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ABSTRACT

Outcomes of a teacher-teaming program that was implemented among seventh-grade teachers at a Florida middle school are described in this practicum report. Training sessions on effective teaming practices were initiated to address the lack of effective teaming practices among the seventh-grade teachers. Eight seventh-grade teachers participated in a 12-week workshop program designed to increase their awareness of students' affective needs. Teachers completed pre- and post-test surveys of teaming effectiveness. After completing the workshop, teachers reported more positive attitudes toward teaming and used teaming practices more frequently. The teacher teams implemented several new programs designed to increase student self-esteem, which contributed to a significant drop in the number of student discipline referrals. Appendices contain student award certificates, team goals, survey data, and a critical thinking checklist. (Contains 11 references.) (LMI)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE TEAMING PRACTICES  
TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SEVENTH GRADERS

by

Juanita C. Deason

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for Advancement  
of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Educational Specialist

The abstract of this report may be placed in a  
National Database System for reference.

December 1992

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## ABSTRACT

The Development of Effective Teaming Practices to Meet the Needs of Seventh Graders.

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The Center for the Advancement of Education.

Descriptors: Middle Schools/Team Training/Team Teaching/Affective Behavior/Student Behavior/Self-Esteem/Affective Measures/Humanistic Education/Staff Development/Teachers/Teamwork/

The lack of effective teaming practices was addressed by the implementation of effective teaming practices training sessions. The lack of teaming practices contributed to low student self-esteem, resulting in a high rate of discipline referrals. The eight teachers in the target group participated in a twelve week workshop program designed to increase their awareness of students' affective needs.

The results indicated increased frequency in the teaming practices of the target group. Many new programs designed to increase student self-esteem were implemented by the teams. As a result of these programs, the number of student discipline referrals dropped significantly. The writer plans to share the dynamics of the project as a presenter at county staff development sessions, as well as at national conventions on middle grade education. Appendices include sample team commonalities, student award certificates, team goals, survey data, and critical thinking checklist.

Authorship Statement/Document release

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

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## CHAPTER I

### Purpose

#### Background

The School is 37 years old and began as a junior high school of seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. It is now a middle school comprised of grades six, seven, and eight. The School has 50 teachers and one media specialist. The School has a principal, two assistant principals and three guidance counselors. The School has 982 students of whom 48 percent belong to minorities. Sixty four percent of the students receive free lunch, and an additional three percent receive reduced price lunch (Gregory, 1992a). The School building houses three academic wings, one vocational wing, a media center, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, and music, art, and band suites. The wings have been adapted to accommodate interdisciplinary teaming. There are two teams at the sixth grade level with five teachers assigned to each team. At the seventh and eighth grade levels there are also two teams with four teachers assigned to each team.

The current principal of the School is beginning his second year as a principal. Prior to becoming principal, he worked in budgetary administration. The current principal's predecessor retired after serving at the School for seven and a half years. There have been five new assistant principals at the school during the last nine years.

The writer is a language arts teacher, certified in English (grades 6-12), social studies (grades 7-9), and economics (grades 7-12). The writer has an undergraduate degree with a double major in English and social studies and a masters degree in English. The writer has 18 years of teaching experience at high school, junior high, and middle school levels. The writer has served as an academic team leader since 1986, has coordinated six weeks award assemblies for both sixth grade teams since 1989, and has received training for middle school teaming at several local, state, and national middle school workshops and conventions. The writer has served on the school advisory development and steering committee for two years, has served on the principal's advisory committee, and is a certified Prime Grant trainer.



The target group for the practicum was the seventh grade teachers at the School. Despite the efforts of administrators over the past several years, the teachers in the target group have resisted efforts to institute an effective teaming program in the seventh grade. The attitudes and characteristics of these teachers are discussed in the "problem statement" portion of this chapter.

#### Problem Statement

Grade level teaming for the sixth grade was instituted in 1986 at the School. Such teaming was mandated by the county school system. Unfortunately, the administration of the School was unsuccessful in its efforts to convince the seventh grade teachers to team.

In 1989, to comply with a county mandate, the eight academic area seventh grade teachers were assigned to two interdisciplinary teams with a common planning period, a common group of students, and a common teaching area. Although team leaders were appointed, they did nothing to lead the teams. The seventh grade was a team in name only.

The lack of teaming at the seventh grade level was apparent to seventh grade students who participated in the strong sixth grade teaming program. In sixth grade, students had six weeks award assemblies, team tee shirts, team field trips, interdisciplinary thematic units, and special team activity days. None of these programs existed in seventh grade.

Sixth grade teachers found that many of their teaming practices helped to decrease discipline problems by increasing students' self esteem. Most people, including early adolescents, have a basic need for self-esteem that is based in reality -- recognition and respect from others. Self-esteem produces feelings of self-confidence, prestige, power, and control. Early adolescents who possess self-esteem begin to feel they are useful and contributing members of society. However, when students do not feel a sense of self-esteem, they may resort to disruptive or immature behavior to get attention. Many discipline problems stem from the lack of self-esteem (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). In the last twelve weeks of of the 1991-1992 school year, seventh grade academic teachers wrote 167

disciplinary referrals to the School's administration. During the same time period, the sixth grade academic teachers wrote seven referrals.

Since 1987, many parents of seventh graders have expressed concern because of the diminished self-esteem and self-confidence their children have exhibited in seventh grade. Most sixth and eighth grade teachers and non-academic teachers have shown concern that no teaming goes on in seventh grade. Resource teachers, the Superintendent for Curriculum K-12, and the Area Superintendent have all visited the School and have tried, without success to work with the seventh grade teams and the administration to solve the problem.

There are three men and one woman on each of the seventh grade teams. Their ages range from 30 to 55 years with the average age being 45. Fifty percent of the teachers have experienced significant health problems within the last year. Most of the seventh grade teachers have been at the school longer than the principal, the principal's predecessor, or any of the assistant principals. They were resistant to efforts of administrators to encourage teaming.

For the most part, the members of the group are very traditional in their approach to education. The overall personality style is that of the academic rationalist. As a group, they are extremely resistant to change (Gregory, 1992b). Ideally, because of the unique needs of the middle school child, teams of teachers should have a blend of personality styles which can translate into effective teaching styles and programs to meet early adolescents' needs.

At the end of his first year, the principal of the School approached four of the team teachers and asked if they would be willing to move to the sixth grade level so that the two experienced sixth grade team leaders could join the seventh grade teams to provide leadership. Their response was negative (Gregory, 1992b).

Since the seventh grade teams will not be split for the 1992-1993 school year, a situational leadership mode is needed. The target group of seventh grade teachers appears uncommitted and lacking in motivation and confidence. The target group needs direction and structure incorporated into a training program that will enable them to effectively team to meet the students' needs.

### Outcome Objectives

After participation in 12 weeks of weekly team training workshops, the seventh grade academic team teachers were expected to demonstrate 30 percent more positive attitudes toward teaming as measured by pre-workshop and post-workshop surveys for evaluating the effectiveness of the team developed by Elliot Merenbloom.

In addition to increasing positive attitudes towards teaming, after the twelve weeks of teaming workshops, the seventh grade academic teams, whose mechanisms for positive student reinforcement had been limited to an annual awards assembly, were expected to increase their implementation of effective educational practices through quantifiable reinforcement activities such as six weeks awards assemblies, team tee shirts, and Student of the Month awards, by 100 percent.

Finally, through increased awareness of students' affective needs and implementation of affective educational techniques, after 12 weeks of team training workshops, the number of disciplinary referrals were expected to decrease by 50 percent from the 167

reported in the last 12 weeks of the 1991-1992 school year on the county's computerized Discipline List By Teacher.

## CHAPTER II

### Research & Solution Strategy

#### Research

Erb (1987) interviewed teachers, administrators, and support staff who were organized into interdisciplinary teams. He found that teams were better able to join in decision making in the school than non-teamed teachers, that team members decided rules of conduct and expectations of students, that teams could better support problem students, and that teamed teachers were better able to isolate and diagnose problems. Where team organization existed, teachers had better access to principals on a number of school issues because principals met on a regular basis with team leaders or came to team meetings on a regular basis.

In team meetings, members could generate ideas with their colleagues and support staff on improving the school. In addition to having greater input on school-wide issues, teachers made decisions on adopting team goals, developing discipline rules, adopting team mascots and themes, and designing systems for rewarding

students. Placement and grouping or regrouping of students for academic or behavioral reasons was done by the teams without upsetting the master schedule.

If problems appeared to be beyond the immediate resources available to the teams, the teams would decide to invite a counselor to the meeting to supply background information on a student to help the team decide on a course of action. Interaction with outsiders supplemented the effectiveness of the team. Since team teachers shared planning time and students, they were better able to pool their perspectives on each student to develop a more complete picture of how that student was doing in school.

Team members reported support of other team members as one of the greatest advantages of teaming. Peer recognition improved teacher moral. Team teachers also expanded their teaching roles by assuming roles of leadership in organizing and conducting meetings and communicating team actions to outsiders.

Teams not only talked about students but talked more about curriculum. Field trips were often planned to coordinate with several subjects being taught on the team. Team meetings were also used for staff development of new skills. Communication with parents was



more frequent. Counselors felt their services were better utilized because of improved communication with teamed teachers. Erb (1987) concluded that teachers who teamed were more satisfied when they were organized into interdisciplinary teams.

Johnston, Markle, and Arhar (1988) agreed that the net outcome for teachers who team is increased satisfaction with their jobs. Teachers who team reported more positive interpersonal relationships, greater social support, higher self-esteem, and greater efficiency. The contentment level of teachers improved the quality of student learning. Academic teams need to work closely and cooperatively with the fine and practical arts teachers (Loundsbury et al., 1982).

Interdisciplinary teaming needs the support of teachers, elective teachers, and school staff. Providing feedback to various groups is also important. Updates about teaming should be provided to foster communication between all groups on how development of the team process is progressing (Smith, 1991).

Bloomquist, et al., as cited in Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1988) found that making specialist teachers members of teams facilitated conversations about students. In another study, Johnston, as cited by Arhar,

Johnston, and Markle (1988) reported specialist teachers experienced a sense of isolation and sometimes anger from not being on a teaching team. The study also found that factors other than the organizational element of teaming affect staff communication.

Teaming is becoming the standard instructional organization practice in the middle school according to George and Oldaker, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989). Similarly, Loundsbury and Johnston, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) indicated that 67 percent of the schools in the study used some form of teaming in the sixth grade. Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) concluded that the success of teaming depends upon the commitment of teachers. Teaming itself does not cause this commitment, but it does give teachers the ability to translate this commitment into action. Teaming permits certain conditions to exist that are directly related to instructional effectiveness and student success. Teaming reduces student anonymity and allows teachers to know students. It permits teachers to focus on students in positive ways to affect their learning. Schurr (1988) felt that teaming is at the heart of a successful middle school program.

Sinclair, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989), found that teamed students found the school environment to be more supportive and facilitative than students did in departmentalized schools. Gemsky, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) found that team arrangements affected, positively, student attitudes toward teachers, interest in subject matter, sense of personal freedom and sense of self-confidence. George and Oldaker, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) reported improvement in school discipline and personal development of students enrolled in middle schools that employed teaming.

George and Oldaker, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989), also noted that teaming and teacher-based guidance facilitated productive peer relationships and reduced conflict. Student emotional health, creativity, and confidence in self-directed learning, as well as student self-concept, were also positively affected. More wide spread and frequent awards given through teams can help encourage early adolescents feel a heightened sense of achievement regarding their academic, social, and athletic abilities (Van Hoose and Strahan, 1989).

To improve school climate, schools must recognize and reward arts, vocational studies, athletics, academics, crafts, and social skills. Schools need to insure that every child has a reasonable chance to excel at something (Arth et al., 1985). The focus on self-concept should be included in all aspects of the instructional program. The overall climate of the school should be positive so that early adolescents will grow and learn in a healthy environment (Merenbloom, 1986). Since nearly all schools have established rules for conduct, establishing awards for good behavior should be a top priority (Doda, George, McEwin, 1987).

Effective middle schools must foster development of a clear self-concept and positive self-esteem. These concepts bring together the physical, social, and cognitive characteristics of the early adolescent into a sense of identity, adequacy, and affirmation. From the sense of self, variables such as behavior, perceptions of others, and motivation develop (Beane and Lipka, 1987).

Self-esteem produces feelings of self-confidence, prestige, power, and control. Early adolescents who possess self-esteem begin to feel they are useful and

contributing members of society. However, when students do not feel a sense of self-esteem, they may resort to disruptive or immature behavior to get attention (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). Young adolescents with clear self-concepts and positive self esteem tend to do better in most aspects of school than those who have low self-esteem. They are less likely to drop out and/or see the ending of school as the ending of learning (Beane and Lipka, 1987). Teachers who believe in the ability of their students to succeed usually are able to project that belief of success into the learners themselves. If teachers structure learning opportunities to assure success, students tend to show progressively better achievement and stronger self-esteem (Beane and Lipka, 1987). Techniques for building self-esteem were also discussed by Newkirk (1991).

Team leadership is a vital component of the teaming process. Without direction, teams cannot achieve their full potential. The leadership must come from within the team. Leadership is needed to insure that decisions are made properly and that the unique personality of the team emerges. The team leader has an important responsibility to involve all team members in the teaming process (Merenbloom, 1986).

One person does not necessarily have to serve as team leader for an entire year and should not be expected to be responsible for all of the leadership responsibilities. In some middle schools, team leaders receive a supplement and serve the entire year. In other schools, the team leader is appointed by the principal or elected by the team and receives no remuneration. It is not necessary for the team leader to be a quasi-administrator but should be a peer of the other team members. The position if chosen by the members can be rotated. When rotation occurs, every team member has a greater respect for the leadership responsibility. Some teams have certain members who specialize in certain aspects of the team process which results in an acceptance of the leadership function by all team members. It is not wise to place all aspects of team leadership on any one team member (Merenbloom, 1986).

Fiersen (1987) analyzed five team meetings in a suburban middle school by using a coding system based on N.A. Flanders' (1964) work on classroom instruction. Data were analyzed to identify common patterns and to determine the proportion of interaction from each category of the instrument by each participant. The

material was supplemented by questionnaires and follow-up interviews with selected staff. Fiersen concluded that effective team meetings had the following characteristics: 1) Rules of order that limit discussion to the topic and provide a means of reaching closure; 2) Minutes distributed to all team members so that each member has a record of group discussions and decisions; 3) Occasional case reports from various team members; 4) Examination of past agendas to determine students who are discussed frequently and to identify pupils in need who are rarely discussed; 5) One team member acting as a "child advocate" to emphasize the needs of the child and to focus attention on a plan of action; 6) One team member serving as a process observer who periodically assesses group performances and dynamics; 7) Team agendas should allow time for team members to interact informally to strengthen ties and discover common interests.

MacIver and Epstein (1991) analyzed data which showed that increased common planning time for teams strongly associated with principals' estimates of the proportion of time that team members spent coordinating their activities (deciding common themes and related topics for instruction, altering schedules, regrouping

students, discussing problems of specific students, and arranging for help). Also principals reported that larger amounts of common planning time for team meetings also associated with obtaining greater benefits from interdisciplinary teaming. Finally, the study indicated that when interdisciplinary teams have formal leaders, teams spend more time engaged in team activities and produce greater benefits for their school.

For a team to function effectively, there is a need for an assessment instrument which can be used to formulate team goals. A self-evaluation may be the most effective for teams because it uses a form that parallels the philosophy, practices, and uniqueness of that particular team. The evaluation instrument should be used regularly, systematically, and in a positive fashion so as to promote communication between team members. Team members working together to plan for improvement can formulate goals from the assessment process (Merenbloom, 1986).

Hunt (1991a) stated that expanding the teaming process beyond the academic areas is beneficial to schoolwide teaming. Incorporating exploratory and special education into the teaming process is vital. Hunt (1991b) followed up her earlier work by enumerating and



discussing the specific mechanics of improving the teaming process for all types of team members in the middle school setting.

A critical factor in the development of teams is evaluation. The team leaders should conduct a pre-assessment to discover the team's expectations. Teams must have a common focus, common understanding, and common commitment to teaming (Smith, 1991). Evaluation of the functioning of a teaching team helps team members and administrators identify staff areas that need attention, assist in planning for the next semester, and improve the school program in general. The early steps in developing an evaluation instrument include deciding who will evaluate, which factors are to be evaluated, and how the data will be recorded and collected. Formulating the instrument should involve administrative staff, parents, and students as well as teachers. In evaluating the operation of the team itself, teachers need to focus on factors that contribute to a successful teaming experience such as actions of the team leader, individual team members, the team as a unit, and the accomplishment of goals set by the team.

The follow-up planning and goal setting to improve the team and the teaming program is paramount to the evaluation process (Rehbeck, 1987).

### Solution Strategy

From this review of literature, it is clear that to bring the teaming concept to teachers who have not teamed, three general areas must be addressed:

- 1) Positive benefits of teaming for the teachers.
- 2) Positive benefits of teaming for the students.
- 3) The mechanics of teaming.

First, teaming benefits teachers. Erb (1987) stated that teamed teachers are more actively involved in the decision making process not only at the team level but school-wide. Teams generate ideas for school improvement and have support to communicate the ideas to school personnel. Team teachers never feel isolated because of the support they receive from one another. Teams are able to share student concerns with one another and work together to solve problems. Communication with counselors and parents is increased and made easier with team input. Teamed teachers know more

about the horizontal curriculum and can plan to coordinate the curriculum. Johnston, Markle, and Arhar (1988) reported teamed teachers have more positive interpersonal relationships with staff and higher self-esteem.

Second, teaming benefits students. Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) stated that teaming reduces student anonymity and allows teachers to know students well and focus on them in positive ways to affect their learning. Gemsky, as cited in Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) found that teaming positively affected student attitudes toward teachers, interest in subject matter, sense of personal freedom, and self-reliance. George and Oldaker, as cited by Arhar, Johnston, and Markle (1989) reported improvement in school discipline and personal development. Teaming along with teacher based guidance also facilitated productive peer relationship and reduced conflict. Student emotional health, creativity and confidence in self-directed learning, as well as student self-concept, were also positively affected. Arth et al. (1985) stated that schools must provide opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate excellence in a number of domains which include the arts, vocational studies,

athletics, academics, crafts, and social skills. Schools need to insure that every child has a reasonable chance to excel at something. Van Hoose and Strahan (1989) stated that in successful schools many students as opposed to the same ones over and over receive some type of recognition in awards assemblies.

Finally, the mechanics of teaming are logical and pragmatic. Merenbloom (1986) stated that team leadership is a vital component of the teaming process. Fiersen (1987) enumerated strategies for effective team meetings. Rehbeck (1987) stated that evaluation of the function of a teaching team helps team members as well as administrators identify staff areas that need attention, assist in planning for the next semester or year, and improve the school program in general. Goal setting to improve the team and teaming program is vital to the evaluation process. Shewey (1991) discusses specific mechanics of team function.

## CHAPTER III

### Method

Since the target group had been reluctant to change their way of teaching in the past, the administration and the writer were concerned with addressing and overcoming this recalcitrance. To accomplish this objective, the teachers in the target group were told that the program being instituted was one of peer mentoring rather than one of administrative intervention. In addition, the principal told the teachers that the alternative to cooperation with this program was the reassignment of the teachers for the next academic year.

The principal of the School scheduled one day a week for the writer to meet with the eight seventh grade teachers in the target group. The meetings began on Friday, August 21, 1992, during pre-school, and were held before school on each successive Monday morning thereafter for the next 11 weeks. The writer led the target group through team building and team training

workshops seeking input from the participants through brainstorming, group discussions and utilizing problem solving techniques.

Week One: Getting Ready for Students

The first session was an orientation session led by the principal and the writer during preschool. The purpose of the training was discussed and an overall timeline given. Due to the impending arrival of students, the writer discussed three basic team commonalties to reduce stress for students as well as teachers. First, a common paper heading was decided. Second, a common school supply list was made (Appendix A:41). Third, common team classroom rules and consequences for unacceptable and exceptional behavior were established (Appendix B:43). Finally, the target group prepared a parent information letter, telling parents about the supply list and disciplinary plan (Appendix C:45).

The writer asked a volunteer from the target group to write and copy a parent letter for distribution to the students on the first day of school and asked another volunteer to make a team bulletin board on the seventh grade hall. Teachers were encouraged to incor-

porate the team's name, symbol, and colors in individual rooms so that students would begin to establish a team identity. Teachers completed a pre-survey of teaming effectiveness (Merenbloom, 1986).

#### Week Two: Expectations of the Team Leader

In the second session, the writer provided lead questions to the target group as a basis for discussion (Merenbloom, 1986). The writer gave the group a list of roles and responsibilities of team leaders (Shewey, 1991). Both teams selected a leader.

#### Week Three: Techniques for Effective Team Meetings

At the third session, teachers in the target group reviewed a team agenda sheet which was submitted to the team leader on the day prior to the meeting. This agenda sheet allowed the team leader to plan more effectively for the meeting. Teachers discussed strategies to make their meetings effective. They also discussed the reasons why minutes of team meetings should be taken and distributed to administrators, grade level counselors, and all team members. The teams set a team meeting day during their common planning period. Teachers discussed the value of written student/parent conference forms and reasons for keeping

all written team records in a team notebook (Shewey, 1991). Team members prepared for Open House held during that week.

#### Week Four: Team Identity

The group discussed the importance of establishing team identity and the positive effects of team identity on the early adolescent and methods for achieving team identity including team names, symbols, colors, mottoes, traditions, celebrations, and tee shirts (Schurr, 1988). The writer explained the importance of the selection of students of the month at this meeting. The student of the month certificates were designed by the target group (Appendix D:47).

#### Week Five: Expectations of Other Team Members

In the fifth session, the writer asked questions to determine what the target group expected of each other (Merenbloom, 1986). The responses were recorded. The target group compared their expectations of other team members with generally accepted roles and responsibilities (Schurr, 1988).



Week Six: Team Awards Assemblies Training, Part One

At this session, the writer explained the process of organizing the assemblies. Names of team awards were decided. Volunteers for running the assemblies were selected.

Week Seven: Team Awards Assemblies Training, Part Two

Week seven was a continuation of "Team Awards Assemblies." Teachers reported on progress made since the last meeting. The writer explained the procedure for perfect attendance awards. Teachers in the target group designed "Sensational Seven Award" certificates (Appendix E:49).

Week Eight: How to Incorporate the Exploratory and Special Education Teachers into the Teaming Process

In week eight, the group discussed the concept of the "extended team." The group brainstormed ideas on ways to include the extended team in the teaming process. The teachers compared their ideas with a list of ways to include the exploratory and special education teachers in team activities furnished them from the writer's research (Hunt, 1991a).

#### Week Nine: Teacher Techniques to Build Self Esteem

Week nine's session focused on techniques that build self-esteem. The writer began the session with group discussion questions on building student self-esteem. The teachers discussed techniques for building student self esteem (Newkirk, 1991). The teachers planned the agenda for the Awards Assembly and selected October Students of the Month.

#### Week Ten: Award Assembly Implementation

Awards assemblies for both team were held during the tenth week. The assemblies were held in the media center. The writer assisted the target group teachers with last minute problems and critiqued the assemblies.

#### Week Eleven: Evaluation Survey

During week eleven's session the teachers completed Merenbloom's post-survey on Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Team. Teachers discussed "50 Things That Great Teams Do" (Hunt, 1991b). The group considered goals and strategies for the final week.

Week Twelve: Reflection and Looking Ahead

In the final week's session, the group discussed results of the post-survey and teaming practices. They formulated goals for the remainder of the year (Appendix F:51). By the end of the twelve sessions, the teachers had compiled a teaming handbook for reference and to share with new team members joining the team.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results

The seventh grade academic team teachers completed Eric Merenbloom's 38 question survey on Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Team at the beginning of the training sessions (Appendix G:53) and again at the end of the training sessions (Appendix H:57). The desired outcome of the training sessions was that the teachers would demonstrate a 30 percent more positive attitude toward teaming at the end of the sessions. This goal was surpassed. The responses to the effective teaming practices questions were coded as being followed "consistently," "frequently," "occasionally," or "never." The table below shows the percentage of increase or decrease from the first to the second survey.

Table 1

A Comparison of Pre-training and Post-training  
Teaming Techniques Survey Results

Frequency	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	Percentage Change
*Consistently	32	95	+197%
*Frequently	63	86	+ 37%
*Occasionally	124	75	- 40%
*Never	83	38	- 54%

The second evaluatory benchmark dealt with quantifiable increases in team reinforcement activities for students. Prior to the training sessions, the only seventh grade reinforcement activity for students was a year end awards assembly. The writer projected a 100 percent increase in such activities as a result of the training. Again this goal was surpassed. The number of awards assemblies per year was increased from one to six. The number of awards given at such assemblies was also increased to include honor roll, principal's list, and "Sensational Seven" awards. Perfect attendance awards for each marking period were given in advisory classes. The target teams began giving student of the month awards accompanied by certificates and "care packages," and intercom recognition of the honored student. Team slogans were developed. The sale of team tee shirts, which was recommended by the writer in the training sessions, was rejected by the target group.

The final evaluatory tool was the number of disciplinary referrals from the target group. In the twelve weeks prior to the training sessions the target group issued 167 disciplinary referrals. The writer projected that this number would decrease by 50 percent. This goal was not met. During the twelve weeks

of training sessions, the number of disciplinary referrals from the target group dropped to 114, a 32 percent decrease. The writer feels that this goal was not reached because the measurement period for the decrease began simultaneously with the commencement of the training sessions. The full impact of the training sessions could not be felt until after their completion. The writer, however, feels that the 32 percent decrease is statistically significant and demonstrates the effectiveness of the training sessions.

In addition to the quantifiable results, there were several favorable intangible results observed by the writer. Team leaders for the target group asked the writer for additional material about team practices and procedures. Teams asked for help on dealing with cross-teamed students. The target teams requested budget money for student/team activities. The teams independently arranged regular meetings with grade level counselors to discuss teamed students.

The writer completed the Critical Thinking and Self-Reflection Checklist for the GEM Practicum Internship (Appendix I:61) with an average score of 4.5. The writer received 11 fives, 3 fours, 1 three, and 1

two. During the training the writer encouraged the target group teachers to use critical thinking skills in their classrooms.



## CHAPTER V

### Recommendations

The writer worked closely with the School principal in implementing the project. The principal and the writer envision sharing certain aspects of the project with the eighth grade teams as a staff development program. The writer will continue to act as a consultant to the seventh grade teachers as they expand their teaming practices. In addition, the school's administrators will read the proposal and final report to become aware of the effective teaming techniques that can be utilized schoolwide.

The county director of middle schools attended one training session and was favorably impressed with the effort to establish effective teaming practices in the school. The director stated that continuing effective teaming practices is a county goal. The writer and the principal will share the results of the project with other middle school principals in the county who have not been able to establish an effective teaming program in their schools.

The writer is available to act as a trainer through the county's Professional Talent Network. The writer will offer sessions through staff development to schools or groups of teachers desiring information on effective teaming practices. The writer will be available as a guest lecturer to college professors who are training students in middle school educational practices.

The writer plans to share the project dynamics nationally. The writer will apply to be a presenter at both the 1993 National Middle School Symposium and the 1993 National Middle School Convention. In addition to presenting the project nationally, the writer plans to submit an article to the Middle School Journal on how to get reluctant teachers to team at the middle school level.

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Appendices

Appendix A  
Common School Supply List

## MEADOWLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 7th Grade Supply List

These items should be purchased within 7 days from entry into school or by September 8th, 1992

1. Notebook paper (White only, wide rule, no spirals)
2. Pencils
3. Three (3) Ring Notebook (No trappers ).
4. Colored pencils
5. Black or Blue Ball point pins.
6. Zipper notebook case (to hold pencils, pens ect.).
7. Protractor
8. 6 inch ruler with cm.
9. Markers
10. Notebook paper reinforcers.

ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES MAY BE NEEDED FOR ELECTIVE CLASSES

Appendix B  
Discipline Plan



## 7th Grade Team Discipline Plan

While you are in class there are several important rules you need to follow. These basic rules, which are listed below, are based on common sense and common courtesy. Following these rules will help create a positive and productive learning situation for everyone involved.

Here are the rules.

1. Be on time to class every day. Be in your seat when the bell rings and ready to start class.
2. Bring books, paper, and pens or pencils to class every day.
3. Gum, candy, other types of food, and toys are not allowed in class.
4. Treat other students and their property the way you would want to be treated.
5. Follow all school wide rules, especially those rules dealing with fighting, use of profanity, and defiance/disrespect.
6. Follow all directions given by the teacher.

Here are the consequences for unacceptable behavior.

- 1st offense - verbal warning or discuss the problem with the student
- 2nd offense - 30 minute centralized detention and/or contact the parent
- 3rd offense - 60 minute centralized detention and/or referral to the guidance counselor
- 4th offense - referral to the assistant principal

Violations of the lockout tardy rule will be dealt with according to the school wide tardy plan. Major offenses such as defiance and disrespect by the student, use of profanity, and fighting will result in an automatic referral to the assistant principal.

Here are the consequences for exceptional behavior.

1. Recognition referral
2. Student's name read over the public address system
3. Family gram
4. Awards assembly
5. Certificates

I understand that following these rule will allow me to concentrate all of my efforts on doing the best job that I possibly can.

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C  
Parent Information Letter

*Meadowlawn Middle School*

5900 - 16TH STREET NORTH  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33703

46

August 1992

Dear Parents:

We are writing to welcome you and your child to the Seventh Grade family at Meadowlawn Middle School.

Your Seventh grader will be involved in two special programs at Meadowlawn. LancerLots and teaming. LancerLots is a twenty minute advisory period each morning, in which small groups of students discuss academic and social concerns with a faculty advisor, assigned to their group. Teaming allows all your child's academic teachers to work together. This will facilitate teachers discussing the needs of your child and making recommendations as to their academic and social growth.

There are two seventh grade teams. The Kent Team is available for conferences from 11:45 to 12:35 a.m., while the Windsor team is available from 1:15 to 2:05 p.m. Before and after school conferences can be arranged by simply calling the Seventh Grade Guidance Counselor.

Middle school years are times of change in a student's life. Students need a foundation of discipline, with clear and specific rules. We are attaching a copy of the Seventh Grade rules you to review with your child. Since positive reinforcement, as well as discipline is necessary, we have a program of rewards and honors.

Your child may buy several items through the school. For example, locks for lockers are available for \$2.50, and team T-shirts will be on sale soon.

We want Middle School to be a positive experience for you and your child. We pledge to work with you. Please feel free to call the Grade Level office at 527-7383, or visit with us.

Sincerely  
Your Seventh Grade Teachers

Appendix D  
Student of the Month Certificate

CERTIFICATE  
OF AWARD



\_\_\_\_\_

HAS BEEN SELECTED  
KENT TEAM STUDENT OF  
THE MONTH FOR \_\_\_\_\_ AT  
*MEADOWLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL*  
PRESENTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Appendix E  
Sensational Seven Award Certificate

**SENSATIONAL SEWENS  
AWARD  
KENT TEAM**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

\_\_\_\_\_ has been awarded this certificate  
at MEADOWLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL



this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_ 199\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher

Appendix F  
Seventh Grade Team Goals



**SEVENTH GRADE TEAM GOALS**

1. Conduct award assemblies following each marking period.
2. Conduct team/student and/or parent conferences.
3. Discuss students' cognitive and affective needs in team meetings.
4. Meet weekly in individual teams and provide minutes to seventh grade teachers and administration.
5. Improve communication with exceptional education teachers.
6. Select students of the month.
7. Have input into the master schedule.
8. Provide recognition for perfect attendance.
9. Itemize team budget needs consistent with team goals.
10. Organize team teacher socials.

Appendix G  
Pre-training Survey

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Team

	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
1. Does the team respond to the needs of students?			<del>    </del>	
2. Does the team enhance the self-concept of the students of the team?			<del>    </del>	
3. Do the members of the team discuss their commitment to the middle school concept?				
4. Do the members of the team explore their role and function as a team?			<del>    </del>	
5. Do members of the team make an effort to know each other?				
6. Do the members of the team discuss their expectations of each other?				
7. Does the team work effectively with resource personnel?			<del>    </del>	
8. Do the members of the team support the efforts of the team leader?				
9. Are leadership responsibilities shared?				
10. Does everyone participate equally in making team decisions?				
11. Are the guidelines for gaining consensus for decision-making followed?			<del>    </del>	
12. Have team decisions been implemented?				
13. Are records kept of team decisions?				
14. Does the team have specific goals and objectives for each school year?			<del>    </del>	
15. Does the team evaluate its goals and objectives periodically?			<del>    </del>	

SOURCE: The Team Process in the Middle School: A Handbook for Teachers by Elliot Merenbloom, NMSA, 1986

	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
16. Do team members correlate content between the subjects included on the team?				
17. Do team members correlate the teaching of skills?				
18. Are skills taught in context?				
19. Does the team provide a personal development or home base program for the students?			<del>    </del>	
20. Do team members recognize the relationship between the planning periods and the instructional program?				
21. Do team members use a variety of techniques in communicating with parents?				
22. Do team members utilize opportunities for modular/flexible scheduling?				<del>    </del>
23. Do team members develop and utilize rotating schedules?				<del>    </del>
24. Do team members identify local options available to the team?				<del>    </del>
25. Do team members develop plans to utilize local options available to the team?				<del>    </del>

	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
26. Do team members utilize opportunities to group and re-group pupils for various instructional purposes?				
27. Do the team members utilize available data about pupils in developing the overall instructional program?				
28. Are individual team members sensitive to group dynamics at the team meetings?				
29. Does the team have an agenda for all team meetings?				
30. Is the agenda followed?				
31. Is team planning time kept strictly for team business?				
32. Does the team utilize sub-groupings of the team at team meetings when appropriate?				
33. Do team members offer suggestions for the design of the master schedule?				
34. Do team members participate in staff development activities?				
35. Do students benefit from the team's efforts?				
36. Do team members discuss appropriate teaching strategies?				
37. Do team members assess team planning logs on a regular basis?				
38. Are opportunities for alternate day rotations utilized?				

32 63 124 83

Appendix H  
Post Training Survey

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Team

	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
1. Does the team respond to the needs of students?				
2. Does the team enhance the self-concept of the students of the team?				
3. Do the members of the team discuss their commitment to the middle school concept?				
4. Do the members of the team explore their role and function as a team?				
5. Do members of the team make an effort to know each other?				
6. Do the members of the team discuss their expectations of each other?				
7. Does the team work effectively with resource personnel?				
8. Do the members of the team support the efforts of the team leader?				
9. Are leadership responsibilities shared?				
10. Does everyone participate equally in making team decisions?				
11. Are the guidelines for gaining consensus for decision-making followed?				
12. Have team decisions been implemented?				
13. Are records kept of team decisions?				
14. Does the team have specific goals and objectives for each school year?				
15. Does the team evaluate its goals and objectives periodically?				

SOURCE: The Team Process in the Middle School: A Handbook for Teachers by Elliot Merenbloom, NMSA, 1986

	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
16. Do team members correlate content between the subjects included on the team?				
17. Do team members correlate the teaching of skills?			<del>    </del>	
18. Are skills taught in context?				
19. Does the team provide a personal development or home base program for the students?				
20. Do team members recognize the relationship between the planning periods and the instructional program?				
21. Do team members use a variety of techniques in communicating with parents?				
22. Do team members utilize opportunities for modular/flexible scheduling?				
23. Do team members develop and utilize rotating schedules?				
24. Do team members identify local options available to the team?				
25. Do team members develop plans to utilize local options available to the team?				



	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
26. Do team members utilize opportunities to group and re-group pupils for various instructional purposes?				
27. Do the team members utilize available data about pupils in developing the overall instructional program?				
28. Are individual team members sensitive to group dynamics at the team meetings?				
29. Does the team have an agenda for all team meetings?				
30. Is the agenda followed?				
31. Is team planning time kept strictly for team business?				
32. Does the team utilize sub-groupings of the team at team meetings when appropriate?				
33. Do team members offer suggestions for the design of the master schedule?				
34. Do team members participate in staff development activities?				
35. Do students benefit from the team's efforts?				
36. Do team members discuss appropriate teaching strategies?				
37. Do team members assess team planning logs on a regular basis?				
38. Are opportunities for alternate day rotations utilized?				

95 86 75 38

Appendix I  
Critical Thinking and Self-Reflection Checklist  
The GEM Practicum Internship

Critical Thinking and Self-Reflection Checklist

The GEM Practicum Internship

John Barell - (Adapted)

Using a scale of 1 to 5. rate your work setting according to the following items:

5=Very Often 4=Often 3=Sometimes 2=Seldom 1=Rarely

CLASSROOM

- |  |     |     |     |     |   |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| 1. When students pose unusual or divergent questions, I ask, "What made you think of that?"  | 5   | (4) | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 2. Information in the text is challenged.  | 5   | 4   | (3) | 2   | 1 |
| 3. When a decision has to be made between involving the class discussion of an intriguing student idea (topic related) or moving on to "cover" content, I choose the former. | 5   | (4) | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 4. I encourage participants to seek alternative answers.   | (5) | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 5. The target group receives positive reinforcement for initiating questions.  | (5) | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 6. Problems are used as a means for the target group to generate their own questions (or problems), which we then seriously consider.  | (5) | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 7. Teaching and learning occur without teacher talk.   | 5   | (4) | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 8. Most questions posed during class can be answered with short or one-word answers.   | 5   | 4   | 3   | (2) | 1 |
| 9. Students spontaneously engage in critiquing each other's thinking.  | (5) | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1 |
| 10. Students are encouraged to relate subject matter to experiences in other subjects or to their personal lives.  | (5) | 4   | 3   | 2   | 1 |

11. I stress how to think, not what to think. (5) 4 3 2 1
12. Students often set objectives for their own learning. (5) 4 3 2 1
13. Students spend time working collaboratively to solve subject matter questions. (5) 4 3 2 1
14. One focus in my implementation is trying to help others understand how and why people (mentioned in texts) created ideas, solutions, experiments, rules, principles, and so on. (5) 4 3 2 1
15. Students actively listen to each other. (5) 4 3 2 1
16. I facilitate collaborative instructional problem solving. (5) 4 3 2 1