

At the commencement, mid-point, and conclusion of the work with the small groups, each of the two grade 5 teachers was interviewed separately. Their evaluations were:

1. The small size of the group and the close interpersonal relationships established were very advantageous.
2. The close interpersonal relationships between student and counsellor were encouraging a greater closeness between student and teacher. Increased freedom of communication with an adult was evident.
3. There was improved participation by students in the classroom, but how much of this was directly attributable to the small groups was unknown. General growth and maturation had no doubt also improved this ability.

#### REFERENCE

- Sears, Pauline S., & Sherman, Vivian S. *In Pursuit of Self-Esteem*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1964.

### DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING WITH GROUPS OF GRADE-SIX AND -SEVEN BOYS AND GIRLS

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The purpose of this study was to develop, through small group participation, a greater sense of individuality and independence among elementary school children, ages ten to fourteen. It was also hoped that students would develop qualities of leadership and become more knowledgeable, understanding, and accepting of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses through involvement in regular, small, unstructured, group-counselling sessions.

#### DESIGN

All the grade six and seven students (53 in all) in a suburban school participated. They were divided by sex and grade to form two groups of grade-six girls, two groups of grade-six boys, two groups of grade-seven girls and two groups of grade-seven boys.

Four of the groups were to be "unstructured" (group centered) and four to be "structured" (leader centered) in the first few sessions and then gradually to be changed to a less structured situation. In the "unstructured" groups, the students would be expected to initiate all topics and assume the leadership roles in discussions; in the "structured", the students would initiate most topics but the counselor would assume responsibilities to keep the discussion on the topic, to summarize as necessary, and to control obviously distracting noise or activity.

For a period of six months, weekly meetings of forty minutes duration were held.

Evaluation of outcomes was based on reactions of both the students and staff.

## RESULTS

The student reactions to their group sessions were generally very favorable. Two questionnaires were given: one utilizing a multiple choice technique, one a "yes" or "no" answer. Tabulations of the results of these questionnaires are given in Tables II and III. The students answered most questions, but occasionally an item was omitted and totals in the tabulations are thus not identical.

TABLE II  
REACTIONS OF GRADE-SIX AND -SEVEN STUDENTS  
TO GROUP SESSIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE I

Question	Boys N=25	Girls N=28
1. Do you think of your weekly counseling sessions as mainly		
(a) a way of getting out of school work?	1	2
(b) a way of getting to understand yourself and others?	14	18
(c) a chance for only the talkative people to give their opinions?	1	1
(d) a time to chat with your friends about anything you want?	6	7
2. Do you think members of the groups should be selected by		
(a) the teacher?	4	3
(b) the students?	17	22
(c) someone outside the school who gives a test?	4	3
3. Do you think your weekly counseling sessions were		
(a) too long?	0	0
(b) about the right length of time?	10	12
(c) too short?	15	16
4. Would you prefer your counseling sessions to be		
(a) once a week?	21	27
(b) once every day for two weeks?	4	1
(c) once a month?	0	1
5. Would you like to have group meetings with boys and girls together?		
(a) Always?	7	6
(b) Never?	1	2
(c) Sometimes?	17	19
6. If you had to choose between no counseling at all and counseling meetings only after school which would you choose?		
(a) no counseling?	2	4
(b) counseling after school?	22	24
7. Has your group this year been		
(a) too big?	6	4
(b) too small?	1	2
(c) just the right number?	18	22

8. Do you think your counselor should choose the topics for weekly discussions?

(a) sometimes?	19	20
(b) nearly always?	2	3
(c) always?	0	1
(d) never?	4	4

ITEMS IN THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Do you think your group meetings have been helpful in learning about problems people your age face?
2. Has this knowledge helped you in understanding some of your own problems?
3. Have your weekly discussions helped you in a way that your parents, teachers or friends could not have?
4. If you had a choice, would you want to join in a similar group again?
5. Do you think it would be helpful to have weekly guidance classes with your teacher?
6. Do you think that topics discussed in your meetings have been kept a secret?
7. Is it important that matters discussed in the group be kept secret?
8. Do you feel there should be more opportunities to meet with your counselor by yourself or with a friend?
9. Would you prefer to have the counselor provide the answers to your problems?
10. Do you think that it would be better to have small group meetings only when students wanted them and when everyone had a similar problem to discuss?
11. Have you felt free to talk about anything you wish in your counseling sessions?  
If not, why not?

TABLE II  
REACTIONS OF GRADE-SIX AND -SEVEN STUDENTS  
TO GROUP SESSIONS: QUESTIONNAIRE II

Question	Boys N=25			Girls N=28		
	Yes	No	No Reply	Yes	No	No Reply
1.	22	3	0	25	3	0
2.	22	3	0	27	1	0
3.	18	2	5	18	9	1
4.	25	0	0	26	2	0
5.	5	20	0	7	18	3
6.	14	11	0	18	10	0
7.	14	9	2	25	3	0
8.	18	6	1	21	5	2
9.	16	8	1	19	7	2
10.	19	6	0	7	20	1
11.	21	3	1	22	6	0

### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The counselors each evaluated their own groups and agreed upon the following statements:

1. Students in the structured groups seemed to develop greater insight and growth in interpersonal relationships. It would appear that students at this age level need structure initially to establish and orient themselves to the group situation. This then allows them to assume the responsibility of leadership when they are ready and willing to do so rather than be confronted with a very unfamiliar and frustrating situation immediately upon entering the group situation.

2. This was in most cases the students' first experience with a group situation in which there was an adult leader present who was prepared to share the leadership with them. This was, perhaps, the most significant experience for the students in the experiment.

3. In the "structured" groups the leader's role changed during the meetings from one of direction to one of facilitating group interaction. By the end of the experiment, students seemed ready to assume group roles of leading, questioning, and clarifying. The unstructured groups took longer to reach this stage than did the structured groups.

4. A thirty-minute counseling period would be more appropriate for the grade six groups, particularly in the early stages, as the attention span of this age group is still quite short. However, the students disagreed completely on these issues—fifteen felt forty minutes was just the right length of time and fourteen felt it was too short.

5. Heterogeneous groups seem more desirable because they promote greater interaction among all students.

6. Although the students reacted favourably to their counseling groups, most of them were opposed to weekly guidance classes with their own teachers.

### CONCLUSION

After six months of group counselling the four counsellors involved felt that the project was successful. It was apparent that students improved their ability to interact with one another in a small group and to participate responsibly in group discussion and to respect the rights of others in the group. Although group counselling at the elementary school level is a relatively new area, we can see great possibilities of its being of benefit to this age group.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELING

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