DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 391 CG 024 881

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TITLE Program To Reduce Failure Rates of Ninth Grade Students.
PUB DATE Dec 92
NOTE 103p.; Major Applied Research Project, Ed.D., Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Academic Failure; Grade 8; *Grade 9; *High School Freshmen; High Schools; Junior High Schools; Junior High School Students; Middle Schools; *Prevention; *Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS Middle School Students

ABSTRACT

This report describes procedures to develop and implement a program to reduce ninth grade failure rates at a high school of 1,200 students in the center of a western city of 100,000. It is noted that grading data collected at the middle school and the high school levels have indicated that the number of failing grades increased substantially as students moved from eighth to ninth grade. The solution to the problem reported here involved a coordinated effort between middle and high school teachers to increase student academic success. The described program addressed problems associated with the middle school transition by having eighth grade students attend a shadow day and extracurricular fair to become familiar with the high school. Additional time was spent assisting eighth grade students in selection of classes for their ninth grade year and a peer leader program was implemented which provided academic and social support for incoming ninth grade students. Project results are presented which demonstrated that students involved in the majority of program interventions had a greater likelihood of succeeding in school and that ninth grade students who had had frequent peer visits had fewer failing grades. This report documents the problem background and context, describes the project implementation, presents an evaluation of results, and discusses decisions on the future of the intervention. Appendices include survey instruments, teacher and peer leader comments, and a peer/mentor/leader program proposal. Contains 42 references. (NB)

Program to Reduce Failure Rates of Ninth Grade Students

by

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A Major Applied Research Project Report
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

National Ed.D. Program for Educational Leaders
Nova University

December 1992

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Abstract

Program to Reduce Failure Rates of Ninth Grade Students

This report describes procedures to develop and implement a program to reduce ninth grade failure rates. Grading data collected at the middle and high school indicate that the number of failing grades increased substantially as students move from eighth to ninth grade.

The solution to the problem involved a coordinated effort between middle and high school teachers to increase student academic success. The project addressed problems associated with middle school transition. Middle and high school teachers developed a study skills program. Eighth grade students attended a shadow day and extracurricular fair to become familiar with the high school. Additional time was spent scheduling eighth grade students to assist them in selection of classes for their ninth grade year. A peer leader program provided academic and social support for incoming ninth grade students.

The project results demonstrated that students involved in the majority of program interventions have more likelihood of succeeding in school. Ninth grade students with frequent peer visits had fewer failing grades.

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Chapter 1

Problem Statement and Community Background

General Statement of Problem

Before the implementation of this project, 48% of 400 ninth-grade students at Central High School failed one or more classes as evidenced by a review of semester grade reports for 1989-1990.

Description of Immediate Problem Context

School District 60's school system serves 18,201 students within the city of Pueblo, Colorado. Pueblo is located approximately 100 miles south of Denver and about 20 miles east of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. It has a population of almost 100,000. Pueblo's schools contain a diverse population. About 49% of the school population are Hispanic; 3%, Black; .5%, Asian; and 48%, White.

Central High School is in the center of Pueblo and serves neighborhoods ranging from affluent to middle class to public housing. The school has an enrollment of 1200 students in grades nine through twelve. The staff includes 5 administrators, 63 full-time teachers, 4 counselors, one media specialist, and 59 classified

personnel.

Central High School is one of four high schools in School District 60 with two feeder middle schools. One of the middle schools is in a middle class neighborhood. The other middle school is in a low income neighborhood. There are eight elementary schools located in the Central Quadrant. Six of the elementary schools are Chapter I schools.

Fifty-two percent of the students enrolled at Central High School for the school year 1990-1991 were recipients of the U.S. Government's subsidized free and reduced priced lunch program. Central's ethnic/racial distribution in school year 1989-1990 was 54% Hispanic, 4% Black, .07% Asian, .44% Native American, 41% White American. Central's composite score for grades nine through twelve on the 1989-1990 Science Research Associates (SRA) achievement test was at the 46.8 Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE). Annually, about 30% of Central's graduates attend college. Students who enroll in Central's college preparation courses score competitively, statewide and nationally, on the American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). An additional 10% of

Central's graduates continue post-secondary schooling or training. Central's graduation rate over the 1987-90 period was 71.3%; the dropout rate in 1989-1990 was 5.4%; and the daily attendance rate for 1989-1990 averaged 87.8%

The Major Applied Research Project (MARP) manager is Principal of Central High School. The job responsibilities of the principal are as follows: supervision and allocation of staff; coordinator of all academic programs; budget development and allocation of monies for staff, instructional supplies and equipment; school improvement and program articulation with schools in the Central Quadrant; staff development; and program evaluation.

Description of Surrounding Community

School District 60 is divided into quadrants. Central High School is in the Central Quadrant. In 1990, the district initiated a plan to restructure administration. The Superintendent (Vallejo, 1990) outlined a plan to accelerate the process of moving toward more school level autonomy and began decentralizing administrative support services. Vallejo's goal was to design a management structure that would effectively support the classroom teacher. He

hoped to provide building administrators with the autonomy to select staff, develop budgets, decide curriculum and participate in shared decision making.

Beginning in the 1990-1991 fall term, each quadrant was assigned a Curriculum Coordinator. The Curriculum Coordinator is responsible to the Director of Curriculum. The high school principals are directly responsible to the Executive Director of Secondary Education, although this position will be abolished in the Fall of 1994. After the Fall of 1994, each principal will be responsible to a deputy superintendent.

The Central High service area includes 11,278 families. There are 906 single parent families with children under the age of 18. The median family income is $21,453.00. Approximately 13.5% of all households in the Central community receive public assistance.

In the 1980's, the community of Pueblo lost thousands of jobs at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation. A coalition of business and community leaders established the Pueblo Economic Development Corporation in an attempt to attract new industry to Pueblo. This corporation constructed a competitive package of

incentives and marketed the community's advantages. Since 1985, Unisys, Target Warehouse and Distribution Center, McDonnell-Douglas, Trane, B.F. Goodrich, WATS, (a division of American Express Communications), Kurt Manufacturing, Kaiser Aerospace, and Atlas-Pacific established operations in Pueblo. The Pueblo Community College developed cooperative training and support for the employees of Pueblo's new businesses.

Pueblo's community leaders continually work to improve education. Community-wide attention was focused on education in March 1989, when Jamie Escalante spoke at the annual dinner of Pueblo Latino Chamber of Commerce. Educational needs gained further attention when Albert Shanker addressed the January 1990 Annual Pueblo Chamber of Commerce dinner.

The Pueblo business community has initiated partnerships with several schools in the district. Business leaders recognize that the future work force comes from the schools, and a productive work force requires talented and educated employees. Business leaders participated in the district's strategic planning process. The Communicator (1990) discussed the important role of the

business community in developing a District 60 mission statement for the 1990s.

Chapter 2

Problem Definition and Evidence

Problem Background

In an attempt to develop staff awareness of the seriousness of the failure rate problem, each staff member received grading data that summarized grade distributions by teacher and courses in each subject area during the 1989-1990 school year. For the first time, school-wide grading data that reflected the number of failing grades earned by students in grades nine through twelve were also distributed to teachers.

Reducing the failure rates of all students in grades nine through twelve was adopted as a school-wide goal for the 1989-1990 academic year and established as a priority by the Building Advisory Committee. Failure rates in grades nine through twelve were also identified as a weakness of Central High when staff prepared for a North Central school improvement process evaluation (1989 North Central Report).

As part of the 1989-1990 North Central School improvement follow-up phase, recommendations were implemented to reduce

failure rates of students in grades nine through twelve. Student progress reports were developed and sent to parents during the fifth week of each grade quarter. A study skills program was implemented and taught by a majority of the teaching staff. A school-wide incentive, recognition, and reward program to reduce student failure and increase success rates was instituted.

These interventions did not adequately reduce the failure rate for ninth-grade students. Table 1 shows a comparison of the 1989 and 1990 academic year class failures in grades nine through twelve.

Table 1

Percent of Students in Grades 9-12 with One or More Failing Grades

Year	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
1989	51%	52%	41%	24%
1990	48%	39%	40%	24%

The numbers contained in the table do not illustrate a real change during the 1989-1990 academic year in the number of ninth-grade failures after the interventions were implemented. The

interventions were designed to reduce failures of all students and did not target ninth-grade students specifically.

The MARP proposal and the identified problem focused on reducing ninth-grade failures. Prior interventions were implemented and acted upon because of the North Central Evaluation (NCA) recommendations. The NCA solutions were not totally developed by the staff nor supported in literature sources as viable methods to reduce failure. Educational change efforts discussed by Sizer (1989) suggested that change processes must start at the classroom level to produce successful results.

The problem solving process assisted the writer to generate solutions based on staff and student surveys supported by literature and experts in the field of education. The ninth grade contained approximately 400 students with 20 teachers. Establishing the ninth grade as the target group provided the opportunity to set up manageable solutions.

Evidence of Problem Discrepancy

Central High School established a school improvement process at the start of the 1987-1988 school year to meet requirements for

North Central Accreditation. The staff used an alternative format of their design and examined three areas: classroom management; affective climate; and instructional delivery. The North Central on-site visiting team identified several areas in need of improvement. One major area identified was the high number of failing grades earned by students. The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Report of Visiting Resource Team, 1989 stated, "Statistical data showed that more than 1/5 of the students in grades nine and ten fail many academic core classes" (Doggett, 1989, p. 40). Table 2 summarizes the percentage of failures in grades nine through twelve.

Table 2

Percentage of Students with One or More Failing Grades by Semester 1989-1990

Grade	1st Semester	2nd Semester	Entire Year
9	51%	46%	48.0%
10	37%	40%	38.0%
11	38%	42%	40.0%
12	19%	28%	23.5%

The numbers illustrate a higher failure rate in grade nine than in grades ten through twelve. The statistical data collected is a

reflection of failing grades earned in elective and required courses.

Fenwick (1992) stated that students with high socioeconomic backgrounds achieve more than students with low socioeconomic backgrounds. Central High School has two feeder middle schools. One does better academically, presumably due to the socioeconomic level of the school. The other middle school is a Chapter I school with lower achievement levels. Table 3 summarizes the number of failures earned by eighth grade students during the 1989-1990 school year.

Table 3

Failures Earned by 8th Grade Students (N=224) 1989-1990

Middle School Attended	% Students with More than One Failure	Total Students with More than One Failure
Chapter I Site	58.4	131
Non-Chapter I Site	18.4	41
Other Schools	23.2	52

The data in Table 3 show that students in the Chapter I school have a higher failure rate. Based on the number of failures, the need to focus on transition to high school was more evident at the

Chapter I school.

When achievement data of all students in the eighth grade (1989-1990) were compared to failing grades, a negative relationship was found between mathematics achievement and the number of failing grades. In reading and language achievement, there was a modest negative correlation. Clearly, students with higher achievement scores earned fewer failures.

The records of 235 eighth grade students who earned failing grades during the 1989-1990 school year were examined. Table 4 compares the number of failures earned, relative to the ethnic population of each school listed.

Table 4

Percentage of Failures Earned by Hispanic and Anglo Students

Site	%Hispanic	%failures	%Anglo	%failures
Chapter I school	74.8	84.0	25.0	9.7
Non Chapter I school	36.8	51.2	47.0	43.9

There was an inordinate number of Hispanic students who earned failing grades. This finding was consistent with School

District No. 60 Student Achievement Test Results Report, Spring 1990, which stated:

> There is a consistent seven to ten NCE point difference favoring Anglos across the grade levels. This difference goes as high as 13 points, especially in the area of high school reading scores. Thirteen points is nearly two-thirds of standard deviation and should be considered quite significant. (Veitch, p. 6)

The discrepancy in achievement levels between Hispanic and Anglos correlates with the disproportionate number of Hispanic students who received failing grades at the middle and high school. Veitch (1990) suggested that the discrepancy in achievement levels can be attributed to differences in socioeconomic status.

School District 60's annual test results (Veitch, 1990) showed that there was very little difference in the achievement levels of males and females. Females out-scored males by a few points. The greater differences in test scores were between Anglos and Hispanic.

Possible Causes of Problem

Teacher interviews (see Appendix A) were conducted at the middle and high school for determining causes of student failures.

The teachers interviewed were from the core areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and English. Seven out of eight teachers interviewed attributed the high ninth-grade failure rates to problems of transition from middle school to high school. Four of the high school teachers interviewed attributed failure in ninth-grade students to differing academic expectations between middle and high school teachers. The literature supported the findings from the teacher interviews. MacIver (1990) discussed social and biological changes of adolescence and the negative impact that these changes can have on the motivation to learn while students are in transition from middle to high school. Christner (1987) reported that in grades nine through twelve, ninth graders have the highest number of failures. He attributed this to high school courses having higher academic expectation than middle school classes.

Instructional techniques used also could be a cause of high failure rates. Classroom observations conducted in 1989 (using the District 60 Teacher Appraisal Form), indicated that teachers at Central High did not incorporate a variety of instructional

techniques into instruction. These findings were further validated in the North Central Visiting Team Report (1989). It stated that, "Large group, direct instruction was the most commonly observed instructional method used by the staff" (Doggett, 1989, p. 24).

Goodlad (1984) suggested that teachers who provide a variety of classroom approaches can make a significant difference in student learning. Sizer (1985) believed that the student should be the "worker" and the teacher should serve as a "coach", rather than a deliverer of instruction through a lecture format.

Chapter 3

Problem Situation and Context

Influences in the Immediate Problem Setting

Central High's staff has participated in the school improvement process during the last four years. They devised an alternative format for the North Central Association self-study/evaluation visitation in March 1989. They generated many goals, strategies, and time lines to improve instructional delivery, classroom management, and the affective climate of the school. Every year, goals are mandated by the Colorado Legislature and the District 60 Board of Education. The Central staff has attempted to tie these related goals together to identify clearly areas of improvement on which to focus within a given year. The staff's willingness to devise a school improvement process based on identified student needs was a facilitating influence.

The 1989 North Central School Improvement Evaluation identified student failure as a major area in need of improvement. The staff was aware that many students failed core classes. Core area departments devised plans to reward and recognize student

achievement on a school-wide basis. The staff's participation in the reward and incentive program was a facilitating factor for identifying solutions to the ninth-grade failure problem.

The North Central Visiting Team recommended a restructure of the ninth-grade English curriculum as a strategy to reduce failure (32% of ninth-grade students failed English in 1989-1990). The recommendation and the staggering statistic served as a catalyst to develop and implement solutions.

At the start of the 1990-1991 academic year, a core group of middle and high school teachers volunteered to research and restructure the instructional delivery program for ninth-grade students. The core group developed a vision statement to guide efforts for reducing failure rates of ninth-grade students. Task forces were developed in the following areas: middle school transition; instructional delivery; student scheduling; community relations; staff development; and evaluation. The formation of the core group of teachers and their commitment to reduce ninth grade failures was a facilitating influence.

The school district's Executive Director of Secondary

Education provided funds for inservice programs, travel, and release time for the core group to research and develop solutions. The group visited other high schools involved in restructuring activities. The funds provided to begin the preliminary activities helped develop staff awareness and willingness to carry out the solutions generated by the core group of teachers.

Central High School was described as a school in transition in an article that appeared in The Chieftain (1990). The article stated that, "Central High School is a school in transition and involved in a movement that has change and optimism in the air" (Espinoza, 1990, p. 1B). The tone of the article influenced the development of positive attitudes among staff and community members toward the change efforts.

School District No. 60 Board of Education Goals (1990-1991) included a process to initiate and complete a strategic planning process. The plan would guide the district into the decade of the 1990s. The School District No. 60 Communicator (1990) described the strategic planning process as one that would provide a decentralized, school-based management model. The responsibility

for programs and curriculum decisions increased at the building level. The strategic planning at the district level and the autonomy each building principal had were facilitating influences for the project.

There were several constraining factors that needed to be dealt with to implement solutions. Planned solutions required more time, money, and people. At times, the union contract with teachers was a barrier to implementation of the new programs.

A potential temporary constraint was the Agreement (1991) between Pueblo School District No. 60 and Pueblo Education Association and the guidelines regulating teacher preparation time. There are provisions in the contract that present obstacles to the development of an advisor/advisee program. For example, the contract states that, "During the preparation time teachers shall not be assigned to other duties except for emergencies or conferences" (p. 26). The union contract could be circumvented through a "memorandum of understanding", if the solution was determined to be appropriate.

Central High School has a core group of staff members who

resist change. A group of counselors filed a grievance with the union to block the reorganization of the administrative team during the 1989-1990 school year and the establishment of a head counselor position. The grievance was resolved through a "memorandum of understanding." The Memorandum (1989) established the administrative reorganization as a pilot project to be evaluated at the end of two years. The staff resistance to changes in teacher job functions and the union contract were constraints.

Solutions to the problem of high failure rates required additional resources for staff training. Staff inservice programs would be conducted outside the school day, and teachers would need to be compensated for the time required to attend inservice training. The costs of the inservice training were a constraint. Federal grants were obtained to cover the costs of inservice programs.

High school and middle school teacher interviews indicated that teachers needed more time to participate in staff inservice training and collaborate with each other (see Appendix A). Time for staff to plan and collaborate is difficult to schedule during teacher

work hours. Release time was provided for staff to develop solutions and programs, but budgetary limitations continued to be problematic.

The school district's centralized budgeting process was a constraint. Building principals do not have the autonomy to develop programs and decide expenditures based on projected needs. The new programs required additional monies to provide for staff training and other resources. These budget concerns were eased to some degree by obtaining grant monies.

Influences in the Broader Community External to the Problem Setting

Several influences in the community facilitated the achievement of the MARP outcomes. Community leaders established a climate for educational change. Community-wide attention was focused on education. The Pueblo Chamber of Commerce Education Task Force established open discussion with educators in School District 60. Gersik (1990), who was President of the Chamber of Commerce, believed that the purpose of the education task force was to develop Chamber goals in kindergarten through twelfth grade. These efforts to improve education through a community

business/education partnership facilitated the achievement of the project's goals and objectives.

An educational alliance between the University of Southern Colorado and School District 60 was announced on October 12, 1990. The alliance was a strong indicator that Pueblo was preparing to confront its own educational needs. The alliance committed the resources of both entities to education needs from pre-school to the baccalaureate degree. Vallejo (1990) believed that the alliance between District 60 and the University would bring about fundamental changes necessary to begin solving educational problems. The alliance served as a positive force for developing solutions to reduce ninth grade failure rates at Central.

The Pueblo Rotary International entered into a partnership with Central High School to provide assistance to teachers who wanted to work with the business community to improve classroom instruction. At a faculty meeting on November 14, 1990, the staff and Rotary members discussed the "worst fears" and "best possible outcomes" of the partnership. The Central Times school newspaper featured an article written by a student (Williams, 1990) that

outlined the objectives of the business partnership. The teachers and business representatives agreed to explore methods to incorporate business resources into the classroom. The partnership facilitated community support.

The Pueblo Education Association formed a partnership with Central High staff to develop a shared decision making model. In a survey of staff members (conducted by building faculty representatives in 1991), 50% of the staff supported the development of a shared decision making model (see Appendix B). Staff involvement in decision making facilitated the problem solving process and increased teacher accountability.

Pupil personnel reports (1990) indicated a 43% ninth-grade student mobility rate. The high transiency among ninth-grade students was a partial explanation for low student achievement. Some staff members were aware of the negative impact that high turnover of students can have on achievement and viewed the effects as "givens" that could not be changed. This somewhat apathetic attitude continued to be a negative influence for developing solutions to improve ninth-grade student achievement.

Student achievement scores indicated that minority students score 10 to 13 Normal Curve Equivalency (NCE) points below Anglo students. This discrepancy between Anglo and Hispanic achievement was discussed earlier in Chapter 2. The findings are not new, but have not been systematically examined in the past. The achievement test data illustrate the need to identify methods that will increase academic achievement of minorities. Central High has a large minority population. The staff and community are aware of the discrepancy in achievement for minorities and Anglo students. The awareness of the staff and community in the disparity of achievement levels between Hispanic and Anglo students was a catalyst for developing solutions to reduce failure in ninth-grade students.

Chapter 4

Problem Conceptualization and Solution Strategies

Review of Literature and Consultation with Others

The literature review focuses on research that attributes ninth-grade failure to problems encountered during middle school transition, followed by research that connects ninth-grade failure to the teaching process. Research that describes solution strategies that will ease middle school transition and effective teaching methodologies that could be employed to reduce ninth-grade student failure are also examined.

The high failure rate of ninth-grade students at Central indicated that the first year of high school is a critical point for students who are entering from the middle school. Glasser (1988) reported that, in the Sarasota high schools, 25% of the freshman students received three F's, and 54% received at least one F. Glasser believed that eighth-grade students are accustomed to a supportive environment in the middle school. He attributed increased ninth-grade failure to higher expectations and course requirements than existed in middle school.

Pinsker et al. (1985) stated that, for the first time, credits "count" for a student entering high school, and the earning of credits was a factor that compounded transition problems. This finding by Pinsker et al. was validated by ninth-grade teacher interviews (see Appendix A). Teachers at Central felt that ninth-grade students do not realize the importance of class work and earning of "credits" for graduation.

While transition to the high school has long been a concern, moving from one level to another is always a challenge. Laderriere (1984) discussed school failure in the large context of school transition from one level to another in kindergarten through twelfth grade. He attributed school failure to "breaks" in the teaching style when students changed levels. Laderriere said that failure also can be attributed to teaching practices, and that educators must be held accountable for student failure. To provide a continuum of instruction from one level to another, teachers must communicate and articulate their teaching methods with each other.

Teaching methods must be examined to find out their effect on student achievement. Bruce et al. (1987) suggested incorporating a

variety of teaching methods into classroom instruction to enhance student achievement and success levels. Bruce et al. stated that: "Currently most teachers use a very narrow range of practices" (Bruce et al., 1987, p. 22). She points out that few teachers expand their teaching methods unless they are provided with specifically designed training.

A Report of the Select Seminar on Excellence in Education by Capital Area School Development Association (1989) related student success to the teaching process. The report gets to the core of the matter and supports active learning versus passive learning:

> If American students are to be leaders of a positive future, they must participate actively in the present. They cannot sit passively putting in time while the teacher (covers content.) They must select facts and concepts from the mass of information available and synthesize them into patterns meaningful to their lives. We cannot and should not be doing this process for them. (p. 34)

Teacher interviews showed a willingness to incorporate a variety of instructional techniques to improve student achievement and reduce failure rates in the ninth grade.

One important aspect described in the literature influencing student failure is teacher attitudes toward student failure.

Stabile (1989) stated that there are some teachers who fail 50% of their students. Stabile believed that, to reduce failure, it must be viewed as unacceptable by administrators, teachers, and parents. Teachers at Central identified (1989 North Central Report) high ninth-grade failure rates as undesirable and an area in need of improvement.

Rogers (1989) discussed failure and the effects that failing grades have on student achievement. He believed that failing grades place a negative label on students and do not serve to increase the student's positive self image. Rogers stated that failing grades "attack" the person, and that the educational system should be concerned with mastery of skills and knowledge rather than assigning failing grades to students. Goodlad (1984) questioned the usefulness of failing grades and asserted that schools should concentrate on assuring that students meet established performance standards.

Shepard and Smith (1990) estimated that, by ninth grade, approximately 50% of the students have failed one grade, and that grade retention practices contribute to failure. Shepard and Smith

emphasize that retention does not work because the student usually remains with the same teacher who uses unchanged teaching methods. Repeating a grade with the same teacher using the same teaching methods does not increase student performance or reduce student failure.

During the 1989-1990 school year, 25% of the ninth-grade students at Central High were retained (School District No. 60, Student Report 1990). School district policy requires that a ninth-grade student must have a total of four credits to be classified as a tenth grader. Christner (1987), in a study of the Austin Independent School District, found that ninth grade contained more students who had been retained than non-retained.

Proposal Solutions Components

Ninth-grade teacher interviews indicated that eighth-grade students have difficulty adjusting to the ninth grade. This is evident by the increase in the number of students failing from eighth to ninth grade. The records of 161 students who had one or more failures in ninth grade during 1989-1990 were examined. A data matrix was developed to examine the increase of failures from

eighth to ninth grade (see Appendix C). The number of students with one or more failures increased 127% from the eighth to the ninth grade. The enormous increase in the number of students who fail in ninth grade compared to eighth grade strongly suggests that students have problems making the transition into high school.

Sansone and Baker (1990), in their study of ninth-grade students with failing grades, discovered problems relating to eighth-grade transition. Ninth-grade students indicated that the high school environment was impersonal. The students had little knowledge of how high school differed from middle school. Students also identified problems with their academic schedule. Student schedules planned during their eighth grade did not meet the students' academic needs after beginning the ninth grade. Sansone and Baker recommended that transition activities be developed to integrate incoming eighth-grade students into the high school before the ninth grade and that activities be carried on throughout the year. Sabatini (1989) believed that the beginning of the freshman year is not a good time to begin activities to orient students to the high school.

Two hundred and twenty ninth-grade Central students in the class of 1990 were surveyed to determine what they would need to be more successful in school (Appendix D).

Table 5

Students' Responses to Reasons for 9th Grade Success Questionnaire

Contributors to Success	Percent of Responses
More visits to the high school.	65.0
More information about extracurricular activities.	68.0
More career information.	61.0
More information on how to improve study skills.	51.0
More help to develop class schedule.	47.0
More time with teacher.	41.0

Table 5 presents the responses most often identified by students as efforts that would keep them in high school. Students were asked to circle the activities they believed would increase their success in ninth grade. The students were surveyed at the end of the first nine-week grade period of their freshman year. The student responses were used to formulate solution strategies for easing transition from eighth to ninth grade.

Three out of four high school teachers interviewed (1990)

indicated that ninth-grade students fail because of poor study skills. This perspective was supported in an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Report (1990) indicating the following:

> Unless students develop study skills, they will be unable to respond to expectations at each grade level for greater self-motivation, self-structuring, and self-monitoring of the learning process. Study skills will teach students how to manage information and become better life long learners. (p. 3)

In an interview with the district's Curriculum Specialist (S. Datz, personal communication, September 23, 1990), she suggested implementation of a study skills program at the middle school for all eighth-grade students. A study skills program would provide students with the opportunity for direct application of study skills in their daily class work and assignments.

Findings in Table 5 indicated that 41% of the ninth-grade students' surveyed desired more time with their teachers to feel comfortable at Central. This finding illustrated the need to "connect" and integrate the ninth-grade student into the high school environment. MacIver (1990) believed that young adolescents need caring adult supervision to learn how to regulate their behavior and

make responsible choices. He believed the typical school day and the periodic changing of classes do not allow students to establish close relationships with adults who could provide the needed guidance. Gill and Read (1990) advocated that every young adolescent should have an adult in school who can supervise the total development of the student. Gill and Read proposed that every school should incorporate an advisor/advisee program to allow each student to get to know one caring adult.

Although adult advisor/advisee programs have proven to be effective, peer leader programs can supplement the school's adult counseling and support systems. The Atlanta Peer Group Connection Project (1990) reported that peer mentoring programs improved freshman attendance and study skills. The program has given freshman students the opportunity to get to know a cross-section of senior peer leaders and connects them to a group with which they can identify.

To improve transition, seven out of eight middle and high school teacher interviews (1990) suggested articulation activities to communicate expectation levels, curriculum differences, and

teaching techniques. Rosa and Vowels (1988) recommended opening the lines of communication through inservice program sessions where eighth- and ninth-grade teachers share ideas regularly. The sharing sessions could provide middle school teachers with feedback on the performance of their students, and high school teachers could avoid duplication of concepts already taught in middle school.

Teacher interviews and group meetings (1990) indicated that ninth-grade teachers wanted to develop a variety of teaching techniques to deliver instruction to reduce ninth-grade failure rates. Ross (1989) related that students with an aptitude to learn from conventional teaching methods will succeed. However, because of the wide range of student abilities and diversity, only a few students benefit from traditional teaching methods such as lecture and seatwork.

Carrol (1990) proposed a total restructure of the high school and the delivery of instruction through use of alternative scheduling. Carrol advocated block scheduling with a departure from the traditional 50 minute class period at the high school.

In an interview with a former eighth-grade teacher, (B.

Guerrero, personal communication, September 18, 1990), who now teaches at the high school, Guerrero proposed a change in the length of class periods at the high school. She suggested that high school instructors needed to incorporate different teaching strategies, other than lecture, to meet the academic and personal needs of ninth-grade students. Guerrero believed that a block schedule would facilitate the teacher's ability to incorporate varying teaching methods into classroom instruction. For example, she felt that block scheduling would provide more time for teachers to develop instructional techniques to accommodate student learning styles. Her recommendations were based on classroom observations.

Carrol (1990) believed extended periods of classroom instruction establish conditions that encourage the use of nontraditional teaching methods that are more personalized to meet the academic and personal needs of the students. Blocking gives teachers an opportunity to know their students and deal with them on a more personal basis (S. Smith, personal communication, August 13, 1990).

Carrol (1990) incorporated mastery learning into the block

schedule plan, which allows teachers to assess student progress based on the mastery of course objectives. Mastery learning is an effective teaching method to improve the educational performance of most students (Bloom, 1987).

Ross (1989) noted that cooperative learning techniques and mastery learning are effective teaching strategies, while individualized instruction and ability grouping are the least effective at the secondary level. Ross' findings apply to the general school population. Carrol (1987) stated that "cooperative learning" is an effective teaching practice; it deemphasizes grades and ability grouping.

MARP Outcomes

The single terminal objective of the MARP is stated as follows: The number of ninth-grade students who earn one or more failing grades will decrease from 48% to 15% by June 1992, as indicated by school progress and grade reports.

The solutions implemented were based on staff interviews (see Appendix A), ninth-grade student surveys (see Appendix D), the literature, and consultation with experts in the field. The major

solution components and interventions are expressed here.

1. Initiate articulation activities between middle and high school staff members to align teacher expectations and curriculum.

2. Develop study skill inservice program for middle and high school core area teachers.

3. Incorporate study skill techniques into classroom instruction in grades eight and nine.

4. Develop an extracurricular fair for eighth-grade students.

5. Conduct a "shadow week" for eighth-grade students.

6. Design and implement, with assistance from high school counselors, scheduling procedures for eighth-grade students.

7. Develop a peer leader program to provide ninth-grade students with a support system in personal, social, and academic areas.

Relationship to Organizational Goals

This project fits in with the district's Strategic Plan (Pueblo School District No. 60, 1991). Individual schools are expected to develop activities and strategies to improve student achievement, graduation, and attendance rates. The MARP developed a program to

reduce failure rates among ninth-grade students. The reduction of failure in ninth-grade students will ultimately result in higher levels of student achievement, improved student attendance, and an increase in the number of students who complete high school.

The Strategic Plan (Pueblo School District No. 60, 1991) stated that: "Schools are expected, through a collaborative effort which utilizes site based shared decision making, to develop activities and strategies for the objectives" (p. 16). The middle school transition program required a high level of coordination between both levels. Middle and high school teachers developed activities to reduce the problems associated with middle school transition.

Chapter 5

Implementation History

Original Action Plan

The major strategies included interventions to "ease" the transition of middle school students into the ninth grade. Components of the program were as follows: (a), one inservice program with eighth- and ninth-grade teachers to improve curriculum articulation; (b), two study skill inservice programs with eighth- and ninth-grade core area teachers to develop a study skill program; (c), an extracurricular fair for eighth-grade students to introduce them to activities available in high school; (d), a "shadow" experience for eighth-grade students; (e), small group scheduling procedures for eighth-grade students with the assistance of high school counselors; (f), a peer leader mentor program to provide a support system for entering ninth-grade students.

The MARP manager originally proposed block scheduling as a major intervention of the project. The school's restructuring committee researched and discussed block scheduling. The committee and the MARP manager concluded that it was impossible

to implement during the MARP intervention period. The restructuring committee proposed that block scheduling should be implemented on a small scale with volunteer teachers to determine advantages and disadvantages. Teachers were asked to volunteer and develop an experimental interdisciplinary block program. One language arts and one science teacher volunteered to develop a modified block. The block included a ninth-grade physical science class and a ninth-grade English class. Fifty students were enrolled in the program with parent permission. Instructional techniques included individualized and cooperative learning. A computer science lab was integrated into the program.

The pilot block program is in its second year. The MARP manager is currently evaluating the program and preparing to present the program results to the restructuring committee. The two teachers indicate that the interdisciplinary experience has been rewarding for them. Both agree that they have learned from each other. The teachers also feel that students are motivated because they are responsible for their learning.

Chronology of Events

The MARP manager began the project on January 18, 1991. Data were collected from grade reports to examine the high failure rates among ninth-grade students. The data indicated that 48% of ninth-grade students earned at least one failing grade. A task force of eighth- and ninth-grade teachers was assembled to study the problem of ninth grade failures. Five separate task forces were established to conduct research, identify solutions, and evaluate objectives. The task forces were as follows: middle school transition; instructional delivery; scheduling; staff development; and parent/community relations.

On January 24, 1991, a joint study skills inservice was conducted for staff at Corwin Middle and Central High School. Eighty teachers attended the inservice program that was held at Central. The inservice program was conducted by Ms. Caroline Wilkinson, Consulting Services. Ms. Wilkinson presented the hm Study Skills Program, developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The program included: (a), a definition of study skills and learning processes; (b), components of a comprehensive program;

(c), effective strategies for teaching study skills; and (d), techniques for integrating skills into existing curriculum. The inservice training raised awareness levels of staff members. The study skills inservice established a direction for future inservice programs conducted on May 1, 1991, and October 30, 1991.

Future study skills inservice programs were planned by core area eighth- and ninth-grade teachers. Meetings were held with a committee of middle and high school teachers on February 21, March 13, and April 15, 1991, to decide the purpose for future inservice training. The committee designed a one-half day inservice training session that was held on May 1, 1991. The purposes of the workshop were to decide how study skills would be taught, what study skills would be taught, and the scope/sequence of study skills taught. Sample study skill materials were available for teachers to examine during the workshop. Teachers set priorities and ordered materials to teach study skills; whereupon, they defined which skills would be taught in the Fall of 1991. The core area departments divided the skills as follows: (a), the language arts and mathematics departments selected listening skills; (b), social studies developed

promptness, attentiveness and social skills; and (c), science developed organizational and motivational skills. Each teacher received an Ideas for Teaching Study Skills Packet on May 28, 1991, that summarized the inservice training. The teachers agreed to teach the study skills that were assigned beginning in the Fall of 1991. They also planned to participate in a follow-up inservice program to share war stories, successes, and glitches after they had the opportunity to teach the study skills in their classes.

On October 18, 1991, the MARP manager met with the teachers to plan the follow-up inservice training. The inservice training was held on October 30, 1991. Teachers shared their experiences and discussed their challenges. The English teachers discussed their experiences related to teaching students how to follow directions. There was general agreement the problem was with transfer. The teachers felt that study skills taught in the core areas did not always generalize to other subjects. Mathematics teachers felt ninth-grade students lacked confidence and would often not attempt difficult problems. Social studies teachers stated it was difficult to incorporate study skill instruction into the curriculum because of

time constraints. They felt compelled to cover the curriculum. Science teachers also felt they did not have enough time to cover study skills and lab instruction because ninth-grade students were immature and did not manage class time efficiently.

During the second half of the inservice program the teachers participated in goal setting, outcome development activities, and ideas for evaluating the outcomes. The next steps were defined and written. For example, all teachers agreed to return to their classes and reinforce the expectations of study skill instruction to students. In addition, teachers stated they would attempt to bring disinterested staff into the process. All the teachers agreed to continue to teach test-taking and note-taking skills. After the inservice training every teacher received a Study Skills Inservice Summary Packet containing student outcomes and evaluation procedures. The packet also contained a summary of the inservice training.

A slow learner mini-grant funded the three inservice programs. The writer and the principal of Corwin Middle School submitted the grant to the office of Special Education. The grant

paid for substitutes ($1,650.00) and materials/supplies ($1,235.00) for a total of $2,885.00.

The MARP manager surveyed (see Appendix E) 20 teachers who participated in the three inservice programs and asked them to indicate the value of the study skill training. Ten of the 20 teachers responded to the survey. Nine of the teachers indicated that communication improved between eighth- and ninth-grade teachers. One teacher stated the inservice training lacked value. Others placed a high value on the practical study skill materials. One eighth-grade teacher stated, "I saw high school teachers as people, not just teachers blaming the middle school for problems." (For a complete listing of teacher comments see Appendix F).

In the survey, the teachers were asked how often they applied study skill instruction in their classes. Seven of the teachers indicated they applied study skills frequently, two said they applied them daily, and one responded infrequently. When asked, six stated student performance increased, and four said performance remained the same. Six of the teachers stated classroom climate was more positive, and four indicated classroom climate remained the same

because of study skill instruction. It appears, in general, the teachers who responded felt the study skill component was a worthwhile activity. Extra efforts to obtain more surveys did not yield results.

The MARP manager met with middle school and high school teachers on January 30, 1991, to discuss alternatives for ninth-grade orientation. Ninth-grade student survey results were reviewed (see Table 5). Sixty-five percent of the students surveyed preferred more visits to the high school during their eighth grade. The teachers agreed this activity could and should be increased. The high school assistant principal suggested a "shadow" experience for the students. The principal and counselors of the middle school agreed to help develop and coordinate shadow day. The writer met with the assistant principal on January 31, 1991, to plan and organize shadow day.

Shadow day was held during the week of April 22-25, 1991. Corwin Middle School students were bussed to the high school. Every eighth-grade student from Corwin was required to attend shadow day. The students were divided into groups of 50 students. Each

student was paired with a high school student who volunteered to participate in the shadow day program. The high school students attended an orientation session to review expectations and the purpose of shadow day on April 19, 1991. During the shadow experience, students visited and participated in some classroom activities, talked with teachers, and learned the layout of Central (e.g., location of lunchroom, gym, lockers, counselors, office, and other support areas). The eighth-grade students spent the whole day at the high school. Costs for shadow day included transportation fees, name tags, and materials. A total of 116 out of 313 eighth-grade students from Corwin Middle School participated in shadow day. (The middle school transition activities focused on Corwin eighth-grade students for reasons discussed in Chapter 2 of this report.) The shadow program was expanded after the first year, and now includes all eighth-grade students coming from Corwin and Pitts Middle school, a Non-Chapter I school.

Ninth-grade students had indicated they would have been more successful in high school if they were given more information about extracurricular activities during the eighth grade (see Table 5). To

address this, the MARP manager met with the assistant principal and representatives from the middle school in February 1991, to plan and organize an extracurricular fair. Approximately 200 eighth-grade students attended the fair. Teachers and students from Central set up booths in the gym to provide students with information and the opportunity to join a sport or activity of their choice. Costs for the fair included a booklet of activities, transportation, and substitute fees. The fair was well attended by eighth-grade students. However, during the fair, students visited in groups and had to be encouraged to visit the booths to receive extracurricular information. The middle school principal and staff recommended a different format for future career fairs. They felt each club or activity should present sessions lasting for ten minutes on a rotating basis. This format would give every student the opportunity to receive information on all activities offered at Central High School.

The ninth-grade students also indicated they would have been more successful in high school if they would have had more help to develop their class schedule (see Table 5). Middle and high school

counselors met together in January 1991, to investigate this expressed concern and evaluate past scheduling procedures. The counselors believed scheduling procedures could be improved if done in small groups instead of large groups. They also felt eighth-grade scheduling would be more effective for students if core area eighth-grade teachers helped in the process during February. Middle school students were scheduled in small groups with assistance from their eighth-grade teacher and high school counselor.

The MARP manager met with the high school counselors on March 28, 1991, to evaluate the new scheduling procedure. The counselors felt the eighth-grade teachers gave them valuable information and suggestions for scheduling individual students. For example, eighth-grade teachers recommended students for honors classes and other courses to better meet individual student needs. The process was expedited because the eighth-grade teachers were present to answer student and high school counselor questions. The high school counselors felt the process eliminated errors because the scheduling was done in 90-minute time blocks with groups of 30 students. This process gave counselors more time to work with

students on an individual basis.

The original solution strategy included the development of an advisor/advisee program for ninth-grade students. To prepare for this, two teachers and an assistant principal visited schools with advisor/advisee programs on January 28, 1991. After the school visits, the MARP manager met with the school's restructuring committee on January 30, 1991. The committee heard presentations from the teachers who visited the schools with advisor/advisee programs. In each school visited, the total staff was committed and involved in the program. Every school had an advisement period within the daily schedule. Teachers kept the same group of students for four years. After hearing the information, the members of the restructuring committee decided not to implement an advisor/advisee program because of time constraints and insufficient staff commitment.

When ninth-grade students were surveyed, 41% (see Table 5) indicated they needed more time with their teachers to succeed in classes. As an alternate to an advisor/advisee program, a peer leader mentor program was developed to provide support for

entering ninth-grade students and ease their transition into high school (see Appendix G). The peer leader program was implemented in the Fall of 1991.

The peer leader program was developed with assistance from the counselors, assistant principals, teachers, and career center paraprofessional. The school's restructuring committee also provided input to develop the program.

On April 11, 1991, the MARP manager arranged for three staff members to attend the National Peer Helpers Association Fifth Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, scheduled for July 29-August 2, 1991. An assistant principal, peer leader teacher, and counselor attended the conference. The conference workshop provided an overview of peer leader programs across the nation and curriculum materials.

An assistant principal, peer leader teacher, and ten student peer mentor leaders attended a peer leader workshop on the campus of the University of Colorado June 27-29, 1991. The conference was sponsored by Partners for Youth Leadership. Peer leader mentors who attended the week-long workshop participated in leadership and

self-esteem development workshops. The students had the opportunity to interact with other students involved in peer leader programs.

The MARP manager obtained funding for the training workshops from the district's Director of Federal Projects. Chapter II funds were used to pay for the training of peer leader teachers and peer mentor leaders. The total cost of the training was approximately $2500.00 for fees, lodging, transportation, and conference registration.

Counselors, teachers, assistant principals, and the writer began brainstorming ideas to develop the peer program on April 12, 1991. Three meetings were held during April with counselors, teachers, and assistant principals to develop the peer leader program. The proposal was completed on May 3, 1991, and accepted by counselors, teachers, and assistant principals.

District policy requires that new programs be approved by high school department chairpersons, deans, principals, and professional council. The peer leader program was presented to the high school deans on May 8, high school principals on May 13, and the district's

professional council on May 15, 1991. The proposal was accepted by all groups. The high school principals requested a formal presentation of the curriculum in the Fall of 1991. The professional council also wanted to review the curriculum in the Fall. The peer leader teachers and assistant principals met with professional council on September 13, and with high school principals on September 24, to present the formal peer leader curriculum. The curriculum was approved by both groups.

The MARP manager and an assistant principal wrote a drug free schools grant in an attempt to fund the peer leader program. The grant was submitted on March 22, 1991; however, it was not approved for funding. The MARP manager met with the President of the Coca Cola Company to solicit funding for the program, but funds were not obtained.

The major funding for the peer leader program came from monies obtained through the Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act 1984. The monies were spent as follows: Substitutes for peer leader teachers $200.00, supplies $5572.00, equipment $2990.00, and travel $600.00. The monies were

administered through the district's office of Vocational Education.

The peer program had 18 peer mentor leaders first semester and 19 peer mentor leaders second semester, 1992. The peer mentors worked with a total of 221 ninth-grade students. Each ninth-grade student had an average of 1.86 peer visits with a peer mentor leader during the 1991-1992 school year. The number of peer visits ranged from 1 to 23. Peer leaders provided tutoring, academic support, and career information for the ninth-grade students. It was expected that 50% of the ninth-grade students would be involved in the peer leader program. In reality, 60%, (193) ninth-grade students were seen by a peer mentor leader during the year.

In January 1992, the MARP manager met with the key players of the peer leader project for a progress report. The meeting included a discussion of the following problem areas: (a), peer mentors did not have enough time to debrief and discuss frustrations; (b), schedules did not make peer mentors available throughout the day; (c), more structure was needed for peer mentors during practicum hours; and (d), teachers in regular classes would

not often release ninth-grade students from class for tutoring with a peer mentor.

Two joint meetings were held with counselors, peer mentor leaders, teachers, and assistant principals in April and May of 1992, to solicit input from the peer mentor leaders. The peer leaders stated the biggest problem was getting teachers to release ninth-grade students from class for tutoring and counseling. They also stated they needed more time to interact with each other to discuss and share problems they were experiencing. The counselors decided to conduct monthly meetings before school with peer mentor leaders to discuss program concerns.

In preparation for this report, the MARP manager developed a data-gathering system to evaluate the project. The data were developed from the following sources: ninth grade attendance reports; grade summary reports; student discipline reports; career center records; and achievement test results. The MARP ended in June 1992. Follow-up activity is being conducted to assure the continuance of the transition activities with the middle schools. The peer leader program is being reviewed to determine areas in

need of improvement for the 1992-1993 school year.

Summary of Accomplishments

The development of transition activities with the feeder middle school is a major accomplishment of this project. There has been an agreement between eighth- and ninth-grade teachers to continue the articulation activities. The study skill instruction techniques for eighth- and ninth-grade core area teachers will be continued, and the eighth- and ninth-grade teachers are planning to discuss which study skills will be taught.

Another major accomplishment of this project is that ninth-grade students have been able to receive support from their peers resulting in "kids working with kids" on a large scale. This happened for several reasons: (a), four counselors were willing to change the structure of the traditional peer counseling program; (b), counselors were able to develop and integrate a career counseling component into the peer leader program; and (c), Central's restructuring committee, KATS CONNECTION (Kids Achieving Total Success), was committed to reducing the failure rate of ninth-grade students.

Significant events happened during implementation that

contributed to the success of this project. The MARP manager obtained funds from three different sources to develop articulation activities with the middle school, for staff inservice training, for peer leader training, and to purchase supplies and equipment.

The writer gained district approval to award credit for the peer mentor leader class to peer leaders. The peer mentor leader program has become one of the unique aspects of Central High School.

A major strength of this project is that solution components were based on what ninth-grade students said they needed to succeed in high school (see Table 5 for student survey results). The middle school transition program, study skill inservice program, and peer leader program were designed to meet student needs. The total project was student centered from the start.

Chapter 6

Evaluation of Results and Process

Objectives and Measurement

As a result of the MARP interventions for this applied research project, eighth- and ninth-grade core area teachers are presently involved in transition activities for middle school students. The transition interventions were continued with the peer mentor leader program. The peer program served as a support system for the ninth-grade students.

The major terminal objective of the project was to reduce ninth-grade failure rates:

> As a result of the practicum intervention from January 21, 1991, through June 21, 1992, the number of ninth-grade students who earn one or more failing grades will decrease from 48% to 15% by June 1992, as indicated by school progress and grade reports.

Results of the objective:

The percentage of ninth-grade students who earned one or more failing grades is summarized in Table 6. The number of students who earned failing grades decreased from 48.0% to 44.5%. The goal of the MARP was not achieved.

Table 6

Percentage of 9th Grade Students with One or More Failing Grades 1991-1992 and 9th Grade Students in 1989-1990

Year	No. of Students	1st Semester	2nd Semester	Average
1989-1990	400	51.0%	46.0%	48.0%
1991-1992	400	43.0%	45.0%	44.5%

The MARP objective was appropriate because student success in school is determined by the number of failing grades a student earns. But, in reality, it was a highly ambitious objective. It was difficult to significantly reduce the failure rate of ninth-grade students. Glasser (1990) stated that it is difficult to motivate students once they begin to fail classes. He believes that they are usually in a "dead end" situation, and, if failing grades are not corrected by the end of the eighth grade, "It is like trying to get a condemned man to plan for the future" (Glasser, 1990, p. 106).

The MARP manager compared the percentage of ninth-grade students who earned one or more failing grades in the district's other three high schools to Central's ninth-grade failure rate. Table 7 summarizes the data.

Table 7

Percentage of 9th Grade Students with One or More Failing Grades in Other High Schools Within the District 1991-1992

Grade 9	1st Semester	2nd Semester	Average
School A	60.0%	37.0%	48.5%
School B	45.0%	48.0%	46.5%
School C	32.0%	28.0%	30.0%
Central High	43.0%	45.0%	44.5%
Total Average	45.0%	39.5%	42.3%

The percentage of ninth-grade students who earn one or more failing grades at Central (44.5%) was higher than the percent of failures in school C. However, schools A and B have higher average ninth-grade failure rates than Central. The larger reduction of failures from first to second semester in school A is interesting and will be investigated by the MARP manager.

The writer analyzed the impact of the five interventions in which students were involved: (a), eighth-grade shadow program; (b), student portfolio; (c), Coordinated Occupational Information Network (COIN); (d), Personal Exploration Guide (PEG); (f), peer leader program visits. Student portfolios were initiated and updated for ninth-grade students. The COIN provides occupational information

based on career interests. The PEG is a personal interest inventory.

Table 8 summarizes the frequency of student participation in the interventions.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of 9th Grade Student Participation in Program Interventions

Intervention	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Shadow Day	116	37.1%
Completed COIN	193	73.2%
Completed PEG	551	7.6%
Completed Portfolio	73	23.6%
Peer Leader Program	159	50.8%

Over 73% of the ninth-grade students completed the COIN, and over half of the students participated in the peer leader program. The Peer Leader Program was the primary intervention of the MARP project. Peer leaders tutored ninth-grade students, administered the COIN, PEG, and developed student portfolios as part of their practicum experience. The program was open to all ninth-grade students who were selected from class rolls. It was originally planned to involve all ninth-grade students in the five interventions.

There was not enough time available for every student to go through all of the interventions. The availability of students often determined whether students completed the five interventions.

The ninth-grade class was divided into three groups: (a), "none" group, with no involvement; (b), "some" group, with involvement in two to three interventions; (c), "most" group, with involvement in four to five interventions.

Table 9 lists the demographic characteristics of the "none", "some" and "most" groups.

Table 9

Summary of Percent of Students in the "None", "Some", and "Most", Groups by Demographic Characteristics

Group	Male	Female	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Other	Free lunch
None	62.0	38.0	60.0	6.2	1.0	33.0	37.0
Some	52.0	48.0	53.0	6.0	1.2	39.8	31.0
Most	43.0	57.0	65.9	2.4	0.0	31.7	34.0

The numbers indicate more males in the "none" group than in the "most" group. In the "most" group there is a higher percentage of Hispanic students than Anglo students. This is because a large number of Hispanic students make up the at-risk population in the

district. (The reasons for this were described in Chapter 2.) The "none" group has a higher number of students who receive free lunch than in the "most" group, indicating low family income.

Table 10 compares the average number of failures earned by students in the "none", "some" and "most" groups during their eighth and ninth grade years.

Table 10

A Comparison of Mean Number of 8th and 9th Grade Failures Earned By "None", "Some", "Most" Groups

Group	No. of Students	X failures 8th grade 1990-1991	X failures 9th grade 1991-1992
None	97	1.42	1.20
Some	83	1.05	.94
Most	41	1.29	1.07
	221	1.26	1.08

The mean number of failures earned by ninth-grade students in the "none", "some", and "most" groups (N=221), was 1.08 failures per student. The mean number of failures earned by the same group of students as eighth graders was 1.26 failures per student. There was a slight decline in the average number of failing grades earned from eighth to the ninth grade of 0.18. The number of failures earned by

ninth-grade students in the "none" group, (N = 97) and the "most" group (N = 41), indicated a small difference. The number of failures earned by the "none" group was 1.20 failures per student. The number of failures in the "most" group was 1.07 failures per student. The difference between the two groups is 0.13. The "some" ninth-grade group demonstrated a lower failure than all other groups.

Other variables were examined that relate to student performance. Table 11 is a summary of means and differences.

Table 11

Comparison of Mean Differences of the "None" and "Most" Groups for Absences and Suspensions

Variable	X̄ None Group	X̄ Some Group	X̄ Most Group	Difference
Absences	20.0	14.0	15.0	5.0
Suspensions	0.16	0.19	0.12	0.04

Ninth-grade students in the "most" group were absent from school an average of five fewer days than ninth-grade students in the "none" group. The "most" group received one more week of instruction on the average than the "none" group. There was no substantial difference in the number of suspensions between the

"none" and the "most" group. The "some" group had fewer absences and suspensions than the rest of the groups.

Data were examined for a group of ninth-grade students with "intense" involvement in the peer leader program. The group (N = 29), averaged eight peer visits with a peer leader during second semester of 1991-1992. The group of students had 55 failing grades at the end of first semester 1991-1992. At the end of second semester 1992, the number of failing grades declined to 34. This represents a reduction of failures by 38%. The data indicate a practical value for the peer mentor leader program and for those students with more frequent peer visits.

Reflections on the Solution Strategy

The implementation phase of the project began with a ninth-grade student survey at the end of first semester 1990 (see Appendix D). Students were surveyed to determine what they felt would have made them more successful in the ninth grade. The results of the survey were shared with middle and high school core area teachers and were used to design the project's interventions. The survey results were also examined by Central's restructuring

committee. The three groups agreed to design a program to reduce ninth-grade failures that would be built upon results of the survey and a review of research. Solutions included a middle school transition program, middle and high school study skill instruction program, and a peer leader program. The peer leader program provided a continuum of support for ninth-grade students once they entered high school.

Although the major goal of the project was not achieved (reduction of ninth-grade failures from 48% to 15%), the differences between the "none", "some" and "most" group are important. The differences in the number of failing grades and absences show the effectiveness of the MARP project. The reduction in the average number of failing grades earned between the "none" and the "most" group indicate that the more interventions students participate in, the greater the likelihood of success. In addition, the decline in the number of failing grades with the "intense" group of students establishes the importance of a peer leader program.

Topping (1989) stated that peer tutoring helps students to accept one another and become responsible for their success. The

MARP manager interviewed ten out of 27 peer leaders. All stated that the program developed their self esteem and made them feel more responsible for the ninth-grade students. One peer mentor said, "We grew together," and another stated, "The major accomplishment of the program is peers reaching out to students who need help." Nine out of the ten peer leaders interviewed felt that the ninth-grade students who were tutored by them became more responsible and improved their grades. Several peer leaders stated that the ninth-grade students felt like they belonged and became more trusting as the school year progressed. (For a complete listing of peer leader comments, see Appendix H).

Implications of Outcomes and Processes

A major accomplishment of this project has been to increase teacher understanding of the problems associated with high failure rates of ninth-grade students. This is evidenced by the continuation of the study skills program for 1992-1993.

The MARP project underscores the importance of programs to support eighth-grade students during their transition into high school. This was accomplished through a continuum of activities

that were articulated between middle and high school teachers for students during their eighth- and ninth-grade year.

The program results demonstrate that it is difficult to reduce failures in one year. In an interview with the high school assistant principal, (M. Padgett, personal comment, July 23, 1992) she stated, "This project made a statement to the faculty, that kids are important." She, also felt that the project focused on a targeted group and illustrated the importance of a team effort to initiate a new program. For example, the peer leader program brought teachers and counselors together to develop a support system for the ninth-grade students. Also, middle and high school teachers devised a transition program based on cooperation from both levels.

This project increased awareness of the problem for students, staff, parents, and community. This is evidenced through Central's efforts to develop a "championship school" during the 1991-1992 academic year. A championship school committee (made up of students, staff and parents) devised strategies to increase Hispanic student success. The strategies included incentives for students who demonstrated a decrease in failing grades and total number of

absences. Championship school T-shirts were given to students who had no D or F grades and fewer than four absences during first and second semester of 1991-1992. The committee also sponsored student seminars and motivational speakers. Parents facilitated small group discussions after each seminar. Students had the opportunity to discuss ways to improve student motivation and provide input for school improvements.

The results of this study will be given to all stakeholders--staff, faculty, students, counselors, parents, and district officials. Sharing the results will insure that everyone understands the workings of a middle school transition program that continues in the ninth-grade year. A summary of the data will be distributed in a concise format to these groups. A report will be made to middle and high school principals to discuss the possibility of replicating the MARP solution strategies in their schools.

Chapter 7

Decisions On Future of Intervention

Decisions and Modifications of the Project

The activities carried out in this project will continue to be implemented in eighth and ninth grades with some modifications. The shadow program for eighth-grade students and study skill instruction will be on going. The peer mentor leader program will be available for all ninth-grade students.

The shadow program for eighth-grade students will go forward in a new direction. Student council will be responsible for organizing and articulating the program with the two feeder middle schools. Members of student council will select other students to serve as shadow/mentors. The student council sponsor will supervise and coordinate the program.

A study skills program will be implemented for all ninth-grade students in language arts and social studies classes. The teachers have developed a scope and sequence of skills to be taught by both departments. An introductory letter will be sent to all ninth-grade parents to explain the requirements of the program before school

starts in the Fall. The University of Southern Colorado has agreed to provide students from their teacher education program to serve as tutors in the study skill program.

The peer leader program will continue with several modifications. There will be 1 peer leader teacher and 12 peer mentor leaders. The peer leader class will meet during fifth hour. This will give peer leaders time to meet with ninth-grade students during lunch. The students will no longer have to miss class time to meet with a peer leader. Ninth-grade students with one or two failures will receive tutoring to improve their grades.

A special effort will be required to insure communication between counselors, teachers, administrators, and peer leaders. Monthly meetings will be held to provide feedback and debriefing sessions. Evaluation meetings will be conducted for the career center paraprofessional, peer leader teacher, and counselors.

The selection process for peer mentor leaders will be changed. Potential peer leaders will be given an information booklet to explain the program before they are selected. The Colorado Community Colleges and Occupational Education System (CCCOES)

monitored the peer leader program on May 21, 1992, to determine how Carl Perkins Funds were being spent. The monitoring team suggested that individuals from special populations be included as some of the peer leaders. The selection process will attempt to include handicapped students. Peer leaders will be selected to represent a cross-section of students.

Dissemination of Information

The MARP manager will help the peer leader teacher develop an information booklet for the program. The booklet will be given to staff, students, and parents. The purpose of the booklet will be: (a), to provide faculty with program information and operational procedures; (b), to advise students of peer leader program purposes and services; and (c), to provide parents with information and understanding of the peer program. The information booklet will be developed with input from counselors and the peer leader teacher.

A special article will be written in the Principal's Accountability Report. The report will be mailed to parents by December 31, 1992. The article will include the achievements of the peer leader program during the 1991-1992 school year.

An summary of program results will be disseminated to the principals in the district. The program results will be reported to the district's professional council, Director of Vocational Education, Director of Secondary Education, and Director of Chapter II programs. Funding for the peer leader program will be requested from the Director of Vocational Education and Chapter II programs.

Changes If Project Were Done Again

The project was implemented on a large scale. In reviewing the progress during this project, the MARP manager realizes that more progress could have been made with a narrower focus. For example, the development of a peer leader program was a major accomplishment, but a monumental task. The middle school transition program was a project unto itself. A great deal of time was spent obtaining monies for funding of both programs. If the project were repeated, the solution strategy would focus on developing one program. Data collection would be simpler and more easily managed. Resources would be allocated to develop one program, which would allow for more flexibility.

In the future, the peer leader program will receive the major

support. Carl Perkins funds will be used to develop peer leader training and staff development. A computer information management system will be purchased to track and store program data, so that information can be obtained during the project.

Although there were disadvantages in carrying out a multi-dimensional program, there is a great sense of accomplishment. The middle school transition and peer leader program were never attempted in School District No. 60 before this project. The two programs are unique to Central High School and the district.

The information in this report will be presented to other administrators to demonstrate procedures for conducting a problem-solving process. The project will be offered as an example of a system-wide change within a school setting.

This project created a climate for change at Central High School. The school's restructuring committee is continuing to seek solutions for student failure in grades nine through twelve. A new vision statement is currently being written for Central, and the building restructuring committee continues to look for bold initiatives to improve learning.

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Appendices

Appendix A

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
(oral)

SCHOOL_____ _____ DATE_____

SUBJECT TAUGHT_____ GRADE_____

NAME_____

48% of 400 ninth grade students at Central High School failed one or more classes as evidenced by a review of semester grade reports for the 1989-90 academic year.

1. What do you perceive the causes of failure to be in your setting?

2. What do you perceive the causes of failure to be for students in the ninth grade at Central?

3. What are some of the possible solutions to the failure problem at your level?

4. What are some of the possible solutions to the failure problem at the high school level?

5. How does the failure problem impact your professional responsibilities?

6. What do you feel you could do differently as a teacher to reduce failure rates in your classroom, provided you are given the support? What kinds of support would you need in your classroom to reduce failure rates?

Appendix B

STAFF SURVEY
SHARED DECISION MAKING

AFTER REVIEWING OUR WORST FEARS AND BEST OUTCOMES FROM THE FALL INSERVICE, PLEASE INDICATE BELOW YOUR DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SITE BASED DECISION MAKING AT CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL.

_____ YES, I WANT SITE BASED DECISION MAKING

_____ NO, I DO NOT WANT SITE BASED DECISION MAKING

PLEASE RETURN TO CAROL'S MAILBOX AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THANKS,

THE T.A.B.B.S. COMMITTEE

SURVEY RESULTS
SHARED DECISION MAKING

THE T.A.B.B.S. COMMITTEE WANTED TO SHARE THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF THE STAFF ON THE QUESTION OF HAVING SITE BASED DECISION MAKING AT CENTRAL.

OF THE SURVEYS GIVEN OUT TO THE ENTIRE STAFF, THESE ARE THE RESULTS:

1 DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO MAKE DECISION

8 NO

35 YES

THERE WILL BE MORE INFORMATION FROM THE T.A.B.B.S. COMMITTEE.

Appendix C

DATA MATRIX

COMPARISON OF 8TH AND 9TH GRADE FAILURES

Student Number	Absence Grade 8	Percent of Absence 8	Absence Grade 9	Percent of Absence 9	Grade Failures 8	Grade Failures 9
56569	10	5.56%	74	41.11%	yes	yes
59104	2	1.11%	62	34.44%	no	yes
59330	8	4.44%	70	38.89%	no	yes
59406	0	0.00%	45	25.00%	no	yes
59607	40	22.22%	51	28.33%	yes	yes
59682	26	14.44%	45	25.00%	yes	yes
59816	3	1.67%	6	3.33%	no	yes
59829	9	5.00%	40	22.22%	no	yes
60485	21	11.67%	82	45.56%	yes	yes
60605	21	11.67%	42	23.33%	yes	yes
61058	4	2.22%	9	5.00%	yes	yes
61544	6	3.33%	14	7.78%	yes	yes
61822	13	7.22%	15	8.33%	yes	yes
61891	13	7.22%	15	8.33%	no	yes
61972	4	2.22%	12	6.67%	no	yes
61982	68	37.78%	53	29.44%	yes	yes
61983	73	40.56%	53	29.44%	yes	yes
62017	17	9.44%	10	5.56%	yes	yes
62098	23	12.78%	11	6.11%	yes	yes
62163	52	28.89%	45	25.00%	yes	yes
62186	7	3.89%	15	8.33%	no	yes
62203	7	3.89%	35	19.44%	no	yes
62205	10	5.56%	29	16.11%	yes	yes
62214	29	16.11%	30	16.67%	yes	yes
62272	7	3.89%	5	2.78%	no	yes
62292	6	3.33%	18	10.00%	no	yes
62465	4	2.22%	6	3.33%	no	yes
62508	6	3.33%	14	7.78%	no	yes
62514	45	25.00%	64	35.56%	yes	yes
62724	24	13.33%	26	14.44%	yes	yes
62734	7	3.89%	4	2.22%	no	yes
63246	1	0.56%	23	12.78%	no	yes
63319	2	1.11%	55	30.56%	yes	yes
63914	6	3.33%	5	2.78%	no	yes
64161	29	16.11%	25	13.89%	no	yes
64223	8	4.44%	40	22.22%	no	yes
64276	53	29.44%	86	47.78%	no	yes
64283	30	16.67%	24	13.33%	no	yes
64285	16	8.89%	14	7.76%	no	yes
64287	30	16.67%	21	11.67%	no	yes

64294	23	12.78%	37	20.56%	yes	yes
64298	36	20.00%	33	18.33%	yes	yes
64298	33	18.33%	36	20.00%	yes	yes
64305	26	14.44%	74	41.11%	yes	yes
64322	4	2.22%	5	2.78%	no	yes
64330	9	5.00%	6	3.33%	no	yes
64337	19	10.56%	8	4.44%	no	yes
64338	7	3.89%	19	10.56%	no	yes
64340	9.5	5.28%	43	23.89%	no	yes
64342	25	13.89%	27	15.00%	no	yes
64347	1	0.56%	16	8.89%	no	yes
64432	8	4.44%	4	2.22%	no	yes
64440	17	9.44%	18	10.00%	yes	yes
64612	4	2.22%	2	1.11%	no	yes
64670	20	11.11%	37	20.56%	yes	yes
64742	33	18.33%	63	35.00%	yes	yes
64906	20	11.11%	6	3.33%	yes	yes
64930	30	16.67%	13	7.22%	no	no
64942	15	8.33%	24	13.33%	no	yes
64955	6	3.33%	7	3.89%	no	yes
64956	5	2.78%	1	0.56%	no	no
64966	8	4.44%	13	7.22%	no	yes
64977	27	15.00%	28	15.56%	no	yes
64979	4	2.22%	3	1.67%	no	yes
64980	12	6.67%	14	7.78%	no	yes
64983	92	51.11%	130	72.22%	no	yes
65197	18	10.00%	29	16.11%	no	yes
65258	12	6.67%	18	10.00%	yes	yes
65294	18	10.00%	8	4.44%	no	yes
65447	5	2.78%	9	5.00%	no	yes
65519	20	11.11%	22	12.22%	yes	yes
65539	18	10.00%	77	42.78%	yes	yes
65812	31	17.22%	65	36.11%	yes	yes
65926	8	4.44%	20	11.11%	no	yes
65980	10	5.56%	5	2.78%	no	yes
65974	35	19.44%	22	12.22%	yes	yes
66089	33	18.33%	8	4.44%	yes	yes
66380	28	15.56%	13	7.22%	yes	yes
66515	14	7.78%	3	1.67%	yes	yes
66602	45	25.00%	21	11.67%	yes	yes
66672	27	15.00%	30	16.67%	yes	yes
66689	56	31.11%	41	22.78%	yes	yes
66849	31	17.22%	85	47.22%	yes	yes
66852	7	3.89%	3	1.67%	yes	yes
67443	27	15.00%	51	28.33%	no	yes
67665	77	42.78%	110	61.11%	yes	yes
67673	14	7.78%	10	5.56%	no	yes
67740	23	12.78%	13	7.22%	yes	yes
67803	37	20.56%	25	13.89%	yes	yes
67855	9	5.00%	9	5.00%	no	yes
67968	22	12.22%	8	4.44%	no	yes
68141	25	13.89%	23	12.78%	yes	yes

68165	4	2.22%	11	6.11%	yes	yes
68189	27	15.00%	34	18.89%	no	yes
68191	2	1.11%	18	10.00%	no	yes
68197	1	0.56%	2	1.11%	yes	yes
68198	6	3.33%	12	6.67%	no	yes
68199	16	8.89%	8	4.44%	yes	yes
68202	17	9.44%	14	7.78%	no	yes
68212	16	8.89%	5	2.78%	no	yes
68214	27	15.00%	60	33.33%	yes	yes
68216	38	21.11%	38	21.11%	no	yes
68220	7	3.89%	4	2.22%	yes	yes
68222	3	1.67%	8	4.44%	yes	yes
68229	2	1.11%	14	7.78%	no	yes
68315	12	6.67%	14	7.78%	no	yes
68327	40	22.22%	51	28.33%	no	yes
68338	25	13.89%	11	6.11%	no	yes
68376	28	15.56%	7	3.89%	no	yes
68417	15	8.33%	55	30.56%	no	yes
68435	6	3.33%	7	3.89%	no	yes
68442	17	9.44%	37	20.56%	yes	yes
68457	13	7.22%	19	10.56%	yes	yes
68504	21	11.67%	40	22.22%	yes	yes
68506	12	6.67%	14	7.78%	no	yes
68515	15	8.33%	24	13.33%	yes	yes
68518	29	16.11%	35	19.44%	yes	yes
68527	7	3.89%	7	3.89%	no	yes
68529	10	5.56%	31	17.22%	yes	yes
68532	4	2.22%	6	3.33%	no	yes
68574	13	7.22%	4	2.22%	no	yes
68603	16	8.89%	13	7.22%	yes	yes
68615	38	21.11%	71	39.44%	no	yes
68629	18	10.00%	13	7.22%	no	yes
68636	28	15.56%	37	20.56%	no	yes
68675	13	7.22%	8	4.44%	yes	yes
68703	35	19.44%	61	33.89%	yes	yes
68721	24	13.33%	14	7.78%	yes	yes
68757	0	0.00%	1	0.56%	no	yes
68923	11	6.11%	58	32.22%	no	yes
68977	62	34.44%	75	41.67%	yes	yes
69204	0	0.00%	22	12.22%	no	yes
69228	18	10.00%	23	12.78%	yes	yes
69250	9	5.00%	9	5.00%	yes	yes
69252	7	3.89%	8	4.44%	no	yes
69259	14	7.78%	13	7.22%	no	yes
69266	17	9.44%	63	35.00%	no	yes
69272	57	31.67%	48	26.67%	yes	yes
69278	23	12.78%	18	10.00%	no	yes
69284	8	4.44%	15	8.33%	no	yes
69293	16	8.89%	5	2.78%	no	yes
69295	17	9.44%	5	2.78%	yes	yes
69297	12	6.67%	6	3.33%	no	yes
69302	22	12.22%	7	3.89%	no	yes

69308	23	12.78%	67	37.22%	yes	yes
69361	33	18.33%	59	32.78%	no	yes
69871	63	35.00%	18	10.00%	yes	yes
71379	6	3.33%	86	47.78%	yes	yes
72644	10	5.56%	8	4.44%	yes	yes
72958	2	1.11%	16	8.89%	no	yes
72982	22	12.22%	31	17.22%	no	yes
73094	7	3.89%	43	23.89%	yes	yes
74051	22	12.22%	68	37.78%	yes	yes
76855	17	9.44%	14	7.78%	no	yes
76940	4	2.22%	15	8.33%	no	yes
77248	0	0.00%	37	20.56%	no	yes
79368	7	3.89%	34	18.89%	no	yes
79869	20	11.11%	29	16.11%	no	yes
80023	1	0.56%	1	0.56%	no	yes
82600	25	13.89%	23	12.78%	yes	yes
83860	0	0.00%	2	1.11%	no	yes
83861	8	4.44%	11	6.11%	no	yes
83862	4	2.22%	7	3.89%	no	no
85098	16	8.89%	69	38.33%	no	yes

Appendix D

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
9TH GRADE SURVEY

WHAT MIDDLE SCHOOL DID YOU ATTEND _____

We would like to be able to help students make a more successful transition from middle school to high school. Please help us to determine what we can do by filling out the following survey as honestly as possible. Thank you for your help.

Do you feel the need to have more skills in any of the following areas? (Circle Yes or No for each.)

1.	English	Yes	No
2.	Reading	Yes	No
3.	Math	Yes	No
4.	Science	Yes	No
5.	History	Yes	No

What do you feel motivates you to do well in high school? (Circle as many as you wish.)

1. Preparing for college
2. Preparation for a career or job
3. Preparation for entrance into the military
4. Parental encouragement and expectations
5. Self Pride
6. Desire to succeed
7. Approval of others (teachers/counselors/friends)
8. Incentives for good grades (money - car, etc.)
9. Grades
10. Other

Would any of the following have helped you to feel more comfortable at Central? (Circle one for each.)

1.	More individual time with my teacher	Yes	No
2.	More time with my counselor	Yes	No
3.	More time with the peer counselors	Yes	No

4.	More information about extra-curricular activities	Yes	No
5.	More field tripslorientation visits to Central prior to entering 9th grade	Yes	No
6.	A chance to have visited high school more often	Yes	No
7.	Visits to middle school by high school students - to give out information	Yes	No
8.	Visit to middle school by music teachers, coaches	Yes	No
9.	More visits by high school counselors	Yes	No
10.	More help with my class schedule	Yes	No

Please rate the following skills you feel would have made your coming to Central easier. (Number 1 being very important down to number 5 being not important)

1.	Study skills (notetaking, time management, homework, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Social skills (getting along with others)	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Ability to follow rules and regulations	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Ability to be in attendance	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Ability to be on time	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Refusal Skills (to avoid drugsIgangsI harmful actions)	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Ability to follow teachers' rules in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5

How do you like to be taught? (Rank in order with 1 Best to 6 Least)

Lecture	Memorizing
One on one	
Small group	
With computers	
Reading from textbook	

Appendix E

Evaluation
Corwin Middle School and Central High School
Joint Inservice Study Skill Articulation

As a result of the joint inservice between Central 9th and Corwin 8th grade core area teachers during the 1990-91 and 1991-92 academic years, I am requesting your evaluation of the study skills program.

Please take a few moments of your time to complete the evaluation and return it to Sam J. Pantleo, Principal, Central High, by Friday, May 29, 1992.

Please Circle

Grade Level Taught: 8 9

Subject Area: Math Science Language Arts Soc Studies

1. I have applied study skill instruction techniques as follows:

   Frequently Infrequently Daily None

   Please Explain:

2. I believe, as a result of teaching study skills, student performance in class has:

   Increased Decreased Remained the same

   Please explain:

3. Study skill instruction has resulted in:

   Positive Classroom Climate No Difference in Climate

   Please Explain:

4. The articulation between Corwin 8th and Central 9th grade teachers was valuable to me for the following reasons:

5. Where do you see this project going from here? (Next Steps)

Appendix F

Survey
Corwin Middle School and Central High School
Joint Inservice
Study Skill Articulation
Teacher Comments

The articulation between Corwin eighth and Central ninth grade teachers was valuable to me for the following reasons:

"It was important to know what they are teaching their ninth graders."

"Gave me a context to see where my students were coming from. Allowed me to interact with other staff I never would have been able to do on my own."

"Established communication with Corwin teachers to discover what they are doing, their concerns and needs."

"We became aware of both sides of the coin. I saw high school teachers as people, not just teachers blaming the middle school."

"We were able to get together to discuss our concerns."

"Was of no value."

"Communication, coordination, direction, concrete materials, and methods."

"Gave an idea of what incoming ninth graders have had."

"Input from middle school. Opportunity to share experiences, ideas, concerns, etc."

"It is a rare occasion when colleagues have an opportunity to share ideas. For this reason I am grateful for the time spent together."

Appendix G

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

PEER/MENTOR/ LEADER PROGRAM PROPOSAL

SYNOPSIS

The KATS (Kids Achieving Total Success) team is designed to help freshmen, including at-risk freshmen, adjust to their new environment by providing support from eleventh and twelfth grade students who learn leadership skills and group dynamics in a comprehensive training course led by faculty in collaboration with the counseling department.

Eleventh and twelfth grade students will be selected by faculty to enroll in a peer leadership development course. The program will consist of a one-semester peer leadership development training course in which upperclassmen will work as peer mentor/leaders with freshmen in the areas of school success, drug and alcohol awareness, self-esteem, conflict management, and social integration. The second semester will consist of a practicum during which the peer mentor/leaders will be assigned to the Career Counseling Center to continue applying those skills learned in the first semester leadership development course. Peer mentor/leaders will assist any Central student with use of the COIN career inventory, tutoring for class work, administer learning styles inventories, connecting with incoming 8th grade students, or address other social, personal concerns of students. While underclassmen receive help, support, and skills which improve their school performance, the upperclass peer mentor/leaders learn to be responsible for their own lives as they provide positive influence and support for the success of others.

Goals:

1. Increase success in school for freshmen at Central.

2. Maintain quality standards and enhance the peer counseling program.

Objectives:

1. To create a support system in school for freshmen by training upperclassmen to be peer mentor/leaders.

2. To expand the scope of the peer counselor program by allowing students to earn one (1) full credit, grades, and quality points.

Structure of Program:

Group I Grade 12 (traditional Peer Program)

Training - Summer 1991

Peer Counselors provide services all hours of the day throughout the entire school year. Credit will be awarded according to the current system (one-half credit total for the year).

Group II Grades 11, 12

Training - 1st Semester 1991-92 Peer Leader Class (one-half credit)

Practicum - 2nd Semester 1991-1992 (one-half credit)

Group III 10, 11

Training - 2nd Semester 1991-1992 Peer Leader Class (one-half credit)

Practicum - 1st Semester 1992-93 (one-half credit)

Training Components	Support/System Components
Refusal Skills	Refusal Skills
Confidentiality/Mentorship	Managing Conflict /Problem Resolution
Confrontation/Conflict Management	Drug/Alcohol Education
Improving the Home/School Relationship	Self Esteem
Leadership/Social Relationship	Academic Tutoring
Career Awareness Education	Academic Counseling
Self Concept/Self Esteem	Multicultural Sensitivity
Group Dynamics	Career Assessment
Multicultural/Gender Sensitivity	Parent Involvement Activities
Documentation	Incentives/Rewards
Training Retreats	
Study Skills/Tutoring	
Learning Styles	

Practicum Components

Peer Mentor/Leaders will be under contract to provide services, earn a grade and one-half credit with quality points.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will have to see X number of students per week as arranged with peer supervisor (Depending upon the constraints of the students' schedule).

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist in the development of student portfolios.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist in administering the COIN to students.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist in administering a learning styles inventory to all ninth grade students.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist in providing job search information for students in grades 9-12.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist the Career Center Director with scheduling classroom presentations.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will tutor students in a variety of areas.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will visit elementary and middle schools to assist with transition activities.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will attend weekly meetings with teacher/counselor supervisors.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will welcome all new students to the building and introduce them to services in the Career Counseling Center.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist with career development activities.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will assist in crisis intervention.

Peer Mentor/Leaders will provide services as deemed necessary by supervisors.

Rationale for One (1) full Credit, Grade, and Quality Points

1. In order to attract students into the peer mentor/leader program they must be allowed to earn credit, a grade, and quality points. The new system which determines class rank by the number of quality points earned requires this change to maintain and expand the peer program.

2. The peer mentor/leader program will provide more options and programs for students.

3. Peer Mentor/Leaders will be trained in proactive methods to assist peers and serve as better role models for students.

4. Peer Mentor/Leaders will be provided with intensive training in order to help our students deal with the increasingly complex problems they face.

5. Educational literature and "model" peer programs validate the effectiveness of peers working with peers.

Appendix H

Interview
Peer Leader Comments

"I learned a lot about myself. What was valuable was peers reaching out to other kids." "Kids working with kids was most valuable. The grades of my students improved."

"I was able to help and tutor and make new friends. My students improved their grades. The students we worked with improved their self-esteem . I helped a student improve his math grade and he became eligible to play sports."

"I moved here and met new people. I liked helping other students improve their grades. Kids caring about kids and helping to improve their grades was cool. We grew together."

"I felt that the students I worked with became more comfortable with the school surroundings and improved their grades. The students learned more responsibility."

"I liked being a peer leader; it was self rewarding. I got to know other kids. They looked up to me as a role model. We grew to trust each other. Their grades improved a little."

"Peers telling peers was valuable. I learned how to deal with people, my skills to deal with people improved. I worked with a student who didn't care, but I helped him improve his grades. Peers telling peers was better than adults telling peers."

"Helped me to realize my problems were not as big as I thought. The students opened up and they felt more accepted."

"I helped a student to improve her attendance, and her grades improved."

"Being a peer leader helped me to see another side of life. Reaching out to students, showing them how school works and the one-on-one contact helped a lot."

"Kids helping kids was most helpful; their grades improved. I learned patience."