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ABSTRACT
          This practicum project evaluated the effectiveness of a peer
counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program to enhance the transition of
students from elementary to middle school by reducing behavior problems and
absenteeism, and by enhancing students' ability to deal with academic or peer
difficulties. The problem of adjustment to the transition from elementary to
middle school was documented through school and teacher records, especially
the number of teacher referrals for behavioral, emotional, and social
problems and the number of student-generated help forms asking for assistance
in resolving academic and social problems. The 8-month intervention consisted
of a peer counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program. The tutors were
seventh and eighth graders in the same school. The Pause, Prompt, and Praise
tutoring method was taught to student mentors and tutors. Sixth graders were
matched to a mentor/tutor and they met twice weekly to become acquainted and
to work on academic and other concerns. Both tutors and tutees maintained
journals detailing the problems, discussions, and possible solutions for each
session. The process was monitored to identify potential serious student
problems. Evaluation findings indicated that there was a reduction in
student-generated help forms requesting assistance with an academic problem,
teacher-generated referrals for problem behaviors, and absenteeism. In
addition, students were able to write transition problem statements with
resolution strategies and achieve a passing 1.0 or better report card grade.
(Seven appendices include forms used in the intervention. Contains 60
references.)

Improving the Transition of Sixth-Grade Students During the First Year of Middle School Through a Peer Counselor Mentor and Tutoring Program

ED 424 911

by
Patricia J. Leland-Jones
Cluster 76

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in
Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
1998

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Patricia J.
Leland-Jones under the direction of the adviser listed
below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and
Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova
Southeastern University.

Approved:

_7/09/98_
Date of Final Approval of
Report

Dr. Donald Stanier, Ph.D.,
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I also wish to thank the students, faculty, and administration involved in the Practicum II implementation for being the heart and soul of the project. A special thank you goes to Ms. Beth Friedman for supplying the most tutors throughout the eight-month implementation period. Her strong belief in the project and support was invaluable. Progress was made that helped sixth-grade students succeed academically and personally in their transition from elementary to middle school. It is my hope that all future transition stresses will be eased because of these experiences.

A final thank you goes to Dr. Lee C. Jones, my husband. His devotion, supportive love, and belief in my abilities helped to strengthen me daily. I will be forever grateful.

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Abstract

Improving the Transition of Sixth-Grade Students During the First Year of Middle School Through a Peer Counselor Mentor and Tutoring Program. Leland-Jones, Patricia J., 1998: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Middle School/Peer Mentoring/Peer Tutoring/Peer Counseling/Peer Support/Cross-age Tutoring/Cross-age Mentoring

This practicum was designed to help sixth-grade students make the transition from elementary to middle school. The 1996-97 sixth-grade 565 student school records revealed that a total of 1,650 student-generated help forms were written for four 9-week quarters (19%-30% asked for tutoring assistance); and 1,754 referrals were written for class disruption, fighting, profanity, vandalism, and weapons possession. There was student absenteeism and an inability to deal with academic or peer difficulties.

The solution was to implement an 8-month peer counseling mentor and tutor program to reduce: student-generated help forms, teacher-generated referrals, and absenteeism. It was the hope that students receiving a 0.9 or below at the 5-week interim of a 9-week quarter would achieve 1.0 or better on end-of-quarter report cards. Sixth-grade students receiving peer mentoring and tutoring would be able to write at least three school-transition problems or feelings of stress and the resolution strategies.

The 8-month implementation results revealed a reduction in student-generated help forms, teacher-generated referrals, and absenteeism. It also revealed that students were able to write transition problem statements with resolution strategies and achieve a 1.0 or better report card grade.

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Permission Statement

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_6/22/98_   _Patricia J. Leland-Jones_
Date   Signature

Chapter I: Introduction

Description of Community

The middle school concerned in this practicum was located in the southeastern part of the United States. It was a suburban city with a population of 28,000 people within its incorporated area. The city is in a county that totaled 1.5 million in population. It is one of the many surrounding smaller cities attached to a larger metropolitan city.

The community that encompassed the middle school was largely residential with small shopping areas located nearby. The housing consisted of low-income rental apartments and townhouses. The majority of the renters were of varied ethnic backgrounds.

Writer's Work Setting

The middle school was divided into three smaller schools, each grade level with its own faculty, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. There was one principal who oversaw the day-to-day running of the entire middle school. There was a school improvement team (SIT) and a parent teacher organization (PTO) involving faculty, support staff, and community leaders who met once a month to formulate ways to solve problems and enhance curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The student population at the middle school was 1,586. The county's 1997 School Enrollment/Diversity Summary Report

revealed a racially diverse population of 43.32% Caucasian, 18.35% Hispanic, 33.80% African American, 3.91% Asian, and .57% Indian. Many students were from single-parent families. The student mobility rate was 33% with low-income students moving from one apartment area to another (Bell, 1994-95). The student population receiving free or reduced lunch was 52%. Dropout prevention classes included 17% of the student population.

The instructional staff consisted of 70 members. The racial/ethnic composition of the instructional staff was 81.4% Caucasian, 1.4% Hispanic, 15.7% African-American, and 1.5% Indian. The years of teaching experience for the middle school instructional staff included 31 with 0-3 years, 13 with 4-9 years, and 26 with 10 years or more (Bell, 1994-95/ 1996-97).

Writer's Role

The writer had been teaching sixth-grade social studies, five classes daily. Due to the success of her Practicum I, the writer taught three classes of study skills to sixth-grade students on an elective wheel every 9 weeks for the 1997-98 school year. This elective wheel allowed 160 students to move to a new class--Art, Physical Education, Graphics, or Study Skills--as the wheel rotated each 9 weeks. The writer also taught two world geography classes to seventh-grade students.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem resolved in this practicum was that sixth-grade students were experiencing transition difficulties throughout the first year of middle school.

Problem Description

Students experienced difficulty making the adjustment from elementary to middle school. The problems were academic, behavioral, emotional, and social in nature. Students were entering middle school for the first time and were used to an elementary school climate. The middle-school-student population and faculty was large and confusing for new, incoming sixth-grade students. Students used to having one teacher now had many teachers and different classes to find and attend on time daily. Some students had no peer support system at a time in their development when peers were very important.

Problem Documentation

The evidence that supported the problem was available in school and teacher records. The 1996-97 sixth grade referrals written totaled 1,754 for four 9-week quarters and were as follows: first quarter 277, second quarter 372, third quarter 567, fourth quarter 538. Referrals were written for various reasons that dealt with behavioral, emotional, and social problems.

The problems causing the writing of referrals involved classroom disruption, fighting, profanity, vandalism, weapons possession, etc. These children were removed from the classroom and were placed into internal behavior modification (IBM) on campus, off-campus classroom suspension (located at the Boys and Girls Club), or, for the worst offenses, externally suspended for 3-10 days. The ending Grade Point Averages (GPA) of 564 sixth-grade students for four 9-week quarters of 1996-1997 were as follows: 53 have GPAs in the 0.0-0.9 range; 120 in the 1.0-1.9 range; 205 in the 2.0-2.9 range; 168 in the 3.0-3.9 range; and 18 in the 4.0 range or higher.

Students experiencing transition problems stopped attending classes in a variety of ways such as excessive tardiness and absenteeism or skipping classes. Student-generated help forms (see Appendix A) for sixth grade at the end of the fourth 9-week period totaled 1,650. The help forms asked for assistance in resolving problems dealing with academics, peer conflicts, teacher conflicts, and family difficulties. The help forms were given to the sixth-grade guidance counselor who then tried to work with the student towards a possible resolution.

Causative Analysis

Students throughout the first, sixth-grade year of middle school faced many difficult and stressful challenges. There were too many teachers and classrooms, causing stress

and confusion. School rules were strictly enforced in middle school because students were older and considered to be more responsible for their actions than elementary students. The curriculum was more difficult for students not used to or willing to study. There was a larger student/teacher ratio (36:1) in each classroom which made it difficult to work one to one with students. There were students not receiving the tutoring they had requested through student-generated help forms. Ninety percent of the sixth-grade student-generated help forms detailed a lack of academic support, family problems, and/or peer conflicts. Many students were from low-income families, resulting in 52% free or reduced lunches daily.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The literature confirmed that students entering the first year of any new school experience transition difficulties, but especially those students entering the first year of middle school. Adolescence is a time of independent self-discovery and dangerous risk-taking that can affect one for life. These risks included a 15-30% high school dropout rate, the highest arrest rate of all age groups, and a growing number of alcohol and drug abusers (Office of Educational Research, 1988).

Middle school is the start for many of these problems and students not feeling comfortable or somewhat successful continue to increase the high numbers already stated (Office

of Educational Research). Eccles et al. (1993) related that
when students enter middle school there are physical,
cognitive, biological, and interpersonal changes occurring
which contribute to the transition difficulties. They
related that students are at a vulnerable stage in personal
self-esteem and the self-system.

Simmons and Blyth (1987) related that girls and boys
experiencing pubertal changes and school transition at the
same time are at risk for high truancy rates, behavior
problems, and long-term negative motivational school
mismatch difficulties. Hirsch and Rapkin (1987) stated that
students used to being the oldest, biggest, and most
knowledgeable in elementary school experience transition
difficulties because now these same students are the
youngest, smallest, and least knowledgeable in the new
middle school. Entwistle (1988) called this phenomenon "Top
Dog," stating that stress comes from the traumatic move to
middle school where these same students immediately become
the "Bottom Dog" (p. 585).

Hirsch and Rapkin added that middle school
discontentedness is common whether a student is academically
successful or not. The middle school transition is difficult
for both boys and girls. Midgley and Feldhaufer (1987)
stated that students leaving elementary school and
expressing a fondness or comfort level having one teacher
and one classroom for many years began to feel

uncomfortable, confused, and stressed with several teachers and classrooms when making the transition to a new middle school. Midgley and Feldhaufer also related that students in a new middle school environment felt inhibited by whole class instruction, ability groupings usually for math, less freedom, stronger discipline, and little or no individual help from the teacher.

Robinson, Garber, and Hilsman (1995) revealed that students making the transition from elementary to middle school exhibit signs of extreme stress, especially students with a negative attributional style and low self-esteem. They concluded that school transition can increase levels of depression in these types of students. Kazdin (1993) stated that problems such as adolescent depression and eating disorders, mostly among females, may have beginnings in difficulties associated with school transition. Kazdin concluded that attempted and completed suicides rise to high levels during adolescence and have been linked to problems begun in the transition or adjustment to middle school.

Rutter (1987) revealed that the adjustment to a new school can cause upsetting misalignments or mismatches between students and schools. Midgley, Feldhaufer, and Eccles (1989) stated that the transition to middle school can have serious long-lasting effects on low-achieving students. Testerman (1996) stated that at-risk transition

students not succeeding academically or socially tend to do one of two things: go unnoticed by the teacher or misbehave with increasing severity until noticed. Midgley et al. concluded that these students may have already experienced too many failures in the elementary grades and the new school environment difficulties and failures become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Seidman, Aber, Allen, and French (1996) revealed that attendance problems and low scholastic achievement are linked to transition problems for both middle and high schools. Crocket, Peterson, Graber, Schulenberg, and Ebata (1989) related that low or poor scholastic attainment and school attendance are basic proof that transition problems exist since one usually follows the other, although the actual order can vary from student to student. Seidman, Aber et al. continued that transition problems occurring when students enter middle school are more traumatic than at the high school level. The authors added that these transition problems if not resolved can lead to increased rates of high school dropouts, teenage crimes, adolescent drug usage, and suicidal ideations or completions. Seidman, Aber et al. went on to say that school transition problems can bring disorder and possible destruction to the self-system, peer and family relationships, as well as a lifestyle that is harmful and sometimes inescapable. The authors concluded that middle

school is the negative beginning for too many vulnerable students.

Tomlinson (1995) warned that educators must not be fooled by the quiet students, many of whom also go through extreme transition difficulties and academic struggles because of inabilities to read, write, or compute on grade level. He concluded that students at-risk or at remedial levels will continue along these same negative life paths, but quiet may no longer be the descriptive word as the move is made to middle school. Lipsitz, Mizell, Jackson, and Austin (1997) stated that increasing numbers of students are administratively promoted with intellectual deficits in the academic basics, lack higher-level thinking skills, have no sense of moral, social, or ethical obligation to enhance individual growth as future voting, democratic citizens.

Reyes and Hedeker (1993) revealed that a student's inability to make the transition to different school levels has proven to be a predictor of a future high school dropout. Maughan and Rutter (1986) stated that students with poor attendance and/or low grades, two indicators of transition problems into middle school or high school, begin to take negative turns toward dropping out and for some, the turn is irreversible. Larson and Shertzer (1987) related that students unable to make successful school adjustments or transitions run the risk of dropping out at 16 years of age which becomes costly to the individuals, families,

cities, and societies as a whole. Eccles, Lord, and Midgley (1991) stated that when students do not experience a successful school transition, the results include the risk of lowering self-esteem as well as grades which can lead to academic failures and an adult life with few career choices.

Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchel, and Feiman (1994) stated that the transitional effects of entering the first year of middle school cuts across gender and ethnicity lines, with the qualifying factors being poverty and urban environmental life stressors. Mosley and Lex (1990) revealed that students who are affected the most by school transition difficulties are low income, urban, racially varied, and have already experienced a number of stressful life events. Cauce, Hannan, and Sargeant (1992) revealed that minority students from poor neighborhoods on free or reduced lunches experience greater stress levels during the transition to middle school. Seidman, Allen et al. concluded that urban students receiving free or reduced lunches based on parental income can be an embarrassing stress factor.

MacIver (1990) stated that large school populations contending with increasing numbers of students living at or below the poverty level, designated by free or reduced lunches, do not have extra funds to pay for programs that could help ease school transition, thus the student problems continue to increase. Dodge (1983) contended that students learn from peers either positively or negatively and for too

many low-income minority children it is the latter which makes school transition difficult due to group conformity pressures. Quinton, Pickles, Maughan, and Rutter (1993) related that minority children living in negative environments categorized as poor and at-risk have spent the majority of those years around peers of the same nature, and the move to middle school does not create an atmosphere for positive changes in behaviors or attitudes. They concluded that, if anything, adolescence plus peer pressure causes behaviors good or bad to increase because at that developmental level group conformity is crucial.

Ramey and Ramey (1994) related that children from families living in poverty experience more difficulties with school transition. Cauce et al. (1992) stated that for too many minority students the middle school climate itself is distant and not supportive. According to Ramey and Ramey, problems are increased as the children get older and more aware of personal environments and limited life choices. Ramey and Ramey concluded that as children get older an awareness of one's individual life circumstances can create anger, frustration, and school disengagements that unfortunately may also last a lifetime.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and
Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The goal was that sixth-grade students, with assistance from peer tutors and mentors, would be able to resolve first year middle school transition problems.

Expected Outcomes

1. After practicum implementation, there will be a 50% decrease in the number of student-generated help forms (Appendix A) from sixth-grade students asking for academic assistance or peer mentoring.

2. After practicum implementation, 50% of sixth-grade students' failing grades of 0.9 or below on the 5-week interim of a 9-week quarter will improve to passing grades of 1.0 or better.

3. After practicum implementation, student referrals for all sixth-grade students as a group will be reduced by 10%.

4. After the practicum implementation, sixth-grade students will reduce the total number of absences by 10%.

5. After the practicum implementation, 50% of sixth-grade students who have received tutoring or mentoring help during the 8-month implementation period will be able to write at least three school-transition problems or feelings of stress and the resolution strategy which could be used to resolve the problem or difficulty.

Measurement of Outcomes

The first outcome was measured through the collection of all student-generated help forms by sixth-grade students. The total number of help forms asking for academic assistance or peer mentoring were compared with the total number received the previous year.

The second outcome was measured by listing the grades of students from the 5-week interim reports of 0.9 or below and comparing the grades on the tutoring implementation 9-week grade form (Appendix B) or report card for that quarter.

The third outcome was measured by totaling the number of referrals from school records and mentoring forms (Appendix C) for all sixth-grade students at the end of the 8-month implementation and comparing the total number of referrals by sixth-grade students from the previous year.

The fourth outcome was measured by calculating from school records the number of absences for sixth-grade students at the end of the 8-month implementation and comparing the total number of absences for sixth-grade students from the previous school year.

The fifth outcome was measured by calculating the percentage of sixth-grade students able to write at least three school-transition problems. The statements included

feelings of stress and the resolution strategies used to resolve the stated problem or difficulty.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Statement of the Problem

Sixth-grade students were experiencing transition problems throughout the first year of middle school.

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The writer found literature confirming the existence of school transition problems among students entering any new school, but especially those entering at the middle school level. Graber, Brooks-Gunn, and Peterson (1996) stated that adolescent development is described as the search for personal identity, strong self-focus and self-consciousness, for peer acceptance, for a relationship with the opposite sex, and usually for an increase in abstract thinking. They added that new middle school students can be helped through transition problems that are academic, behavioral, emotional, and/or social in nature by an environment that safely promotes positive growth in these adolescent areas through peer mentoring.

O'Brien and Bierman (1988) related that adolescence is a time when peers are very important, which can be helpful in the resolution of school transition problems through the use of peer counseling, positive peer role models, peer-mentors, and peer-tutors. They concluded that as students enter a new school, peers serving as role models, mentors, and tutors can help by explaining or modeling the school's established norms and accepted behaviors.

Cowan, Lotyczewski, and Weissberg (1984) found that when children are shown ways to understand and ease school transition problems, many long-lasting problems such as poor academic achievement, school failure, or even dropping out of school can be avoided. They concluded that teacher-facilitated programs implemented by supportive peers modeling good behavior and academic achievement as the norm through mentoring and tutoring new students are able to adjust to a new school in positive ways. Top and Osguthorpe (1987) related that the benefits are evident to all involved students, whether the completed service work is done as a tutor to a tutee or vice-versa, because, as teachers have stated in-depth, learning occurs when one teaches and repeats a concept to others. Palincsar, Brown, and Martin (1987) stated that peer tutoring benefits both parties, not just the low-achieving tutee but the tutor as well. Palincsar et al. added that the tutor many times learns more by teaching to others because the concepts are verbalized, written, and practiced in examples to help the tutee.

Fantuzzo, King, and Heller (1992) related that it is good for the tutor and tutee to take turns teaching and learning if both parties are at common skill levels, thus each student reinforces and supports the other while learning new material. House and Wohlt (1989) stated that the benefits to tutors and tutees have long-lasting effects,

such as improved scholastic abilities, improved school
attitudes, and increased responsibility and involvement in
one's own learning. Gartner and Riessman (1994) stated that
tutoring helps everyone involved learn how to learn. They
added that as tutors learn material and rework material to
teach at the knowledge level acceptable to tutees, a give
and take process of teaching and learning is created,
allowing both to gain an in-depth understanding on a variety
of academic concepts. Gartner and Riessman continued that as
students enter a new school, mentors or tutors can help ease
transition problems by explaining teacher expectations and
school rules, helping with school work, helping to study for
exams, and serving as guides throughout the new school year.
New students feel comfortable with peer mentors and tutors
because the support system consists of students near in age
who are willing and able to help with academic, behavioral,
emotional, and social problems, which are all a part of
adolescent development, not only school transition.
They concluded that everyone at any age feels better when
sharing problems with someone who has recently been through
the same struggles, but especially adolescents going through
biological changes as well.

Osguthorpe (1984) revealed that even low-achieving
older students allowed to become a tutor to a younger tutee
actually improve because of the teaching responsibilities.

He concluded that mainstreamed special education students,
acting as tutors, also gain improvements in self-esteem as
the younger tutees learn and rely on these tutors for other
mentoring concerns, problems, and resulting advice.
Fantuzzo, Polite, and Grayson (1990) stated that students
working with peer tutors begin to use higher-level thinking
skills more easily and quickly than when working alone. The
authors concluded that struggling students receive immediate
positive feedback and/or corrective praise, allowing
confidence in skill abilities to emerge for future problem
solving. Thorkildsen (1993) revealed that students
considered to be high achievers usually enjoy tutoring or
mentoring other students through personal and academic
struggles. He concluded that these high-achieving students
learn by serving others many valuable lessons of the heart
that can last a lifetime.

DePaulo et al. (1989) defined two types of tutoring as
peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring. They stated that
cross-age tutoring is used with the most success because the
older student is more easily accepted and generally knows
the academic concepts from first-hand experience. DePaulo et
al. concluded that tutoring, whether peer or cross-age
tutoring, can occur in libraries and cafeterias as well as
classrooms. Schrader and Valus (1990) related that cross-age
tutoring works best when the tutor is at least two years

older than the tutee because the tutors are seen as role models, causing a reduction in misbehavior.

Schrader and Valus (1990) concluded that solving math problems is very good because of the use of many concrete examples which helps enhance higher-level thinking and transfer-applications skills for tutors, while beginning the development of those same skills in struggling math tutees. Leland and Fitzpatrick (1993) stated that older low-achieving tutors gained a sense of reading and writing enthusiasm after working and helping younger tutees. They added that improved student attitudes were derived from helping younger struggling students achieve academic success which, in turn, inspired the older formerly unenthusiastic student to improve scholastic achievement. Jason et al. (1992) stated that peers one or two years older who have already made the school transition successfully can be very helpful to new incoming students. They continued that these successful peers have experienced the school setting, have developed positive ways to deal with confusing and stressful transition problems, have mastered positive acceptable behaviors and academics, and understand both formal and informal school rules. Peer mentors or tutors one or two years older serving as role models are more likely to impress new students because of increased developmental stage and age attainment.

Jason et al. (1992) concluded that many low-income and low-achieving students have had negative role models for many years and the chance to encounter positive role models who obey rules and are achieving in school can be a life-enhancing, life-changing experience. Santrock (1996) stated that the use of peers as mentors and tutors is a useful intervention in helping students through school transition difficulties. He concluded that older peer mentors are usually successful working with younger students and that this pairing has proven to be very effective and beneficial for both because students will listen more to a peer, and the mentor gains in self-esteem by helping someone in need.

Labbo and Teale (1990) stated a belief that the tutoring experience gives both the tutor and tutee good reasons to read because each is reading for a purpose either to complete a lesson or in the planning of a lesson designed by the tutor to specifically motivate the tutee. Topping (1989) added to the beliefs in the benefits of cross-age tutoring, as long as both parties are compatible and each participates in the planning of projects that are mutually interesting. He concluded that if the tutor and tutee are really motivated then the benefits of in-depth learning how to learn will occur, which can last a lifetime.

Eggers (1995) related that cross-age tutors helping younger students enhance the learning of both individuals.

Tutors gain a variety of individual problem-solving skills when searching for different ways to teach younger tutees difficult concepts such as math. He concluded that the immediate feedback gives both the tutor and tutee the courage to try more complicated problems because of increased confidence, self-esteem, and skill abilities.

Bajtelsmit and Naab (1994) stated that cross-age tutoring helps improve skills in reading and writing for tutors and tutees because learning environments and activities are created of personal interest to both parties. Crowhurst (1992) related that some of the effects of cross-age tutoring programs are increased student responsibilities in individual learning, a sense of power and control over one's learning prospects, an interest in determining exactly what is read, the ability to select activities which will enhance reading comprehension, and a strong connection between reading and writing to demonstrate comprehension. Schneider and Barone (1997) revealed that cross-age tutoring created students in charge of planning and educating others; and, in return, both parties gained a belief and respect in each other as teachers and learners. The classroom became a supportive environment where learning went beyond reading and writing to mutual respect and self-discovery of previously hidden scholastic talents.

Barone and Taylor (1996) stated that tutoring at any age level was an excellent way to teach responsibility and

to involve all students in the learning process. They
continued that peer tutoring can be very successful if
proper training occurs. The training must include a teacher
modeling the concepts to be taught, tutors must practice
teaching the concepts to each other, then an evaluation must
occur of the teaching methods used by each tutor, and
finally, a continuing reversal of tutor/tutee role-playing
to repeat the process so that tutors learn how to teach in
the ways that are most beneficial to tutees. They concluded
that these types of strategies helped to create confident
tutors capable of competent teaching, but added that one
must be aware that even when both tutor and tutee appeared
to be socializing or somewhat off-task, discussions
afterwards detailing each lesson's positives and negatives
usually revealed that learning and higher-level thinking had
both occurred.

Fantuzzo, Riggio, Connelly, and Dimeff (1989) stated
that all ages and different types of students can benefit
whether as a tutor or a tutee. These authors added that the
comfort levels are high between peer tutors and tutees as
opposed to always dealing with authoritarian adult figures.
They continued that it is good for teachers to become
facilitators and allow students to help each other in the
responsibility and involvement of their own learning and
concluded, "Students who prepared to teach and then taught,
perceived themselves as more intrinsically motivated and

more actively and positively engaged with the learning
environment than students who were not involved in peer
tutoring" (p. 176).

Palincsar and Brown (1984) stated that teachers can
help peer tutors and tutees by teaching and modeling
learning strategies which can be repeated until tutors as
well as tutees comprehend and use the strategies daily in
content areas. Simmons, Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, and Hodge
(1995) related that if there is a shortage of cross-age
tutors then peer tutors can help needy students with the
understanding and completion of daily assignments, but
careful compatible pairings or groupings is essential for
success.

Merrill, Reiser, Merrill, and Landes (1995) stated
that training is essential for mentors and tutors if
positive results are to occur. They added that there are
strategies specific to tutoring which can help low-achieving
students complete assignments with confidence if taught
correctly and practiced for in-depth comprehension and daily
usage. Jenkins and Jenkins (1987) related that peer mentors
or tutors must be trained and facilitated by adult monitors
to be effective. Peer counselors are in training or are
already trained and thus make good choices as mentors and
tutors to ease a variety of sixth-grade transition problems.

Fuchs, Fuchs, Bentz, Phillips, and Hamlett (1994)
stated that peer counselors helping students as mentors or

tutors usually achieve positive results, more often because of the training in counseling and tutoring strategies. Slavin (1997) revealed four successful tutoring guidelines, the first to, "Identify the exercise or assignment and tell the student exactly in what way it will help him or her in learning" (p.323). The second guideline was to, "Praise correct answers as the student completes items in the exercise" (p. 323). The third was to, "Avoid moving to the next item or step before the student has met the objective or performance criterion for each preceding one" (p.324). The fourth guideline was, "At the end of the session, review accomplishments, praise the student, and record the results of the session in a tutor log" (p. 324).

Sprinthall and Scott (1989) revealed the importance of keeping journals or logs in which tutors and tutees make entries of all problems, discussions, and possible resolutions. They concluded that peer tutors were more successful because of preplanning lessons with tutees, evaluating those lessons for positives as well as negatives, and discussing teaching improvements which would benefit all involved.

Casanova (1988) stated that low-achieving as well as high-achieving students improve individual ability levels when allowed to tutor younger students using the teaching method entitled "pause, prompt, and praise." "Pausing for a few seconds allows the student to delay a response while

giving the tutee a chance to think through an answer completely" (p. 14). "Prompting by the tutor gives just enough help so as to allow the tutee to think more clearly about solving a given problem" (p. 14). He concluded, "Praising by the tutor helps to keep the tutee working on task through positive reinforcement" (p. 15).

<u>Description of Selected Solution</u>

The review of literature revealed that the use of peer-counselor-mentors, peer-tutors, and cross-age tutors were good solutions to help ease school transition problems. Specific tutoring strategies were usually successful when implemented with care and training. Peer counselors were an excellent choice for such a program, but if the tutee population was larger than the number of available peer counselors, then older peers could be trained for tutoring purposes alone, allowing the peer counselors to mentor students with behavioral, emotional, and social problems.

Casanova's (1988) teaching method of "pause, prompt, and praise," gave the students being tutored a chance to discover solutions on their own. This writer was impressed with Slavin's (1997) four tutoring guidelines which dealt with identification of assignments, praising correct answers, step-by-step progression through performance criteria, and review of academic gains. The writer agreed with the view of keeping journals or logs in which tutors and tutees made entries of all problems, discussions, and

possible resolutions (Sprinthall & Scott, 1989). The writer agreed with Jenkins and Jenkins (1987) that peer mentors and tutors must be trained and facilitated by adult monitors to be effective. Teachers were an excellent resource for training tutors through modeling of learning strategies in the content areas (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

The writer's school had 38 eighth-grade peer counselors and 79 peer-counselor trainees for the 1996-97 school year. There were 30 trained peer counselors for the 1997-98 school year who were available as peer counselors, mentors, and tutors. Thirty of the seventh-grade peer-counselor trainees for 1997-98 continued the usual counseling training sessions and also served as observers and recordkeepers during tutoring sessions conducted by eighth-grade peer counselors. Students entering the eighth-grade and recommended by teachers were enlisted and trained as cross-age tutors only to help reduce the tutor/tutee ratio.

When behavioral, emotional, and social transition problems occurred, peer-counselor mentors stepped in to help as needed. The writer worked closely with the sixth-grade guidance counselor and peer counseling coordinator in order to facilitate a peer counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program for all sixth-grade students in need of help as the transition was made through the 8-month practicum.

A journal page entry of each peer counseling, mentoring, or tutoring session, detailing the problems, discussions, and possible solutions, was kept and evaluated during the 1997-98 school year. The evaluations were used to improve services to new sixth-grade students for the 1998-99 school year. Efforts were made to enlist more peer-counselor mentors, cross-age tutors, and peer tutors so that one counselor, mentor, or tutor was available for each sixth-grade student in need for the 1998-99 school year.

Report of Action Taken

The writer implemented and facilitated an 8-month practicum in which a peer counseling, mentoring, and tutoring program helped new sixth-grade students throughout the first year of middle school.

Month One: Weeks One and Two

1. The writer introduced the peer mentoring/tutoring program to administration and faculty during two 30-minute seminars.

2. The writer requested that faculty create a list of seventh- and eighth-grade students, not peer counselors or trainees, capable of tutoring sixth-grade students or keeping records of tutoring sessions.

3. The writer taught the tutoring method entitled, Pause, Prompt, and Praise (Casanova, 1988) to chosen eighth-grade peer-counselor mentors and tutors.

4.   The writer taught tutors the four guidelines for
      tutoring all subjects (Slavin, 1997).

Month One: Weeks Three and Four

1.   The writer, along with the sixth-grade guidance
      counselor and peer counseling coordinator, explained to
      all peer-counselor mentors and eighth-grade tutors the
      transition difficulties experienced by sixth graders,
      requiring a year-long program on mentoring and
      tutoring, during two 30-minute seminars.

2.   The writer along with the peer-counseling coordinator
      administered the Peer Tutor Interests Forms to
      eighth-grade students as well as peer counselors
      (Appendix D).

3.   The writer along with the sixth-grade guidance
      counselor administered the Sixth-Grade Student
      Interests Forms (Appendix E).

Month Two: Weeks One and Two

1.   After completion of all Student Interests Forms, the
      writer began the matching process of mentor/tutor to
      sixth-grade student with the assistance of the
      sixth-grade guidance counselor and the peer counseling
      coordinator.

2.   The writer, sixth-grade guidance counselor and peer
      counseling coordinator began the meeting and getting to
      know each other classroom process for all mentors,
      tutors, and sixth-grade students two times each week.

3. Personality and interest matching adjustments were made as necessary during this process so as to promote the best working combinations beneficial for mentoring and/or tutoring.

4. The writer obtained a copy of all sixth-grade 5-week interims which listed those students receiving a failing grade who would officially require tutoring.

Month Two: Weeks Three and Four

1. The writer was present to monitor and facilitate tutors and mentors working with sixth-grade students before school, during school, and after school as needed.

2. The writer had students who had generated help forms (Appendix A) meet with the sixth-grade guidance counselor first, and then meet with the assigned mentor or tutor based on transition problem difficulty.

3. If help forms were not student-generated, the writer had the mentors and tutors continue meeting all sixth-grade students two times each week to continue the getting to know each other process and filling out journal pages (Appendices F and G) for each session.

Month Three: Weeks One and Two

1. Sixth-grade students who received failing grades on the 5-week interim and had received tutoring then went to the teacher(s) and obtained written proof on a form (Appendix B) to see if tutoring had helped with the

attainment of 1.0 or better on the first, 9-week
quarter report card.

2. The writer had the form (Appendix B) stapled to all the
   tutor/tutee journal pages (Appendices F and G) that
   were filled out and filed under the sixth-grade
   student's name.

3. The writer had all sixth-grade students who received
   mentoring during the first 9-week quarter write a
   paragraph explaining if the mentoring help administered
   was useful and if it should be continued.

4. The writer had the paragraph stapled and filed with the
   individual mentoring session forms (Appendix C) as
   proof of success or failure to help that particular
   sixth-grade student.

Month Three: Weeks Three and Four

1. The second school quarter was facilitated and monitored
   in the same way as the first quarter by the writer, the
   sixth-grade guidance counselor, and the peer-counseling
   coordinator.

2. The writer made any problem corrections that had
   occurred between mentors, tutors, and sixth-grade
   students so as to be of greater benefit during the
   second-quarter 5-week interim and second 9-week
   quarter report card.

3. The writer requested meetings with the sixth-grade
   administrator as needed to discuss deeply troubled

students with severe behavior problems so as to find
better ways to solve the student and/or practicum II
implementation problems.

4. The writer tape recorded all adult meetings with each
   group's permission to ease the transcribing process.

Month Four: Weeks One and Two

1. As the second-quarter 5-week interims were generated
   once again, a list of those students failing alerted
   parents and the writer to concentrate the tutoring
   process on those sixth-grade students failing a certain
   subject(s).

2. The writer made a list comparing students with failing
   grades during first and second quarter interims to see
   if tutoring strategies should be changed or enhanced.

3. The sixth-grade students receiving failing grades for
   two interims were assigned a peer-counselor mentor, as
   well as a peer tutor by the writer.

4. The writer, sixth-grade guidance counselor, and
   peer-counseling coordinator met with students
   continuing to fail to work out additional help as
   needed.

Month Four: Weeks Three and Four

1. The writer closely monitored sixth-grade students
   continuing to experience academic and behavioral
   transition difficulties through mentors, tutors, other
   facilitators, and the sixth-grade administrator.

2. Sixth-grade students receiving more than two referrals each 9-week quarter attended meetings with the writer, the sixth-grade guidance counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator so as to help students understand why the referrals were written and to develop other ways to achieve positive future outcomes.

3. The writer continued to monitor all sixth-grade students through the transition year of sixth-grade as the end of the second 9-week quarter came to a close.

4. The writer asked all sixth-grade teachers to list any students still experiencing transition difficulties and who did not seem to be benefiting from the mentoring or tutoring services.

Month Five: Weeks One and Two

1. The writer asked those sixth-grade students who received failing grades on the second 5-week quarter interims to obtain written proof on a form (Appendix B) as to whether or not a passing grade of 1.0 or better had been achieved for the second 9-week quarter report card.

2. The writer had the form (Appendix B) stapled to all tutoring journal session pages and compared to the first 9-week quarter.

3. Sixth-grade students receiving help were asked to write a paragraph again concerning the impact of the continued mentoring and/or tutoring received thus far.

4. The writer met with the sixth-grade guidance counselor and peer-counseling coordinator to discuss the second 9-week quarter overall positive or negative implementation results.

Month Five: Weeks Three and Four

1. Sixth-grade students had received mentoring or tutoring for two 9-week quarters with the writer, sixth-grade guidance counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator facilitating and monitoring the progress.

2. The writer, with the help of the sixth-grade guidance counselor and peer-counseling coordinator, completed an overall comparison report to see if implementation improvements could be made which would further enhance the on-going mentoring and tutoring process.

Month Six: Weeks One and Two

1. The writer met with the sixth-grade administrator to see if a reduction in written referrals had occurred.

2. The writer discussed with the sixth-grade administrator ways to reward sixth-grade students who had made academic and behavioral improvements resulting from the mentoring and tutoring implementation process.

3.   The writer implemented rewards such as the rental and showing of a G-rated movie decided by student popular vote to all improved sixth-graders.

Month Six: Weeks Three and Four

1.   The writer obtained copies of all third-quarter 5-week interims so as to once again concentrate the mentoring and tutoring process on those sixth-grade students failing certain subjects.

2.   The writer compared sixth-grade student names with previous interims to see if the same students were continuing to academically fail and in which subjects.

3.   The writer continued to read the mentoring forms (Appendix C) and tutoring journal pages (Appendices F and G) for implementation enhancement ideas.

4.   The writer, sixth-grade administrator, guidance counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator discussed the comparison results for possible brainstorming solutions.

Month Seven: Weeks One and Two

1.   The writer implemented mentoring and tutoring solution enhancements for sixth-grade students continuing to academically fail or severely misbehave as brainstormed by the sixth-grade administrator, guidance counselor, peer-counseling coordinator, peer-counselor mentors, and peer tutors.

2. The writer continued to facilitate and monitor the on-
    going mentoring and tutoring process as the third
    5-week quarter interims were generated by the faculty.

Month Seven: Weeks Three and Four

1. The writer obtained copies of all third quarter 5-week
    interims for sixth-grade students alerting parents of
    academically failing grades and behavior.

2. The writer began again to concentrate the mentoring and
    tutoring process on those sixth-grade students failing
    a certain subject(s).

3. The writer compared for the third time to see if the
    same sixth-grade students names appeared on all three
    quarter 5-week interims.

4. The writer along with the sixth-grade administration,
    guidance counselor, and peer counseling coordinator met
    with the sixth-grade students continuing to
    academically fail or misbehave after many months of
    mentoring and tutoring to decide if and what kind of
    additional help was needed.

5. The writer did not give up on these students because
    the transition difficulties needed to be solved for
    future progress, thus possible daily mentoring and
    tutoring occurred in the hopes that some improvements
    would result.

6. The writer, sixth-grade administrator, guidance
    counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator were aware

of, met, and discussed the life stressors faced daily

by each of these troubled sixth-grade students.

Month Eight: Weeks One and Two

1. The writer obtained copies of the third quarter
    9-week report cards to determine the number of
    sixth-grade students academically passing and/or
    failing.

2. The writer also checked the report cards for
    improvements in behavior.

3. The writer obtained a list of sixth-grade referrals for
    all four 9-week quarters to determine if a 10%
    reduction was made.

4. The writer obtained school records of sixth-grade
    students absences to see if a reduction of 10% had
    occurred when compared to the absences at the beginning
    of the implementation.

Month Eight: Weeks Three and Four

1. The writer examined journal pages and help forms to
    determine if problems had been solved by the students
    through the mentoring and tutoring program.

2. Sixth-grade students were asked to clearly state and
    write at least three school-transition problems or
    feelings of stress and the strategies used to overcome
    these problems as documented by seventh-grade peer
    counselor trainees in journal entries. The results were
    documented by the writer.

3. The writer, sixth-grade administrator, guidance counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator planned an evening meeting with parents of sixth-grade students continuing to fail academically or severely misbehave after four 9-week quarters of peer mentoring and peer tutoring to help attain passing grades.

4. The writer, sixth-grade administrator, guidance counselor, and peer-counseling coordinator planned a picnic for the sixth-grade students, mentors, and tutors to celebrate four quarters of academic achievement and good behavior attainment.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem was that sixth-grade students were experiencing transition difficulties throughout the first year of middle school. Students experienced difficulty making the adjustment from elementary to middle school. The problems were academic, behavioral, emotional, and social in nature. Students were entering middle school for the first time and were used to an elementary school climate. The middle-school student population and faculty was large and confusing for new, incoming sixth-grade students. Students used to having one teacher now had many teachers and different classes to find and attend on time daily. Some students had no peer support system at a time in their development when peers were very important.

The goal was that sixth-grade students, with assistance from peer tutors and mentors, would be able to resolve first year middle school transition problems. This was accomplished through peer tutoring and mentoring which helped reduce the number of help forms, referrals, and absenteeism. It also increased grades to 1.0 or better on the final 9-week report cards each quarter. Students were also able to write transition problem statements which included resolution strategies.

The following five outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. After practicum implementation, there will be a 50%
decrease in the number of student-generated help forms
(Appendix A) from sixth-grade students asking for academic
assistance or peer mentoring.

Table 1

Comparison of Sixth-Grade Student Generated Help Forms
Asking for Academic Assistance or Peer Mentoring

| Quarter | No. of Students Asking for Academic Help or Peer Mentoring | | Percent Decrease |
	1996-1997	1997-1998	
1	103	9	91%
2	137	78	43%
3	111	18	90%
4	68	18	74%

As shown in Table 1, the number of help forms asking
for academic assistance or peer mentoring was substantially
reduced throughout the 1997-98 school year when compared to
1996-97. The table reveals a reduction in all four 9-week
quarters. The 50% outcome criterion was met for the first,
third, and fourth 9-week quarters only, with percentages
ranging from 74% to 91%. The second 9-week quarter revealed
a reduction of only 43%; therefore, it did not meet the 50%
outcome criterion.

The sixth-grade guidance counselor stated that the
number of help forms in past years had always contained
large numbers of students asking for tutoring help. As

academic progress occurred, the message of where to go for tutoring assistance was passed along by student word-of-mouth. Many students showed up at the writer's door with notes asking for help. As the project was introduced, many of the students would not admit a need for help. When the 5-week interims revealed failing grades, some students still did not want to admit the need for academic assistance. The student word-of-mouth was very important to the project's success.

2. After practicum implementation, 50% of sixth-grade students' failing grades of 0.9 or below on the 5-week interim of a 9-week quarter will improve to passing grades of 1.0 or better.

Table 2

Comparison of 5-Week Interim Grades with 9-Week
Report Card Grades for Tutored Sixth-Grade Students

Quarter	Failing Grades 0.9 or Below 5-Week Interim	Passing Grades 1.0 or Above 9-Week Report Card	Percent of Improved Grades
1	250	131	52%
2	425	251	59%
3	376	134	36%
4	187	124	66%

As shown in Table 2, the 50% outcome criterion was met for the first, second, and fourth 9-week quarters with improved grade percentages that ranged from 52% to 66%. The

third 9-week quarter improved grade percentage was only 36%;
therefore, it failed to meet the 50% outcome criterion. The
students receiving tutoring help achieved passing report
card grades of 1.0 or better.

It was time consuming for the writer to go through each
sixth-grade interim, although when a struggling student came
into the classroom denying that help was needed, it was
important to show the evidence of failing grades
immediately. It was difficult to deny failing grades; and,
as the year continued, the denial ended. Expressions of
gratitude occurred on many occasions for the help given
which improved report card grades.

3. After practicum implementation, student referrals
for all sixth-grade students as a group will be reduced by
10%.

Table 3

Comparison of Sixth-Grade Student Referrals

Quarter	Percent of Students Receiving Referrals 1996-1997	1997-1998	Percent Reduction
1	277	212	23%
2	372	243	35%
3	567	262	54%
4	538	285	47%

As shown in Table 3, there was a reduction in the
number of referrals written for sixth-grade students

throughout the 1997-98 school year when compared to 1996-97. The percent reduction ranged from 23% to 54%. This met the 10% outcome criterion. The sixth-grade Assistant Principal was impressed with the smaller numbers of misbehaving, frustrated students all year. Discussions with the writer revealed that the academic assistance provided contributed to higher self-esteem among the sixth-grade students thus reducing the need to misbehave in order to get individual attention. As the project continued throughout the year, students knew that academic assistance or mentoring was available from knowledgeable peers as needed. Sometimes it was both at the same time.

4. After the practicum implementation, sixth-grade students will reduce the total number of absences by 10%.

Table 4

Comparison of Student Absenteeism

Quarter	No. of Student Absences 1996-1997	1997-1998	Percent Reduction
1	101	3	97%
2	77	10	87%
3	38	4	89%
4	44	11	75%

As shown in Table 4, the 10% outcome criterion was met during all four 9-week quarters for 1997-98 school year when compared to 1996-97. The percentage reduction ranged from

75% to 97%. However, it must be noted that these numbers may have been enhanced by the school's administrative team. There was a deliberate attempt to reduce the number of children externally suspended from 3-10 days. The students were internally suspended on campus. When children are internally suspended, school work is completed in a silent, nondistracting environment. It is believed to be a better solution as opposed to being externally suspended which allows children to be at home alone while parents are at work.

5. After the practicum implementation, 50% of sixth-grade students who have received tutoring or mentoring help during the 8-month implementation period will be able to write at least three school-transition problems or feelings of stress and the resolution strategy which could be used to resolve the problem or difficulty.

Table 5

Student Ability to Write Three School Transition Problem Statements and Resolution Strategies

Quarter	No. of Students Participating	No. of Students Demonstrating Ability	Percent
1	122	62	51%
2	189	68	36%
3	174	80	46%
4	106	81	76%

As shown in Table 5, the 50% outcome criterion for the writing of transition statements was met during the first and fourth 9-week quarters for the 1997-98 school year. The 50% outcome criterion was not met during the second and third 9-week quarters. There could not be a comparison to the 1996-97 school year because it was the first time many students had written transition statements. The transitions revealed location difficulties in a bigger school, academically challenging work, and learning to get along peacefully with other children.

The sixth-grade students were the youngest and smallest in the middle school as opposed to being the oldest and biggest in elementary school. This required adjustments made easily by some and with great difficulty by others. Some students did not understand the meaning of a transition statement. Many enlightening discussions occurred to determine what caused feelings of stress and the various ways one could find a peaceful resolution.

Discussion

The preceding four 9-week quarters of 1997-98 were compared to the four 9-week quarters of 1996-97. The results revealed that outcomes 1 and 2 criteria were met for three 9-week quarters; outcomes 3 and 4 criteria were met four 9-week quarters; and outcome 5 criterion was met two 9-week quarters. Students received peer tutoring and mentoring as needed which resulted in a reduction in student-generated

help forms, referrals, and absenteeism. This increased the number of students achieving 1.0 or better grades on report cards. It also allowed sixth-grade students to express in writing school-transition problems, feelings of stress, and resolution strategies. Many students learned that academic assistance was needed sometimes in order to achieve goals, such as passing report card grades.

Students became excited about individual learning as grades improved. Academic assistance occurred sometimes on a daily basis to provide the necessary help. The first 9-week quarter revealed that 122 sixth-grade students received 250 failing 5-week interim grades. Tutoring and mentoring by 64 cross-age peers occurred during 367 sessions. This resulted in 131 grade improvements by the end of the 9-week quarter report cards. The second 9-week quarter revealed that 189 sixth-grade students received 425 failing 5-week interim grades. Tutoring and mentoring by 77 cross-age peers occurred in 503 sessions. This resulted in 251 grade improvements by the end of the 9-week report cards.

During the third quarter, 174 sixth-grade students received 376 failing grades on the 5-week interim. Tutoring and mentoring by 73 cross-age peers occurred in 321 sessions. The results revealed 134 grade improvements by the end of the 9-week report cards. The last, or fourth 9-week quarter, identified 106 sixth-grade students receiving 187 failing grades. The students received tutoring and mentoring

by 73 cross-age peers during 395 sessions, which resulted in 124 grade improvements on final 9-week report cards.

The 8-month practicum outcome results affirm statements made by the writer based on an extensive literature search. O'Brien and Bierman (1988) related that as students enter a new school, peers serving as role models, mentors, and tutors can help by explaining or modeling the school's established norms and accepted behaviors. Cowan, Lotyczewski, and Weissberg (1984) stated that teacher facilitated programs implemented by supportive peers, demonstrating good behavior and academic achievement, helped new students adjust to schools in positive ways. House and Wohlt (1989) revealed that the benefits to tutors and tutees have long-lasting effects, such as improved scholastic abilities, improved school attitudes, and increased responsibility and involvement in one's own learning.

Gartner and Riessman (1994) stated that tutoring helps everyone involved learn how to learn. New students feel comfortable with peer mentors and tutors because the support system consists of students near in age who are willing and able to help with academic, behavioral, emotional, and social problems, which are all a part of adolescent development, not only school transition. Fantuzzo, Polite, and Grayson (1990) concluded that struggling students receive immediate positive feedback and/or corrective praise, allowing confidence in skill abilities to emerge for

future problem solving. Schrader and Valus (1990) related
that cross-age tutoring works best when the tutor is at
least two years older than the tutee because the tutors are
seen as role models, causing a reduction in misbehavior.
This was an interesting observation for the writer since
most of the cross-age tutors were eighth-grade students.
These students were very mature when compared to sixth-grade
students. In fact, many of the eighth-grade tutors were the
writer's former sixth-grade students. This knowledge started
many humorous discussions about the growth in maturity now
exhibited.

One last disturbing piece of data collected that must
be mentioned involved the number of times cross-age tutors
went to classrooms to tutor sixth-grade students and were
turned away by the classroom teachers. The following are the
times tutoring permission was not given for various reasons,
such as tutee misbehavior or whole class instruction. The
first quarter tutors were told 86 times by classroom
teachers that a tutor was not needed for the assigned
failing sixth-grade students; second quarter the same thing
occurred 230 times; third quarter 64 times; and fourth
quarter 135 times. The number of times tutors were turned
away does not include when students were absent or
suspended. It was a large number of times for cross-age
peers and the writer to comprehend when the same teachers
continued to give failing 5-week interim or 9-week report

card grades. This made the writer think about future recommendations and dissemination carefully. Many of the involved teachers were friends as well as colleagues. When asked by the writer why the extra help was turned down, the common reason was tutee misbehavior. The teachers believed that the sixth-grade students needed to behave properly and earn the right to have a cross-age peer tutor. The assistant principal and principal of the writer's school requested that all future memos concerning cross-age peer tutoring and mentoring be written on school stationary. It was felt that administrative approval including signatures would encourage future teacher participation.

Recommendations

The writer recommends the following in order for cross-age tutoring and mentoring to help sixth-grade students reach individual potential:

1. Students need the opportunity to receive tutoring in all subjects in which failing grades are received and at all times.

2. Teachers need a stronger project introduction for in-depth understanding about the academic assistance for new sixth-grade students undergoing the transition from elementary to middle school .

3. Teachers need to understand that for many children school is the only peaceful, quiet place to complete academic work.

4. Teachers need to understand that a language other than English may be spoken at home, thus inhibiting the caregiver's help with academics.

5. Teachers need to always remember that the main objective is to help create independent learners.

6. Students must understand that strategic learning is a life-long process, much more than 9-week quarter grades.

7. Teachers must be flexible enough to accommodate students with transitional needs on an as needed basis.

These recommendations have been written because students need more help than is possible given today's overcrowded classrooms. Students must actively participate in learning how to learn. The project results confirm cross-age peers can be an important part in helping one another along the path to independent learning. A teacher can no longer be the only fount of knowledge. It becomes an impossible job for one to do alone. Teachers today must be facilitators enabling students to master concepts, complete assignments, and learn in a quality manner from cross-age peers whenever necessary.

Dissemination

The writer has shared the entire practicum results, including the final results, with the current 1997-98 faculty members. The writer also plans to share the report with all faculty members at the opening of the 1998-99 school year. In addition, the writer will contact the county

district office involved with school and student improvement. The writer will request presentations of the practicum and its results at conferences and workshops, both locally and nationally.

The writer is scheduled to teach study skills again to sixth-grade students for the 1998-99 school year. The teaching of this subject allows the writer to meet a large majority of sixth-grade students throughout the year. The writer plans to conduct the cross-age peer-tutoring project again.

The future tutoring list will be formulated by the classroom teachers with the writer's assistance. It is hoped that this will eliminate tutors being turned away as often as the current project results revealed. The school's administration has requested that the writer continue to promote cross-age peer tutoring at parent and school improvement meetings for the new school year.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT SERVICES: HELP FORM

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SERVICES: HELP FORM

Date_____

Name_____

Grade_____

I need to see:

_____Assistant Principal   _____Guidance Counselor

_____'Gain' Counselor   _____ESE Specialist

_____Peer counselor   _____Peer Tutor

_____Chapter I Counselor   _____Security Specialist

_____School Resource Officer

Reason:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student Schedule:

	Teacher	Room Number
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

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APPENDIX B

TUTORING IMPLEMENTATION 9-WEEK GRADE FORM

APPENDIX B

TUTORING IMPLEMENTATION 9-WEEK GRADE FORM

Date:_____

Teacher Name:_____

Subject:_____

5-week Interim Grade:_____

Directions: Please circle the correct school quarter and write the report card grade for the sixth-grade student listed above.

9-week Quarter (s):   One   Two   Three   Four

The 5-week Interim was_____.

The 9-week Report Card grade is_____.

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL PEER-COUNSELOR MENTORING FORM

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL PEER-COUNSELOR MENTORING FORM

Directions: Please print correct information in spaces

below. File under counseled student's name.

Date:_____

Name of peer counselor:_____

Name of sixth-grade student to be helped:

_____

Concern or problem:

_____

_____

Discussion of concerns:

_____

_____

Possible solution(s):

_____

_____

How can this concern be avoided in the future?

_____

_____

Did your peer-counselor/mentor help you today? (Yes or No)

_____

What can your mentor do to help you better in the future?

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

PEER TUTOR INTERESTS FORM

APPENDIX D

PEER TUTOR INTERESTS FORM

Directions: Please print all information requested below.

Date:_____

Peer Tutor's Name:_____

List your favorite interests_____

_____

_____

List the school subjects you achieve good grades in and that
you would feel comfortable teaching to others:

_____

_____

How many times each week would you be able to tutor
sixth-grade students?_____

How many sixth-grade students each week would you be able to
tutor? _____

APPENDIX E

SIXTH-GRADE STUDENT INTERESTS FORM

APPENDIX E

SIXTH-GRADE STUDENT INTERESTS FORM

Directions: Please print all information requested below.

Date:_____

Student Name:_____

List your favorite hobbies or interests:

_____

List school subjects in which you achieve good grades:

_____

List school subjects in which you could be helped to achieve

better grades:_____

_____

Would you like a peer-counselor-tutor to help you with

school work?_____

Would you like a peer-counselor-mentor to talk to about

concerns or problems?_____

How many times each week could you use a peer-tutor?_____

_____

How many times each week could you use a peer-counselor

mentor?_____

APPENDIX F

PEER TUTOR JOURNAL PAGE

APPENDIX F

PEER TUTOR JOURNAL PAGE

Directions: Please print all information in the correct
spaces below. When tutoring session has been completed,
staple to matching Tutee Journal Page. Place both pages in
file under tutee's name.

Date_____

Peer Tutor's Name_____

Sixth-grade tutee's Name_____

Subject and lesson taught:

_____

Teaching Procedure:

_____

_____

_____

What did your tutee do well?

_____

_____

How can your tutee improve?

_____

_____

What did you do well as a tutor?

_____

_____

What can you do to improve as a tutor?

_____

_____

APPENDIX G

SIXTH-GRADE TUTEE JOURNAL PAGE

APPENDIX G

SIXTH-GRADE TUTEE JOURNAL PAGE

Directions: Please print all information in correct spaces below. When tutor session is completed, please staple to the back of the peer-tutor page. Place in file under your name.

Date_____

Name_____

Subject and lesson taught:

_____

What were you able to do well?

_____

_____

What can you do to improve?

_____

_____

What did your peer-tutor do well?

_____

_____

How can your peer-tutor help you more next time?

_____

_____

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