A Comparison of Student Perceptions in an Alternative School

Kari Mueller-Fuentes
Longwood University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.longwood.edu/etd
Part of the Educational Methods Commons

Recommended Citation
A Comparison of Student Perceptions in an Alternative School

Kari Mueller-Fuentes

Longwood College

This Thesis was Approved By:

Dr. Peggy Tarpley: Peggy S. Tarpley

Dr. Ruth Meese: Ruth Meese

Dr. Chris Bjornsen: Chris Bjornsen

Date: May 1, 1997
Abstract

Students at risk of failure and students with emotional and behavioral disorders have been known to have lower self concepts, earn poorer grades, and have less motivation to achieve when compared to their peers. Nontraditional methods of teaching have been known to be successful with these students; however, a number of students at risk do not benefit from alternative forms of teaching. In this study interviews were used to examine the difference in perceptions of an alternative program by five students who successfully participated in the program and three students who were not permitted to return to the program. Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRM-SF) questionnaires were also used to determine differences in moral development between students who were presently in the alternative program, students who were no longer in the alternative program, and students who had never been associated with the program. Results indicated that the majority of the subjects who were in the alternative program at some point in time viewed the program in a positive way. The SRM-SF scores did not discriminate among the three groups; however, some interesting discrepancies in the scores may lead to future research in this area.
Acknowledgments

It is mandatory to have a committee in order to compose a thesis. This thesis could not have been completed without the help of many people. My committee, Dr. Tarpley, Dr. Meese, and Dr. Bjornsen, have been of the greatest amount of assistance. Without this committee I may have lost all focus on what it was I set out to study. An enormous amount of thanks goes out to Dr. Tarpley who was patient enough to take my calls on weekends and accept me in her office for substantial periods of time without any appointment. I am very grateful to the three of these kind professors for taking the time to read through the myriad of drafts I turned in on my very own recycled paper.

All thesis time was not spent simply in the offices of the committee members. I also want to thank my wonderful husband, Arturo, for handling my sudden feelings of being overwhelmed with a gentle reminder that the next time I shouldn't wait to do things at the last minute. Both Arturo and my parents kept me steered in the right direction. They constantly provided me with the reason I ever chose to write a thesis in the first place (I often forgot). I am sure that without Mom, Dad, and Arturo my spirits to get this thesis done would have been absent. Thank you for all your help! I love you.
Table of Contents

List of Appendices by Title ................................................................. 5
Review of the Literature ................................................................. 6
Method ............................................................................................ 21
  Subjects and Setting ........................................................................ 21
  Procedures ..................................................................................... 22
  Instruments .................................................................................... 23
  Data Analysis ................................................................................ 24
Results .............................................................................................. 27
  Subjects .......................................................................................... 27
  Subject Themes .............................................................................. 34
  Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form .................................... 35
Discussion ......................................................................................... 44
  Limitations ..................................................................................... 47
  Suggestions for Further Research .................................................... 48
References ......................................................................................... 49
Appendices ......................................................................................... 52
Appendices by Title

Appendix A: Table of Questions .............................................. 52
Appendix B: Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form ...................... 54
Appendix C: Letter of Consent to the Superintendent of the School Division ........ 60
Appendix D: Letter of Consent to Parents ........................................ 62
Appendix E: Letter of Consent to Subjects ........................................ 64
Appendix F: Table 1, Moral Stages ............................................. 66
Appendix G: Tables 2-5, Subject Themes ........................................ 68
Appendix H: Tables 6-7, Reliability ............................................. 73
Appendix I: Figures 1-2c, SRM-SF Graphs ...................................... 76
A Comparison of Student Perceptions in An Alternative School

Students at-risk of failure or of dropping out of school and students with emotional/behavioral disorders are often found to share similar characteristics. Studies have shown that these students tend to have an external locus of control (Nunn & Parish, 1992; Mills, Dunham, & Alpert, 1988). The students studied believed, for example, that their behavior had little to do with the outcomes that follow. At-risk students and students with emotional and behavioral problems have been found to have lower self concepts as compared to peers without disabilities (Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992; Streeter & Franklin, 1991). In the school systems examined, these students earned poor or failing grades, had significantly lower scores on achievement tests than other students (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Nunn & Parish, 1992), and were often less motivated to achieve as compared to high or middle achieving students (Nunn & Parish, 1992). They were known to have a negative perception of their own ability to learn and experienced many disciplinary problems both in and out of the school (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Mills et al., 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992).

According to Mills, Dunham, and Alpert (1988), all humans are believed to be born with a natural tendency to function with common sense, maturity, and with an interest in learning. The events that may move youth out of this natural state can occur within high stress level families which often experience problems such as alcohol abuse, drug use, or neglect (Mills et al., 1988). When families of students at-risk of failure were assessed, 74% of those students rated their families as being moderately to severely dysfunctional (Franklin & Streeter, 1995). It was reported that parents who are
constantly worried about their ability to do well as a parent can give a bad impression to their child (Mills et al., 1988). The child may interpret their parent's constant worry as being a problem with themselves. This misinterpretation was thought to instill in them an insecure belief system upon entering school which could cause the child to have an imbedded defensive behavior towards others (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Mills et al., 1988). The students' insecurity, therefore, was believed to contribute to their increased feeling of alienation throughout the school years. They developed a negative attitude toward school and negative beliefs about themselves in relation to school (Mills et al., 1988).

Due to repeated failures and loss of self-esteem in the school, the negative attitudes these students held toward school increased more and more with each failure and rejection (Mills et al., 1988; Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

According to Brendtro and Long (1995), the lack of social bonds between the parent and child were believed to be related to problems with behavior and motivation later in life. When there was no time spent with a child, no teaching of conflict resolution skills, or no communication of behavioral expectations, the bond between parent and child was malnourished. Brendtro and Long expressed that this ill established bond lessens the child's chance of developing perspective taking skills that are important for self-concept and understanding other individuals' emotions. Children and adolescents with poor social skills were often reported to have difficulty imagining the thoughts and feelings of others. They were known to treat people harshly without feeling the remorse that would normally be present with the knowledge of another's point of view (Chalmers & Townsend, 1990).

Certain perspective taking abilities are thought to be necessary in moral reasoning in any individual (Kohlberg; 1976). Therefore, if a child's perspective taking
skills were not well developed, his/her moral development might have been retarded. Child-rearing practices and peer interactions have been found to be related to moral reasoning (Enright & Sutterfield, 1980; Walker & Taylor, 1991). Walker and Taylor (1991) believed children of parents who are supportive, listen to their child empathetically, and use praise and humor showed more moral gain than children whose parents tended to lecture, threaten, and be sarcastic. Peer interaction involving participation in social events and opportunities in holding leadership roles were thought to be conducive to moral development as well (Enright & Sutterfield, 1980). Child-rearing practices and peer interaction were acknowledged as playing a major role in either helping or hindering a child's overall social development (Mills et al., 1988; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Brendtro & Long, 1995; Enright & Sutterfield, 1980; Walker & Taylor, 1991).

The basic needs of a child lacking social bonds have not been met (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mandler, 1988). These researchers stated that the child's conscience becomes impaired and he/she does not internalize values that are typically learned through families and social interactions (Brendtro & Long, 1995). The basic needs that were reported to be mandatory in order for children to feel secure and able to succeed were being capable and successful, being cared for and accepted, being able to exercise power and control, being generous and helpful to others, and being provided with opportunities for stimulation and fun (Curwin & Mandler, 1988).

**Traditional Teaching Approaches**

Much attention has been focused on students at-risk of failure and students with emotional/behavioral disorders. Traditional approaches to teaching and managing these students have often proved ineffective (Curwin & Mandler, 1988; Brendtro & Long, 1995;
Mills et al., 1988; Peacock Hill Working Group, 1991; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Streeter & Franklin, 1991; Baker & Sansone, 1990). Traditional approaches have typically used the punitive model of behavior management (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Mills et al., 1988). The punitive model has focused on changing the students' negative attitudes and behaviors by using punishing consequences or "scare tactics" that in some way try to convince the student of the seriousness of his/her attitude or behavior (Mills et al., 1988; Curwin & Mendler, 1988). This model holds the ideal that adults are the authorities and always know what is best for all students. However, it was believed that by using punitive consequences with those students who defy what teachers demand, the student can be humiliated or embarrassed. This was thought to result in behaviors which become even worse with each consequence as students attempt to retaliate for the disrespect which is imposed on them (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). An approach such as this, which punishes, was perceived as excluding the student and making him/her feel even more alienated from the teacher and other students (Brendtro & Long, 1995). Curwin and Mendler (1988) reported that humiliation and embarrassment techniques can show the student that he/she is not a valued member of the class and that his/her thoughts are incorrect or unworthy. The student may then feel he/she must depend on others for decision-making. Such dependence was found to result in a loss of dignity and further erosion of skills and controls needed to use and direct behavior in the future (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). The student was believed to enter a vicious cycle of low self-esteem, dependence, and external locus of control.

Traditional approaches to teaching and managing the behaviors of students at-risk of failure and students with behavioral disorders have also focused on positive
reinforcement in order to change negative behaviors (Mills et al., 1988). No long-term success has been correlated with this practice, however, because it does not help students use higher and mentally healthy levels of functioning (Mills et al., 1988). By using positive reinforcement to change negative behaviors, students exchange their unwanted behavior for some material item(s). This process was reported to have had little long-term success because it is not a result of the student changing his/her thinking patterns, it is a change in what the student is receiving. According to Kohn (1994), external motivators did not change the emotions or cognitions that underlie behavior. Once a student is promised a reward for acting properly, Kohn (1994) believed he/she then has a reason to stop doing so when a reward is no longer earned for that behavior. With the termination of rewards, people are thought to return to the same behaviors that were present before a reinforcement program began (Kohn, 1994).

According to Kohn (1994) rewards and punishments were viewed as similar in that both manipulate an individual's behavior. Kohn (1994) stated that rewards are simply another form of control a teacher can have over students. Rewards involve doing "things to children rather than working with them" (Kohn, 1994, p.1). Good values should be grown internally and when facing a decision students should have to ask themselves "What type of person do I want to be?" as opposed to "What will I get for doing what they want me to do?" (Kohn, 1994, p.2). Students at-risk and students with behavior problems expressed a desire for a more informal and nontraditional approach to learning (Nunn & Parish, 1992).

**Alternative Teaching Approaches**

Many alternatives to traditional approaches of teaching and managing behaviors of students at-risk have been created. Because the causes of many of these students'
problems have been known to stem from dysfunctional family life, numerous interventions have been aimed at involving the families or parents (Abikoff & Klein, 1992; Baker & Sansone, 1990; Brendtro & Long, 1995; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Nunn & Parish, 1992; Streeter & Franklin, 1991). These interventions have mainly trained parents on techniques such as behavior modification, parenting skills, and parent management (Abikoff & Klein, 1992). Significant amounts of improvement in behavior or attitudes of students at-risk have not been correlated with this sort of treatment (Abikoff & Klein, 1992). An attempt to get families more involved in the schools has also been evident (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Streeter & Franklin, 1991; Mills et al., 1988). It was stated that parents can assist by developing contracts, by motivating their child for better attendance (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Streeter & Franklin, 1991), or by becoming a part of an educational team which works together to help with the student's social, behavioral, and family problems (Streeter & Franklin, 1991).

Another approach that has been attempted to get families more involved in their child's healing process is the multidimensional approach (Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Streeter & Franklin, 1991). This approach was said to recognize the complexity of the many factors placing students at-risk of failure and to offer various levels of assistance to the students. Multidimensional approaches made health, social services, educational services, and community services accessible to the students and their families. System of care services, which are networks of mental health and other services organized to meet the multiple needs of students, have been created. These services were child centered and family focused. The intention of system of care services was to enhance the dignity of the family and child by respecting the family's goals and wishes and
maximizing their involvement in the planning of delivery services (Skiba, Polsgrove, & Nassnom, 1996). A system of care taken one step further was thought to provide wraparound services created for specific individuals' needs and delivered by friends, family, or community members. Local services are “wrapped around” the student and family with the hopes of supporting that student in the community. Skiba, Polsgrove, and Nassnom (1996) believed that an important feature of this approach is case management. In many situations, the schools have had case managers and systems coordinators as a part of the school so that all of the services can be tied together to help the student (Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Streeter & Franklin, 1991). Streeter and Franklin (1991) stated that the multidimensional approach to learning transcends academic skill deficiencies and focuses more on problems that go beyond traditional schools. The Peacock Hill Working Group (1991) believed that the treatment should be matched to the problem that is occurring in the student. Therefore, a multidimensional approach should expose the student to various types of environments and address the important components of the student's ecology (Peacock Hill Working Group, 1991).

A second philosophy, the wellness model (Mills et al., 1988), suggested that the school has the role of providing an educational setting which is attractive to both the faculty and the students (Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Mills et al., 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992). By making school appearance important and allowing students to help decorate and beautify it, the message that students are valued and respected would be perceived (Carr, 1995). The schools should produce “happy customers” and promote a positive psychological environment which is consistently safe, loving, upbeat, and empathetic toward students (Bre tendro & Long, 1995; Franklin & Streeter, 1995; Mills et al., 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992). Researchers believed that adults in the school should model
responsibility, maturity, and positive relationships among other adults and students (Mills et al., 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992). Many secondary school programs for students at-risk were reported as using modeling, role-plays, and feedback as a source of correcting negative patterns of behavior (Peacock Hill Working Group, 1991; Curwin & Mendler, 1988). As a result, researchers believed students had more contact with personnel and peers and would develop positive affective relationships and social bonds within the school (Nunn & Parish, 1992; Mills et al., 1988). This also contributed to the students increased sense of belonging in the classroom and attainment of advanced morale (Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992; Brendtro & Long, 1995; Enright & Sutterfield, 1980). Students at risk of failure were then perceived as benefiting from extra support systems (i.e. teachers and peers) who might be of assistance to them in successfully demonstrating their competencies in school (Baker & Sansone, 1990; Nunn & Parish, 1992).

In order to counteract the negative self-concept students with emotional/behavioral disorders often acquire, diverse learning experiences which compliment each students' style of learning were deemed necessary (Nunn & Parish, 1992). These students need to know that it is normal and understandable to want to give up when the feedback they receive is typically not encouraging. Students at-risk must know they can succeed and that their successes will be recognized (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). The main focus for students at-risk of failure should be on success, not failure (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992). The wellness model also recommended that students be armed with positive alternatives to discipline and taught how their own thoughts are related to their perceptions, emotions, and behaviors (Mills et al., 1988). Nunn and Parish (1992) believed the schools should
provide carefully monitored experiences which demonstrate the relationship between the student's behaviors and the good or bad outcomes that follow. This knowledge of the link between behaviors and outcomes was thought to contribute to the student increasing his/her self-awareness (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

Similarly, a third alternative model, Discipline with Dignity (Curwin & Mendler, 1988), emphasized the importance of positive school interactions and self-awareness (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Curwin and Mendler (1988) created a problem solving and prevention approach that teaches self-awareness, critical thinking, and self-control. In order to meet the basic need of exercising power and control, students have to feel they can influence events that apply to them (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). By building a sense of control over themselves, the students at-risk of failure can learn to see how their own actions affect what happens to them. Asking questions to these students, such as, "What are you doing?" as opposed to "Why are you doing that?" was thought to encourage them to learn responses which focus on their own behavior. Curwin and Mendler (1988) stated that this focus on their actions and their being a part of the consequences results in growth of the students' internal locus of control. They were thought to begin to see that it is their behavior that makes the consequence occur and by controlling their behavior they can control the consequences.

Students at-risk of failure should be an active part of their own healing process (Brendtro & Long, 1995). The quality of decision-making and problem solving must be emphasized with these students (Mills et al., 1988; Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988).
Choosing, predicting, and planning are three major steps that should be taken with students with emotional/behavioral disorders in order to strengthen their concepts of self-awareness and self-control in the classroom. Social contracts in which students develop classroom rules and consequences were thought to enable students to serve as key decision-makers. It was reported that peers are more likely to remind each other of broken rules when they, not the teacher, own the rules. Student compliance was found to be higher when the students have ownership over decisions made in the classroom (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Empowering children and giving them real, meaningful choices in the classroom was thought to strengthen their decision-making ability (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Offering choices such as turn taking, consequences for their behaviors, or which math problems to complete have been found to show students they are capable of making decisions (Mills et al., 1988; Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

If students have had little control in school, as was the case reported in many traditional classrooms, they were viewed as poor at predicting consequences (Brendefro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Teachers who are caring and who teach with an interesting, varied, and predictive routine were believed to provide students at-risk with important structure which helps prediction skills and decision-making ability. The predictable routine helped students learn what to expect with given behaviors (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Practicing, by sharing real or made up incidents with students, was also beneficial to their problem solving and decision-making skills. “What do you think will happen if ...?”, or “When the noise level gets too loud, what are things you might do?” are some questions that can be asked by the teacher or students to elicit thoughts of consequences for behaviors and possible solutions (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).
Curwin and Mendler stated that having a plan to manage events creates a feeling of control in the students. When there was a plan, the students were reminded of the alternatives (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). For problems such as anger control, for example, Peacock Hill Working Group (1991) believed that the plan for the student may be to recognize his/her anger and the causes of it and then choose some techniques to prevent the anger from occurring again. Students can plan by helping the teachers solve problems (Curwin & Mendler, 1988) such as, "I'm feeling that there is a lack of motivation in many of you lately, let's think of a plan to get all of you motivated again!"

Direct teaching of social skills through daily class meetings or peer groups was also thought to be helpful in developing positive social interactions and self-awareness (Lowenstein, 1989; Carr, 1995). During group meetings, students plan different aspects of class such as special events. They discuss problems that have come about in class and develop solutions for those problems as a group (Carr, 1995). This created a shared sense of control and responsibility between students and the teacher (Lowenstein, 1989).

Brendtro and Long (1995) believed that in order to reclaim the schools' attitudes and habits toward students at risk of failure, attachment, achievement, autonomy, and altruism must be part of each class. Attachment and achievement matched the earlier mentioned interaction with teachers and peers and with the focus for students at-risk experiencing success, not failure (Brendtro & Long, 1995; Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Nunn & Parish, 1992; Mills et al., 1988). Brendtro and Long viewed attachment as well established social bonds that lead to prosocial behavior and a sense of belonging. Achievement was the idea of high expectations for students at risk of failure with a refusal to accept anything less than success (Brendtro & Long, 1995). With autonomy
present in a classroom, students were believed to be challenged to be independent and
not depend on others for decision making and problem solving. Through making the
students autonomous, teachers were to demand responsibility rather than obedience
(Brendtro & Long, 1995). According to Eakin in the guide to implementing Discipline
With Dignity (1991), the definition of responsibility was "making the best decision you
possibly can with the information you have available" (p. 20). Students should be
required to gather information, see what options are open to them, and choose the
alternatives they believe will be the best (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). It was perceived
that responsibility is learned by strengthening the students' methods of choosing,
predicting, and planning (Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Altruism was the act of helping
oneself and others (Brendtro & Long, 1995). This contributed to meeting one of the
basic needs of all humans, to be generous and help others (Brendtro & Long, 1995;
Curwin & Mendler, 1988). Curwin and Mendler (1988) believed that students at risk of
failure and students with emotional/behavioral disorders lose touch with this need
because they shut out their physical and emotional pain. Students should be given
opportunities to realize they can assist others and be a valuable part of the community.
When engaged in projects in which others are relying on them, students were thought to
develop a sensitivity to the needs of others (Carr, 1995). By helping others, these
students were healing themselves and realizing their self-worth (Brendtro & Long, 1995;
Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

The alternative teaching methods reviewed were just a few of the numerous
alternative models currently available to teachers of students with behavioral disorders.
Many commonalities were apparent across these models, however. Each stressed the
importance of motivating students at risk of failure to succeed and not leaving failure as
an option. The encouragement of positive social interactions within the school and community for these students was also a vital component of many alternative programs. Through positive social interactions, students' sense of belonging to school was believed to be acquired. Teachers who show respect for their students, who can listen and understand them, were expected to receive respect from their students in return. Alternative models were believed to allow students to have more control in school and provide opportunities for students to make choices that are important. These programs emphasized the student's responsibility for the choices that he/she makes and the student's acceptance of the consequences following his/her decisions. Most models were based on meeting the basic needs of all humans in order to make students at risk of failure and students with behavioral disorders realize that they are valuable human beings.

An Alternative School

One alternative school program that was investigated in this study used many of the same practices previously mentioned as approaches to teaching and managing the behaviors of students at risk of failure. The type of students served in this alternative program were at risk of failure according to both teacher assessments and standardized test scores. These students were asked to participate due to their lack of interest and success in the regular high school. The general underlying principles of the program were that failure is not an option and that students needed to take responsibility for their education and for themselves.

Students played a vital role in planning and running the alternative program. They helped define the rules and establish individual and group goals which they attempted to achieve through cooperating with one another. Each day, class or "family"
meetings were held in order for the students to plan for the day and, if necessary, discuss problems existing within the class. In addition, these meetings afforded students the opportunities to develop solutions as a group. This alternative program emphasized the importance of a sense of community among students and teachers.

The program began at 7:40 AM, Monday through Friday. The students met in family groups for homeroom. Family groups consisted of ten to fifteen students and one advisor who was the teacher for that homeroom. As members of a family group, students were responsible for helping reduce absenteeism, complete homework, and improve achievement within their own family group. The academic areas that all students were required to take were Biology, History, Computer Services, and a Discovery course. They rotated to these classes with their family group. Students were permitted to get up at anytime to use the restroom or to get a drink or snack. Soda and snack machines were provided for their use. The alternative program ended at 11:43 AM. At this point, students either went upstairs to attend lunch plus two other classes, or they left for the day to work with an employer. The students who left for work were active in the work/study program offered by the high school.

Statement of Purpose

In comparison to their peers, students at risk are known to have lower self-concepts, to earn poorer grades, and to be less motivated to achieve. The external locus of control that they acquire makes it difficult for them to understand the relationship between their behaviors and the consequences that follow. As a result, students with emotional/behavioral disorders often experience disciplinary problems. They have an instilled sense of insecurity due to the child’s needs of feeling successful, accepted, in control, generous, and happy or stimulated not being met. The traditional
methods of behavior management are thought to punish and humiliate these students, leaving them feeling even more alienated and disrespected than they did before receiving a punishment.

Methods that have proven to be effective with students with emotional/behavioral problems involve using many services that support the student and family. By providing safe and loving school environments in which students are given opportunities to interact positively with teachers and peers, students at risk of failure can form social bonds within the school. A focus on success and on control over oneself allows the student to increase his/her self-concept and understand why consequences occur as they do. Students who can choose among alternatives, predict consequences, and have a plan to manage events become better decision-makers and problem solvers.

The information that has been reported about students at risk of failure distinguishes what is and what is not effective. Alternative methods of teaching were stated to be successful with most students having emotional/behavioral disorders. However, while most students at risk of failure have benefited greatly in alternative programs that use effective methods of behavior management, other students have not. Differences between the students who have succeeded in alternative programs and students who have not succeeded in these programs are not known. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify differences among students at risk of failure and students with emotional and behavioral problems which might have impacted their degree of successfulness in an alternative program.
Method

Subjects and Setting

Eight of the subjects for this study were selected from an alternative school housed within a high school. The school is located in a rural county of Virginia, which contains mainly working class residents. The alternative school was established to meet the needs of students who were at risk of failure in the regular high school. The program consisted of four classrooms and one meeting room. Four teachers were in the program and approximately forty to fifty students were enrolled. Students were invited to join the alternative program either because of personal interest or teacher recommendation. They were required to fill out an application and complete an essay about why they believe they would benefit from the program before they are considered for enrollment.

For the first time since the program's establishment, students in the alternative school had to reapply in order to return to the alternative program for the 1996-1997 school year. Some students were accepted back into the program; however, others were not. Those who were not accepted back either dropped out of school completely or returned to full-time enrollment in the regular high school.

Thirteen subjects within the ages of 14 through 18 were used for the present study. Five of the thirteen subjects were enrolled in the program at the time of the study. These subjects were students who were also enrolled for the 1995-1996 academic year. These students made up Group one. Three of the subjects were students who were part of the alternative program last year (i.e. 1995-1996 school year) but did not return for the 1996-1997 school year. One of these three subjects could not return due to a conflict in scheduling and the other two subjects were asked to leave the
program. These three subjects were attending the regular high school at the time of the study. These three subjects together made up Group two. The remaining five subjects were students from the regular high school who were matched to the five subjects enrolled in the alternative program in the 1996-1997 school year by sex and grade. Group three consisted of these five subjects.

Procedures

Qualitative, structured interviews were used in this study. The interviews took place in a separate room in which disturbances were limited to emergencies only. The researcher interviewed one subject at a time and asked identical questions to each subject. A list of the guided questions used can be found in Appendix A. Prior to the interviews, the subjects were told that there were no right or wrong answers, but they should share their personal opinions and perceptions. The interview sessions were recorded with the permission of the subject and transcribed at a later time. The questions asked reflected student characteristics and attitudes toward the school. Only the eight subjects who were at one point a participant in the alternative program were interviewed.

A pilot study was conducted prior to the beginning of the research to determine the appropriateness of the guided questions. There were three subjects used in the pilot study. All of these students were within the same age range of the thirteen subjects. They were residents at an alternative camp for adolescents with behavioral problems.

Before the interview sessions took place, all thirteen subjects were given a questionnaire, which assessed moral understanding. This instrument is known as the Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form (SRF-SF) developed by Gibbs, Basinger, and Fuller (1992), (Appendix B). The SRM-SF is a standardized questionnaire that
allows individuals to evaluate the importance of moral values. It consisted of brief
questions in which the subjects rated and provided written explanations of the
importance of the value presented in that question. Due to a chance that some subjects
who were in the alternative program may have had deficiencies in their written
communication skills, the questionnaires were administered orally to each of the eight
subjects. The researcher read through each question with each subject and audio-
taped his or her oral responses. At a later time, the researcher transcribed the
responses and proceeded with analyzing the data in the same way that it would have
been scored as a written questionnaire. The five subjects in Group three wrote down
their answers to each question. These responses were scored at a later time as well.

Letters of consent were obtained from the superintendent, the parents or
guardians of all subjects, and the subjects (see Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix
E). All participants of this study were assured confidentiality of their responses. No
names of schools, administrators, faculty, or students were identified in any part of the
study. All subjects were notified that, if at any given time they no longer wanted to
participate in the study, they were free to resign without facing any penalty.

instruments

Two instruments were utilized for collecting data in this study. The researcher
individually interviewed the eight subjects. Each subject was asked ten identical
questions. The researcher (see Appendix A) formulated the table of questions used.
Adaptations of questions utilized in Odney and Brendtro's (1992) interviews with student
who were grading their schools were used. During the interviews, all subjects were
audiotaped, with permission of the subject. The recording was transcribed at a later
time for data analysis and all tape recordings were destroyed.
Each subject completed a Sociomoral Reflection-Short Form (SRM-SF) which is located in Appendix B. This questionnaire consisted of eleven brief questions that asked students to rate the importance of six moral values. The six moral values evaluated were contract or promise, truth, affiliation, life, property and law, and legal justice (Gibbs et. al, 1992). The questions contain lead-in's for sociomoral reflection such as, "Think about when you've made a promise to a friend of yours" and evaluation questions like, "How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, to friends?". Gibbs, Basinger, and Fuller (1992) designed the questionnaire in a way that the subjects rate the addressed values on three different levels of importance, (i.e., very important, important, not important) and follow their rating with an explanation of why that value holds that importance to them.

The SRM-SF was designed to be a production measure of moral understanding that would be less time consuming than Kohlberg's Moral Judgement Interview (MJI). The SRM-SF's reliability was investigated with a sample of 509 subjects. Subjects included public school students in the fourth, sixth, and eighth through twelfth grades; delinquent youths, university students, and adults. The reliability of the instrument was acceptable with a test-retest correlation of .88, p< .0001 and Cronnach's alpha of .92. Acceptable concurrent validity was shown between the MJI and the SRM-SF at .69, p<.0001(Gibbs et al., 1992). Further information on the measure can be obtained from the reference manual.

Data Analysis

The responses from all interviews were analyzed qualitatively. In order to achieve validity and reliability the researcher first had the subjects verify the transcribed interview to be sure their true feelings and opinions were recorded. If the subject felt
his/her transcribed response(s) were perceived incorrectly, changes that needed to be made were completed and then rechecked by the subject. Once the responses were correctly transcribed, the researcher and an additional Special Education professional examined the responses to determine themes. Then, the researcher chose two adults, not involved with the study, to code subject responses for thematic content. Independently, the adults categorized a randomized list of interview statements into the themes determined by the researcher. Once there was 80% or higher accordance among the researcher and adults, interrater reliability was considered achieved.

The moral development level of the SRM-SF questionnaire responses were assessed according to the criteria provided in Gibbs, Basinger, and Fuller's (1992) reference manual. These criteria were created from Kohlberg's four stages of moral development (Gibbs et al., 1992). Stage one reflects a superficial outlook of moral worth, stage two is concerned with instrumental thinking patterns, and stages three and four encompass mature moral understanding (Gibbs et al., 1992). A table of further descriptions of the four stages can be found in Appendix F. Thinking which reflected adaptations of Kohlberg's four stages of moral development were detected using the SRM-SF reference manual, which contains criterion justifications (CJ) for each moral judgement stage and transition level. CJ's served as "skeletal forms" (Gibbs et al., 1992, p.46) of sociomoral reflections that guided the researcher to the specific stages into which the subject's responses fit. Subject's responses could range from a stage one rating through a stage four rating, including transition stages (i.e. Transition 1/2, 2/3, 3/4). Overall scores on the SRM-SF consisted of the primary summary score in the assessment, the Sociomoral Reflection Maturity Score (SRMS), which is the mean of the item ratings. By calculating the SRMS a Global Stage was then assigned to the
questionnaire. This Global Stage represents the developmental area in which the SRMS is located. The Global Stage is found within a ten level scale in which the levels (stages) are separated by a .25 range. Moral type identification also could have been an option in attaining overall scores, however the researcher felt that distinguishing the moral types of the subjects would not be related to the purpose of the study.

The data obtained from the interviews and the SRM-SF provided the researcher with subject moral development level and subject perceptions of the alternative program. Interview data allowed the researcher to view the subjects’ perceptions of themselves, the school, adults, and classmates. The SRM-SF data provided insight into how the subjects rated moral values and levels of moral understanding they fell into. It was believed by the researcher that information provided by the SRM-SF questionnaires could be tied into the subjects’ perceptions of responsibility, generosity, problem solving, and social relationships.
Results

Subjects

Subjects were placed into three separate groups. Group one consisted of students who were in the alternative program for the 1995-1996 academic year and continued with the program in the 1996-1997 school year. This group contained a total of five subjects who were members of the alternative program for two to four years. The grades that the subjects were in ranged from ten through twelve and their ages were 16 through 17. Subject one was a seventeen-year-old white male in tenth grade. He had been in the program for two years. Subject two was also in the second year with the alternative program, a African-American female, in the tenth grade, and sixteen years old. The third subject in Group one was a seventeen-year-old white male in the tenth grade. He had been in the program for two years as well. Subject four, an African-American male who had been with the alternative program for four years, was in twelfth grade and seventeen years old. The fifth subject was in the program for two years, a white female in the tenth grade, and seventeen years old.

Group two was made up of three subjects who were part of the alternative program in the 1995-1996 year, but also did not return to the program for the 1996-1997 school year. These subjects were full time students in the regular high school upstairs from the alternative program. Their subject numbers are subject six through subject eight. Group two's subjects were either sixteen or seventeen years old, in grades nine through twelve, and had spent one to two years in the alternative program. Subject six was a seventeen-year-old white male in the twelfth grade. He had been in the program for two years prior to the 1996-1997 year. Subject seven spent one year in the alternative program. This subject was in twelfth grade and was a seventeen-year-old
white female. The eighth subject was a white male who was in the program for one year. He was in ninth grade and sixteen years old.

Group three contained five students from the regular high school who had never been associated with the alternative program. Group three's subject numbers begin with subject nine and run through subject thirteen. Their ages ranged from sixteen to nineteen years old, and they were in grades nine through eleven. Subject nine was a white male, in tenth grade and sixteen years old. Subject ten was a sixteen-year-old white female in ninth grade. The eleventh subject was a male, in eleventh grade and seventeen years old. Subject twelve was a white male, in tenth grade and nineteen years old. Subject thirteen was a sixteen-year-old white female in the tenth grade.

Interviews

The structured interviews (Appendix A) administered to Group one and Group two were analyzed by groups by the researcher. Question one responses consisted of good, an A student, and average. One subject from Group one and one subject from Group two rated themselves as being good or an A student. Four subjects from Group one and two subjects from Group two believed they were average students. Question 1a yielded the responses: someone you can trust, a good attitude, smart, follows rules, and keeps up with work, stays focused. One subject from Group one thought a good student was "somebody you could trust to be there." Two subjects from Group one and one subject from Group two identified a good student as a person with a good attitude, that is smart, and follows rules. One subject from Group one and one subject from Group two felt a good student keeps up with work and "stays focused on what they are in school for."
Question 2 yielded responses that were mainly concerned with getting in a lot of trouble, receiving bad grades, and being under too much pressure upstairs. Four subjects from Group one and all three subjects from Group two stated that they became a member of the alternative program because they were getting bad grades and in a lot of trouble upstairs. One subject from Group one reported the reason for being in the program as "...upstairs work, I mean, I could do it, but it was too much pressure." When asked question 2a, all five subjects from Group one and one subject from Group two claimed they were better students once they came down to the alternative program. One subject from Group two thought of himself as a better student in the program "once in awhile" and one subject from Group two stated "it (her behavior) was worse down here...because there was a lot of trouble makers down here last year."

Question 3 asked the subjects how they felt about being a student in the program in the 1995-1996 year. All five subjects in Group one, and two of the three subjects in Group two, expressed that they enjoyed the program. Statements such as, "I feel good", "I love it", "very privileged and lucky", "it's done a lot for me- I'm glad they have it for us", and " I liked being down here" were mentioned by these seven subjects. One subject from Group two, however, said, "I felt like I was on a tight rope all of the time because they expect so much from you." Answers to question 4 fell into one of two categories: the subjects either felt accepted by their peers in the program or they felt isolated. All subjects in Group one felt accepted, along with one subject from Group two. Two subjects from Group two mentioned feeling isolated or not feeling any sense of family. Subjects' responses to feeling the way they did about their peers (question 4a) ranged from others helping them out (i.e. "We'll be down here and everybody get along and we talk to each other about our problems and stuff") to people not caring
about the program. One subject from Group two and all subjects from Group one believed they were accepted because others downstairs helped them and spoke to them about problems. One subject from Group two said, "Me and two other girls got in right much trouble and whenever trouble came along it was guaranteed us, we could be asleep and we did it." She believed that this constant blaming was what led her to feel isolated. The other subject from group two stated feeling no sense of family because people didn't care about the program.

The answers to question 5 were unanimous. All eight subjects reported a difference between the teachers who are in the program and those who are not. They discussed how the teachers in the alternative program "take more time with one person, instead of just throwing stuff on the board and saying 'Do it!'" These teachers were said to explain instructions better, be "a lot more open" and "easier going", "more like your friends than teachers", and "they don't fuss" with students. One subject from Group two, however, mentioned that "there were a lot of things that we learned that we wouldn't have learned upstairs, but, there are also a lot of things that we didn't learn that we should have learned." This subject considered this a problem because once she was in classes upstairs in the 1996-1997 year, she felt she had missed out on some things that the regular high school teachers taught.

All subjects from Group one and two subjects from Group two disagreed with question 6. These seven subjects claim to have felt that the teachers in the program always thought they could do well. One subject from Group two did, at one point in time, believe that one teacher in particular "turned his back" on this subject. The types of actions teachers took to cause the subjects to feel as they did (question 6a) were; always trusting the students, verbally praising the students, helping the students with
their work, and scolding the students. The one subject from Group two said the scolding from the teachers made it hard to believe they thought she could do well. One subject from Group one stated that the teachers always trusted him. Three subjects from Group one and two subjects from Group two reported verbal praise such as, "You're doing a great job", "Keep up the good work", or "You're a good leader for down here", as the action teachers took that made the subjects believe they could do well in the program. One subject from Group one said "They are always behind you and they are helping you just take your time, never pushing you to do things real fast."

All eight subjects stated they were able to make their own decisions in the 1995-1996 school year (question 7) and that it was important to them to make decisions (question 7a). When asked what type of decisions they made in the 1995-1996 year, the subjects' responses ranged from creating consequences for people in trouble to making bad decisions (i.e. acting in the wrong ways). One subject from Group one made decisions about consequences for others. Three subjects from Group one and one subject from Group two claimed to make decisions about field trips, class rotations, and annual themes for the program. One subject from Group two stated making some rules for the alternative program. Two subjects from Group one made good decisions, which kept them out of trouble and one subject from Group two made "some pretty bad ones about my (her) behavior." If given the opportunity, some of the subjects would have liked to make more decisions (question 7b). Another subject from Group one wanted to make decisions concerning how everybody got along in school. One subject from Group one would have liked to expand the alternative program because of its effectiveness. A subject from Group two would cut down on the amount of reading and another subject from Group two would have wanted to decide whether or not certain
people could stay in the program. He said, "...if I could stay here, I would have stayed down here." Two subjects from Group one and one subject from Group two were happy with the amount of decisions they were making or have made.

Question 8 deals with how the subjects were corrected for wrongful behaviors. Three of the subjects from Group one and two of the subjects from Group two said that when somebody broke the rules, the student would talk about the behavior(s) downstairs in a town meeting or alone with the teachers. One subject from Group two and two subjects from Group one discussed how the students were sent upstairs for severe behaviors (i.e. physical fights) and suspended. When the subjects were asked if the correction of the behavior kept them from misbehaving again (question 8a), all subjects but one said yes. This one subject from Group one stated, "they could've put me out for good and it really wouldn't have mattered...because it's just more students look at being suspended as 'Good thing I don't have to be in school no more.'." This subject's reason for coming back to school after a three-month suspension was not because a lesson was learned but because it was very close to the subject's graduation date. One subject from Group two claimed, "I learned my lesson, but some of their ways of correction were too mentally depressing." This subject did not think it was appropriate to expose one student's problem to all of her classmates. In reply to question 8b, this subject from Group two stated a preference to being kicked out, while the prior subject from Group one thought discipline should be based on what the student is working toward. The other subjects who were in agreement with the discipline they had received believed the corrections were helpful for various reasons. Two subjects from Group two said it was helpful because they were "not cut any slack" and they were treated "no differently than anybody else." One subject from Group one stated that
having a chance to explain yourself makes the corrections better. Another subject from Group one thought bad behaviors were prevented because when a student from the alternative program was in trouble upstairs, it made the entire program look bad. The subject stated, "If one person did bad it kind of reflected on the whole program. That person is in (the alternative program), they are bad kids. So they knew if they did something bad it would kind of put the whole program down."

All eight subjects reported enjoying helping or giving to others (question 9). Five subjects from Group one and two subjects from Group two believe that they had chances to give to and help others in the alternative program in the 1995-1996 school year (question 9a). One subject in Group two described only having some chances to help others in the program. Three of the subjects in Group one and all three of the subjects in Group two helped others with their school work and/or working through a problem. Two subjects in Group one helped the teachers and two other subjects in Group one told of the community service in which they participated.

The final question (10) asked the subjects to describe the type of school that would be motivating for them. Four subjects from Group one and one subject from Group two suggested that a school similar to the alternative program would get them to come to school everyday. Some characteristics described by these subjects which made the program motivating were "teachers that understand", "more activities", and "more freedom." These subjects also reported that the program was "like another home...you're happy to go see your family" and "everybody gets along and plus the way they teach is more interesting." One subject from Group one and one subject from Group two wanted a school where everybody could get along and have fun learning. Two subjects from Group two would have enjoyed a school with "more freedom to do
what we want to do." A subject in Group two also stated that "teachers shouldn't be so robotish", they should "loosen up and talk to you like you're human instead of pets."

**Subject Themes**

Four themes were extracted from the responses to the structured interviews. These themes were titled Discipline, Decision Making, Teaching Methods/Interaction, and Social Environment. Discipline entails treatment which corrects behaviors. Any statement that mentioned the method in which behaviors were attempted to be corrected or the consequences received for behaviors was considered to be in the Discipline category. The definition used for decision making was the freedom one has to make choices either alone or within a group that may or may not directly affect that individual. Comments that discussed the ability or inability of subjects to make their own decisions while in the alternative program were recorded under the Decision Making theme. Teaching Methods/Interaction was defined as the way teachers instructed lessons in the classroom and how they communicated with and acted toward their students. The Teacher Method/Interaction theme consisted of quotations made by subjects which indicated a type of method or interaction the teachers in the program used with the subjects. The definition for Social Environment was the conditions surrounding and effecting one's perceptions of that environment and of those individuals present in that environment. This theme included concepts of family and respect. Statements, which identified the subjects' general feelings about being a part of the alternative program and the impressions these subjects received from other students in the program, were classified as Social Environment statements.

The various quotations from the subjects in Group one and Group two were divided into their corresponding themes. These statements were further broken down
into negative and positive statements for each theme (See Appendix G, Tables 2-5).

Interrater reliability was achieved at the appropriate levels for thematic identification and for positive and negative statement identification among the four themes (See Appendix H, Tables 6 and 7). Two raters' opinions were assessed in order to arrive at these levels of reliability.

**Sociomoral Reflection Measure - Short Form**

Subjects from all three groups were administered the SRM-SF questionnaire (Appendix B). The mean scores of each questionnaire, which are titled Sociomoral Reflection Mean Scores (SRMS), ranged from 2.94 to 1.95. The SRMS's were assigned to a Global Stage that stood for the developmental region in which each SRMS score was located. The Global Stages earned by the thirteen subjects were as low as Stage 2 and as high as Stage 3 (see Appendix F for stage descriptions). Therefore, the moral development stages of the subjects were within four consecutive intervals. See Appendix G, Figure 1 for subject SRMS's and Global Stages.

The researcher reviewed the subjects' responses to each question in the SRM-SF questionnaire across groups. Group one's ratings to question 1 ranged from a 2.5 developmental level to a 3.5 level. Group two ratings were from Stage 2 through Stage 3. Rating levels for Group three ranged from the 2.5 level to the 3.5 level of development. Question 1 asked about the importance of keeping promises to a friend. The responses given for this question are known to identify the developmental level of contract with friends of the subject responding. Stage 2 ratings are earned when responses show instrumental consequences for keeping a promise. An example from one subject is "somebody is gonna look at you differently if you promise something and then don't keep it." A 2.5 rating indicates concern for the friendship. "They trust you
and believe that you will do whatever you promised", or "your friends depend on you" are responses made by subjects who were rated at the 2.5 level. The idea that breaking a promise "might hurt your friendship" lies within the Stage 3 developmental level. Keeping a promise "shows they can count on you for other things as well." This thought also can be a concept of Stage 3 development. A 3.5 rating was received if the subjects believed that keeping a promise should be a generalized action where the results are desirable for all parties. One subject stated, "You can lose respect or trust between the two of you" when a promise is broken. Therefore, by keeping the promise the respect and trust remain between friends.

Contract question 2 deals with the importance of keeping a promise to anyone. The ratings found in Group one were Stage 2 through level 3.5. Group two ratings were as low as Stage 1 and as high as level 3.5. Ratings from Group three ranged from level 2.5 through Stage 3. A Stage 1 rating showed that the individual thought about keeping promises in a physicalistic way. That person would be labeled, "it would make them look at me...like I'm a liar", if the promise is not kept. A response such as, "you're not gonna keep your promise to them if you don't know if they are going to keep one with you", was scored at Stage 2. An example of level 2.5 responses, which provided thoughts of empathetic role-taking and prosocial intentions, was "if you don't keep your promise no one's going to believe you when you say you'll keep a promise." The subjects who scored at Stage 3 were concerned with how they appeared to others. They stated that whether or not one keeps a promise "makes an impression on how you are...they are not gonna think very highly of you if you don't keep it" and "you don't want them thinking you're a jerk." At level 3.5 a focus is on conscious feelings. Keeping a promise would make someone feel like a "responsible guy." As one subject stated "that
is your word, that's who you are", distinctly placed herself into the 3.5 moral developmental level.

Question 3 is a contract question as well, which asks about the importance of parents keeping promises to children. Group one ranges were between levels 2.5 and 3.5. The range for Group two was Stage 3 to level 3.5, and for Group three, levels 1.5 to stage 3. Level 1.5 development is response to this question was marked by the idea of unilateral authority. The subject who was rated at the 1.5 level suggested, "in some cases it is important to keep promises to a child, but it really does not matter as much." Other subjects stated, "children rely on" their parents and "they are gonna feel real let down" if the promises get broken. These ideas would be examples of developmental level 2.5. Stage 3 involved mutual and prosocial reasoning. Responses such as, "if you don't keep your promise to a little child, it really hurts them", or "that really disappoints a child" were classified as Stage 3 responses. "They're setting an example for their children" was a reason given by a subject which indicated a 3.5 moral development level. At this level, consequences of keeping a promise to a child became intrinsic. By keeping a promise the child's future could benefit and "children will learn to trust their parents."

The truth question (number 4) yielded ranges of Stage 2 through level 2.5 in Group one, Stage 1 to level 3.5 in Group two, and Stage 1 through level 2.5 in Group three. The responses to why telling the truth was important that were rated at Stage 1 were "if you lie a lot, people are gonna know that you are a liar" and "you have to tell the truth." These two thoughts used labels and rules as reasons for telling the truth, which placed them in the Stage 1 category. One subject stated that "telling the truth is very important, it could mean friendship or not friendship...life or death." This showed that
the subjects viewed telling the truth or not as resulting in predictive consequences (level 1.5). Stage 2 identified those who tell the truth because it is to their advantage and they would rather not get caught. "You just lie and get caught in another lie and it keeps like a cycle and you keep lying and lying and lying" so "if you don't tell the truth, sometime it will come out anyway." At level 2.5 the concept is still partially focused on whether the individual will get caught in a lie and partially on that individual's conscious feelings. A subject said he told the truth "so you (he) don't have to worry." The 3.5 level addresses various concepts for telling the truth. The subject who scored at the 3.5 developmental level responded "certain circumstances call for certain words." This response acknowledged that not only must one consider oneself and the relationships that he/she is in, but also the outcomes that the truth will have in certain circumstances. This acknowledgment placed this response into the 3.5 level.

Questions 5 and 6 are based on affiliation with parents and friends. Question 5 asked how important it was for children to help their parents. Scores for answers to this question ranged from level 2.5 to Stage 3 for Group one. Group two scores were from Stage 2 to level 2.5. Group three had a high score of 3.5 and a low at Stage 2. Responses at the Stage 2 level indicated the importance of helping based on an exchange. "When you want to do something they'll remember all the help you gave them and it give you a better chance to get what you want" and "they have helped you a lot" are examples of Stage 2 responses. When responses to this question entailed a necessity to help the parents, they were considered to be at level 2.5. Answers like, "they need support too", or "they can't do the things they once did", showed that these subjects thought helping their parents was important because they need help. The Stage 3 level was based more on the prosocial intentions which the subjects wished to
give their parents. Children should help so "they (the parents) get that extra feeling that you are trying." Responses at the 3.5 level of development consisted of orientations of obligation that demonstrated a growing relationship between the parent and child. One subject said "it shows your parents that you are responsible." Another subject stated, "The child learns by helping people, but I think they learn better by helping their parents." Both of these subjects scored at the 3.5 developmental level.

Question 6 dealt with saving the life of a friend. Group one ratings on question 6 ranged from level 2.5 to Stage 3. The ratings Group two received fell between level 2.5 and level 3.5. Group three scores ranged from Stage 2 to Stage 3. The lowest rating received by all subjects for this question, Stage 2, was based upon the possible advantages that can come from having a friend. "Keeping as many friends as you can is important because one day friends will be all you have", this quote taken from a subject demonstrated the advantage this subject saw for keeping a friend. Examples of responses from level 2.5 are "my friend needs help just like anyone else", and "I feel bad for them, I don't want to lose my friend." These statements served as transitions between Stage 2, where keeping a friend was to an individual's advantage, and Stage 3, where the well being of the friend was the most important issue. Out of love for a friend, in Stage 3, one "wouldn't want to see them get hurt or die." At level 3.5 responses such as, "you can build some kind of bond between your friend", identified the purpose for saving a friend as causing the relationship to grow.

Questions 7 and 8 focused on the value of life. The importance of saving a stranger's life was addressed in question 7. All of Group one's responses were scored at Stage 2. Group 2 only had one scorable response which received a 3.5 developmental level rating. The scores in Group three ranged from Stage 2 through
level 2.5. At Stage 2, subjects mentioned some sort of exchange or preference. An exchange such as, "even if you don't know somebody, they might do it for you, so why not do it for them" was typical of Stage 2. Preferences were shown through statements regarding not trusting strangers or saying, "I don't like total strangers until I get to know them." Level 2.5 responses were similar to Stage 2 responses. An example of level 2.5 would be "that person you are helping would probably help you, so you should help that person." Level 3.5 indicated the perspectives that individuals have about life. One subject made it clear how he felt, "there ain't nothing more precious than life."

The importance of living even when one does not want to live was the issue raised in question 8. Group one ratings ranged from Stage 2 to Stage 3. Developmental level 2.5 was the only level achieved for Group two. Group three had a wide range of Stage 2 through Stage 4. Responses which demonstrated freedom for people to do what they wanted were scored at Stage 2. Statements such as, "if they want to live, they want to live, if they don't, they don't" and "that's their business", were indicative of subjects' feeling people had the freedom to do as they pleased with their lives. At level 2.5, the subjects felt they should save a life "because tomorrow they (that person) may want to live." Stage 3 was rated based on the subject's appreciation of life. One subject said, "I wouldn't want to see anybody die." Another subject who scored on this level believed that sometimes it's all right to assist people in their death if they are in tremendous pain. He stated that by doing this he could put "people to death the easy way, without making them suffer." The response that was scored as Stage 4 was representative of disapproval of self-pity and characterized by a will to live life to its fullest. This subject stated, "just because they don't want to live doesn't mean they cannot live a full and productive life."
Reasons for obeying the law and not stealing frequently were the topics in questions 9 and 10 of the SRM.-SF questionnaire. Question 9 focused on the importance of not taking others belongings. Group one's ratings ranged from Stage 2 to level 2.5. Group two had a wider range with a low rating of level 1.5 to a high rating of Stage 3. The ratings in Group three ranged from level 1.5 to Stage 3 as well. Stage 1 entailed responses which showed concern for the physical consequences of stealing. The quote "If you take something someone is going to hurt you for it when they find out" was an example of a response that would receive a Stage 1 rating. At level 1.5, there was still concern about the physical consequences; however, the concerns were more generalized, such as, "You will usually end up in an argument over what you took" or if you don't steal you "won't get in trouble." Stage 2 dealt with exchanges (i.e., "if it's not yours, don't mess with it") and predictive consequences (i.e., "you could get in trouble"). The idea of relationships and empathetic role taking played a large part in level 2.5 development. The subjects claimed, "I wouldn't want nobody taking nothing from me" and "you work hard all your life to make a living...and then somebody goes and takes things from you." Stage 3 development stressed the expectation of the value items may have to people. One subject summed the idea up well, "a lot of things are very important to people and a lot of things have memories."

The issue of obeying the law was discussed in question 10. The subjects were asked to provide reasons for why they felt obeying the law was important or not. Group one ratings ranged from Stage 1 development through Stage 3 development. Group two had a range of level 1.5 to Stage 2. Finally Group three's range was Stage 1 to Stage 2. The Stage 1 responses were specific to obeying the law because it is a law. The subjects who scored at this level believed the law to be important because
"everybody has to obey the law." Level 1.5 and Stage 2 responses were very similar in that both addressed the disadvantages of not obeying the law. However, Stage 2 responses about consequences were more definitive. For example a level 1.5 response was, "it's the only way you can stay out of trouble", and a Stage 2 response was, "if you don't obey the law, you go to jail." At level 2.5, the subjects viewed breaking the law as a possible danger to others (i.e., "you might hurt somebody else by breaking the law"). The subject who scored at Stage 3 believed that sometimes it was important to break the law (i.e., "for some people you have to do things to survive that don't always obey the law").

The final question (11) addressed the topic of legal justice. This question asked subjects to give a justification for sending people who break the law to jail. Group one ratings to question 11 ranged from Stage 2 to level 2.5, Group two ratings were level 2.5 across the whole group, and Group three received the score of level 1.5 to Stage 2. A level 1.5 rating was assigned to responses that reflected a belief of the law breaker never committing a crime again if he/she was sent to jail. One subject stated, "for serious crimes they should (put them in jail) so these people never commit them (the crimes) again." This response was scored at the 1.5 developmental level. Stage 2 development was marked by the idea that if the lawbreaker did not go to jail, he/she would continue breaking the law. Some subjects replied, "they would do the same thing over and over", and "they will keep on stealing or whatever they did wrong." Subjects who believed that it was important to send people who do not obey the law to jail because they will learn from that experience received a score of level 2.5. These subjects said, "people who break the law should be in jail" and "people got to get the message by seeing other people (put in jail)." People can get the message, according
to the subject, by observing that those who kill or break the law go to jail. Therefore, they would think before committing a crime.

Average ratings for each of the eleven questions in the SRM-SF were calculated across Group one, two, and three. A graph of this distribution can be found in Appendix I, Figures 2a, 2b, & 2c.

The questionnaire ratings were compared among two raters to determine interrater reliability. This was determined by achieving a mean absolute discrepancy of no more than .20 points, 80% agreement of Global Stages within one interval, and 50% exact Global Stage agreements. These standards for interrater reliability were minimal for acceptance according to Gibbs, Basinger, and Fuller's (1992) reference manual.
Discussion

The results indicated that there was an overall positive attitude toward the alternative school. It appeared that the alternative program encompassed forms of student attachment, achievement, autonomy, and altruism which Brendtro and Long (1995) reported to be beneficial in any class containing students at risk of failure. Student attachment was evident through the statements subjects one through eight made about their social environment. Only two subjects of the eight interviewed mentioned not feeling accepted by the students and teachers in the alternative program. These two subjects were the two subjects from Group two who were not permitted to return to the program for the 1996-1997 school year.

A majority of the subjects in Group one and Group two reported having achieved more once they were placed in the alternative school. This increase in achievement was addressed by the subjects through their statements of how their grades and behavior improved and how they began to enjoy school once they became members of the program. The subjects indicated that teachers in this program showed the subjects they cared, took time to listen to the students, and taught in interesting ways. These methods the teachers used may have served as an important structure for these subjects and helped them with prediction skills and decision making (Curwin & Mendler, 1988).

Autonomy served a big role in the alternative program as well. These subjects were empowered to make decisions about rules, goals, punishments, field trips, rotations, and annual themes. By meeting as a group when conflicts arose or decisions had to be made, the subjects were provided with chances to become better problem solvers and be more responsible for their actions. Meetings such as this have been
known to allow students to come together to solve problems as a group, resulting in a shared sense of control and responsibility (Carr, 1995; Lowenstien, 1989).

There was no question about altruism being a building block of this alternative program. All subjects claimed to enjoy helping others. They participated in community service, assisted teachers, or helped other students understand a concept with which they might have been having a hard time.

One subject in particular seemed to skew the perceptions of the alternative program. While almost all of the other subjects spoke positively about the program, she did not feel she benefited from it at all. She was not accepting of the group meeting aspect of the alternative program. This may account for her lack of success in the program. The basic needs that Curwin and Mendler (1988) suggested were mandatory to have met for students at risk were all of the elements that created a group meeting. By not participating in the meeting, she may have missed the caring that was felt, the decision making that took place, the giving of time and energy, the fun that the students had, and the feeling of success for working through a problem. This subject viewed the meetings as being “totally wrong”, or as “scolding” and “stoning.” Therefore, she probably never felt the security of being accepted, in control, or provided with enjoyable opportunities within the group. The other subject who was asked to leave the program also reported not feeling a sense of family. Perhaps this is the reason these two subjects were not successful with the alternative program.

The SRM-SF results among all thirteen subjects did not show much variability among groups. Of the five subjects who scored the highest on the SRM-SF, three of those subjects mentioned during their interviews that the teachers in the program were supportive of them by telling them they could be leaders in the program. This may be in
accordance with Enright and Sutterfield’s (1980) notion that opportunities in holding leadership roles can be conducive to moral development.

By viewing the individual scores of the SRM-SF, Group one and Group two appeared to be compatible. When the means between the group scores were calculated, there was only a .01 difference. Group three scores were a bit lower. This might have been due to the fact that the five subjects in Group three had never been exposed to an alternative program where peer interaction, responsibility, and leadership were important elements. This lack of exposure to these opportunities might have slightly hindered their moral development.

Averages of groups over each question provided information that was more specific to each aspect of the SRM-SF questionnaires. The questions that had large discrepancies between the group means were based on keeping promises to friends and helping parents and strangers. Oddly enough, Group two’s means for the questions about saving the life of a friend or stranger were much higher than Group one and Group three’s means for those questions. However, when asked about helping parents, Group two’s mean was much lower than Group one or Group three’s mean. The subjects who did not succeed in the alternative program might not have seen the need to help others unless there was a crisis or direct consequence involved. Possibly, they did not value helping their parents as much because they did not see their parents in a life or death situation and they did not foresee any positive or negative consequence resulting from helping.

The question asking about keeping a promise to a friend yielded a lower average score for Group two as compared to groups one and three. This lower average may have accounted for the lack of contract these subjects reportedly had with the rest of the
alternative program. They might not have seen any importance in keeping a promise or deal they made with students in the program. These deals could have pertained to behavior, attendance, or simply obligation to the program as a whole.

Some questions had overall low ratings from all three groups. The question pertaining to telling the truth indicated that none of the subjects are extremely close to a morally mature understanding of that concept. Another question that was rated low has some relation to the issue of honesty. That question was about obeying the law. Perhaps these low scores were a result of the young ages of the subjects', however, it also could have been that these subjects have learned that they do not enjoy being caught in a lie or a crime. Therefore, they told the truth and obeyed the law to avoid getting in trouble. This concept paralleled that of Kohn (1994), where the reinforcement (i.e., negative) did not result in the subject's changing their thinking patterns, but rather it altered what the subjects were receiving. It might have been possible that if these subjects knew they would not get in trouble for lying or committing a crime, they would have done it.

Limitations

This study had various limitations. Due to lack of availability of students who were not asked back to the alternative program, Group two was small and not very representative of students who do not succeed in alternative schools. More concrete results might have been determined with a tighter method of control over which subjects participated in the study. Matching subjects exactly on age and achievement amongst all groups could have produced more specific results. Also, due to lack of volunteers and time the researcher's ratings of the SRM-SF were compared with only one rater's
ratings. This could denote that the scores calculated for the SRM-SF questionnaires could have been more accurate if two raters were used.

**Suggestion for Future Research**

It would be interesting to evaluate what discrepancies lie between the sociomoral development of high achieving students and students at risk of failure attending an alternative school. The characteristics of many alternative programs seem to be related and might even foster moral development through stressing group goals, generosity toward others, and responsibility.

This study did not indicate any major differences between students who were successful in an alternative program and those who were not. In the future it may be useful to collect more academic and behavior related information recorded by the schools in order to study more specifically how these students may differ. Research involving a much larger number of subjects from alternative programs that are similar to each other across the country may yield results which could show precisely why some students at risk are not benefiting from these programs. This is an important area in which research must continue. Many students are falling through the cracks in this quickly developing educational world. These students need a plan where they feel accepted and motivated and can develop a positive outlook of themselves and their futures.
References


APPENDIX A

Table of Questions
Table of Questions

1. What kind of student do you consider yourself to be?
   Possible Probe: What makes a good student?

2. What do you think made you qualify to be a member of the program downstairs last year? Were you a better student downstairs than you were upstairs?

3. How did you feel about being a student in the program last year?

4. Last year, did you feel that you were part of a family and accepted by others, or did you feel like you were isolated from others? What do think made you feel this way?

5. While in the program downstairs last year, did you think the teachers differed from teachers upstairs? How so?

6. Did you feel that any of the teachers downstairs didn’t believe you could do well last year? What kind of things did these teachers say or do that makes you think that?

7. Were you able to make your own decisions last year? Is making decisions important to you? What kind of decisions did you make or would you like to be able to make?

8. How were you corrected for behaviors that were against school codes last year? Do you think it was helpful in keeping you from breaking the rules or regulations again? What do you think made it helpful or would make it helpful?

9. How do you feel about giving to or helping others (i.e. students, family, people in the community)? Do you think you had chances to give and help others in the program last year? How so?

10. What type of school environment would motivate you to come to school each day, willing to learn, and happy to communicate with your teachers and fellow students?
APPENDIX B

Sociomoral Reflection Measure-Short Form

(SRM-SF)
Social Reflection Questionnaire

Name: ______________ Date: ____________

Birthdate: ___________ Sex (circle one): male female

Instructions

In this questionnaire, we want to find out about the things you think are important for people to do, and especially why you think these things (like keeping a promise) are important. Please try to help us understand your thinking by WRITING AS MUCH AS YOU CAN TO EXPLAIN-EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO WRITE YOUR EXPLANATIONS MORE THAN ONCE. Don't just write "same as before". If you can explain better or use different words to show what you mean, that helps us even more. Please answer all the questions, especially the "why" questions. If you need to, feel free to use the space in the margins to finish writing your answers.

SRM-SF (code #: ____________ )
1. Think about when you've made a promise to a friend of yours. How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, to friends?
   Circle one: very important  important  not important
   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

2. What about keeping a promise to anyone? How important is it for people to keep promises, if they can, even to someone they hardly know?
   Circle one: very important  important  not important
   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

3. How about keeping a promise to a child? How important is it for parents to keep promises, if they can, to their children?
   Circle one: very important  important  not important
   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?
4. In general, how important is it for people to tell the truth?
   Circle one: very important important not important

   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT
   (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

5. Think about when you've helped your mother or father. How important
   is it for children to help their parents?
   Circle one: very important important not important

   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT
   (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

6. Let's say a friend of yours needs help and may even die, and you're the
   only person who can save him or her. How important is it for a person
   (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a friend?
   Circle one: very important important not important

   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT
   (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?
7. What about saving the life of anyone? How important is it for a person (without losing his or her own life) to save the life of a stranger?
   Circle one: very important   important   not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

8. How important is it for a person to live if that person doesn't want to?
   Circle one: very important   important   not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. How important is it for people not to take things that belong to other people?
   Circle one: very important   important   not important

WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
10. How important is it for people to obey the law?
   Circle one: very important  important  not important

   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

11. How important is it for judges to send people who break the law to jail?
   Circle one: very important  important  not important

   WHY IS THAT VERY IMPORTANT/NOT IMPORTANT (WHICHEVER ONE YOU CIRCLED)?

   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Letter of Consent to the Superintendent of the School Division
Dear

I am writing to gain permission to interview and administer a questionnaire to students who are currently or were involved in the program in the 1995-1996 school year. I am a graduate student at Longwood College and presently working with Dr. Donald Ball and Dr. Peggy Tarpley on my Master's thesis. My research findings will be included in the evaluation of the program that Dr. Donald Ball and Dr. Peggy Tarpley are composing. I am researching the differences between students who have continued in the program and those who have not returned to it. Participation is voluntary and may be discontinued at any time. The results will be kept confidential as will the identity of the school, the students, and the staff. At the completion of this research, a summary of the results may be obtained upon request. However, if you have any questions, please call me at 804-392-5124.

Your permission is needed to begin conducting research. Please return one signed permission sheet to me in the envelope provided and keep the other for your own records. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kari Mueller-Fuentes
Longwood College
Graduate Student

I, ____________________, give Kari Mueller-Fuentes permission to interview and administer a questionnaire to the students needed for her research.

Signed: _______________________________
APPENDIX D

Letter of Consent to Parents
Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to gain permission to interview and administer a questionnaire to your child for research I am conducting at school. I am a graduate student attending Longwood College and presently working on my Master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Peggy Tarpley. My research is based on students who participated in the program during the 1995-1996 academic year. The research may be used as a part of a current evaluation of the program. The interviews will be held in the school and last no longer than 30 minutes. The information that will be collected during the interviews will be student opinions and feelings of the school, adults, classmates, and themselves. The questionnaire will consist of questions which address moral understanding.

Your child's participation is voluntary and may be discontinued at any time. All results will be kept confidential as well as your child's identity. I, the primary researcher, will only know your child's responses and results. The results or responses will not be used against your child in any way. At the completion of the study, a summary of the overall results and/or your child's individual results may be obtained upon request.

Your permission is needed to begin conducting research. Please return one signed permission sheet to me in the envelope provided and keep the other sheet for yourself.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kari Mueller-Fuentes
Longwood College
Graduate Student

I, ______________, give permission to Kari Mueller-Fuentes to interview and administer a questionnaire to my child, ________________.

Signed: ____________________________________
APPENDIX E

Letter of Consent to Subjects
Dear Subject,

I am writing to gain permission to interview you and administer a questionnaire to you for research I will be conducting at High School. I am a graduate student attending Longwood College and presently working on my Master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Peggy Tarpley. A thesis is a study that a student performs in order to learn more about human development. My study is based on students who participated in the program in the 1995-1996 school year. The research may be used in a current evaluation of the program. The information collected from the interviews will consist of your opinions and feelings toward school, adults, classmates, and yourself. The interviews will take place in school and last no longer than 30 minutes. The questionnaire will consist of questions that address moral understanding.

Your participation is voluntary and may be discontinued at any time. I will be the only person that knows your name and your responses. All of your results and responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used against you in any way. If, once the research is complete, you would like a summary of the overall results or your own results, you may receive them upon request.

Your permission is needed to begin conducting research. Please return one signed permission sheet to me in the envelope provided and keep one for yourself. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kari Mueller-Fuentes
Longwood College
Graduate Student

I, ____________________, give permission to Kari Mueller-Fuentes to interview me and administer a questionnaire to me in school.

Signed: ______________________
APPENDIX F

Table 1

Moral Stages
Table 1

**Moral Stages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>This stage entails a physicalistic understanding of moral authority. It typically represents a morality of unilateral authority and expressions such as &quot;always&quot; or &quot;never&quot;, showing absolute terms are often used. Stage 1 judgment is superficial and reflects the natural tendencies of young children. Following the rules is important at this stage because otherwise a physical consequence may occur (the person &quot;will beat you up&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>This stage is considered superficial as well, however reasoning rises above the physicalistic nature found in Stage 1. Stage 2 is known to be pragmatic in that the reasoning used satisfies the individual and limits the amount of negative consequences to the individual. At this stage it is assumed that others are reasoning in the same way, therefore an emphasis on exchange is apparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>A mature understanding of norms and values is attained at this stage. Stage 3 is based on the integration of the perspectives of instrumental exchange and mutuality or trust that is the foundation for mature relationships. The focus of reasoning in Stage 3 is on maintaining relationships, mutuality of expectations, and sentiments of gratitude and obligation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>This stage takes the mature understanding of Stage 3 and expands into a deep knowledge and acceptance for consistent standards and requirements. Stage 4 entails the understanding that in society we are interdependent with others. At this stage there is a balance between rights and responsibility to respect others. Stage 4 reasoning accepts that one must contribute to society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX G

Tables 2-5
### Positive Statements

**GROUP ONE**

"They told me the consequences, what would have really happened if I would have done what I did upstairs and they sit down and talk to me about it (the problem getting me in trouble)..."

"We would just have a town meeting and everybody would go in there and if a conflict arose we would talk about it as a whole group and solve it as a whole group..."

"Once you got caught once, more than likely nobody did it again."

"...if it wasn't something really bad, then they would just work it out with you, so you wouldn't get in lots of trouble upstairs."

"They (students) know if they did something bad, it would put the whole program down."

If you get caught one time, you have to face everybody in the big room talking."

"Down here it keeps me from violating the rules but upstairs I don't care about nobody"

**GROUP TWO**

"...they would sit you down and talk to you (about what the problem was). Tell you who's doing wrong."

We didn't get sent upstairs for fighting or cursing because they felt it could be handled down here. And that was good because we didn't get in trouble a lot..."

"You are (treated) no different than anybody else..."

"When I was down here my behavior changed because I didn't mind doing stuff down here."

---

### Negative Statements

**GROUP ONE**

"They (the teachers) were better last year (with correcting behaviors)."

I can't say three months out of school really taught me anything."

I think this day and time since parents aren't that bad no more, like grounding children, it just don't really matter (getting suspended)."

**GROUP TWO**

"But some of their ways of punishment weren't. You're kicked out of school for so many days, it was like you were branded, because once you done something wrong, the whole (alternative program) knew..."

I think that it (everybody knowing what you did wrong) was totally wrong. If a student gets in trouble not everybody has to know about it."

"Kick me out! Don't have everybody looking and gauking. It's like they are stoning you to death with their eyes and their talk."

"I learned my lesson, but some of their ways of correction were too mentally depressing."

"It was just scolding, 'You make the whole program look bad', you do this and you do that and it's like am I on trial?, am I getting persecuted?"
Table 3
Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP ONE</th>
<th>GROUP TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Statements</td>
<td>Positive Statements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| "...if we are just reading the newspaper we can go out in the hall, get something to eat, drink, finish, come back in and finish your assignment assignment. I wish more schools were like that." | "They always asked us what we thought and we thought and we would just give our opinions."
| Last year they let us make up our own field trips...they trusted us a lot too..." | "I was happy with the decisions."
| "The only decision I would like to make about this program is to expand it." | "If somebody else makes my decisions, I will never learn anything."
| "We make decisions on journals and decisions about people getting in trouble." | "(I would like) more freedom to do what we want to do...we already know our consequences, if we do this and that, we are going to get in trouble." |
| "Down here, if we want a break, we just go take one for five minutes." | "If I could stay here, I would have stayed in here." |
| "They (the teachers) pick the field trips but we decide whether we want to go on this one or that one and what we want to call our theme for the year." | |
| Negative Statements | |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
### Table 4
#### Teaching Methods / Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP ONE</th>
<th>GROUP TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Statements</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative Statements</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When I came down here, I started getting A's and B's.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;... it's more one on one...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The teachers down here, they take more time with one person, instead of just throwing stuff on the board and saying do it.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;It's a lot more fun to learn down here.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can do the work upstairs, it's not easier down here, it's just better.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;You can't really get as close to teachers upstairs as you can down here. I did get close to a couple of teachers down here and that's good.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You do everything you would do upstairs, but they (teachers) have you do it an easier way and they don't fuss with you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Down here, if you got a problem and you come to talk to them, they would talk to you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... if you got a problem, just talk to a teacher down here, and they would help you out the best they can.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Teachers down here understand more about like teenage and stuff like that.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... the way they teach is more interesting than sitting in front of a chalkboard and learning out of a book.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;There was always something to keep you occupied instead of just sitting in the classroom, sitting still watching the teacher do stuff.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... it's more like a friendly relationship where they don't really tell you what to do, they ask you to do it and then you feel like you owe it to them do the work.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;... down here if you got a problem, they (the teachers) can see to it right away...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I think all schools should be like this... have hands on learning, do rotations, and do little field trips, like we do, so kids won't be so bored with school work.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;... The ones (teachers) upstairs, they don't care what you have to say.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... The ones (teachers) upstairs, they don't care what you have to say.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;... I could do it (work in the regular school), but it was too much pressure.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I didn't like being totally controlled upstairs.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I didn't like being totally controlled upstairs.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"... Upstairs, you got one teacher and thirty kids..." |
| "You are not at school to talk with your friends... you come to school to do your work." |
| "There were a lot of things that we learned that we wouldn't have learned upstairs, but, there are also a lot of things that we didn't learn that we should have learned." |
### Table 5

**Social Environment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Statements</th>
<th>Negative Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP ONE</strong></td>
<td><strong>GROUP TWO</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Everybody was always helping me out with my work...if I had a problem everybody pulled me aside and helped me out.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Everybody got along.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I was like part of a family and it's always been like that since I have been here.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I liked being down here, the people here, the way they do things, the way they teach.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;'It's just like another home.'&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I just love everybody down here.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We was all stuck together side by side, no matter what happened.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...if upstairs was like (the program) two years ago, I would have been at school everyday.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...everybody talks about everything together...&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Everybody has respect for everybody.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...if I ever came in with a problem, they could tell...that something was bothering me and someone would ask me what the problem was and talk it over.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We were really close to everyone down here.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Last year we had a lot of people just taking advantage of the program.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I felt isolated...whenever trouble came along, it was guaranteed us...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We get a lot of criticism...everybody else upstairs thinks it's just for stupid kids.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I really didn't sense no family.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Last year we had worser times with people just just using (the program).&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;None of the people last year really gave a crap what it was down here.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Some students (last year)...liked to fight people down here, stay in trouble upstairs...and instead of putting their input in on what we should do, they would be in the back horse playing.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I felt like I was on a tight rope...because they expected so much from you.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;...you got girls in there that love starting stuff because they know how you are and how your temper is.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I wish they (students upstairs) would treat (the alternative program) with more respect.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

Tables 6-7
Table 6

Interater Reliability for Subject Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rater 1 &amp; Researcher</th>
<th>Rater 2 &amp; Researcher</th>
<th>Rater 1 &amp; Rater 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Methods/Interaction</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Environment</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

Interater Reliability for Positive and Negative Statements in Subject Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rater 1 &amp; Researcher</th>
<th>Rater 2 &amp; Researcher</th>
<th>Rater 1 &amp; Rater 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>50%*</td>
<td>50%*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Methods/Interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - There were only two negative statements made in the decision making theme. Therefore, 50% agreement between the raters was considered acceptable.
APPENDIX I

Figures 1-2c
Figure 1

Sociomoral Reflection Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subject Number
Group Averages per SRM-SF Questions

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

Averages of Ratings

Questions

Figure 2A
Figure 2B

Group Averages per SRM-SF Questions

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

Questions

Averages of Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2C

Group Averages per SRM-SF Questions

Group 1 Group 2 Group 3

Questions

Averages of Ratings

Groups: Group 1, Group 2, Group 3

Questions 9, 10, 11

Averages (scale from 1.00 to 4.00): 2.30, 2.20, 2.50