed the students to understand the format of the assignment prior to getting home.

3. The part that changed many of these students' and parents' attitudes and homework practices was our policy of thirty minutes maximum for homework each night. Many

of these parents and students told stories of arguing about homework with each other late into the night.

We had two expectations of the parents. First, they were to sign the homework folder each night. Completion of the work was not the issue with us in the beginning. I wanted to know that we had consistent lines of communication with the students, staff, and parents each day. Second, the parents were to make sure their children had the assignments, materials, and homework folder under their arm when they left the home each day. For some parents this meant making sure the homework, homework folder, and materials were by their children's shoes next to the front door at night.

As staff members, parents, and students, we knew that homework could not be done each night, especially in single parent households. We tried to eliminate the stigma of failure from not doing homework. We all focused on celebrating the homework that was completed.

In summary, I was unable to consistently communicate as thoroughly as this study necessitated with all mentors and students on a daily basis. This folder system allowed me to review the data from the folders and clarify with the mentors and the SED students the events or actions from a specific day and also communicate with the parents about homework for the day.

Unified Sports Program

On September 28, the SED students and I examined and discussed the current and up-coming school co-curricular activities. South Middle School offered many of the traditional co-curricular activities. These included: athletic teams and clubs, band, choir, foreign language clubs, drama, spirit club, school publications, student council, service/volunteer groups, and national honor societies. The 10 SED students reached a consensus that three changes would make their co-curricular activity experience better.

First, nine out of ten students wanted to play team sports. South Middle School coaches allowed all students to join and participate on their teams. Three SED students played football, two played basketball, and one played softball on the school teams. However, seven students were not comfortable enough with their athletic ability or peer group to attempt trying out for the fall football, soccer, cross country or volleyball teams. They wanted to compete against other students, but not at the level of competition offered in the existing sports programs. The 10 SED students agreed upon three participation sports: bowling for the fall, basketball for the winter, and softball as the spring sport. I am a committee member for the county "unified" sports program offered through the state Special Olympics Program. A key

component of the unified sports program is that SED students can invite any student from their middle school to participate as a member of their team. I arranged for the SED students to compete against other schools with similar SLP special education programs in bowling, basketball, and softball during the 1995-96 school year.

Bowling

In October, the fall bowling tournament took place at a bowling alley located in Highland. Ninety-two bowlers from five schools participated. The South Middle School team consisted of all 10 SED students and 11 regular education students who joined them from our school. Each SED student was expected to invite another student from our school, not in the SLP, to the bowling tournament. The SED students implemented this rule. I invited one boy, who seemed to have few friends at our school. We had to turn eight students away from joining our group of students. It became apparent other regular education students needed and wanted additional co-curricular activities. We could not afford taking all the students from South Middle School who wanted to participate. The Graf Valley Educational Service District paid for the lanes of bowling and bus transportation for each student. Each of the SED students had four practice lanes of bowling at our local bowling alley before participating in

the tournament. Three of the students had not bowled before, and I wanted them to have bowling experience before participating in front of their peers.

The tournament was indicative of the capabilities of SED students with whom I worked. Other than wanting the same bowling ball as someone else, the 95 SED students spent approximately two hours in the bowling alley without any major incidents. This included eating lunch and participating in an awards ceremony. The South Middle School principal who acted as the master of ceremonies stated he was amazed how well all the SED student cooperated and behaved themselves. He made a point of sharing his observations with the South Middle School staff.

Prior to the tournament Roger, my sports enthusiast, decided our students needed an additional incentive during the bowling tournament to bowl their highest scores. We all talked and it was decided that a score of 100 would earn a bowler a 100 Grand candy bar. Roger believed prizes made it more fun. Three bowlers from our team earned candy bars during the tournament. One bowler finished with a score of 99 and went home without a candy bar. We used this situation at our follow-up tournament meeting to review goal setting, successes and frustrations, and strategies to meet unmet goals in life.

Prior to the tournament, each student had set goal areas to work on as they participated from the SI-d scale. Most goals centered around working with new people (e.g., considerate to others, able to make friends), and adapting to changes that they had little control over (e.g., works with ideas of others, disagrees appropriately).

Basketball

The winter sport was basketball. Because of the success of the fall bowling tournament, all five middle schools participated in a similar basketball tournament. The site of the tournament was South Middle School. Seventy-eight students from five middle schools made up the teams. Seven SED students from our program took part in the games. Eight regular students from South Middle School invited by the SED students played on our team. Two students from the SLP, because they played on the South Middle School basketball teams, refereed the games of the tournament. Jesus and Keith had skill levels well above the other students. In private, they said it would be embarrassing to play at the level of the other students. Shawn did not want to participate in the games because he had severe scars on his legs from a childhood burn accident. A request for uniforms by his fellow players influenced his decision. The SLP students requested they be allowed to wear the school basketball

uniforms so they would look like a real team. Until this request, Shawn had been practicing with the team and intended to play. He had the option of wearing warm-ups or sweat pants, but he believed it would make him look different from everyone else. He volunteered to be in charge of the tournament clock.

Again, we had to turn South Middle School students away from this basketball tournament. Eight regular students did join Jesus and Keith in refereeing the games. Six members of the South Middle School student council assisted in keeping score and helping with the visiting teams' needs. The tournament canceled all physical education classes for the morning, so the regular education students watched our players during the tournament. This was the first time six SED students had competed in front of their peers. Staff members visited the tournament during their prep periods. The staff observed these students using social and leaderships skills they had not seen in their classes. For example, Leslie, who appeared so quiet and passive in her classes, showed her athletic ability and assertiveness. Her dribbling and overall game sense was superior to many of the boys during the games. She let the boys know that she expected to bring the ball up court most of the time.

One staff member, who was not part of our study, noticed the enthusiasm and sheer joy shown by some of the

students as they were playing. Teachers were able to use the basketball tournament as a way of connecting with these students through conversations following the tournament. Teachers made a point of identifying individual SLP student's accomplishments during classes, especially advisory group.

Since we were the host school for the tournament, our individual and class goals differed slightly from the bowling tournament. Our SED students felt it important to set the goals of "demonstrates fair play" and "shows leadership" for each SED student. I used this tournament to influence the students. I stressed with the students that hosting the tournament in a successful manner would prove significant as we asked special permission to leave campus for other co-curricular activities.

Softball

The SED students played in a spring softball tournament. One hundred and twelve players on 12 teams took part in a tournament at Rainier High School. Five middle school and seven high school teams participated. Eight of our SED students wanted to play and two students were not sure. We asked these two students to play one full inning. If they did not want to play after trying one inning, they did not have to continue. Both agreed to try. This was a common practice within the SLP.

Seriously emotionally disturbed students are not risk takers especially in social situations. The SLP has the expectation that students will attempt new experiences within a supportive system. If a student is reluctant to try something new and he or she asks "Do I have to?" The standard reply is," "Yes, you get to do it." One boy continued playing in all three games. One girl played the one inning of the first game, and joined the team on defense the rest of the day. She did not like the pressure of hitting in front of all the strangers. I asked her why she played in the field during all three games. She stated it was better to play in the field than sit on the bench all by herself. Ten regular education students from South Middle School joined us in the softball tournament.

The students reported that the softball tournament was a positive experience for them, but the time following the tournament was the most rewarding for them. Students from our SLP asked if they could start a "pick-up" game, and they continued playing softball with whoever wanted to play. The students organized teams, set the rules and batting orders, and played through their lunch break. The following days, numerous positive comments appeared in their journals about this final pick-up game and the connections made with other students and staff members from other schools.

Shawn talked about the students he had met that knew other students from his home town. He made a connection with them in his home town after the tournament. Kristi described how neat it was for students to all play together, and could we invite a school up to our South Middle School for another activity before the end of the school year.

The goals for our tournament were designed somewhat around defensive social skills because of the high school students who were attending the tournament. Two high schools had students who were infamous for not working well with other groups of students. We set the following team goals: work with others' ideas, react with proper mood, disagree appropriately, and stands up for self. The goals were necessary. A group of high school students tried to intimidate five of the male students from my SLP. As I approached from a distance five of my SLP students were being confronted by seven high school students. I witnessed Jesus step up to the front of the South Middle School students to meet the leader of the other group. The leader of the high school students stated, "I have got a bullet with your name on it." Jesus smiled and calmly replied, "I doubt if you could even spell my name." I intervened at this point.

The Graf Educational Service District (ESD) recognized the value of the three unified sports

activities. As a year end activity, the ESD paid the admission fee at a local amusement park for the student athletes, their parents if they chaperoned, and some of their guests. Staff members from the county SED programs planned to continue and expand these unified sport activities for the next year.

Leisure Activities

The students collaborated with their mentors and me to develop leisure activities they wanted to participate in if they met their goals from the folder system.

I had a classroom budget of $700.00 from the ESD that funded the co-curricular activities and the use of a 15 seat mini-van from East Valley High School. The students used these funds for co-curricular activities outside school. The students participated in the following activities: golfing, snow skiing, archery, professional and college football and basketball games, professional wrestling, movies, swimming, video arcades, fishing, bicycling, hiking, rock climbing, and shopping trips. As the year progressed, I realized that these students had not experienced many of these activities with their own families. The newness of the experiences brought out an investment and enthusiasm seldom seen among the SED students in school. Their co-curricular experiences also expanded into their homes. One father had never been able

to get his son to do anything with him. Now Keith asks to play golf with his father on a regular basis.

The SED students, with my facilitating, developed the criteria for students to be eligible for the co-curricular activities during the school year.

1. Each student had to maintain level five on their "folder system" for at least 14 out of a possible 15 days before any activity. A student could not be on a level one or two 15 days before any activity.

2. Each student had to invite another middle school student, who was not part of the special education program to participate in the activity.

3. Each student had to maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0, with no F's, for at least three weeks prior to the activity. Our school used three week progress reports and nine week report cards to monitor academic progress.

4. Each student's attendance had to be at 90 percent over the previous three week period. Parents reported students, who they felt were ill, came to school so as not to jeopardize participating in a co-curricular activity.

5. Each student had to participate in the planning and work of preparing for the activity. Systems are very important to the success of the SLP at South Middle School. We used a very specific format to make our decisions. After the first two trips, the SED students

were expected to develop a plan of action and submit a final proposal to our building principal. I reviewed the proposal prior to its delivery to principal and offered suggestions, as needed.

6. Disciplinary issues over the previous three week period could not involve acts of violence, illegal acts, or severe insubordination to a staff member at school.

Issues at home did not exclude a student from an activity unless a parent requested it. We always honored these requests. Keith's mother asked that he not attend a ski trip because he refused to do some chores around the house for a couple of days. When she tried to use a family outing as an incentive, he told her he did not care because he was going skiing with our school.

7. The students and I implemented an escape clause. After three weeks, if students had met the above standards they would have all negative behaviors erased from co-curricular participation contracts. Students repeatedly identified in their journals and discussions what a positive influence this was on them. They knew if they missed a co-curricular activity, it was possible to earn the opportunity to go on another in three weeks.

The grades of some students not in our program also improved. Teachers noticed that students, not in our program but who went on trips with us, commenting about the need to maintain a "C" average so they could

participate with our SED students in co-curricular activities.

Break Buddies

These SED students wanted and needed something to do during the unstructured times before and after school, and during lunch recess.

A review of disciplinary notices from the prior year suggested that these SED students needed planned activities during unstructured times. Approximately 33 percent of all disciplinary issues occurred during unstructured times. Jesus and Roger accumulated over 70 percent of their disciplinary notice violations during these unstructured times.

The students claimed there was nothing to do during recess if you were not one of the popular kids. Because of the limited sports equipment available during recess, SED students participation in the pick-up games or activities was minimal. The students came up with suggestions. First, we used some of the classroom budget to purchase sports equipment for the SED students to check-out and use during recesses. Because of the limited supply of all recess equipment, other students asked to join our SED students as they used the footballs, basketballs, Frisbees, and soccer balls.

The SED students immediately identified new friends and acquaintances. In the beginning of the school year, five SED students chose to eat lunch in the SLP classroom because they considered the lunchroom a noisy, crowded, and unfriendly place. As the SED students began to have more interaction with students during the lunch recess, they started eating lunch in the cafeteria more often. This created a circle of peers with whom our students ate on a consistent basis. During discussions and journal entries, the SED students identified these eating partners as their new friends. As student schedules were created each quarter, the SED students stressed the importance of having the same lunch period as their regular education peers.

Second, the students suggested that we get a TV for our classroom. They said during rainy days that the gym was too crowded and confusing. Professionally, I could not support their TV suggestion. They re-negotiated for a Super Nintendo machine with three conditions attached to its use. First, if the rest of the school was out at recess, they had to go outside. South Middle School has no covered play area for foul weather days. On rainy days, students are expected to choose the library, gym, or sit on the stage and talk. Second, they decided it could only be used before and after school, and at recess if a person from outside of our program was participating with

them. Eventually, as many as 12 students were in our classroom at a time using this machine. The students decided who was in charge of the machine, what game cartridge would be used, who played, what constituted a turn, and how disagreements would be settled. Last, they decided they would provide the game cartridges. I agreed with these suggestions by the students. We identified the popular game cartridges for students of this age. We reviewed their content and made sure they could be played by two players at a time. I purchased five of the games to supplement what the students brought in. I did not want to limit a SED student's opportunity to make a new friend just because the SED student did not have a game cartridge.

Board games and computer games were purchased to provide additional opportunities for our students to meet and make friends with students outside of the SLP. The four computers were popular with our students, followed by board game use. At breaks, the first option for students was to see who was playing Nintendo, what they were playing, and decide if the wait for their turn was worth it. If it was not, their options were computer games, game boards, or choose another school-wide option.

Social Skills Training

The IEPs of every one of these students had annual long and short term goals related to social skill development. These were also reflected as goals in the folder system used by the mentor program. I wanted to use a systematic approach to teach or reteach social skills. Using the 29 categories from the (SI-d) form, I implemented a model of social skills training I learned at Boys Town, Nebraska. The premise behind this training is that most disciplinary issues of SED students reflects a lack of social skill development. The Boys Town model has broken down many of the goals on the solution-focused scale through task-analysis. As a goal is identified, students can practice the social skills necessary to meet the goal.

The first consequence for most disciplinary issues was teaching the replacement skill for an inappropriate social response (e.g., a SED student uses obscenities with another student because he does not know how to ask appropriately to be allowed to participate in an activity). According to my data most home school disciplinary systems mandated that a student who used obscenities would receive a thirty minute detention or a referral to the office. The weakness of this system is that the SED student re-entered the same social situation unprepared again. Under the SLP system, the student would

be taught and would practice how to ask for permission to participate in an activity and how to "negotiate" with people during a disagreement. This social skill was monitored using the folder system to see if the skill has been learned or if additional teaching and practice was needed.

An experience with Jake reinforced the success of practicing these social skills in a systematic way. Approximately 200 students from our school were waiting for buses to take them skating. Our school has a policy that any aggressive physical contact between two students means those students involved are immediately sent home. Jake was waiting in a crowd of students, and I was nearby. Another student got agitated with people around him. He started to push and became upset with Jake and some other people nearby. He grabbed Jake's coat and started to intimidate Jake. Jake took the boy's hands off the coat and pushed him away. Our principal who saw the end of the exchange between Jake and the other student immediately came over. He stated he saw what had happened and directed both students call their parents for a ride home because they were not going on the skating trip. The South Middle School principal is a person who typically makes these kinds of decisions with little input from others. The other student went in to make his call. Jake stood there and quietly broke down and wept. I called him

over and suggested he try some of the social skills we had been working on. We reviewed what it looked and sounded like to disagree appropriately. Based on the Boys Town model it is:

1. Look at the other person.
2. Use a pleasant voice tone.
3. Make an empathy/concern statement.
4. State disagreement specifically.
5. Give a rationale.
6. Say "Thank-you."

I watched from a distance and observed what happened next.

Jake composed himself and walked over to Mr. Cougar. He asked if he could talk with him. Calmly, he told Mr. Cougar that he knew Mr. Cougar thought he was fighting, but he assured him he was not. Jake said, "Please do not take my word for it, but would you please go ask the other students who were standing by us." Jake let him know that he would go to the phone immediately if they did not support his version of the story. Jake closed by saying, "Thank-you."

Mr. Cougar agreed to check out Jake's side of the story. Mr. Cougar came back to Jake and said it was all right that he stay for the trip. Jake came back to me to explain what had happened. I congratulated him on his actions and results. He rejoined the other students as

they waited for the buses. Mr. Cougar caught me at the skating rink and relayed what had transpired between Jake and himself. He made the comment he wished all students would be so diplomatic in similar situations.

The following Monday, I had Jake retell his experience with the aggressive student and Mr. Cougar. The other students were very impressed. I reinforced how the social skills we were working on had the potential to help Jake and the other SED students in many different environments. We talked about how these skills can transfer to future jobs, marriages, and interactions with their own kids, etc. Keith commented, "I'm sold! If it can get Mr. Cougar to change his mind. It can work with anyone."

Non-competitive Grouping

My observations while working in classrooms suggest that SED students are at-risk during social situations because of the way regular classroom teachers assign students to groups. Many times the teachers allowed students to pick whom they worked with. For many of the SED students who were not picked this meant they were left to work by themselves or join other students who were viewed by the class as undesirable. The SED students found this frustrating to be not selected and then be forced to work with students with whom they also did not

want to work. Instead of working with undesirable peers Nate and Jesus stated this caused them to act out in order to be allowed to work by themselves.

The SED students described that they were not allowed or selected to participate in many co-curricular activities. I observed in classes and the gym what they were describing. I stood with supervisors and watched as the SED students were not selected for groups, teams or turns in activities. Second, these students were reluctant to use the rules established by students or teachers to enter groups, games, and activities. The dominant strategy used by teachers to create groups or teams was to give the direction "find a group or a another person to work with." To other students and the SED students, this meant "find a friend." Initially, eight out of ten SED students did not have close friends in their classes. They were the people left after the majority of the students had divided up. After the initial groups were formed, some of the SED students were left to join a group with other students who had not been selected. Sometimes they were left to match up with other students with poor social skills. Numerous disciplinary issues with the SED students can be attributed to the initial selection of teams and groups, particularly in teachers' classrooms not participating in the study.

First, I worked with students to understand the rules, routines, and procedures and the systems of participation, how to enter a game or group, how to leave appropriately if your turn was over or if you lost your turn through competitive standards. Second, after observing with staff members the lack of participation by less popular students during group activities, we decided to implement and monitor the following factors:

1. We practiced non-competitive grouping whenever possible and eliminated students being selected based on popularity or friendships. Students were divided into groups based on predetermined non-competitive criteria such as counting off, birth month, etc.

Two duty teachers did not support this completely. One stated, "I'm here to relax during recess...not to be a teacher."

2. Teachers made sure students were aware of the rules, routines, and procedures necessary to participate.

3. The supervising person was *invitational* with these SED students. If possible, they made a contact with each SED student as they entered the classroom, playground, gym, etc. by using the person's name, some social greeting, and some personal communication (e.g., "Hi, Kristi. Are you coming to the dance, Friday?").

Summary

The advisory program offered the SED students a connection with the larger culture of South Middle School. Each SED student began their school day in a regular classroom under the guidance of an advisory teacher selected by the SED student.

The mentor/mentee program provided the SED students an opportunity to be mentored by a regular education teacher instead of a person from the SLP. The mentors were viewed by the SED students as allies and friends who could be trusted.

A behavior management folder system was used by the mentors to monitor the SED students' successes and social skill development. Social skill goals originated from the SI-d checklist. Homework was also monitored using this system.

SED students identified that they wanted to compete in team sports. The SED students participated in a fall bowling tournament, a winter basketball tournament, and a spring softball tournament.

A goal of the co-curricular program was to encourage leisure activities participation by SED students outside of school. The opportunity for SED students to participate in off-campus activities appeared to motivate these students to maintain strong grades and regularly attend school.

During recesses and unstructured times the SED students found it hard to find peers who would socialize with them. The SED students of this study had access to activities (e.g., Nintendo and computers) and sports equipment not available to the regular education students at South Middle School during recesses. The regular education students began to befriend the SED students in order to use these same activities. During these recess activities friendships were formed between the SED students and regular education students that lasted the entire year.

Social skill training and development allowed the SED students to develop friendships that extended outside of the co-curricular activities of the study. Regular education students began to contact the SED students outside of school in order to socialize.

CHAPTER 6

Effects of the Solution-Focused Interventions

Introduction

The central purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students. In this chapter, I present descriptions of the effects of the solution-focused interventions during co-curricular activities on the SED students. The first part is a synthesis of the data related to all ten SED students. The second part are case studies of three students: Nate, Leslie, and Jack.

The Effects of Interventions

The central research question considers the effects of co-curricular activities on SED students. How does the experience of a sustained experience in co-curricular activities either enhance or impede the academic and social development of middle school SED students?

The previous sections, which provided descriptions of both the students and the interventions, included some data that described the effect of the program on student

performance. What follows is a more focused description of the effects of this co-curriculum.

Research Question Number One

The first research question was: How does participation in co-curricular activities influence the SED students' ability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and adults?

Adult Relationships

Each SED student indicated positive thoughts and feelings about being a student at South Middle School, and could name teachers that enjoyed their company. Five students used the word "family" when referring to their mentors and the atmosphere of South Middle School during the study. Mrs. Ellensburg and I were jokingly referred to as their mom and dad. Jesus and Lupe, who were known gang members outside of school, created a special hand sign for our classroom that they would use with Mrs. Ellensburg and me. As we stood in the hall during passing time between classes, these students would flash the sign to elicit a smile from us. Peers of Jesus and Lupe picked up on the sign and also began to flash it to us. It was not uncommon for the SED boys to wish in their journals or

in counseling sessions that their mentor or someone like them could be their dads.

Each student had positive experiences during the study with their mentors and staff according to their journal entrees. The students identified their mentors as people who could be trusted. They did not believe the teachers at South Middle School were trying to control their lives. This was very important to all the students. At their home schools they believed the teachers were constantly trying to criticize and manipulate them. Many of the SED students were offended by the contrived rewards that were offered to them if they would only be "good" and follow the rules. It was not uncommon for these SED students to receive candy as a daily reward from a principal or teacher even though it was against four of the home school rules for teachers to pass out candy to students. Nate, Shawn, and Keith purposely manipulated their principals to receive pizza and Dairy Queen "treats" as part of their behavior contracts. Part of the trust at South Middle School came from the consistency of the systems that were being used with the students. Each student could describe the mentor system, folder system, social skills training procedures, and the co-curricular study they participated in. Students spoke about knowing exactly what was expected of them at South Middle School. These students knew their individual goals, the school

rules, routines, and procedures, and the positive and negative consequences of their choices and actions. The students commented at the end of the study that because of all the teaching and reteaching of the rules and expectations, they could be teachers for any new student. The students said the rules and expectations at our school were much tougher than at their home schools. According to the SED students, the difference at South Middle School was that the rules were intended to help a student be successful with other people.

The students felt it was important that the teachers model how to work with other people during stressful times. Jake once told me that he could never use his strategy of yelling at a staff member at South Middle School like he did at his home school because the South Middle School teachers did not treat students that way. He believed that had changed him more than anything else during the year. Jake said it was like the "Golden Rule" his grandmother always talked about. Jake and the other students also appreciated the staff keeping potentially negative situations small instead of making a "big deal." The students appreciated that their mentors worked with them to resolve issues instead of getting too many people involved, especially their parents.

Students identified their mentors as people who could "read" them. Jack knew that his mentor could tell by his

eyebrows what mood he was in. If his eyebrows were down to his chin, he knew his mentor would come and check with him. Kristi's mentor made a point of participating in the activity with her to make sure she was participating. The students recognized other invitational strategies being used by the staff such as being greeted by name as they entered a room, their mentors and teachers trying to get to know them by discussing their interests, and the teachers making sure they were included in activities.

Students reported numerous phone calls and notes from mentors to their parents reporting their successful progress and to inform them about upcoming events and activities. Students and parents believed these calls made a difference in the success of the students. In the beginning of the school year, some students requested that the teachers call instead of sending notes home because the parents would not believe positive notes were coming home from a school. Three students said their parents thought the students were forging the notes.

One particular strategy used by our staff was praised by students over and over. If a student did not follow a rule or caused a concern, their parents were not called automatically. The students knew that only illegal acts, acts of violence, or severe insubordination would warrant an automatic parent contact. Their mentors became the person who was contacted for in-school rule violations.

The students knew that they did not always follow the rules, but getting their parents involved at their former schools was very frustrating and embarrassing. Students noticed a difference in the support for schools by their parents for this practice. When the support for the school was needed the parents provided assistance. Lupe, Jack, Shawn, and Jake were surprised by the support of their parents as each one of these students tried to pit the parents against the school over a disciplinary situation. For example, this happened with Jack during his dad's wrestling season. His dad was the head wrestling coach at a school fifteen miles from South Middle School. Jack had been brought back to our school by the school bus because he was opening the latch on the bus emergency door and would not stop. I called his dad and asked him to leave in the middle of his high school practice to come and provide transportation for Jack. Jack was sure when his dad arrived that I would be the one feeling his dad's wrath. His dad was very upset at being asked to leave practice, but this step was agreed upon ahead of time with Jack's dad. His father came in and listened as I explained what happened. He thanked me for staying with Jack until he arrived. As they left, I could hear Jack's dad chastising Jack for his choices and actions. Jack told me later how much this showed his dad believed in our program and school and how consistent our

system was at South Middle School. Jack really thought I would have to take him home that night.

Those students who did have mentors from outside the SLP believed they were more a part of the school because of it. In October, Jesus stated, "There are ten of us in this program. If one does something stupid in school, we all could get fingered. If I do something outside the program it's between me and my mentor. I am just one student who 'screwed up' out of the 300 students."

Peer Relationships

In the domain of student friends, Roger said it best, "In the past, I said I had friends but nobody ever invited me over to their houses or wanted me to be around. When all the other kids would get invited to birthday parties, I never did. Now, I have people who look for me on breaks, in classes, and call my house." Kristi added, "It was a nice feeling to be with her mom and be able to say 'hi' to other students, and have them say 'hi' back to her."

These SED students seemed to connect more closely with other "at-risk" students in the school than the more popular students as friends. This connection based on discussions with the SED students was caused by the SED students inviting them to join in co-curricular activities. After the activities these other at-risk

students would continue to use our program as a resource and a place to spend their time.

The SED students reported much less teasing and little if any harassment by other students compared to their home schools. Roger was the only student who believed he was not accepted by many of the male eighth-grade students. This was accurate upon checking with students and staff members. Roger made suggestive comments to male students questioning their private sexual practices and their sexual activities with their mothers. Roger said these comments were made in response to physical intimidation by other students. During the study, I worked with Roger and four regular education students to resolve this issue. This issue of inappropriate comments to other male students did appear as a goal on Roger's folder system. It went from a daily occurrence in September to a behavior that occurred about once every three weeks by March.

Mr. Columbia noted that these SED students were not in the top social group of students, but they had made enough progress with other students to not be singled out or shunned by many of the more popular regular students. The acceptance shown by these more popular students influenced their friends to include the SED students in classes. The students in our program did take great pride in identifying that a popular student was a "friend."

This showed up many times in discussions and journal entries.

One teacher observed a change in body language for three of the SED students from the beginning of the study to the end. In the beginning of the study, these students looked like "victims" as they walked in the hallways. Their heads were down, shoulders slumped forward, and they avoided eye contact with most students. By the end of the study these SED students did not stand out from the rest of the students as they moved through the hallways. Other staff members agreed with this observation.

Family Relationships

Parents also noticed a change. Two parents reported that students had invited people over to their homes for the first time ever. Parents said friends and relatives of the family noticed significant social changes in these SED students. These SED students were perceived as more positive, respectful of other peoples' opinions, and more interesting to be with. The parents and relatives attributed this change to the students having positive experiences with peers during school social activities. Nate's grandmother said it was easy to identify this as the cause because all he could talk about were his co-curricular experiences at school. Parents used the students' involvement in school activities to their

advantage to expect more of them at home. Some of the families used the information from the daily folder system to influence their students at home. If the students were being held accountable for specific social behaviors at school. Why should they not show the same social skills at home? Nate, Jack, Keith, and Lupe's families tied their participation in off-campus co-curricular activities to their social skills at home. I monitored and worked with the families to set realistic expectations so as not to exclude these students from activities at school because of a situation at home.

Participation by Latino Students

There was one situation that caused me concern during the study. The two SED Latino students received peer pressure from other Latino students to not participate in co-curricular activities. The popular activity for the Latino students, especially the males at our school, was to walk around as a large group talking and joking with each other during breaks and recesses. Some teachers and the administration were very threatened by the cohesiveness of these Latino students. Reportedly, our new vice-principal was assigned to our building because of the Latino students. Jesus and Lupe had described how Latinos received different disciplinary sanctions than Caucasians at their home schools. Their clothing,

drawings, and writing styles were reasons for disciplinary action at their home schools. It also happened at South Middle School. This brought the Latino students even closer together. This put pressure on Lupe and Jesus during breaks and activities. The use of the Nintendo in the SLP or playing baseball with Caucasian students was not supported by the other Latino students. An activity or sport the Latino students did not support was called a "dog sport." If we had an activity that was taking place off-campus, Jesus and Lupe wanted to join us. If that same sport was offered on-campus, they chose not to. An example would be the softball tournament held at Rainier High School. Lupe and Jesus declined to practice with us on-campus prior to the date. As we organized the trip to Rainier, they were both willing to work with the other students to plan the trip. Lupe did request that the bus pick the team up during classes and on the side of the building. During the tournament they had a great time. As we returned to South Middle School, I could see a change begin to happen. Both boys became very quiet and withdrew into themselves. The other students showed off their tournament ribbons and talked openly about the tournament with their friends and teachers. Lupe and Jesus acted as if they had never heard of the tournament.

A similar situation happened with Lupe concerning a trip to see a professional basketball game. As we planned

the trip, he was so excited because he loved basketball, and he had never been to a professional game before. He shared his excitement about the upcoming game with the students of the SLP and me. When he was with his Latino friends not a word was mentioned about the trip. Only after he came back from the game did he mention the trip to his friends.

The image the Latino students portrayed was something we all had to work in order to understand. Jesus and Lupes' mentors and all staff members believed these students wanted to be successful and be a part of the larger culture of our school. But first, Jesus and Lupe had to adhere to the norms and mores of the Latino culture. If we tried to force or influence them into actions that were not acceptable with their Latino culture, we were putting them at-risk of failing.

An unfortunate twist happened that allowed Lupe and Jesus to use our room during recesses. So many of their Latino friends were expelled and suspended that Lupe and Jesus began using our classroom with some of their less judgmental friends.

Research Question Number Two

The second research question was: How does participation in co-curricular activities influence the SED students' grades, attendance, and disciplinary issues?

As noted previously, SED students have the highest rate of failing a course (44 percent) and average of absenteeism (18 days per year) for any group of students at the middle and high school level (U.S. Department of Education, 1992). As demonstrated in Tables 5 and 6 these national averages are reflected by the numbers from the home schools. A significant change was demonstrated by the SED students in these areas while they attended South Middle School.

Table 5
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students' Grade-Point Averages: A Comparison Between Schools

Student	Home School	South Middle School
Jack	1.5	2.9
Jake	2.1	3.2
Jesus	1.7	2.9
Keith	2.7	3.6
Kristi	1.8	3.1
Leslie	2.3	3.1
Lupe	0.6	2.7
Nate	1.3	3.3
Roger	2.3	3.1
Shawn	0.8	2.9
Mean GPA	1.7	3.0

Table 6
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed Students' Attendance Percentages: A Comparison Between Schools

Student	Home School	South Middle School
Jack	90	99
Jake	92	98
Jesus	84	96
Keith	89	98
Kristi	67	95
Leslie	90	91
Lupe	77	97
Nate	78	95
Roger	91	99
Shawn	90	99
Mean	85	97

The students had a mean grade-point average of 1.7 at their home schools. At South Middle School, the average grade-point average was 3.0. The students attributed this change to their effort and caring about school, their parents involvement with their homework, and that they wanted to participate in co-curricular activities especially those off-campus. The students reported satisfaction in their ability to complete assignments and receive passing grades. Shawn and Roger especially enjoyed sharing their projects with their mentors and

advisory teachers. Each SED student improved their overall grade-point average from the previous year. The consensus among the students was that maintaining passing grades in order to participate in co-curricular activities was a positive influence on their work completion. Also, the SED students believed their strong grade point averages affected their overall happiness. Kristi came in after school each night to make sure she had not missed any materials she needed for her homework. Shawn, one of our most reluctant students, agreed that the ability to get out of school for co-curricular activities when everyone else was working was an influence on him.

Second, the students believed at South Middle School the homework was easier and clearer for their parents. At there home schools, these students reported falling behind in their work and either not taking any homework home or taking homework home but they lacked adequate directions. This caused frustration and arguments with their parents. Not only could some of these SED students not do the assignment, they could not explain the assignment. Parents also expressed this concern. The SLP staff believed that we had to change the attitude of students and parents. The components of the SLP homework plan are described in chapter 5. This system seemed to be successful many times during the year. Mrs. Rock kept track of late assignments and projects in her history

classes. The SED students in her classes averaged a completion rate of ninety-four percent. One major eight week project for her class illustrated this point best. Mrs. Rock had 123 students in all her classes. Thirty-eight students turned in their projects on time. Of those thirty-eight students, six of the projects turned in on time with the assignment criteria met were by the SED students. One of the SED students did not meet the deadline and he completed the project over the weekend and turned it in the following Monday. Three of our students were not in her class.

During a meeting with the SED students in September and repeated in May, we identified the criteria for successful and unsuccessful behavior at South Middle School. In late September, the SED students identified the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful students in their classes. In May, Jesus made an observation about unsuccessful students, "That was me in September."

Parents appreciated the year their students had experienced. They were excited about the academic, social, and behavioral successes, but what made them most happy was the pressure it took off them at home. In the past, many of the parents dreaded phone calls during the day because they expected it to be a call from their student's school reporting bad news. Two mothers had the

same feelings when their students came home after school. Each parent expected a bad note from school. All the parents had experienced their students coming home frustrated and angry. Each day, the parents expected to spend time listening to or watching their students take their frustration out on family members. These parents talked about holding their breathe waiting to see what their student was going to do. Each new school year, they hoped there would be the teacher with whom their student would be successful. For years they could not brag about their student or share positive experiences with other parents. It was like they owned a dark secret, one mother said.

Parents saw a difference almost immediately in their students once they attended South Middle School. Students came home discussing positive experiences about peers and staff members instead of venting their frustration. The social issues had shifted to interpersonal skills with other students. Second, as their students began to participate in more regular classroom assignments the parents had to assist with homework completion.

The parents knew issues between mentors and students occurred but they reported their satisfaction that these issues were being handled at school. The parents liked the philosophy of South Middle School. If an issue with a student occurred at school, if possible, it would be taken

care of there. The parents said this made their disciplining at home much easier. They dealt with their own issues at home with these students, and the issues from school did not interfere with their communication with their students. Parents received positive information about their students through phone calls, notes, grade progress reports, and conferences. Parent conferences in the past were an event that they avoided or attended without their students. During the "Back to School" night in early September, eight of the parents showed up. Five of them came with their students. Parents said it was difficult to get their students to come. At the November conferences, nine families were represented by adults and students. Kristi's mother was absent because she worked during the conference hours. Kristi's mentor, Mrs. Naches, served as her parent for the night. She called Kristi's mother the following day to talk about Kristi's grades and progress. During the conferences the mentors reported mothers breaking into tears because they were so happy with their students. The adults and the students discussed with their mentors and teachers the positive change the SED students had experienced. Some of the parents could not believe the adjectives they heard used to describe their students such as friendly, hard working, fun, and creative. The only issue that was consistent with the majority of the

students was homework completion. By November, their social skills and disciplinary issues were not significant compared to other students in their classes and the school as a whole.

The parents saw and heard a difference in the way their students described school. During a November parent meeting, the parents decided there were two main ways to decide how their students felt about school. First, it was getting them up in the morning. Parents said there was a dramatic difference between this year and other years. The students did not use having to go to school as a reason for staying in bed. Lupe's mother reported that if he missed his bus ride to school, he willingly walked the three miles. Many parents said this one change in their students made the whole day easy for everyone in the family.

Second, parents before had to deal with questionable illnesses. Now, Shawn's mother had to force him to stay home so his cold did not develop into something more serious. Parents reported their students talked about the expectations they had to meet if they were to participate in co-curricular activities. Missing days of school effected their grades in turn which affected their ability to participate.

Seven of the ten SED students said the ability to participate in co-curricular activities influenced their

decisions about how they interacted with peers and followed the rules of the school. All the SED students shared examples of having to decide to behave as they did at their home school or demonstrate the appropriate behavior at South Middle School. Physical altercations were an example of this. Four students shared that they had refrained from fighting, so they would not lose the opportunity to participate in a co-curricular activity. This self-restraint was a major source of satisfaction for Jack and Jesus. In the past, they had prided themselves on their physical intimidation of other people.

Three Case Studies

Nate

Nate's grade point average during the study averaged a 3.3. Every teacher recognized his effort and six commented on his positive contributions especially during discussions. His grade-point average could have been higher. Nate was willing to settle for a B grade on projects in classes in which teachers contracted with their students for grades. Nate told me once that his grandmother would do anything for him because his grades were so much higher than last year. He did not need to get an A to "brown nose" her.

Nate attended school 95 percent of the days during the study. He missed some time because of an illness during January. The previous year he attended school 78 percent of the time.

The South Middle School teachers saw a major difference from the first of the year when they had to correct or redirect Nate. In the beginning, he was quite defensive and resistive. By the end of the study, he was consistently rated "pretty much" or "very much" in the category, follows directions the first time given, and in, his ability to accept criticism or feedback. During the study, Nate maintained a level 5 rating 94 percent of the time on his behavior folder.

Nate summarized his thoughts about school and his sense of belonging following a situation requiring disciplinary action in a science class. He stated, "You know, Mr. Stevens, I have figured out what the difference is between my old school and this school. It is like I am in a video game. At my old school when I did something wrong they killed me once and I stayed dead. At this school, if I do something wrong I get killed, but I get a chance to come back to life."

Nate's final journal entry in May follows:

Mr. Stevens,

I know we were your rats in this study. I did not like all the journal writing and talking we had to do in group.

I did like going on trips (golfing, swimming, and bowling) that the rest of the school did not get to go on.

Mr. Morrow was cool. I am going to miss his advisory class, next year. I will not miss Mrs. Water's math class.

Interest groups were good too. Next time, eighth graders should always get first choice over the seventh graders.

It's time for lunch and I am done. Where is my cheese?

Nat the Rat

During a high school transition meeting in May, Nate told the team he did not want to return to his home school district. He wanted to remain with his friends and enroll in the local high school.

Leslie

The major goal for Leslie was to talk with teachers in a full voice. She met this goal by the end of October. She never did achieve the ability to carry on a casual conversation with staff members. She would answer any question about herself, but once the information was given her facial expressions and words would cease. Leslie's emotions did not seem to be utilized as a way of communicating with adults. She said she liked the adults at South Middle School but she just did not feel like talking a lot with them.

She maintained a grade point average of 3.1 during the study as compared to a 2.3 grade point average the previous year. She turned in assignments 97 percent of the time. Her grade increased quickly in math once she

started asking for help and discussing her methods and answers with the teachers.

Leslie was present 91 percent of the days during the study. She stayed home to take care of her younger sisters when they were ill. The previous year her attendance was almost identical.

She achieved a level 5 rating on her folder 93 percent of the time. Carrying on conversations and showing the appropriate mood for the social situation were the primary goals of her folder contract. Staff members felt Leslie still needed to be able to show emotions and moods that matched the social situation. Some staff members reported talking with Leslie very intently about an assignment while Leslie smiled.

Leslie reported she felt a part of our school, but she always wanted to go back to her home high school.

In April, I began the process of transitioning Leslie back to her home high school. I sensed the home district's reluctance to accept her back. The high school principal and district special education director were skeptical of Leslie's progress. The special education director was invited to observe Leslie at our school, talk with her, and meet with our staff. She visited and observed Leslie taking part in all classes, had a conversation with Leslie, and she heard testimonials from our staff about what a capable student Leslie was. When I tried to schedule the

transition meeting with the high school principal, he gave me the impression he still was not convinced about Leslie attending her home high school. I knew the special education director had met with him, but she had not convinced him. I believed if Leslie was to win his support, I had to convince him she was ready. Before the transition meeting, I led Leslie through the process for the upcoming meeting so she could facilitate some of the meeting. She practiced running the meeting with Mrs. Ellensburg, Mrs. Brown, and me. She knew that to attend her home high school she had to convince the home school principal, school counselor, resource room teacher, and special education director that she was ready to come back.

At the transition meeting, Leslie introduced herself to all the participants, explained the format of the meeting, and lead the team members through her progress at South Middle School. I interjected information intermittently, but she ran the meeting. At the end of the meeting Leslie was asked to leave the room so the team could discuss and decide on her high school placement. The special education director had observed Leslie at South Middle School, records showed that all South Middle School staff members had conversed with her, and she had just finished leading the transition meeting. The special education director and principal decided, reluctantly, to accept her back on a trial basis at her home school

district in the fall. The counselor and resource room teacher lobbied against Leslie returning because they believed the regular teachers were not ready to work with a student like her.

Jack

Jack's grade point average during the study was 2.9. Last year, at his home school he had a grade point average of 1.5. This was accomplished using parallel curricula and compensatory teaching methods. The language arts teachers allowed the SLP to record his texts. Some written assignments were dictated to Mrs. Ellensburg or me. Jack took the verbatim dictation and typed the text into a computer program that read it back to him. He used a grammar and spell checker to edit his papers.

He surprised his dad by getting his first B in a regular class. Jack did this without any assistance from the SLP. He worked with Mrs. Rock if he needed any additional assistance with his assignments. Jack's dad was very proud because it was the first time Jack was able to earn a B in a regular content areas class without support from a special education program.

The real issue by the end of the study was Jack's ability to transition to a different activity when he had not completed his previous work. He hated to leave things unfinished. He commented many times in his journal how

much he disliked being asked to move to a new assignment or routine before he was ready. Teachers learned to make sure he was kept aware of how much time he had left on individual assignments. If teachers did switch without warning, he would get quite upset with them. Teachers learned to not take this response personally, they knew that Jack was very serious about his studies. Beginning in November, the SLP helped Jack get started on assignments prior to the actual classtime. This allowed Jack to understand the format of the lesson and start the work before entering the class. He finished many of his history and math assignments during his lunch break, on his own. He was very proud of his grade point average.

Jack maintained a level five 91 percent of the time on his folder during the study. The major goals on his folder were: adapting to new situations, reacting with proper mood, and disagreeing appropriately.

Jack's attendance increased from 90 percent attendance at his home school to 99 percent at South Middle School. Jack received numerous suspensions at his home school. He was not suspended while he attended South Middle School.

Jack wanted to return to his home high school. He commented in his journal and counseling sessions that he was very successful and had friends at South, but he wanted to wrestle for his dad. This meant he had to

attend his home high school. Privately, his father and his home school district special education director voted against him coming back. The director and his dad had battled over the years about services for Jack. They finally were in agreement about him not returning to his home high school. I believe their decision was what they thought was best for Jack, but also it helped each of them from having to deal with each other over Jack's issues. I believe Jack will influence them to change their minds. Jack saw a purpose in attending South Middle School, but he does not see why he should not attend his local high school. Jack, as all of our SED students, have been allowed in our school to openly negotiate with our teachers about their educational wants and needs. I emphasize to the SED students, they are the "experts" who know their strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles best. Our school will work with Jack, his dad, and his former district to find the best placement for Jack.

Summary

In summary, it appears that participation in co-curricular activities influences a number of desirable characteristics for SED students, for example: grades, attendance, work completion, self-esteem, feelings of control, and lower levels of alienation.

The findings indicated at South Middle School that participation in co-curricular activities helped increase the sense of belonging for SED students. Students reported their positive relationships with adult mentors and peers significantly influenced their sense of belonging. Students had higher grade point averages and better attendance during this study than at their home schools. During co-curricular activities (e.g., advisory group, leisure activities, athletic competitions), teachers identified leadership, thinking, communication, and cooperative learning skills that were not apparent in the regular classroom settings.

Parents reported that their students were more likely to engage in leisure activities involving peers outside school, and were easier to live with at home.

Students identified that the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities motivated them to not use, or at least minimize, some of their past counter productive social strategies during periods of stress or disagreements with peers and adult authority figures.

Latino students found it difficult to participate in activities dominated by Anglos, if other Latinos did not view the activity as acceptable.

During the last parent meeting, we reviewed the data and findings. After the meeting, one parent handed me a

note. A portion of the note summarized the effects of the study for at least one student and his family.

> Show me your friends, and
> I will show you your future.

Because of the friends he has made at South Middle School my son has a bright future. Thank you.

Mrs. Breeze

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Implications

The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. (C.S. Lewis, 1993, p. 542)

Discussion

The central purpose of this research was to examine the effects of a co-curricular program on the behavior of seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) middle school students.

The data suggests that SED students who work with adults knowledgeable about adolescent development in a meaningful and systematically planned environment can be successful. The challenges faced by those who work with SED students appears daunting and unrelenting. Yet, in my 20 years of teaching I have yet to meet a SED student who did not strive to be successful in school. The research data shows that SED students previously failing at their home schools quickly made dramatic changes when placed in a learning environment that addressed each SED students' personal needs. The co-curricular activities acted as the foundation of experiences that laid the groundwork whereby the SED students and adults in this study could build a relationship built on trust versus control. Before trust, help is perceived as criticism and manipulation by the SED

students. Energy is exhausted attempting to deal with conflicts. After trust, energy can be directed into mutual cooperation and achievement. The South Middle School mentors provided what these students needed most, an adult who cared about them and who stuck with them over the long term no matter what occurred. Each day for one school year, the mentors provided sustained support, guidance, and systematic assistance to their students. A key factor in the solution-focused approach used by the mentors was the use of positive resolutions to issues with the SED students. Each mentor talked with their SED students in terms of "when" progress would be made, not "if" progress would be made in a specific skill area. In addition, the use of positive rationales by mentors was emphasized to explain the bridge between the SED students' proactive behavior and positive consequences during social situations. Each mentor used a folder tracking system to assist in monitoring the progress of their SED student. The folder system created a consistent language between the SED students and the adults in the study. As Lovitt and Curtiss (1968) wrote. "Some children will do what you want them to if you just tell them what you want." (1968, p. 124)

In the previous chapters I have described the experiences of the SED students as they participated in co-curricular activities. To conclude, I shall draw out

what I see are the main lessons learned and their implications for schools working with middle school SED students.

Implications

Co-curricular Programs Benefit Students

The co-curricular program appeared to be the bridge that connected the SED students with the larger culture of the middle school.

SED students seemed responsive to a co-curricular program that addressed their interests, such as sports and leisure activities, life skills, academic enhancement, and building relationships with peers and adults. Because of this connection, the SED students became contributing members of their middle school and, ultimately, society. The role of co-curricular activities was to encourage the inclusion of all students. Research clearly reveals that a key element in a student's disengagement from the educational process is a feeling of alienation from the school (Barr, 1987; Docktor, 1990).

Trusting Relationships With Adults

During co-curricular activities the SED students developed trusting relationships with adults at the middle school level.

These SED students and middle school staff members worked together in the context of meaningful activities to develop relationships that transferred back into the regular classrooms. In prior learning environments the SED students felt controlled and manipulated by adults. Within the parameters of the co-curricular program, the SED students believed that they could trust the adults especially their advisory and mentor teachers. The adults were seen by the SED students as friends and confidants.

This study showed there is a window of opportunity open to teachers and administrators who work with SED students to improve the lives of these students. But the work must be accomplished by teachers and administrators. We cannot look to policies, regulations, and slogans to do the job (Cuban, 1989). One skilled caring teacher can make a dramatic difference in the life of a SED student.

Adult Mentors Influence Change

Adult mentors who were perceived by the SED students as caring were able to influence positive changes in the

areas of grade point averages, attendance, disciplinary issues, and positive peer and adult relationships.

Evidence exists of the value of one-to-one mentoring as an effective teaching method (Hamburg, 1990). With a trained mentor, 98 percent of students do better in school than they otherwise would. In this study it was 100 percent.

One life skill that many SED students often lack and can be taught by a mentor is the ability to purse constructive relationships with others. Adolescent SED students who are vulnerable because they have been isolated and lonely, depressed, angry, and lacking in interpersonal skills can be helped by the day-to-day modeling of a caring adult mentor.

These SED students have experienced numerous negative, confusing, and stressful relationships with key adult figures in their lives. The adult mentor must be carefully monitored with the goal of making these relationships models of openness, caring, and consistency. The mentor must be aware that body language carries more importance than tone of voice, and tone of voice carries more importance than words when communicating with a SED student.

In recent years there has been an increasing awareness that the best way to help students is to strengthen the family unit (Berg, 1992). A role that a

mentor may need to assume is that of an "extended" family member. The SED student will benefit greatly if the mentor is able to connect with the SED student as well as the student's parents. Typically the middle school SED student's parents have become just as disenfranchised as the student from the school. The mentor's efforts may transform an "involuntary" parent into a cooperative and motivated parent who is willing to be an intrical part of the student's "success plan."

Systematic Approaches

Systematic approaches benefited all participants in this study.

Many times during the study the SED students, their parents, and the South Middle School staff identified the clarity of expectations as a major reason for the SED students success. Wong (1991) writes that the number one problem with SED students in the classroom is not discipline; it is the lack of clear and consistent rules, procedures, and routines by teachers and schools. One advantage teachers have with SED students is that there is always a purpose for the students' behavior. Usually, it is to get something or avoid something. This makes an SED student's behavior highly predictable. There was an attempt to have a plan for every action or event (e.g., how to disagree with an adult appropriately, what

materials were needed for each class, how to participate in an activity). A plan was considered successfully implemented if all participants knew the rules, procedures, and routines for every situation. Kounin (1970) discovered that effective teachers were no different from ineffective teachers in responding to or dealing with students' behaviors after a behavior had occurred. However, there was a significant difference in the behavior of effective and ineffective teachers prior to the students' behavior. This prior planning on the part of the staff and students to clarify all rules, procedures, and routines assisted the SED students to predict the desired outcome and choose appropriate behaviors.

Parents Need to be Involved

Parents need to be involved and informed about their child's goals and progress.

Parental involvement in school activities declines steadily as children progress to middle school. Yet, researchers view the parent-child relationship as a critical factor influencing the behavior of SED students (Jones, 1980; Masterson, 1980; Walker, 1979). Unfortunately, programs for SED students are often inadequately staffed and can not provide meaningful services to parents. In this study, parent contacts were

made in person, by phone, and through written communications on a regular basis. Each day parents had a contact through the homework system that was used during this study. Other parents of regular education students at South Middle School began to request similar homework contacts. This study showed that parents at the middle school level if they understood and valued the communication remained actively involved with their child's education program. SED students' parents identified that this was the first time their SED students consistently demonstrated their strengths in a school setting. The parents and the South Middle School staff viewed the parents participation as part of the reason for their child's success.

It should be noted that at no time did we attempt to offer "parent" training. These parents were valued members of their child's education team and identified as the "expert" when it came to their child. I offered little advice to these families during our discussions. Many of these families because of past negative experiences with schools perceive "unasked for advice" by school personnel as the same as criticism.

Relationships With People

The SED students' relationships with peers and adults need to be developed to build a stronger sense of

connectedness with the entire culture of the middle school.

As the SED students developed trusting relationships with teachers, friendships with peers, and success in the eyes of their parents, these students saw a purpose for becoming more actively involved in the activities of the school. This in turn caused them to accept more ownership for their own experiences but also the success of the larger culture of the school. Similarly, Griffin (1988) found that regular education teachers rated students who participated in co-curricular activities as more capable in the areas of thinking, communicating, and cooperating.

Co-curricular activities provided motivation and recognition for many students who do not find motivation and recognition in the classroom. These activities also contributed to the development of self-esteem and leadership.

Research suggests that co-curricular activities filled needs in the affective domain for SED students by providing a sense of belonging that is missing in their families and neighborhoods (Hunt, 1991).

Social Skill Development

Social skill development is a necessity. The term "social skills" implies the life tools needed to successfully survive in society. A SED student's success

depends in large part on social skills. In this highly technological society, however, many SED students grow up without the social skills necessary to cope in school or in a competitive and demanding world (Cartledge & Milburn, 1980). Just as schools have always attempted to make students competent adults through academic instruction, so must they now concentrate on developing students' social skills to ensure their success. The development of social skills for SED students may be more important than academic skills. Most SED students are removed from regular classroom because of the lack of social skills not for lack of reading, writing, or math skills. The Peacock Hill Working Group (1991) identified and described that the provision of practicing new skills in everyday settings greatly enhanced the retention of skills as opposed to skills being taught in isolation. Co-curricular activities appear to afford SED students the opportunity for practicing social skills in everyday settings. The SED students will use these social skills as life tools to benefit themselves and the society in which they live.

Professionals Need More Training

Teachers and administrators should receive additional training to expand their level of skills to better meet the needs of SED students.

Most teachers in middle schools are not now specifically educated to teach young adolescents (Lewis, 1993). Although there are a few graduate education programs that prepare middle school teachers, most teachers are educated as either elementary or secondary school teachers.

School districts should give teachers and principals the training and resources to transform middle schools into environments that promote stable relationships between these SED students and their teachers and peers (e.g., SED students used crying and creating illnesses at their home schools to get attention). Shawn described how he "disappeared" when he wasn't crying. Only when he cried did he feel noticed at his home school. Schools must be able to recognize and use the strengths of the SED students and still address their needs. Training, formally reserved for counselors and other student support staff, should be made accessible for other staff members. Such training should focus on communication skills, problem-solving skills, group process, cooperative learning, and recognition of individual SED students' learning styles.

Wong (1991) believes we can make the necessary changes in our education system at the middle school level if we concentrate on one key element of the teaching profession. That one element is the beginning teacher.

The teaching profession will replace most current teachers during the 1990s. Fifty percent of the teachers teaching in 1995 will have been in the classroom five years or less. Of the teachers teaching in the year 2000, 75 percent will have been trained after 1990. In order to effect positive change in the education of SED students, I propose that a comprehensive training model be developed for any teacher of SED students, but especially new teachers.

In my county, the shortage of qualified special education teachers who work with SED students has caused our ESD to attempt to design its own teacher development program for prospective and current middle school teachers. Past patterns have created this need for action by our county. In the past, school districts have hired the most qualified special education teacher available. These teachers has proven to be unprepared to deal with the expectations of the position. Yet, only one teacher in the last seven year has been released from their SLP position. Usually the teachers recognize their own limitations and ultimately resign and take a regular education position. These unqualified teachers cause their school districts to spend an unusual amount of time dealing with frustrated students, staff members, and parents because of the level of services provided. Research indicates that teachers spend significantly more

time instructing and managing students identified as SED and have 60 to 90 percent more interactions with them (Thompson, White, & Morgan, 1982). These percentages also represent the unusual amount of time administrators are required to deal with ineffective teachers of SED students.

Create a Best Practices Manual

A "Best Practices" manual should be created to provide technical support to schools who work with SED students.

A goal should be to create in writing, based on research and practical experiences, a "best practices" manual describing the systematic scope and sequence of services for SED students in our county. Before teachers attempt to provide services for SED students in his or her classes, they should be able to review this comprehensive manual to understand the expectations of the county to better serve SED students. Many current SLP teachers have no one in their districts that they can turn to for advice or technical support. Currently, technical support comes in the form of a behavioral specialist who works in a given building one day a week. As I work with the special education directors and building principals across the county the disjointed approaches to serving SED students are very apparent. The only consistency appears to be in

the use of suspension and expulsion procedures for SED students.

Create a Lab School

A lab school should be created where professionals can visit and receive training.

The county should create a lab school or utilize a proven successful site (South Middle School) to demonstrate the effective techniques and systems needed for middle school SED students. Too often, I consult with untrained teachers in their own buildings. These teachers have no way of visualizing what successful services should be. Typically, these teachers, whether they have 20 years of experience or are new to teaching, are directed to a classroom, shown the existing materials in the class, and given a list of students at the beginning of each school year. In addition to setting up their own classrooms, these teachers are expected, within the first week of school, to work with every regular education teacher in the building. This requires setting up schedules for unknown SED students in unknown teachers' classes. Next, the SLP teacher must make a contact with each family of the SED students. For many teachers, these expectations are overwhelming. Ideally, any new teacher should have the opportunity to spend time observing in an existing program for a minimum of one week, preferably at the

beginning of the school year. During this time, the new teacher will learn the systems and techniques that have proven to be successful with SED students. The new teachers can identify those systems and techniques that match their teaching styles and return to their school to implement them. In addition, monthly reciprocal visits by new teachers should be budgeted for and encouraged to assist in on-going teacher and program development.

Suggestions for Future Research

First, a continuing study of the experiences of the current SED students should be undertaken. I plan to collect data with the assistance of a counselor and the SLP teacher from East Valley High School. Next year, we will collect data in the areas of grades, attendance, and disciplinary issues to be used as a comparison with this year's data. I will also continue to interview the SED students, their parents, and East Valley High School staff and collect data in the areas of social interactions and co-curricular activities participation.

In addition, I will attempt to collect data from the other high schools that three of the SED students will be attending next year.

The goal is to learn from the future data what behaviors continue to be successful for these SED students at their future high schools. By understanding the

successes of these students, I hope to learn what practices I should continue to use and which to change.

Second, a study of the effects of "labeling" as it relates to the students of the SLP will be undertaken. Which labels are used to refer to these students? Is it seriously emotionally disturbed, emotionally disturbed, behaviorally disordered, or a combination of these terms? I plan to study the similarities and differences of terminology used by teachers as they discuss the students that are referred and served by the SLP at South Middle School. Just as there appears to be significant differences between interventions that the home schools and South Middle School uses with these students, I believe I will find significant differences in terminology used by teachers at the various schools that serve students with an emotional disturbance.

In the future I am personally committed to using the term "behaviorally disordered" instead of seriously emotionally disturbed or emotionally disturbed as I write about students with behavioral disorders. I plan to adopt the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD) position that the term behaviorally disordered is more appropriate than the term seriously emotionally disturbed or emotionally disturbed. The CCBD endorses the use of the term behaviorally disordered because (a) it does not suggest any particular theory of causation or set of

intervention techniques, (b) it is more representative of the students who are disabled by their behavior and are being served under the IDEA and (c) it is less stigmatizing (Huntze, 1985). Two studies have shown that the label behaviorally disordered implies less negative dimensions to teachers than the term emotionally disturbed (Feldman, Kinnison, Jay, & Harth, 1983). Both preservice and inservice teachers indicated they thought students labeled behaviorally disordered were more teachable and likely to be successful in a regular classroom than were students identified as emotionally disturbed (Lloyd, Kauffman, & Gansneder, 1987).

Last, when referring to a student, I will attempt to think of the student first, rather than the type of disability he or she has. I will refer to the student as a student with behavioral disorders instead of a seriously emotionally disturbed student as I did in this study. A disability is not the student, any more than any other single characteristic is the person. Each person is a complicated array of characteristics.

Summary

In summary, participation in co-curricular activities by SED students may be the catalyst that enables these students to develop positive relationships with people and build a sense of connectedness with their middle school.

This sense of connectedness helps eliminate past unproductive behaviors when used in conjunction with other solution-focused interventions by caring adults aware of the developmental needs of middle school SED students.

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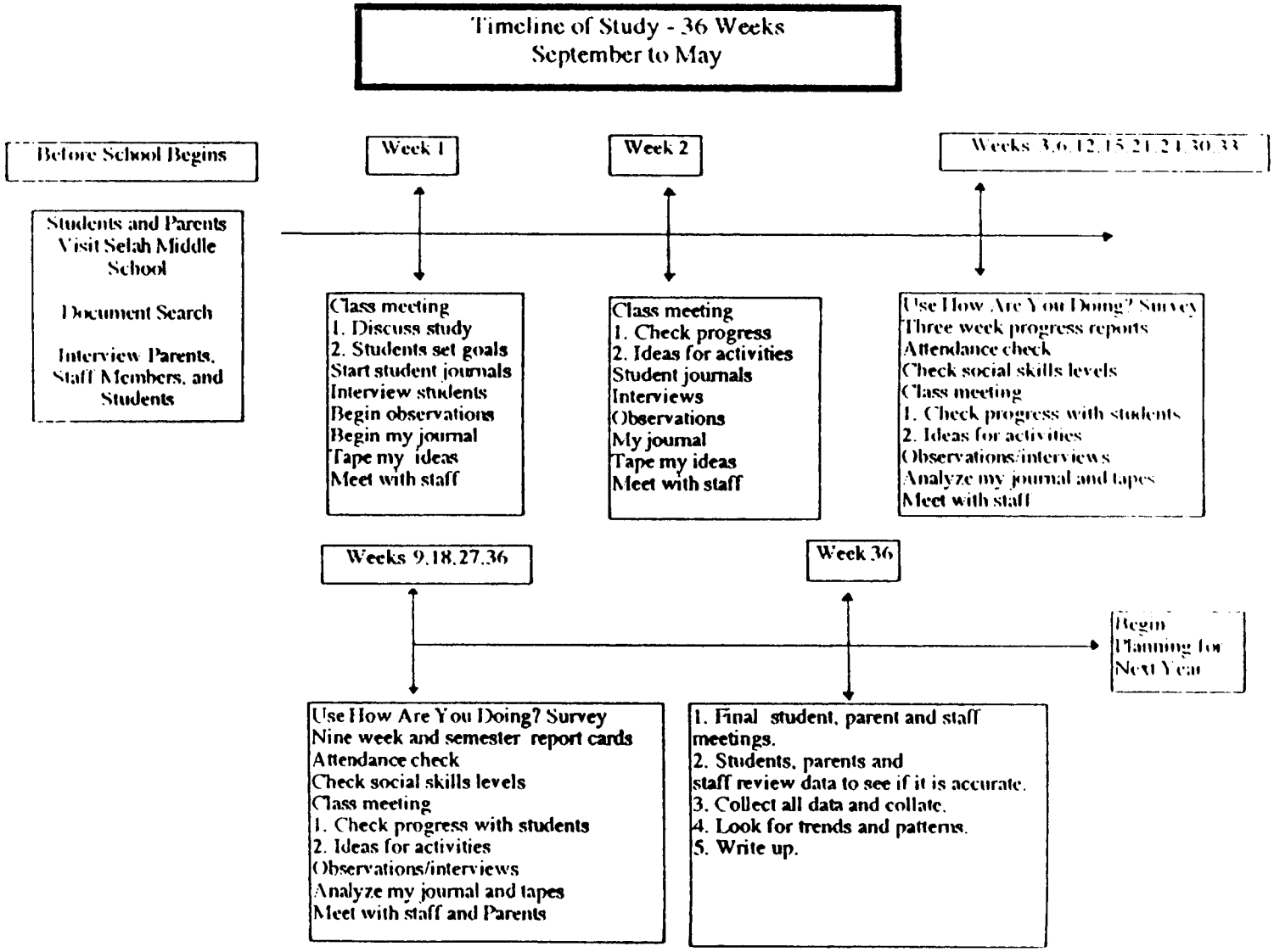
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION METHODS


Timeline of Study - 36 Weeks
September to May
Before School Begins
Students and Parents Visit Selah Middle School
Document Search
Interview Parents, Staff Members, and Students
Week 1
Week 2
Weeks 3,6,12,15,21,24,30,33
Class meeting
1. Discuss study
2. Students set goals
Start student journals
Interview students
Begin observations
Begin my journal
Tape my ideas
Meet with staff
Class meeting
1. Check progress
2. Ideas for activities
Student journals
Interviews
Observations
My journal
Tape my ideas
Meet with staff
Use How Are You Doing? Survey
Three week progress reports
Attendance check
Check social skills levels
Class meeting
1. Check progress with students
2. Ideas for activities
Observations/interviews
Analyze my journal and tapes
Meet with staff
Weeks 9,18,27,36
Week 36
Begin Planning for Next Year
Use How Are You Doing? Survey
Nine week and semester report cards
Attendance check
Check social skills levels
Class meeting
1. Check progress with students
2. Ideas for activities
Observations/interviews
Analyze my journal and tapes
Meet with staff and Parents
1. Final student, parent and staff meetings.
2. Students, parents and staff review data to see if it is accurate.
3. Collect all data and collate.
4. Look for trends and patterns.
5. Write up.

APPENDIX B

DAILY TEACHER INFORMATION SHEETS

Daily Teacher Information

Date _____

grade level subject/room

7 L.A. Block-10 Jesus	7 L.A. Block-12 Kristi	8 L.A. Block-6 Keith Roger	8 L.A. Block-11 Leslie Jake Nate
8 L.A. Block-6 Roger Lupe	7 Math-14 Kristi	7 Math-13 Shawn	8 Math-14 Jake Keith Leslie Lupe
Algebra -13	History-1 Jack Keith Leslie Nate Jack	History-7 Jake Roger	Earth Studies-8 Jesus Kristi
8 Science-16 Jack Jake Roger	8 Science-16 Keith Lupe	Art-9 Lupe Kristi	Computers-15 Keith Roger
Media-19 Leslie Kristi	Consumer Ed.-19 Roger	Basic Math-5 Jesus Jack	History Mystery-7 Jake Nate
Earth Studies-7 Shawn	8 Math-5 Nate Roger	Health-18 Jesus Kristi Shawn	Etc.

APPENDIX C

FOUR CATEGORY INFORMATION SHEETS

FOUR CATEGORY STUDENT SHEET

This sheet is used to pass on and collect information for each student in these categories.

Jack
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Jake
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Jesus
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Keith
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Kristi
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Leslie
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Lupe
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

Nate
- Cognitive -
- Social -
- Emotional -
- Physical -

APPENDIX D

SOLUTION IDENTIFICATION SCALE

Solution Identification Scale (S-Id)

Name:	Date:	Rated By:

Please answer all questions. Beside each item below, indicate the degree to which it occurs.

	Not at All	Just a Little	Pretty Much	Very Much
1. Respectful to grown-ups	____	____	____	____
2. Able to make/keep friends	____	____	____	____
3. Works with ideas of others	____	____	____	____
4. Show ability to learn	____	____	____	____
5. Adapts to new situations	____	____	____	____
6. Tells the truth	____	____	____	____
7. Follows directions-first time	____	____	____	____
8. Handles stress well	____	____	____	____
9. Considerate to others	____	____	____	____
10 Completes what is started	____	____	____	____
11. Maintains attention	____	____	____	____
12. Reacts with proper mood	____	____	____	____
13. Follows basic rules	____	____	____	____
14. Disagrees appropriately	____	____	____	____
15. Uses proper words	____	____	____	____
16. Copes with frustration	____	____	____	____
17. Stands up for self	____	____	____	____
18. Can wait for attention	____	____	____	____
19. Accepts criticism	____	____	____	____
20. Is accepted by peers	____	____	____	____
21. Shows leadership	____	____	____	____
22. Demonstrates fair play	____	____	____	____
23. Accepts own mistakes	____	____	____	____
24. Accepts no for an answer	____	____	____	____
25. Knows how to apologize	____	____	____	____
26. Accepts praise	____	____	____	____
27. Knows how to greet people	____	____	____	____
28. Knows how to make request	____	____	____	____
29. Can carry on conversation	____	____	____	____
30.____	____	____	____	____
31.____	____	____	____	____
32.____	____	____	____	____

Comments:

Ron Kral, 1988

APPENDIX E

PARENT CONSENT LETTER

June 20, 1995

Dear Parents,

I am a doctoral student at Oregon State University. As part of my doctoral studies, I will be conducting a study that involves research about the experiences of the students in our special education program as they participate in co-curricular activities at our middle school. The portion of the study that involves your children will begin August of 1995 and end May of 1996.

I believe the information and ideas generated by the study will help me to better serve your children as they attend our school. The study will be a part of the daily activities of the existing special education program and our school. Your children will benefit from this study because they will have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities sponsored by the school.

Any student information gathered during this study will be strictly confidential. I will keep you informed through monthly meetings as to the progress of the study as it relates to your children.

If you have any questions about the research or your rights please direct them to Cliff Stevens at 000-0000.

Participation in this research is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled, and your child and yourselves may discontinue participation at any time.

Respectfully,

Cliff Stevens

I agree to the participation of my child, _____ (your child's name), in this study of students participating in co-curricular activities.

_____ _____
Signature Date

Which best describes your ethnic identity? (Optional)
_____ Caucasian
_____ African American
_____ Hispanic American
_____ Asian American
_____ American Indian/Alaskan Native
_____ Other (please specify) _____

APPENDIX F

HOW ARE YOU DOING? SURVEY

How Are You Doing?

Name_____ Date_____

Please circle one number for each item	Not at all true (1)	Seldom true (2)	Undecided (3)	Most of the time true (4)	Always true (5)
1. I feel like a real part of South M.S.	1	2	3	4	5
2. People here notice when I'm good at something.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is hard for people like me to be accepted here.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Students in this school take my opinions seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Most teachers at South are interested in me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There's at least one teacher or other adult in this school I can talk to if I have a concern.	1	2	3	4	5
8. People at this school are friendly to me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers here are not interested in people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am included in lots of activities at South.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am treated with as much respect as other students.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I can really be myself at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel very different from most other students here.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The teachers here respect me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I have one activity outside of classes I really enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I wish I were in a different school.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Other students here like me the way I am.	1	2	3	4	5

Other Thoughts: _____

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Solution-Focused Therapy Model of Interviewing
(Sample Questions)

A) Socializing...General conversation to help the client feel comfortable and to enhance a mutually cooperative relationship.

B) Problem definition...It is important to get each person's ideas about the problem (when working with more than one person).
What brings you here today?

C) Setting goals...How does the client wish "things" (her life, feeling state, relationships, attitude, behavior, etc.) to be different?
How will you know when things are going better for you?

D) Separating the person from the problem (Externalizing questions).
How much has what happened to you influenced your life?
How much do you think it has held you back?

E) Understanding the impact of the problem (Relative influence questions)
How has the problem been a problem in your life?

F) Identifying exceptions to perceptions and behaviors (Exceptions or unique outcome questions)
What would your (friend, family members) describe as a time when this problem could have gotten to you but you did something to prevent it? What would s/he say about how you did it?

G) Making sense of the exceptions...making exceptions meaningful (Unique account questions).
What about you helped you to be able to do this?

H) Making sense of the exceptions to view of self and others...(Self-description and circulation questions).
What did ___ know about you that it is important for you to know?

I) Future orientation...co-creating the desired solution, or keeping the new trend going
(Future oriented questions).

1) Miracle question..."If a miracle were to happen tonight while you were asleep and tomorrow morning you awoke to find that this problem were no longer a part of your life, what would be different? How would other people be able to tell without you telling them?"

2) Video description question..."Let's say that we have two video tapes of you, one is in the past when the problem was really getting in the way for you and the other is sometime in the near future when things are better. What's most noticeable in the tape of you in the future that will tell us that things are better for you?"

3) Questions which assume positive outcome..."Let's make a leap of faith and say that our session ends up being helpful, how will you know?"

4) Questions that reinforce taking small steps...What will be a small sign, something you'll likely notice in the week or so that will tell you that things are better for you and your student?"

5) Scaling questions..."On a scale from one to ten, with one being 'pretty bad' and ten being 'pretty good', how would you rate how you're doing now?"

APPENDIX H

STUDENT SUMMARY SHEET

Student Summary Sheet

Student Name _____ Disability Codes _____

Resident District _____ Contact Person _____ Phone # _____

IEP Due Date _____ 3-YR Re-Eval Due Date _____ Interpreter? Y/N

	Functional Level	Materials Needed	Comments
Reading			
Spelling			
Math			
Writing			

Main IEP Goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Physical/Medical Needs: _____

Mainstream History: _____

Successful Strategies: _____

Agencies Involved: _____

Parent Information: _____

Specialist Involved: _____

Student Strengths: _____

Social Skill Development: _____

Concerns/Special Issues: _____

Comments: _____

Signature _____

Copies to: Resident District Coordinator and South Middle School Staff

APPENDIX I

DAILY SUCCESS SHEET

Daily Success Form

Name: Nate	Mentor: Mr. Miser (1 point)	Date: 11-3-95 M T W TH F

Goals:
1. Follows directions-first time (item 7)
2. Reacts with proper mood (item 12)
3. Disagrees appropriately (item 14)
4. Accepts own mistakes (item 23)

Class	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Teacher Initials
Advisory	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
1. Basic Ed.	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
2. History	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
3. Math	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
4. Science	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
5. Lunch	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
6. Art	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
7. English	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
8. Reading	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	
Student Evaluation	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	

Comments:

Recommendations:

Total For The Day = _____ Mentor (1) _____

Levels

_____ 5. 29-36 All privileges/special reinforcers/parent contact
_____ 4. 22-28 Practice social skill or deficit area
_____ 3. 15-21 Lunch detention
_____ 2. 1-14 In-school suspension (until solution is found)
_____ 1. 0 Suspension (mentor/student/principal decision)