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ABSTRACT

Sixty-one adolescent subjects, defined as underachieving and non-motivated and who had been disciplinary problems at school, participated in one of three groups: (1) the experimental group which received vocational orientation and group counseling; (2) a control group which received vocational orientation only; and (3) a control group which received neither. All groups were given the Rokeach Value Survey, the results of which comprised the content for the experimental group's counseling sessions. Results indicated that group counseling, where the content induced meaningful self-revelation, had extended to improvement in achievement and a deceleration of disciplinary referrals. No positive changes were found in the two control groups. It is concluded that group counseling is effective with the population described and that the use of discussions of life values is a viable motivating force. (11)

The Motivational Effect of Values as Content in Group Counseling with
Underachieving Adolescents

Evelyn L. Blackman

In a relatively recent review of research in counseling by Krumboltz (1967) criticism was leveled at the use of such outside criterion measures as GPA, attendance, and self ratings in the evaluation of counseling success. Although only one-third of the 104 studies reviewed by Gazda and Larsen (1968) involved adolescent students, these were largely concerned with problems of under-achievement and discipline. Success of group counseling was measured by such outside criteria as GPA, valuing of school, and improved attendance. Recent studies of group counseling with high school students have shown favorable outcomes in GPA, attendance, realistic vocational goals, improved self acceptance, and reduced anxiety level (Bates, 1968; Abrams, 1969; Catron, 1966; Clements, 1966; Gilliland, 1968.) The majority of these studies terminated when such measures showed significant change. Concession is made to criticisms by Krumboltz when he further stated that "GPA is dependent upon innumerable factors beyond the control of treatment procedures (1967:194)." However, as long as parents, school personnel, and students themselves consider these gross criterion measures to be reflective of desirable outcomes of group counseling, it is obvious that other factors must be considered which have bearing on the success of counseling before these measures are discarded.

Assumptions also have been made that the content of counseling; e.g., self revelation, is almost entirely causal in counseling outcomes (Rovers, 1950). This unequivocally suggests that such success is dependent upon the client-counselor relationship, an entirely process oriented effect.

In much of the major research on group counseling with adolescents the focus has been on attitude change, this largely centered on measures of change in self concept or a combination of change in constructs in self when accompanied by improvement in achievement. The assumption frequently was made that characteristics of self were antecedent to cognitive behaviors. Many of these studies have had conflicting results or minimal success because of methodological difficulties.

Ten years ago, in Kylic's (1961) excellent summary of the existing literature on measurement of self concept, errors in measurement were pointed out including the use of poorly validated paper and pencil tests. In the ten years since this constructive review, studies have continued to proliferate with little heed having been paid to the 'errors of the ways'. As suggested by Joan J. Michael in her position paper before the 48th Annual Conference of the California Educational Research Association in 1970, it is possible that different approaches will define different constructs...that it is time for isolated shot-in methodology in the area of self concept to be ended and time for multitrait/multimethod investigation to begin.

Unquestionably, the motivation of the student is a dynamic variable and one that relates to counseling success. Blocher has pointed out that,

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"traditionally, counseling and psychotherapy have treated motivation as a pre-existing, relatively unalterable entity, which resides within the basic personality structure of the client (1967:15)." Because of the willingness on the part of counselors to 'blame' the client for lack of response and failure in counseling, an alternative view was suggested by Blocher; that of conceiving of client motivation as a "dynamic variable in the treatment process which can be shaped to meet the goals of intervention (1967:16)."

Bodnar and Weinberg (1970) found that underachieving students who volunteered for treatment tended to show subsequent academic improvement in almost all treatment programs. They suggested the possibility that volunteer students are more highly motivated than nonvolunteer students and that this motivation significantly contributes to the effectiveness of whatever the program they experience. Gilbreath (1971) affirmed these findings even to the extent that the initiative and motivation that led some underachievers to respond favorably to counseling programs had significant positive effects on their scholastic performance even without counseling.

In Rokeach's (1968) theory of value organization and change, inconsistencies within the person's value-attitude system tended to cause a state of dissonance which resulted in behavior which was incompatible with an approved way of life. He suggested that, with adolescents, this state of dissonance was manifested in acting-out behavior, inadequate social relations, low grades, or other manifestations of the adolescent's conflict with approved social goals.

The study to be reviewed (Prigg, 1970) analyzes the motivational effect of values as counseling content where gross criterion measures are used to indicate counseling success. The motivational effect of this form of content is examined in connection with the hypothesis posed for the study: stated in the Null form, there is no statistically significant change in academic achievement or disciplinary referral record as determined by pre- and post-measures of the two criteria, as a result of group counseling.

Procedures: Sixty-one adolescent subjects participated, all of normal ability: Group I (Experimental), N=16; Group II (Control), N=9; Group III (Control), N=36. Groups I and II were selected by their counselors, teachers, and parents for vocational orientation prior to counseling. Group III received no orientation. Group I was subsequently divided into two counseling groups which met for 12 50-minute sessions during the fall semester. Groups II and III received no counseling.

All groups were given the Rokeach Value Survey, Form D early in the semester and prior to counseling for Group I. During the second counseling session with Group I, a group profile showing the rank ordering of both terminal and instrumental values was distributed for comparison with the counselees' individual profiles. Later, these counselees were presented with group profiles for Groups II and III as a means of comparison with their own. The placement of values in relation to group members' personal and social problems formed the content for succeeding counseling sessions.

TABLE I
 DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
 BY GRADE AND SEX

	Grade 9	Grade 10
Experimental (Group I)		
N = 16		
Male N = 13	7	6
Female N = 3	3	0
Comparison (Group II)		
N = 9		
Male N = 6	0	6
Female N = 3	0	3
Comparison (Group III)		
N = 36		
Male N = 14	14	0
Female N = 22	22	0
Total N by Grade level	46	15

Analysis: Analysis was carried out on two dimensions: (1) a content analysis as measured by pre/post changes on the Rokeach Value Survey; and (2) an analysis of changes in GPA and number of disciplinary referrals, using data from June, 1969, to January, 1970. In order to determine the degree of difference between the pre/post ranking of the individual values (terminal and instrumental) of the three groups, the standard error of the difference and a t-test of significance were computed. Tables II through VI show changes in rank order of values, t-tests, by groups and by sex.

Discussion: On the terminal value scale (representing end states of existence) for the Experimental Group, the values of "freedom" and "national security" were ranked higher, significant at the .05 level. No significant changes were found for instrumental values (representing modes of conduct).

For Control Group I, "freedom" was ranked significantly lower and "wisdom" significantly higher. No significant changes were found for instrumental values.

For Control Group II, significant changes occurred on both scales. Of the terminal values, "a world of beauty" and "inner harmony" were changed to higher positions on the value scale at the .01 level of confidence, while the values, "equality" and "freedom", were ranked higher at the .05 level of confidence. The two values, "salvation" and "social recognition," were ranked significantly lower at the .01 level. Changes on the instrumental scale involved movement of the value, "independence," to a higher ranking at the .01 level of confidence and higher rankings for the values, "courageous" and "honest," at the .05 level. Downward shifts were found for the values, "clean" "loving" and "obedient".

Content discussion of values followed a prescribed plan by the counselor. During the first session following the administration of the Value Survey, the participants discussed the values that were prompted by the test. The counselor reported that, prior to the preparation of their profiles, the counselees centered their attention upon the values of "freedom" and "honest". For example, in their discussion of the value, "honest," some students indicated that they thought this meant lying, cheating, or stealing, while another participant revealed that he was being honest when he admitted to having stolen some things. As the session progressed, "honest" changed to faith in relationships with people, the ability to be open and honest with each other, and the willingness on the part of one counselee to reveal himself to the counselor and the group. As confirmation of this approach, "honest" was ranked highly by the group on both pre- and post-tests.

In another instance, the counselor reported that "freedom" was the center of attention, from a conception of the meaning of freedom in connection with religion and the Bill of Rights, to present pleas by youth for freedom to dress and act without the dictates of adult authority. It seemed possible that the subsequent high ranking of this value was a reflection of concern by students at their developmental stage when freedom to make decisions was highly important to them.

After development of the group's value profile, discussions centered around such values as "world at peace" and "national security." The relationship of these two values, particularly as they reflected value incongruence, set off

TABLE II

CHANGE IN INSTRUMENTAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Instrumental Values	Males N = 13			Females N = 3			Group N = 16		
	Pre-Median	Post-Median	t	Pre-Median	Post-Median	t	Pre-Median	Post-Median	t
1. Ambitious	11	12	-.42	13	11	.46	11	11	-.12
2. Broadminded	8	13	-1.53	3	3	-.19	8	12	-1.45
3. Capable	12	8	.54	12	15	-2.00	12	11	-.04
4. Cheerful	6	10	-1.11	7	4	.69	7	9	-.66
5. Clean	4	2	1.44	8	15	-2.51	4	2	.00
6. Courageous	13	12	-.11	11	15	-.40	11	12	-.32
7. Forgiving	10	9	-.55	13	9	.49	10	9	-.17
8. Helpful	9	11	.82	15	4	1.15	9	9	1.34
9. Honest	5	6	.21	2	2	.35	5	4	.41
10. Imaginative	11	9	1.21	14	13	.07	11	9	1.07
11. Independent	9	8	.84	10	14	-.77	9	8	.34
12. Intellectual	14	16	-1.35	18	16	-.38	14	16	-1.42
13. Logical	15	14	.34	10	13	-.53	15	14	.00
14. Loving	7	7	.05	5	5	.89	7	6	.55
15. Obedient	14	12	-.42	6	8	.00	11	11	-.41
16. Polite	10	10	.12	7	9	-1.00	9	10	-.15
17. Responsible	9	6	1.01	8	6	.00	9	6	.99
18. Self-controlled	5	6	.34	9	8	.46	5	6	.57

TABLE III

CHANGE IN INSTRUMENTAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR CONTROL GROUP I

Instrumental Values	Males N = 6			Females N = 3			Group N = 9		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Ambitious	3	10	.14	9	12	-.48	9	10	-.07
2. Broadminded	5	3	.25	9	4	.13	9	4	.20
3. Capable	6	9	-.72	9	14	-2.63	7	11	-1.89
4. Cheerful	6	12	-2.34	7	3	2.75	7	11	.72
5. Clean	9	13	-.17	7	2	2.75	9	11	.69
6. Courageous	5	6	1.48	8	10	-.15	8	7	1.21
7. Forgiving	6	5	-.70	11	9	1.24	8	7	.05
8. Helpful	10	10	-1.17	8	10	-1.25	10	13	-1.53
9. Honesty	3	9	-1.58	10	8	.45	5	9	-.99
10. Imaginative	12	8	1.75	14	12	.28	15	8	1.48
11. Independent	13	6	1.87	15	6	.53	15	6	1.90
12. Intellectual	16	11	1.70	15	17	-1.11	16	15	1.33
13. Logical	12	12	-.49	18	16	1.11	14	16	-.16
14. Loving	2	6	-1.57	6	4	-.46	6	6	-1.62
15. Obedient	14	13	.35	12	15	-1.32	16	14	-.61
16. Polite	9	14	-.42	13	8	.38	11	13	-.09
17. Responsible	8	4	1.02	3	9	-.29	8	9	.64
18. Self-controlled	2	7	-.83	2	3	-.91	2	3	-1.24

TABLE IV

CHANGE IN INSTRUMENTAL VALUES BY RANK ORDERS
FOR CONTROL GROUP II

Instrumental Values	Males = 14			Females N = 22			Group N = 36		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Ambitious	8	9	.56	8	11	-1.12	8	11	-.67
2. Broadminded	8	7	.25	7	5	1.67	8	7	1.50
3. Capable	10	10	-.52	3	11	-.06	11	11	-.44
4. Cheerful	10	9	1.70	5	6	.55	9	6	1.36
5. Clean	17	18	-1.80	14	17	-2.32*	17	18	-2.97**
6. Courageous	8	5	.97	6	5	1.99	6	5	2.18*
7. Forgiving	6	8	-.06	5	4	.26	5	5	-.19
8. Helpful	9	10	.17	8	10	-.89	8	10	-.64
9. Honesty	4	1	1.59	4	2	1.97	4	2	2.48*
10. Imaginative	11	8	1.70	7	7	.77	9	7	1.66
11. Independent	4	2	1.96	7	5	2.00	7	4	2.82**
12. Intellectual	7	13	-1.89	11	11	.20	11	11	-1.03
13. Logical	9	10	-.78	12	16	-1.04	11	13	-1.31
14. Loving	6	10	-.88	3	6	-2.37*	4	8	-2.31*
15. Obedient	14	15	-1.01	15	16	-2.00	15	16	-2.23*
16. Polite	11	14	-1.11	14	14	-.91	12	14	-1.44
17. Responsible	6	7	.00	10	10	-1.36	9	9	-.91
18. Self-controlled	14	11	1.39	14	13	.73	14	13	.81

TABLE V

CHANGE IN TERMINAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Terminal Values	Males N = 13			Females N = 3			Group N = 16		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Comfortable Life	5	6	-.89	8	9	-2.08	6	6	-1.38
2. Exciting Life	8	8	-.49	8	7	-.21	8	7	-.56
3. Sense of Accomplishment	11	12	-.32	14	14	.61	12	12	-.12
4. World Peace	2	2	.00	2	2	.99	2	2	.00
5. World Beauty	13	10	.79	11	3	1.89	12	5	1.32
6. Equality	9	13	-1.52	5	5	-.40	9	13	-1.56
7. Family Security	9	12	-1.00	9	12	-.87	9	12	-1.12
8. Freedom	5	2	2.58*	1	1	-1.00	3	2	2.36*
9. Happiness	10	8	.39	4	4	-.29	5	7	.27
10. Inner Harmony	15	14	-.13	13	13	-.53	15	13	-.47
11. Mature Love	6	7	-.48	7	9	-1.39	6	8	-.72
12. National Security	14	10	2.68*	16	10	1.31	14	10	2.88*
13. Pleasure	7	10	-.21	7	15	-1.68	7	10	-1.03
14. Salvation	17	15	.05	12	10	1.51	16	13	1.00
15. Self Respect	13	10	.97	14	6	.83	13	10	1.33
16. Social Recognition	17	14	.60	16	13	.23	14	13	.65
17. True Friendship	8	11	-1.06	11	11	.50	8	11	-.88
18. Wisdom	10	11	-1.90	13	14	-.06	10	11	-1.43

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

TABLE VI

CHANGE IN TERMINAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR CONTROL GROUP I

Terminal Values	Males N = 6			Females N = 3			Group N = 9		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Comfortable Life	10	12	-.76	12	7	1.31	12	10	.57
2. Exciting Life	8	7	.48	2	3	-.08	8	7	.34
3. Sense of Accomplishment	10	16	-1.80	11	15	-.65	11	14	-1.92
4. World Peace	4	4	-.32	5	4	1.00	4	4	-.24
5. World Beauty	6	6	-.41	10	9	-.24	7	8	-.50
6. Equality	9	6	.52	4	4	1.21	9	5	1.32
7. Family Security	14	13	1.11	12	5	.44	13	13	1.23
8. Freedom	2	4	-2.00	1	5	-1.61	2	7	-2.57*
9. Happiness	6	9	-.54	8	7	.38	8	9	-.36
10. Inner Harmony	8	8	-.14	9	9	.57	9	9	.23
11. Mature Love	3	3	-.23	18	14	.33	5	7	.00
12. National Security	12	11	.75	15	17	-1.11	15	14	.00
13. Pleasure	6	8	.00	7	10	.00	6	9	.00
14. Salvation	13	11	-.31	14	18	-4.16	13	12	-1.10
15. Self Respect	9	16	-1.75	13	12	-.71	11	16	-1.98
16. Social Recognition	14	13	.00	10	16	-.46	10	15	-.33
17. True Friendship	5	5	.32	7	11	-2.78	7	5	-.43
18. Wisdom	14	4	2.58*	9	13	.67	14	6	2.51

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

TABLE VI
CHANGE IN TERMINAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR CONTROL GROUP I

Terminal Values	Males N = 6			Females N = 3			Group N = 9		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Comfortable Life	10	12	-.76	12	7	1.31	12	10	.57
2. Exciting Life	8	7	.48	2	3	-.08	8	7	.34
3. Sense of Accomplishment	10	16	-1.80	11	15	-.65	11	14	-1.92
4. World Peace	4	4	-.32	5	4	1.00	4	4	-.24
5. World Beauty	6	6	-.41	10	9	-.24	7	8	-.50
6. Equality	9	6	.58	4	4	1.21	9	5	1.32
7. Family Security	14	13	1.11	12	5	.44	13	13	1.23
8. Freedom	2	4	-2.00	1	5	-1.61	2	5	-2.57*
9. Happiness	6	9	-.54	8	7	.38	8	9	-.36
10. Inner Harmony	8	8	-.14	9	9	.57	9	9	.23
11. Mature Love	3	3	-.23	18	14	.33	5	7	.00
12. National Security	15	11	.75	15	17	-1.11	15	14	.09
13. Pleasure	6	8	.00	6	10	.00	8	9	.00
14. Salvation	13	11	-.31	14	18	-4.16	13	12	-1.10
15. Self Respect	9	16	-1.75	13	12	-.71	11	16	-1.98
16. Social Recognition	14	13	.00	10	16	-.46	10	15	-.33
17. True Friendship	5	5	.32	7	11	-2.78	7	5	-.43
18. Wisdom	14	4	2.58*	9	13	.67	14	6	2.51

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

TABLE VII

CHANGE IN TERMINAL VALUES BY RANK ORDER
FOR CONTROL GROUP II

Terminal Values	Males N = 14			Females N = 22			Group N = 36		
	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t	Pre-	Post-	t
1. Comfortable Life	14	14	.38	15	15	.89	15	14	.88
2. Exciting Life	9	8	.56	10	8	-.97	9	8	-.48
3. Sense of Accomplishment	10	10	-.27	11	10	-1.86	10	11	-1.43
4. World Peace	2	2	1.37	2	2	.45	2	2	1.41
5. World Beauty	14	8	2.18*	12	7	2.69*	14	7	3.51**
6. Equality	3	3	1.91	3	4	1.27	4	3	2.16*
7. Family Security	7	11	-1.26	9	10	-.90	9	10	-1.56
8. Freedom	4	3	1.82	4	4	1.77	4	3	2.56*
9. Happiness	11	10	-.29	10	10	-1.56	10	10	-1.19
10. Inner Harmony	10	6	.81	8	5	3.91**	8	6	2.99**
11. Mature Love	6	9	-1.98	11	10	-.07	7	9	-1.46
12. National Security	14	16	-.54	16	17	-.07	15	16	-.50
13. Pleasure	12	11	-1.08	12	15	-.30	12	14	-1.00
14. Salvation	10	16	-2.80*	17	18	-2.37*	17	18	-3.29**
15. Self Respect	9	10	.13	10	11	-1.29	10	11	-.70
16. Social Recognition	12	16	-1.67	14	15	-2.60*	14	15	-3.10**
17. True Friendship	7	6	.62	6	11	-.68	6	7	-.20
18. Wisdom	12	10	.92	11	10	.05	10	10	.54

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence.

** Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

TABLE VIII
CHANGE IN GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Group	Pre-X	Post-X	t
Experimental	.0946	1.136	5.47**
Control I	.972	1.296	1.80
Control II	3.54	3.49	.32

TABLE IX
CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF
DISCIPLINARY REFERRALS

Group	Actual	Expected	Difference
Experimental	19	31	-12**
Control I	21	7	+14**
Control II	9	11	- 2

** Chi Square = 33.00/one per cent significance.

another discussion of the interpretation of national security. The ensuing breadth of interpretation undoubtedly contributed to the higher placement of "national security" on the post-test.

The values "logical" and "intellectual," seemed more difficult for the students to grasp, and the low placement of these values on the scale may be the result of their lack of identification with these values in relation to themselves. The value, "clean," presented a problem in interpretation, but most of the students agreed that this meant "clean mind and body" thus explaining the high placement of this value on the scale.

Although no other values for the experimental group showed significant change, the temporal factor unquestionably enters in as values are more stable than attitudes and terminal values. In particular, are most resistant to change since they are the most centrally located structures in the value-attitude system (Rokeach, 1968).

Measures of Counseling Success. An analysis of the criteria related to the hypothesis, namely scholastic achievement and disciplinary referral record, revealed significance at the .01 level of confidence for the Experimental Group on both criteria. (See Table VIII) A t-test for the difference between means was computed, revealing that the GPA of the Experimental Group improved significantly at the .01 level of confidence over Control Groups I and II.

These results suggest that the Experimental Group, which had experienced six months of group counseling where the content induced self-revelation of a highly meaningful kind, had been involved in a worthwhile experience which had extended into aspects related to the school such as improvement in achievement and deceleration of disciplinary referrals. In light of the fact that group counseling had not been experienced by either control group, the resulting lack of improvement, particularly for Control Group I, seemed very significant as this group was also made up of underachieving, non-motivated students. No change was expected for Control Group II since these were successful students who apparently could maintain their own momentum without counseling.

Office disciplinary referral records were analyzed for all three groups. Based upon previous rate of referral, chi square analysis was used to determine the significance between the actual and expected number of times the students from the three groups would be referred. Table IX indicated that the experimental group had fewer disciplinary referrals at the .01 level of confidence during the counseling period, while Control Group I had significantly more referrals at the .01 level. In terms of the intervening variable of group counseling, these results suggest that the counseling experience was highly effective in helping the participants of the Experimental Group toward growth in their feelings of self-worth and relationships with others. On the other hand, results for Control Group I showed significant deterioration. No change in number of referrals was found for Control Group II.

Implications for Group Counseling. From an examination of the positive results of this study, two implications seem apparent: the effectiveness of group counseling as a means of helping underachieving, non-motivated students to achieve success in school, and the use of a discussion of life values as a motivating force. It was suggested earlier in the paper that the blending of outside criterion measures with a motivational force in counseling - in this

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instance, the use of the Rokeach Value Survey - would provide supportive procedures in defining counseling success. Replication of the study is recommended as further testimony to these results.

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