

GROUP COUNSELING WITH ADOLESCENTS,

1966-1970:

A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

by

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ABSTRACT

Serious flaws in design and methodology have been identified as leading to dubious acceptance of research reports. The present study investigated whether changes of the kind recommended by Shaw and Wursten (1965) had actually been forthcoming during the intervening six years.

Ten criteria of experimental research were proposed and supported from the writings of authorities in the field of counseling research. The criteria were then used in the evaluation of a sample of fifteen published research studies dealing with the group counseling of adolescents. The studies were selected randomly from the total number of such studies to appear between 1966 and 1970 in The School Counselor, Personnel and Guidance Journal, and Journal of Counseling Psychology. The sample was a stratified one, involving five research reports from each of the journals. A four-point scale with the values none, some, most, and all was used to rate each study according to each of the ten criteria. The re-evaluation of three studies selected randomly from the fifteen after a period of three weeks showed that intraobserver judgment had been 87% consistent with the earlier findings.

No study met in full even half of the ten criteria used and three studies were found to meet none of the criteria in full. The mean number of criteria met in full was found to be 1.9 per study. The most seriously neglected criteria were found to be the criterion dealing with the provision of information about the group leader himself, the criteria stressing the need for the use of baseline data and a follow-up study, and the criterion that stressed the need for the completely random allocation of subjects to a control group.

The necessary conditions of experimental inquiry were defined and were supported by researchers and writers in the field involved. It was concluded that these conditions were largely unmet during the period 1966 to 1970 in group counseling research endeavors involving adolescents.

Examiners: [REDACTED]
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

For a variety of reasons, economic, psychological, and others, the past decade has witnessed an enormous proliferation of group activities and encounters of almost every kind imaginable. Shertzer and Stone (1968) noted that group processes are being utilized in many forms in diverse settings by many individuals (p. 441). Brammer and Shostrom (1968) noted the application of group principles that had been made in industrial, educational, governmental, clinical, church, and family settings.

Some researchers have welcomed this growth wholeheartedly, while others have been more reserved in their enthusiasm. Wrenn (1970) welcomed the lively movement in the area of small group experience and saw it as a result of a firm conviction that such experience is an educational and personal resource of great significance. He viewed our contemporary society as consisting largely of groups, and an understanding of groups, therefore, as being fundamental to our continued existence as a society. Viewed in this light, group process is basic to all interpersonal

relationships. Kemp (1970b) regarded the improvement of the quality of group process as raising expectations for the solving of problems and the improvement of relationships. At the same time, Kemp warned us that groups are not a panacea, but are capable of fostering regression as well as creative development (p. 73).

Coffey (1970) maintained that the importance of the small group experience lies in the fact that contemporary life holds out fewer and fewer opportunities for widely shared experience and self expression, due to the declining importance of face-to-face relationships in primary groups. Bonney (1969) saw the group experience as being an opportunity for people to work together without the loss of individualism, and stated that from all kinds of experiences, from psychotherapy groups to rifle squads, "many of us have come to believe that the most profound expression of individuality can be achieved through membership in a creative interdependent group (p. 158)."

A large amount of research has been conducted in the small group area, to correspond to the increased number of activities of this kind that have taken place. Much of this research has been in the field of group counseling, the principal concern of this study. It is now six years since Shaw and Wursten (1965) noted that although most studies in group counseling reported

successful outcomes, much of the literature reviewed by them was difficult to accept at face value owing to inadequate controls, inadequate statistical procedures, and inadequate outcome criteria. Shaw and Wursten stated improvements were needed in the areas they mentioned before many of the group counseling research reports could be accepted as they stood. One of the problems posed in the present study was to ascertain whether such changes had actually been forthcoming in the intervening five years.

Importance of Evaluating Research

Fundamental to this study were the ideas of Sax (1968) concerning the importance of the critical examination of research findings, and concerning the contribution of good research to the educational process. Sax stated, "In education, the uncritical acceptance of research findings is altogether too common (p. 59)." He believed that such uncritical acceptance had been a factor that had hindered educational progress (p. 58).

Elam (1960) noted that the state of research in the field of education was in extremely deteriorated condition. He wrote:

That part of the research highway devoted to education is, it seems to us, in exceedingly poor repair, full of holes attributable to amateur workmanship, and breaking up entirely

in spots because of bad engineering and faulty specifications (p. 241).

There is reason to suspect that the intervening eleven years may not have witnessed a very marked level of improvement beyond the rather deplorable picture painted by Elam in 1960. Sax (1968) noted that while educators had extolled the promises of research, they still had been disappointed in its results (p. 52). He believed one of the reasons for this may have been the lack of training in research methodology that he found among professional educators (p. 54). A second reason for the relatively slow rate of progress in the area was given by Gowin and Millman (1969). They indicated that, unlike most fields of research, a tradition of disciplined criticism seemed largely missing in the field of educational research. Travers (1969) believed that another reason may lie in the distribution of research funds by the government for political expediency. He stated that "a major hope" underlying the writing of his book was "that research on problems of education will become, in the future, less politically oriented and more scientifically oriented (p. v)." Finally, one main reason why the state of affairs described by Elam (1960) may have persisted is the large number of difficulties which inevitably face the researcher at work in the field of education. Some of

these difficulties, followed by an evaluation of counseling research, are considered in Chapter II.

Purpose

General Purpose of Study

It was first intended to establish a body of criteria to evaluate group counseling research. The criteria developed by this study are considered to have sufficient justification from the existing literature in the field to enable others to examine and appraise research in group counseling and group psychotherapy. Secondly, the criteria were used in the present study to evaluate a sample of research reports published in the professional journals between 1966 and 1970, and having reference to group counseling at the level of the secondary school. These criteria are described in greater detail in Chapter III.

Outcomes of Counseling--Some General Considerations

A Basic Question in Counseling

A disagreement which penetrates to the very core of counseling relates to such matters as what counseling is and whether we can ever be really sure we are doing what we think and claim we are doing. It deals with

such difficult and important questions as what can actually be known, and how it may be known.

Fundamentally, two major points of view can be identified in counseling at the present time (Barclay, 1968). On the one hand, there is the approach that is oriented toward empirical research and objective data. The emphasis is on precise measures, such as those of small, predetermined behavioral changes, and the ideal is "objective" knowledge (Krumboltz, 1966). Counselors of this persuasion specify goals and strive to reach them. They see a need for research as a means of continual re-appraisal of their effectiveness as counselors.

On the other hand, there are counselors who place their emphasis on such wide, general goals as the adjustment, development, or growth of the client (Rogers, 1961). They appear to be more intuitive than research-guided and often attach high value to the self-reports of the client. The counselor works with unique problems--he deals with individuals to whom no generalizations may apply. Counseling is thus seen as an individual rather than as a normative enterprise. The counselor usually has to act on faith until empirical data can be collected (Halmos, 1966).

Counselors who adhere to this second orientation would maintain that counseling often deals with changes

that cannot be measured in the manner deemed essential by the opposing school of thought. Louch (1966) has suggested there may be aspects of human action with which the counselor deals that are not amenable to measurement or to the research methodology that counselors are frequently urged to use.

The method undertaken in the present study represents only one way of evaluating research. Ten criteria were used to examine group counseling research from an empirical standpoint. Other points of view from which the survey could have been conducted include the phenomenological approach alluded to above.

The Effectiveness of Counseling

Truax and Carkhuff (1967) adopt a "not proven" attitude toward the question of counseling effectiveness. It is their contention that "no responsible writer has ever reviewed the evidence of outcome studies and concluded that counseling and psychotherapy as usually practiced have an average benefit beyond that seen in comparable control groups (p. 13)." Whiteley (1967), in a similar manner, noted that in assessing counseling outcome, "research which demonstrates a positive effect for counseling remains the exception rather than the rule (p. x)."

Many writers, however, have expressed opinions or evidence to the contrary. Blocher (1967) is among these

more optimistic authorities. Asking, "What can counseling offer clients?" he tells us that, "Apparently almost any kind of intervention in which client and/or counselor place faith will produce some desirable effect (p. 5)." D. P. Campbell (1965) also believes that "counseling works." His belief is based in part on his follow-up study, conducted twenty-five years after the counseling itself.

D. P. Campbell (1965) maintains that faith is more abundant than truth in the counseling office. To a very large extent, this faith is sufficient justification for much of what counseling psychologists do, while "the empirical establishment of some beneficial end is not necessary (p. 1)." Halmos (1966) places great emphasis on the value of faith in the counseling encounter.

In response to her rhetorical question as to whether counseling does any good, Tyler (1969) gave an emphatic "Yes (p. 236)." She noted that follow-up studies have clearly indicated that counseled students achieve somewhat more success, while they are in school and after they leave, than those without counseling.

Meltzoff and Kornreich (1970) have expressed the belief that the weight of evidence is in favor of the effectiveness of psychotherapy and counseling, rather than against it. They reported that controlled research has been notably successful in demonstrating more

behavioral change in treated patients than in untreated controls (p. 177).

Counseling in Groups

The present study was concerned with an evaluation of research involving the group counseling of adolescents. It has been noted that such evaluation is critical for educational progress (Sax, 1968). The evaluation undertaken in the present study was justified further by a consideration of the importance that many authorities have attached to group counseling itself, particularly the group counseling of adolescents.

The objectives of group counseling have been regarded as similar to those of individual counseling, that is to assist individuals in coming to a fuller realization and acceptance of self and others (Gawrys & Brown, 1965). Other counselors would suggest different objectives, such as the learning and practicing of new behavioral skills (Krumboltz, 1966), or the improvement of communication skills (Mahler, 1969b).

Many reasons have been put forward in support of the notion that group counseling is potentially very beneficial for many clients. Kemp (1970b) has suggested there may be possibilities inherent in group counseling that favor therapeutic change, but which are not to be found in individual counseling. These include the

presence in a counseling group of (a) a number of significant others among whom a member may test his evolving attitudes and ideas; (b) the motivation which results from being accepted by one's peers and from the experiencing of one's own changing attitudes; (c) the encouragement which stems from the participation of others in trying to resolve conflicts; and (d) the high degree of permissiveness and understanding which enhances the safety of the group setting. These are some of the characteristics of a good group counseling situation. In such a situation, the development of the group demands of its members a high degree of interpersonal responsiveness based on caring and a sense of responsibility. As a consequence of such group interaction, many participants experience an increase in self-confidence, an improvement in social skills, and a reduction in tension (Warters, 1960). An individual may also be aided in the achievement of what Mahler (1969a) described as a major goal of group process: the provision of an opportunity for a better understanding of his own and others' behavior.

Kemp (1970b) maintained that the assumption that the counselee's gaining insight in individual counseling will necessarily improve his performance in his relationship with others may be less valid than commonly thought (p. 99). In group counseling, on the other

hand, this assumption is tested in the manner in which he relates to others in the group. The group counseling situation enables reality testing to occur immediately and safely, whereas in individual counseling the client must usually await opportunities in the outside world. One of the advantages of group counseling is that it often bears a much greater resemblance to the real-life situation of a client than does individual counseling. This factor may be of particular significance when the counselor is unlike any other important person in the client's environment (Blocher, 1967).

The permissiveness and understanding experienced in a counseling group imply that an individual can explore his negative feelings or ideas without fear of losing face (Cohn & Sniffen, 1962). Kemp (1970b) expressed doubts as to whether the client would actually discuss his problem in greater depth when alone with the counselor than when in a group, for the presence of his peers may be a more compelling motivation than the presence of the counselor alone.

The primary value of group counseling was seen by Boy, Isaksen, and Pine (1963) as lying in the opportunity it afforded the counselor to establish contact with individuals who might need a different kind of help from that of an individual counseling relationship. Boy et al. also believed that group counseling might

serve as a basis for establishing a good individual counseling relationship with students who have need for it. Though it may serve as a process of readiness for individual counseling, however, it can never be a substitute for it.

Kemp (1970b) regarded both types of counseling, individual and group, as being necessary and significant in their own right--they are not in competition, and neither should be considered an adjunct to the other. In fact, the client's receiving both individual and group counseling simultaneously may actually mitigate against his best use of the group. His special relationship with the counselor may set him apart from the group itself and he may not face up to issues discussed in the group until he is alone again with the counselor (p. 99).

All in all, there would seem to be considerable support for the contention of Blocher (1966) that attempts at behavior change which ignored the motivational possibilities inherent in group structures appeared to be discarding "one of the most powerful tools available for behavioral intervention (p. 169)."

Group Counseling and Adolescents

Group methods of counseling adolescents are considered to be particularly appropriate because of

considerations above and beyond the arguments already presented in favor of group counseling in general. These special or unique benefits include enabling adolescents to find out from the group interactions that they are not alone and unique in their experiences of self-doubt, isolation, insecurity, and frustration. This realization has the effect of reducing feelings of guilt and of increasing self-confidence (Gawryls & Brown, 1965). Resistances and feelings of inadequacy disappear as members come to appreciate that many others also have similar problems to their own (Kemp, 1970b).

Mahler (1969b) considered that group counseling with adolescents should lead to an exploration of what it means to be a person. Outcomes also include learning to understand other people better and learning how to become more responsible for one's own behavior.

Muro and Freeman (1968) noted that many adolescents seek the help of their peers in answering important questions in their lives. In this case, group counseling would appear to be a very practical way of organizing the tendency for young people to help each other. The phenomenon is accounted for in part by the fact that the adolescent is very much less likely to be threatened by a remark from one of his peers than he would be if that same remark came from an adult. Such is the bond of

respect that binds him to other adolescents (Boy & Pine, 1968).

Arbuckle (1965) has stated that a goal of counseling might be to help the individual to attain a stage of development at which he can honestly look at himself and eventually derive some element of satisfaction in what he sees (p. 58). If group counseling is capable of achieving this goal for the adolescent, then such an activity must inevitably make a very vital contribution to a person at the developmental stage of the adolescent, for this is the age of role uncertainty and what Erikson (1963) has termed "identity diffusion." In this way, group counseling can help reinforce a young person's confidence in his own perceptions, views, and feelings-- a major factor at his stage of development.

An important by-product of group counseling is the learning experience it provides for the counselors themselves, because, "on the subject of modern youth, the youth themselves are the best teachers (Eckerson, 1969, p. 853)." Mahler (1969b) also saw group counseling with young people as affording the counselor an opportunity to find out more about the adolescents themselves. This knowledge would be a necessary first step in helping the young clients.

A recent example of the actual appeal of group counseling for adolescents was provided by Axmaker (1971).

He held voluntary group counseling sessions in secondary schools in Victoria, British Columbia. A follow-up questionnaire showed that most of the students involved indicated an interest in being part of another group. Most of the students also felt their relationships with parents and teachers had improved as a result of the group sessions.

The large and diverse amount of group activity which is taking place at the present time has been noted, with particular emphasis having been placed upon counseling in groups, especially the group counseling of adolescents. The following section describes the method by which the research dealing with the group counseling of adolescents, and published during the period 1966 to 1970, was reviewed and evaluated in the present study.

Method

A random sample of fifteen articles dealing with research in group counseling at the level of the secondary school was taken from the total number of such articles appearing between 1966 and 1970 in three of the leading journals which deal with counseling as it relates to students. Twenty-six such research studies were found in the three journals. From this population,

a stratified sample was taken by randomly selecting five articles from each journal. The fifteen research reports evaluated in the present study are listed in the Appendix. The professional journals chosen for their appropriateness for this purpose were The School Counselor, Personnel and Guidance Journal, and Journal of Counseling Psychology.

The studies were considered to deal with group counseling when they involved group members who were not seriously maladjusted or impaired, but were average individuals dealing with normal developmental roles and tasks. In the majority of instances group members were students in a regular high school setting. For a research report to be included among the group counseling studies, the emphasis in group activity was regarded as being necessarily on the individual, rather than upon group discussion and group changes.

The fifteen studies were then evaluated according to the ten criteria developed during the present study and described in Chapter III. The studies were evaluated one at a time by the present writer, the ten criteria being applied to each study before moving on to the next one. Sequence was by alphabetical order, according to author's name.

After a period of about three weeks, three studies were randomly selected from the fifteen. These were then

evaluated for a second time. Of the 30 ratings, ten for each study, 26 were found to be consistent with the earlier findings. Intraobserver judgment was found to have been 87% consistent over the time stated. This procedure showed that an important source of invalidity was in fact rather small.

The findings reported in Chapter IV described the extent to which this sample of research studies met the specifications of research in counseling psychology. These specifications have been described by various authorities in the field as being either necessary or highly desirable features of valid inquiry in the area under consideration.

Some Definitions

In the area under consideration, that of a leader working with youngsters in groups, there has been some confusion as to the various processes and the terms used to describe them. In order to clarify the meaning of the term "group counseling" as it was used in this study, group counseling was distinguished from group guidance and from group psychotherapy (or group therapy).

The emphasis in group guidance has generally been regarded as being on the imparting of information (Gazda, 1968; Gazda & Folds, 1969; Lifton, 1966;

Mahler, 1969b; Ohlsen, 1970). By way of example, Gazda (1968) regarded the content of group guidance as consisting of "school-related topics, e.g., how to study, choosing a college, etc. (p. 265)."

Group counseling, on the other hand, is most commonly thought of as a group procedure where the emphasis is on personal exploration, rather than on the provision and discussion of guidance material (Muro & Freeman, 1968). Mahler and Caldwell (1961) also saw the emphasis in group counseling as being on a process that deals with the developmental needs, attitudes, problems, and interests of the great majority of young people, (e.g., boy-girl relationships, how to get along with parents), rather than on the provision of information.

Another distinction that has been made between group guidance and group counseling is in terms of goals (Gazda, 1969; Ohlsen, 1970). In the latter situation, stated Gazda, "There is no group goal as such, but rather each member has his unique goal (p. 11)." In group guidance, by contrast, "the focus of attention is on the aspects of information and discussion which are most relevant to the group (Gazda & Folds, 1969, p. 25)."

The distinction made between group counseling and group psychotherapy for purposes of the present review was in terms of the persons being "treated" in the group.

Ohlsen (1970) distinguished counseling from psychotherapy in this manner, rather than by way of the treatment process. The latter was described as "a therapeutic experience for emotionally disturbed persons who seek assistance with pathological problems (p. 6)."

Counseling, on the other hand, was seen as "a therapeutic experience for persons who do not have serious emotional problems (p. 6)."

Other writers have also regarded group counseling, as compared with group psychotherapy, as being for individuals within the normal range of adjustment (Gazda, 1968; Ginott, 1961; Mahler, 1969b). Gazda stated that group counselees are basically normal individuals with various concerns which are not debilitating to the extent requiring extensive personality change (1968, p. 265). Mahler (1969b) saw group counseling as being for "normal individuals," and as the process of using group interaction to facilitate deeper self-understanding and self-acceptance.

A second factor concerns differences of approach used in the procedure. Dreikurs and Sonstegard (1968) distinguished between counseling and therapy in terms of process, as well as in terms of the persons receiving treatment. Psychotherapy was seen as more detailed and elaborate, aimed at personality change. Counseling dealt with client changes in the more immediate

situation. This second factor, however, was not used as a basis for the selection of studies reviewed in the present study.

The notion that counseling and psychotherapy exist along a single continuum, rather than upon two separate hierarchical levels, has had many implications for theory and practice at least since Rogers' (1942) epoch-making Counseling and psychotherapy. According to Lewis (1970), Rogers at that time destroyed any gap that might have existed between counseling and psychotherapy by denying that any difference existed. The continuum idea has the support of Gazda (1968, 1969).

Truax and Carkhuff (1967) spoke of counseling and psychotherapy as being almost the same thing. For example, "Counseling or psychotherapy is aimed at producing constructive behavioral and personality change (p. 4)."

The present study was concerned with evaluating recent research in the field of group counseling. In groups of this kind the focus of attention is on the issue which has significance to the individual within a group of normally adjusted individuals of secondary school age. "Group counseling" was taken to mean any situation in which a counselor (or co-counselors) was working with a group, and dealing with the aspects of life that concern the development and adjustment of

such young people as can be called "average," "normal,"
and of no more than minor maladjustment.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

Knowledge from Experimentation

Strong support has come forward in favor of experimentation as a means of finding answers to educational questions. Good (1966), for instance, regarded experimentation as the only safe, meaningful approach. He cautioned us to remember that experimentation is the only valid procedure for settling disputes concerning educational practice and for verifying educational improvements. Further, continuous multiple experimentation is desirable, for experiments require replication and cross validation under other times and conditions. Travers (1969) also urged the vigorous pursuit of experimentation and pointed out that a single study, however great the practical implications of that study might appear to be, could be considered to provide only suggestive results. Sax (1968) strongly supported the experimental approach, as did Kemp (1970a). Kemp recognized that research has a major part to play, even though there will always be complexities, and probably imperfections, and though there will always be subtle variables for which it may be impossible to account.

Knowledge from Alternative Sources

Sax (1968) asserted that experimental research is an approach to comprehension--it is not the only approach, and it is not a panacea for all problems. There are ways of knowing other than by experimental, "scientific" methods. There are those who argue that experimental research may not only be inappropriate but entirely infeasible for the provision of answers to man's questions about himself.

Among the authorities who have questioned the relevance of experimentation for dealing with humans and understanding their problems is Wann (1964). Rogers (Hall, 1967) has similarly suggested a different approach to research. He suggested that we should perhaps call a moratorium on "rigid scientific research" in the behavioral sciences, and go back and do much more naturalistic observation to understand people and behavior. For counseling psychologists to be considered social scientists, attention should possibly be turned to alternative means of studying human beings, using methods that may more appropriately fit the social sciences.

Halmos (1966) claimed to have found an abundance of determined renunciations of the "scientific attitude."

By way of example, he cited R. D. Laing who, despite being employed as a "research psychiatrist," felt compelled to express regret that many therapists:

find it necessary to betray their experience when they seek to convey it, under the entirely confused and mistaken impression that they have to pay their tribute to the idol of what they suppose to be scientific respectability (pp. 114-115).

Halmos further supported this kind of intuitive attitude suggested by Laing when he stated that, in all probability, there will always be a "social science lag" between what we feel we must assume and what we can verify.

Though different views of knowledge and its determination have been shown to exist, emphasis was placed in the present study on the use of experimentation as a means of improving our understanding of counseling psychology. That is, the criteria that were established and used in the present review of research were empirically founded and supported.

Evaluation of Counseling Research

The State of Research in Counseling

Writer after writer in the field of counseling was found to be dissatisfied and discouraged with both the state of counseling research and the probability that

the research being done made only small contributions to the actual improvement of everyday counseling effectiveness. By effective research or by some other means, counselors should be very concerned with improving their techniques so long as there are those who tend to support the contention of Truax (1967) that "counseling, on the average, is not more effective than no counseling (p. 213)."

Difficulties of Counseling Research

Counseling research is acknowledged to have many special complexities. Lewis (1970) observed that, compared with research in the physical and natural sciences, research in human behavior is "clumsy and messy," with research in counseling being one of the most difficult areas of all (p. 196). Lifton (1966) and Mahler (1969b) made their comments with special reference to research in group counseling. Both regarded the problems facing the research worker in the field as considerable and complex, and they believed that the difficulties involved were the reason why no clear-cut answer existed concerning the effectiveness of group counseling.

Research and Practical Help to Counselors

The criticisms of the state of counseling research at the present time appear to fall into three main

categories. In the first place, numerous writers were highly critical of the counseling research that had been conducted because they saw the research as offering extremely limited help to the actual counselor in his day-to-day dealings with clients (Anderson, 1969; Blocher, 1966, 1967; Kemp, 1970a; Krumboltz, 1967; Lifton, 1966; Thoresen, 1969; Truax, 1967).

A quotation from Anderson (1969) typifies many of the criticisms of this kind. "Much of what is published is inconsequential because it contributes little or nothing to the pool of knowledge about group counseling (p. 223)." Anderson would like to see the formulation of general principles about group counseling. He noted that this would require the use of identical treatment procedures in different settings with different clientele, as well as multi-variate approaches which compare several treatment procedures in similar settings with similar clientele.

Truax (1967) believed ". . . much of the so-called counseling research is irrelevant to the process and outcome of effective practice (p. 208)." His review of the counseling and psychotherapy literature led him to believe that less than one out of one hundred published articles in the fields actually did contain information that made a difference.

One of the purposes of experimentation in counseling psychology is to provide information that is of assistance to practitioners in the field. As has been demonstrated above, many authorities have claimed that the research being conducted is of very limited usefulness to the work of the counselor. The findings reported in Chapter IV show that the studies that have been conducted in group counseling met the criteria of empirically based research to a limited extent only. It is maintained that group counseling research would be of greater benefit to the practitioner if the research were conducted with a much more strict adherence to the empirically founded criteria used in the present study.

Unrelatedness of Counseling Studies

A second group of writers in group counseling was critical of what was seen as a serious and unproductive unrelatedness to each other of the counseling research studies that had been conducted. Representative of this group were Anderson (1969), Muro and Freeman (1968), and Thoresen (1969).

Anderson noted that despite the masses of data being collected and analyzed, most studies were relatively unrelated, small-scale efforts which provided only the accumulation of bits of evidence. He wrote,

"There is still no body of theoretically related knowledge on which the practice of group counseling can be solidly grounded (1969, p. 209)."

Research evidence in group counseling does continue to provide new data for bridging the gap between theory and practice, but Muro and Freeman (1968) noted that not one approach to group counseling had been provided with evidence to support it adequately. This situation may be considered unfortunate by those who share the assumption of Lewis (1970) that research is the base on which people will believe. "Counseling without a research base has feet of clay, which can easily crumble under the onslaught of disbelievers (Lewis, 1970, p. 196)."

Flaws in Methodology

The third category of criticism that has been levelled at the research in group counseling is that the research is plagued by pitfalls and flaws relating to methodology (Lewis, 1970; Litwack, Getson, & Saltzman, 1968; Mahler, 1969b; Thoresen, 1969). Thoresen (1969) saw little to be gained from continuing along the paths that had been trodden so far, and Litwack and his co-editors (1968) noted that the quality of the research often left much to be desired.

Lewis (1970) noted that counseling had lacked sophisticated researchers who had systematically advanced

our knowledge about the area. With specific reference to group counseling, Mahler (1969b) said that it was still the case that few studies met all of the major requirements of good research. Mahler noted that research in individual counseling and individual therapy had increased in quality and quantity, and felt that much improvement along these lines was needed in group counseling (p. 218). It is suggested in the present study that a method of improvement might be to apply the criteria described in Chapter III to future group counseling research endeavors.

Many of the flaws referred to above could be avoided by the application to research of the criteria that were established and used in the present evaluation of group counseling research. For instance, one criterion maintains that an adequate research report contain a careful description of the process and procedures of the counseling itself. Other criteria assert the need, in most counseling research, for such features as baseline data, control groups, and follow-up studies.

The present study investigated whether progress in the field of group counseling research had been made since the review of Shaw and Wursten (1965), and since Kagan (1966) noted there was:

evidence for the conclusion that certain as yet unspecified group procedures--at the hands of some

counselors, with some clients, in some settings, and at certain times--will result in improved client grade point average, attitudes, knowledge, and behavior (p. 284).

The Criterion Problem

The "criterion problem" has been considered to be one of the most critically difficult, if not one of the most contentious, areas in evaluating and assessing counseling outcomes. Blocher (1966) believed that the most important area of disagreement that clouded the evaluation picture was that of definition of criteria of counseling effectiveness. For Brammer and Shostrom (1968) finding adequate and specific criteria for judging progress was one of the principal difficulties in evaluating counseling and psychotherapy. In a similar manner, the criterion problem was seen as the major difficulty besetting any evaluator of counseling by Litwack et al. (1968), Patterson (1967), Shertzer and Stone (1968), and Wellman (1967).

The main reason for the existence of the "criterion problem" is that there are no universally accepted goals or objectives for counseling or psychotherapy. There are approximately as many different goals as there are counselors in the field (Blocher, 1966). The simple fact is that different counselors are looking for widely

different things as a result of their interventions with clients.

Gross and Multiple Outcome Measures

One of the major issues in preventing agreement on counseling objectives and outcome criteria has centered around the relative merits of internal global type criteria, such as the various measures of "self," as opposed to external behaviors which can be observed and reported more objectively (Wellman, 1967). Certain of the "self theorists" would maintain that the only source of reliable knowledge about a person is the person himself. Carl Rogers, in his emphasis upon self-regarding attitudes, has asserted that the individual is the sole judge of the adequacy of his adjustment, and that external evaluation is very questionable and should probably be avoided. The major outcome for Rogers (1961) was total personal adjustment, involving the growth of self-directed living and positive self-regard. Rogers claimed that research on measured behavior change existed to support such outcomes (p. 37), and that the effects had been shown by follow-up studies to be relatively lasting changes (p. 65). Some researchers, therefore, including those who tend to favor what might be termed a phenomenological orientation in counseling, are inclined towards global criteria. Such criteria often

involve such personality variables as increased self-acceptance and self-regard, and a better problem-solving approach to problems encountered in everyday life (Rogers, 1951).

Other counselors have argued in favor of multiple measures of outcome, suggesting the utilization of several specific goals. D. P. Campbell (1965) used criteria that included long-term academic success, patents, publications, income, and general "contributions to society." Truax (1967) maintained that it would be difficult to argue against counseling benefit if clients showed improvement across a variety of socially-valued measures of outcome such as grade point average, monetary earnings, and more productivity or competence (p. 209).

Behavioral Outcome Measures

Many writers argue against gross and multiple criterion measures, and the internal kind of criteria for the evaluation of the effectiveness of counseling. They claim that the use of such criteria is inappropriate and misleading, and believe that goals such as developing self-actualization and building up the integrative power of the ego are very difficult to translate into observable behaviors, and therefore are not subject to accurate measurement.

For example, Krumboltz (1966) suggested the goals of counseling should be stated as specific behavior changes that are desired by each client and are externally observable. Such gross criterion measures as grade point average are considered to be dependent upon innumerable factors beyond the control of the treatment procedures (Krumboltz, 1967). So too, over the long term, are annual average income, self-ratings of job satisfaction, and others.

In their approach to the evaluation of counseling effectiveness, many other writers have suggested that basic criteria should be reduced to units of behavior that will permit reliable observation and reporting (Farnsworth, 1966; Gazda & Larsen, 1968; Mahler, 1971; Ohlsen, 1970; Thoresen, 1969, 1971; Wellman, 1967). Farnsworth (1966) stated that criteria should be defined precisely enough to permit scaling on a continuum, with the extremes of the variable easily identifiable. Gazda and Larsen (1968) claimed that one of the weaknesses found in the studies appraised was the tendency not to have specific outcome goals for each group member.

Mahler (1971), however, was encouraged by the decrease he detected in the practice of using global adjustments as an outcome variable. It was notable that

"one of the most promising trends is to indicate specific measurable outcome objectives (p. 607)."

As already noted, different counselors have different goals and objectives. They should, therefore, select outcome criteria that are appropriate for their intentions. For purposes of the present review, research studies were evaluated on the presence or absence of criteria, not on the particular nature of these outcome criteria. A wide range of outcome criteria was, in fact, encountered.

CHAPTER III

CRITERIA USED IN THIS STUDY

Fifteen published reports dealing with research in group counseling with secondary school-age students were selected randomly from three journals. The journals were chosen by the present writer as appropriate in content. Ten criteria were developed in the present study to be used in the evaluation of the fifteen research studies.

The criteria were related to the presence in each published research report of information concerning the following characteristics of group counseling research:

1. the group leader himself
2. baseline or pre-wait period information
3. control group
4. the population and sample
5. statement of research objectives
6. validity and reliability of measures
7. description of group process and procedures
8. unbiased observation
9. participant comments and reactions
10. follow-up studies

The empirical and theoretical support for each criterion was considered, as well as evidence of the validity of the criteria for the purpose of evaluating group counseling research. As in most areas of emerging investigation, however, certain of the criteria have been challenged. Where applicable, reference was made to such contrary opinions.

1. The group leader himself

It is widely accepted among those concerned with the evaluation of counseling research that the counselor himself is a highly critical variable in the process. Tyler (1969) wrote, "Again and again the results of research studies comparing methods, techniques, or theories run up against the fact that differences between counselors are greater than any of these systematic differences in procedure (p. 196)."

Despite the need for information concerning the group leader himself, several authorities have found many studies to be deficient in this area. These writers include Gazda and Larsen (1968) and Ohlsen (1970).

The above quotation from Tyler (1969) implies that an adequate report of a group counseling research study include a description of the characteristics of the group leader himself. Information considered to be essential in such a report of research includes the training, experience, theoretical orientation, age, sex, and socio-economic and ethnic background of the group leader.

Kiesler (1966) contended that the frequent assumption of therapist uniformity ignores the growing body of evidence that therapists are quite heterogeneous along many dimensions (experience, attitudes, personality, and other variables) and that these differences seem to

influence patient outcome. Hence, the effect on outcome of this most crucial independent variable cannot be determined unless the group leader is meticulously described. The need for detail concerning the group leader is very great whenever the design includes replications with different leaders, or the same leaders working with different groups. Research by Truax and Carkhuff (1965a, 1965b) has indicated the importance of giving major attention to therapist variability in outcome research. Research also exists (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Lewin, 1944) that shows that different leaders cause the same group members to feel differently and to relate differently to each other.

Hobbs (1964) stated that the leader sets the climate for the group, and his attitudes seem quickly to permeate it (p. 158). Hobbs saw the characteristics of group counseling as being largely dependent on the characteristics of the group counselor (p. 156). He also maintained that those characteristics of group counseling which we can identify as being positive, negative, or neutral exist in a proportionate relationship to the characteristics embodied by the group counselor.

Ohlsen (1970) was very specific concerning the information he maintained should be provided about the group counselor when a particular technique is being

appraised. He declared that the research report should include a description of the counselor's professional preparation, including his didactic instruction, the nature of his supervision in practica and internships, and his posttraining professional experiences (p. 247).

Despite the demands of Ohlsen (1970) and other writers for detailed information of the type referred to, there are those who suggest that the precise effects of therapist experience, training, and sex are unknown at the present time (Meltzoff & Kornreich, 1970). Meltzoff and Kornreich stated that our assumptions are still dependent on a handful of inconclusive studies, though the preponderant weight of evidence, nonetheless, is that experience does seem to make a difference (pp. 272-273). Mahler (1969b) also believed that counselor experience made a difference to outcome. He asserted that experiments on the methods of group counseling should not be attempted unless the counselor in the program has had extensive group counseling experience. Ideally, he should have worked with people of the same age as those involved in the research project and he should have had experience with ten to fifteen groups (p. 211).

In a similar way to experience, it would seem reasonable to continue to believe that training does not hamper therapeutic effectiveness, but we can still not

be certain that it does any good (Meltzoff & Kornreich, 1970). It should be noted that Truax and Carkhuff (1967) mentioned a growing body of research which indicated that counselor effectiveness, as measured by constructive change in client functioning, is largely independent of the counselor's level of training. There is now evidence to suggest that traditional graduate training programs actually reduce the counselor's capacity to establish growth-producing relationships with clients (Carkhuff, Piaget, & Pierce, 1968).

Meltzoff and Kornreich (1970) stated that no conclusive evidence existed concerning the effects of the sex of the therapist on outcome. The most we can say at the present time is that the question has not been subjected to rigorous and systematic research (p. 299).

It is important that the socio-economic status of the group leader be known to the reader of the research report. On the question of the socio-economic status of the group leader vis-a-vis that of the client, Blocher (1967) noted that a good counseling relationship may not reasonably be expected to occur very readily when a counselor selects clients who are quite different from himself in age, social class, or cultural background (p. 14). Further support for the point of view that the establishment of a good counseling

relationship may be difficult in such circumstances comes from Landfield and Nawas (1964) and Mendelsohn (1966).

Considerable evidence is available, therefore, to show why a report of a research project in group counseling should include a description of the relevant characteristics of the group leader himself. Important details are considered to be descriptions of the training, experience, theoretical orientation, age, sex, and socio-economic and cultural background of the leader.

2. Baseline or pre-wait period information

The gathering of baseline data provides the experiment with an "own-control" feature, and is an alternative, or a supplement, for the regular matched control group. The use of such a baseline permits a more accurate estimate of the influence of treatment than does the use of the more regular control design alone. Whenever possible, it is advisable to include more than one kind of control group in an investigation (Tyler, 1969, p. 220).

It is important, however, to describe the need for the use of a "wait" procedure in the investigation, or the design of the research may run into ethical barriers (Campbell, 1969). An ethical challenge may arise over

the holding of a "wait" group, consisting of individuals who have applied for a counseling service which is available, but who are being deliberately deprived of this service. The justification of this "neglect" of potential counselees has been maintained by certain authorities. The point is related to the provision of control groups and is considered in the discussion of the third criterion.

Lewis (1970) suggested that a precounseling measure taken just prior to the beginning of counseling does not reveal any changes that may have been already under way in clients in the period of time that preceded the treatment. It is important to have a pretreatment baseline, for the motivation which causes a client to seek counseling may also stimulate the beginning of a behavior change--one that may continue through counseling and be erroneously attributed to the counseling itself (Lewis, 1970, p. 203).

Eysenck was adamant concerning the necessity of baseline information. How, he asked, "can one evaluate the claims made for a given type of therapy when there is no clearly demarcated base-line (1964, p. 2)?" Eysenck insisted that time is a very important variable, for client change can be a function of time as well as a result of treatment. For this reason, he asserted that the time-intervals of the waiting period and the therapy

period should be equal (p. 707). Otherwise, "spontaneous remission" could contaminate any results ascribed to the treatment and influence any differences between that period and the waiting period.

Sprinthall (1967) believed that there was an important variation within groups, whether experimental or controls, prior to counseling. A baseline for subjects could be made to demonstrate within-group differences, an important consideration when individual change attributable to treatment is being estimated.

Ohlsen (1964) pointed out a weakness of the experimental subjects' acting as their own controls. Such a research design does not permit the investigator to obtain follow-up data on the subjects as control subjects. An alternative, however, is to establish a baseline for a control group that is separate from the experimental group. Such a plan permits a follow-up of the non-counseled control group.

Evidence has been presented to support the inclusion of baseline data in an adequate report of group counseling research. It has also been shown to be important that the time-intervals of the baseline measurement period and the length of time of the counseling itself be equal.

3. Control group

It is widely, though not universally, held that a research project in counseling should include a control group. Control and experimental groups should be comparable in terms of the significant research variables.

Eysenck (1960) noted that ethical objections had been raised to the practice of placing individuals who had applied for treatment into a no-treatment control group. However, he noted that the use of a control group not treated by means of the new method was "a universal practice," and was ethically admissible in medical research, even when the most serious disorders were involved (p. 701). Lewis (1970) observed that the professional organizations have agreed that to deny counseling temporarily in the interests of scientific inquiry is not unethical (p. 205). Ohlsen (1970) suggested that the researcher should explain to the control subjects how chance had determined which persons were to be treated first, and should make specific arrangements to counsel them at some future time (after post-testing). Further, free counseling, or counseling at a reduced rate, is recommended for this group (p. 263).

D. P. Campbell (1965) said that, methodologically, studies with no control groups were the weakest. Thus, the lack of an adequate control group is a serious criticism, "one that cannot be erased by even dozens of

studies showing results favoring counseled over non-counseled students (p. 17)." Referring to the failure to include a control group, Travers (1969) stated that this was the most elementary of all deficiencies in experimental design (p. 285). Meltzoff and Kornreich (1970) described the introduction of a control group as "the minimum requirement" for the reliable interpretation and use of empirical data (p. 53). Eysenck (1960) stated that in a research design to assess the outcome of therapy a control group is an "absolutely essential minimum requirement (p. 701)."

Despite this insistence on the need for a control group, however, several writers have noted the lack of such a feature in research they have seen. These authorities include Gazda and Larsen (1968), Kemp (1970b), and Wylie (1961).

One of the reasons for the omission of a control group may be that some have seriously doubted that a control group is ever actually just what it is supposed to be. Orne (1962) raised the question as to whether we can ever really achieve a true control group in dealing with human subjects. Many control subjects apparently seek the help of others, rather than waiting patiently to be called (Bergin, 1963; LeMay & Christensen, 1968). Thus the "waiting list" group no longer fits the definition of a control group. Lewis

(1970) detected an extremely difficult situation. To maintain the control group as a true control, the members should be subjected to some activity which appears to be counseling, but which in fact is not. "To devise such an activity would insure an instant reputation for its inventor (p. 206)."

Eysenck (1960, p. 697) quoted Teuber and Powers (1953) : "To some of the counselors, the whole control group idea . . . seemed slightly blasphemous, as if we were attempting a statistical test of the efficacy of prayer" Thus, one reason that may have mitigated against the use of a control group in some cases is the emotional belief that a request for empirical proof of effectiveness constitutes an attack on the concept of the treatment itself.

Another reason for opinions that are contrary to the use of a control group is the question of within-group differences. Research has shown a large amount of variation in outcome within groups of counselees. Cartwright and Vogel (1960) followed the usual comparisons between a counseled group and a control group with an examination of the differences within the counseled group. The reported differences were significant and noteworthy. Arbuckle (1968) detected "a somewhat curious contradiction" in counselors who insist on the uniqueness of the human individual, yet seem to find

no difficulty in lumping him as one of many faceless members of a group (p. 431). Sprinthall (1967) stressed the importance of within-group differences. He further maintained that the entire concept of the traditional research design with experimental and control groups needed thorough researching itself. He stated, "Our fetish with control and experimental groups may blind us to the realities of some rather obvious prior conditions (p. 39)."

Redl (1966) protested against the use of the control group concept as "an intimidation device against imaginative research (p. 18)." He wished to see the "search" put back into "re-search," for in certain areas the discovery of "treatment-relevant facts" may depend upon imaginative new research design (p. 19).

Rothney and Lewis (1969) have raised the question of the validity of the commonly accepted procedure of selecting control group subjects on the basis of their current comparability with experimental subjects without adequate history of their development toward that status. It is a questionable assumption to suppose that because control and experimental subjects were similar at the time the groups were set up, the development up to that time had been similar and would continue to be so if there were no special intervention. The authors stated that we should consider the possibility of

interpreting the results as development rather than as effects of treatment, and remarked that few controlled experiments in the guidance field had provided enough longitudinal data on the subjects (p. 449).

The issue of motivation for counseling is a major variable that should not be overlooked in research in group counseling. Subjects in both experimental and control groups should be "motivated" if comparisons are to be valid. That is, both groups should consist of individuals who want and need the counselor's services (Shertzer & Stone, 1968; Tyler, 1969).

Blocher (1966) and Eysenck (1960, p. 701) maintained that allocation to the two groups should be carried out randomly. The reason is that "it is virtually impossible to match for more than a handful of the possibly relevant characteristics (Blocher, 1966, p. 225)."

For purposes of the present study, an adequate research project in group counseling should include a control group. Subjects should be randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. It is also desirable that the research report include an appropriate statement in the event that some subjects are believed to have sought or obtained counseling elsewhere during the course of the experiment.

4. The population and sample

An adequate report of research in group counseling should include a clear description of the population from which the sample of subjects is drawn, as well as a clear description of the sample itself. These descriptions are especially important if, as Blocher (1967) stated, there is good evidence that counseling, as traditionally conceived, is a process with only restricted applicability for only selected subgroups of the population (p. 6). However, only rarely have researchers described the population from which their sample was drawn to an extent that allowed meaningful generalizations about their results (Ohlsen, 1970). Sax (1968) declared that subjects should be sampled from clearly defined and appropriate populations. As this has often not been the case, Sax found that many of the experimental studies appearing in psychological journals had, in his opinion, "extremely limited applications (p. 345)."

In all sound experimental design, it is important to begin by defining the population to be studied, and then to sample it (Travers, 1969). In actual practice, all too often the reverse procedure is undertaken. Travers stated that perhaps the most common single error in educational research was to study a number of

cases and then seek a population of which the cases could reasonably be considered to be a sample (p. 321).

The sample should be described and the conditions and procedure of the sampling from the population under consideration should be reported. One of the great drawbacks in counseling research has been in the failure of most investigators to describe adequately their samples (Lewis, 1970). Researchers are under an obligation to describe their subjects as fully as possible so that the reader may determine to what extent the findings are applicable in another setting (p. 209). Volsky, Magoon, Norman, and Hoyt (1965) stated that the ability to generalize results to specified populations requires careful attention and precise descriptions in the differentiation of clients treated (p. 173). Sax (1968) noted that the responsibility for describing the relevant characteristics of persons selected for inclusion in a study is one which the investigator cannot avoid. The information should include the "social, cultural, psychological, and educational characteristics of clients or subjects (Kagan, 1966, p. 275)."

Sax (1968) stated that random sampling is to be preferred to the practice of forming matched groups "that represent no important population (p. 351)." It should be noted, however, that some leaders do not feel the need to use randomized groups in counseling research.

Group composition is a therapeutic consideration which is perhaps best left to the "clinical judgment" of the group leader until more conclusive research evidence exists (Kemp, 1970a; Lifton, 1966). Many group leaders have preferred heterogeneous to homogeneous groups. These people may have agreed with Redl (1966) that "there is no such thing as a homogeneous group. The moment a group is well matched according to one criterion, it is, of necessity, as different as can be in relationship to some others (p. 245)." Counselors who have expressed a preference for the heterogeneous type of group include Brammer and Shostrom (1968), Dreikurs and Sonstegard (1968), and Ginott (1968).

An adequate group counseling research study should include a careful description of the population from which the sample of subjects used was drawn. The procedure of sampling from the population under consideration should also be reported, and it is essential that subjects be randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. A clear description of the sample is necessary, and should include details concerning the essential characteristics of the subjects involved. These include the age and sex of group members, as well as their social, cultural, educational, and psychological characteristics.

5. Statement of research objectives

Once the researcher has clearly defined what he intends to do, he must also list appropriate objectives for the research project (Muro & Freeman, 1968). Many counseling studies have failed to attend to this basic consideration and the results have often been rather vague generalizations that had less than adequate meaning (p. 243).

A statement concerning research objectives is distinguishable from comments concerning the more immediate aims of the group counseling which is about to take place. The latter concerns the possible effects of the treatment on the particular group members involved, including such matters as expected outcomes, behavior changes considered desirable by clients, and others.

A statement of research objectives, however, should include a reference to related or comparable research endeavors in the area under investigation, and should include a statement of the way in which the project to be undertaken may be regarded as part of a systematic attempt to enhance our understanding of group counseling. In this way, a careful statement of research objectives may contribute to removing what Anderson (1969) and Thoresen (1969) described as a serious unrelatedness of counseling research studies, and may aid in the eventual

formulation of more general principles about group counseling.

6. Validity and reliability of measures

An acceptable research report should provide information about the validity and reliability of the measuring devices involved. In the case of a well-known standardized test, a reference to the test manual or to research studies using the instrument will normally be sufficient (Sax, 1968). However, the need for evidence of reliability and validity is crucial whenever the tools of measurement are of a novel kind, or are significantly modified or adapted for purposes of the particular research being conducted. If a test is used, for instance, it is not unreasonable to ask for evidence that the test does in fact measure what the researcher claims it measures. The process of obtaining this information may be time-consuming and difficult, but without this information one could not feel justified in drawing valid conclusions from test data (Sax, 1968).

Previous reviews of counseling research have shown that this criterion is not always met. Kagan (1966) found in many studies:

a potpourri of criterion instruments were used. Many of these were homemade to meet immediate needs, were inadequately validated, and were often of unknown reliability and objectivity (p. 278).

Similarly, Ohlsen (1970) included in his list of "obvious weaknesses in choice of criteria" the use of measures for which no evidence of either reliability or validity was presented (p. 252). Ohlsen stated that adequate validity could not readily be established for the instruments commonly used to assess changes in clients. It was also noted by Muro and Freeman (1968) that valid and reliable measuring instruments with which experimental hypotheses could be adequately tested were not readily available (p. 247). Gazda and Larsen (1968) found that many evaluation instruments were unsuitable (i.e., were not valid) for evaluating outcome variables. Arbuckle (1968) noted that as far as the evaluation of the work of counselors and therapists was concerned, there was a very real question about the validity of the means of evaluation that were being used. Consequently, "the individual counselor is generally operating without any empirical evidence of the results of his labors (p. 430)."

Validity

Most personality measures rely on construct validity rather than upon empirical validation (Lewis, 1970). Construct validity is typically used with tests measuring relatively abstract qualities, or "constructs," such as those found in the area of personality measurement (Lindvall, 1967). The author of a test begins with

a theoretical concept in mind and attempts to devise a test which will measure this concept (Lewis, 1970). The construct validity of the test is the extent to which the test may be said to measure the theoretical construct (Anastasi, 1968). The construct validity of a test can be defended by presenting data that show how certain groups of people with known characteristics differ in scores on the test or that show how these scores are related to other established measures in the same general area (Lindvall, 1967).

Construct validity is deemed desirable for measures dealing with interpersonal effectiveness, anxiety, and other personality variables. It is also desirable when measures are used that involve the self-concept, because self-concept theories explicitly require that we measure a stated class of variables--subjects' conscious processes. By definition, however, subjects' phenomenal fields are private and beyond direct observation by the experimenter. "It is not sufficient to demonstrate that one's self-concept measures have 'predictive' or 'concurrent' validity . . . (Wylie, 1961, p. 23)."

When construct validity is claimed, the research report should indicate the extent to which the proposed interpretation has been substantiated and should summarize investigations of the hypotheses derived from the theory. Secondly, if the author proposes to interpret

the test as a measure of a theoretical variable (ability, trait, or attitude), the proposed interpretation should be fully stated. These last two points were graded as "Essential" in Standards for educational and psychological tests and manuals, (APA, 1966, p. 23).

Reliability

Regardless of validity, results of measurement mean nothing without adequate reliability (Ohlsen, 1970). Reliability can be established much more readily than validity, but it often is not done--or at least it is not reported in the literature (p. 255).

The research report should include, therefore, a statement of the verification of reliability of measures employed. Test-retest reliability of an instrument must be established in pre- and post-counseling comparisons in order to give a meaningful estimate of the reliability of the measure over time. The interval of time over which test-retest reliability was measured should be specified in the report (Anastasi, 1968). When the reliability coefficient is reported, it is also desirable for the reader to know the standard error of measurement, as this represents the zone of inaccuracy surrounding any particular figure (Tyler, 1969). If applicable, details of other kinds of reliability, such as alternate-form, should similarly be established and reported.

Lewis (1970) pointed out a possible threat to reliability in what he termed "sensitization by pre-measurement." Subjects given pre- and post-treatment tests feel certain changes are expected of them. One solution is to administer a variety of pre- and post-tests in order to obscure the true criterion from them.

An adequate report of group counseling research should include evidence concerning the validity and reliability of devices used to measure client change. In addition, the report should contain a description of the procedures followed to establish the reliability and validity of the measures being used in the research.

7. Description of group process and procedures

To maximize the application of his findings, the researcher should include in his report a detailed description of the actual counseling process and the group procedures used. Kagan (1966) saw the need for the reader to know the extent and nature of counselor intervention, and to be given descriptions of content and process by counselors and disinterested judges. Wellman (1967) noted, "The assumption that counseling is counseling regardless of where it is found, or by whom it is performed, is not sufficient for meaningful outcome research (p. 156)." Similarly, Rice (1968) warned against treating psychotherapy as a homogeneous

"treatment" variable in design. This assumption ignores the tremendous variation which is known to exist even within a single theoretical orientation.

In spite of the importance of information in this area, Kagan (1966) noted that the only information typically available to the reader about the experimental variable was the size of the group and the number and frequency of the sessions held. The failure to specify the exact nature of the treatment was regarded by Kagan as representing a great obstacle to further discovery. Two factors are involved. First, inadequate description makes successful replication all but impossible (Kagan, 1966; Wellman, 1967). This factor is unfortunate, for replication is at least as essential for the small group field as it is in the physical sciences (McGrath & Altman, 1966). Secondly, inadequate description limits the generation of theory in group procedures (Kagan, 1966). McGrath and Altman (1966) maintained that the "greatest need in the small group research field is for more and better theory (p. 76)."

Other writers in the counseling field have also remarked on the frequent failure of the experimenter to define adequately what he was doing and how he was doing it. These include Gazda and Larsen (1968), Hosford and Briskin (1969), Muro and Freeman (1968), and Thoresen (1971). These counselors saw many studies as

being of little practical value, due to the omission from the research report of a detailed description of the exact nature of the independent or treatment variable.

An adequate report of group counseling research should include a detailed description of the process and content of the counseling itself. A statement by a disinterested observer is desirable, in addition to the description by the group leader himself.

8. Unbiased observation

Unbiased observation occurs when use is made of personnel who are independent of the research project and have neither knowledge of nor stake in the hypotheses. Consistent bias is likely to be present whenever the group leader himself acts as his own observer, recorder, and evaluator. A person who is emotionally concerned with a particular direction of change should not be the only one to give a rating on a particular patient--for example, a researcher may well be suspected of favoring a positive outcome as against a negative one (Eysenck, 1960).

Ginott (1961) indicated a method of reducing observer bias in evaluation. He stated that in order to minimize bias, it was desirable that the researcher who measured posttherapy results be unaware of the pretherapy test scores and predictions (p. 155). When more than one

observer is used, raters should be asked to record their independent observations in given situations, for purpose of the estimation of interobserver reliability levels (Eysenck, 1960; Sax, 1968).

Lewis (1970) pointed out that in addition to the probable bias of the researcher himself, there is the fact that subjects are sensitive to the desires of the experimenter. Subjects often want to please, and they obtain subtle clues that guide their performance.

The degree and ways in which the views and attitudes of experimenters influence experimental results has been amply demonstrated by Rosenthal (1966). It is now appreciated that psychological experiments are not as "objective" as was once imagined.

Research in group counseling should be conducted with a minimum amount of bias. This criterion was concerned with bias in observation. It is desirable that the research report include information on ways in which observer bias was avoided. Whenever it is suspected that a biased situation may have had some effect on outcome, the report should include an appropriate statement concerning a possible limitation on the conclusions.

9. Participant comments and reactions

This criterion is supplementary to criterion #7, which concerned the desirability of a description of

group process and procedures. For this criterion, however, the research reports in group counseling were examined in order to verify whether participant comments were recorded--what did those taking part have to say about the activities of the group?

Eysenck (1960) noted that it is the patient who seeks our aid, and, obviously, his own judgment of any changes that have taken place is important (p. 699). In a good research report, therefore, the reader will find details of subjects' perceptions of the experience (Kagan, 1966). However, as far as the precise evaluation of change is concerned, the more objective the method used, the more trustworthy will the results be (Eysenck, 1960).

Kemp (1970a) went much further than stating a need for the comments of the subjects. He believed an important consideration in researching group counseling was that of involvement. "In general," said Kemp, "the necessity of involving the participators in the research is passed over too lightly (p. 290)."

Participant comments on and reactions to the actual counseling process must be included in an adequate report of group counseling research. Together with criterion #7, dealing with a description of the group process and procedures, participant reactions enable

the reader to have a much fuller understanding of the results of the group activity.

10. Follow-up studies

It is not sufficient to demonstrate that counseling brings about client changes in the short term only. If clients are really helped by group counseling, the new, improved behaviors and attitudes must be maintained following the treatment. Thus, follow-up studies are regarded as necessary in order to test the lasting effects of post-treatment conclusions. Follow-up studies must be done in such a way as to refer to life outside the presence of the counselor. "Real life" is what counts, and there is likely to be bias present in the client's seeing the counselor later and answering his questions (Krumboltz, 1967).

Great care is required at this point of research evaluation. It is held in the present review that evidence should be presented in the research report to show that a follow-up study was conducted with as great a degree of scientific rigor as was the experimental situation itself. Meehl (1955) included in his "minimum standards for an adequate outcome study" a follow-up of both groups, preferably repeated. Meehl did not consider it acceptable to insist upon controls but then to ignore follow-up (pp. 357-358).

The technique of a follow-up should be carefully described in order that the reader may know that the information was collected at first hand by directly contacting the participants. Further, the process should be shown to be an unbiased one. The validity and reliability of any measuring devices used in acquiring follow-up information should be established and reported.

A great many uncontrollable intervening influences will inevitably have their effects on subjects between the end of counseling and the time of the follow-up study. This is one of the factors involved in any experimentation concerning human beings. Outside influences would similarly have had an effect on group members at the time the sessions were being conducted. Subjects should be asked, however, whether they have been receiving any "formal" help since the close of the counseling sessions.

Research in group counseling is not complete without a carefully conducted follow-up study involving all the groups concerned. Further, the follow-up should be conducted by directly contacting the participants, and should be described in detail in the report. A period of at least three months after the termination of counseling was considered necessary in the present review.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The fifteen research studies in group counseling were evaluated by using the ten criteria developed in the present study. A four-point scale using the values none, some, most, and all was used to rate each study according to each of the ten criteria. The ratings for each report are summarized in Table 1.

The criteria were concerned with the following characteristics of group counseling research:

1. the group leader himself
2. baseline or pre-wait period information
3. control group
4. the population and sample
5. statement of research objectives
6. validity and reliability of measures
7. description of group process and procedures
8. unbiased observation
9. participant comments and reactions
10. follow-up studies

Examination of Criteria-Related Findings

Bates (1968). A Test of Group Counseling

Bates (1968) used two counseling approaches to work with high school students in an attempt to determine which of the goals of guidance in education could be achieved through group counseling. A "traditional" group, which met weekly for thirteen weeks, was compared

TABLE 1
CRITERION-RELATED COMPARISON OF STUDIES

| Study | Criterion Number | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Bates (1968) | NONE | NONE | SOME | SOME | SOME | SOME | NONE | SOME | NONE | NONE |
| Benson & Blocher (1967) | SOME | SOME | ALL | SOME | SOME | SOME | ALL | SOME | MOST | SOME |
| Catron (1966) | MOST | NONE | SOME | SOME | ALL | SOME | ALL | ALL | NONE | NONE |
| Clements (1966) | NONE | NONE | ALL | SOME | ALL | NONE | SOME | NONE | SOME | NONE |
| Finney & van Dalsem (1969) | SOME | NONE | SOME | MOST | ALL | SOME | ALL | SOME | NONE | NONE |
| Hoffnung & Mills (1970) | NONE | ALL | SOME | SOME | ALL | SOME | MOST | NONE | NONE | NONE |
| Laxer et al. (1967) | SOME | SOME | SOME | SOME | ALL | SOME | NONE | MOST | NONE | SOME |
| McCowan (1968) | NONE | SOME | SOME | MOST | ALL | SOME | SOME | SOME | NONE | SOME |
| McWhirter (1969) | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | SOME | NONE | SOME | NONE |
| Prediger & Baumann (1970) | MOST | NONE | ALL | SOME | ALL | SOME | ALL | SOME | SOME | NONE |
| Rappoport (1966) | NONE | NONE | NONE | SOME | NONE | NONE | SOME | NONE | SOME | NONE |
| Stetter (1969) | NONE | NONE | SOME | SOME | ALL | MOST | ALL | ALL | SOME | NONE |
| Warner & Hansen (1970) | MOST | NONE | MOST | SOME | ALL | ALL | ALL | ALL | NONE | NONE |
| Winder & Savenko (1970) | SOME | NONE | SOME | ALL | SOME | ALL | MOST | ALL | ALL | NONE |
| Zimpfer (1967) | SOME | - | - | SOME | ALL | SOME | NONE | SOME | NONE | NONE |

with an "accelerated interaction" group, which telescoped the same amount of counseling time into two school days. A total of 36 boys and girls in grades 10, 11, and 12 was counseled in sub-groups of twelve. This pattern applied to both the traditional and accelerated subjects. Counseling outcome was measured by school attendance, by grades for academic performance, effort, and citizenship, and by three tests. These were the Bills' Index of Adjustment and Values, the Tyler Vocational Choice Cards, and the Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank. Hostilities were lessened in both groups, but the traditional group displayed superior outcomes to the accelerated group in the areas of grade point average, citizenship, effort, attendance, in increase in positive view of self, and in vocational projections.

As shown in Table 1, none of the ten criteria was met in full. Five of the criteria, however, were met in part. Each experimental group was paralleled by a control group, but the subjects were matched on five variables before being randomly assigned to groups. The experimental samples were not described in detail and the population represented was not easily identifiable. The statement of research objectives did not include references to other relevant experiments or theory. The report contained no comments on the validity or the

reliability of any of the tests for the research being conducted, though the Incomplete Sentences Blank appeared to have been used appropriately (Cofer, 1953). The criterion concerning unbiased observation was not met in all cases, as subjective teacher judgment was used in some of the measures.

The remaining five criteria were not met even in part. No information was given concerning the group leader and no use was made of a baseline. No attempt was made to describe the actual process and procedures of counseling and no participant comments or reactions were presented. The follow-up concerned only one of the eight measures taken and the length of time following counseling was not given.

Benson and Blocher (1967). Evaluation of Developmental Counseling with Groups of Low Achievers in a High School Setting

The effectiveness of developmental group counseling with underachieving grade ten boys was evaluated in terms of its contribution to helping students cope more effectively with their roles as students in the school. The boys, in a suburban senior high school, were low-achievers and had strong negative feelings and attitudes towards school. Twelve boys were counseled, in two groups of six, for 55 minutes per week over a period of 18 weeks. The SRA Youth Inventory was taken before and

after counseling. Improvements with either practical or statistical significance favored counseled, as against control, subjects in the areas of grades, disciplinary referrals, feelings of adequacy, and persistence in school.

The study met in full the requirements of only two criteria, as shown in Table 1. Subjects were randomly assigned to a control group and the description of the process of the counseling itself was adequate.

The remaining eight criteria were partly met. There was no reference to the age, ethnic origin, or group experience of the counselor himself (Benson). Baseline data were used for only one measure, that of academic grades during the term before counseling. Though the population of underachievers was fairly well described, the report lacked information concerning the ethnic and socio-economic background of the subjects, thus limiting the possibility of identifying the population sampled. Research objectives were stated explicitly, though without reference to other experimentation with similar subjects. The validity and reliability of the Inventory were not mentioned, but its use in this study appeared to be substantiated (Vance, 1965b). The criterion which concerned unbiased observation was not fully met. Disciplinary referrals and grades were used as outcome measures, and teachers may well have been aware of which

students had been involved in counseling. Subjects' reactions to the counseling were fairly well described. An adequate follow-up study was conducted on one outcome measure. This follow-up concerned persistence in school in the following academic year. The report did not state the time involved in the follow-up regarding grades and disciplinary referrals.

Catron (1966). Educational-Vocational Group Counseling: The Effects on Perception of Self and Others

Catron (1966) assessed the effects of educational-vocational (E-V) group counseling, using criteria that were different from the more traditional ones. He discarded such criteria as appropriateness of occupational choice, in favor of testing new ones that included the effects of E-V counseling on the perception of self and others. Thirteen small groups of "normal high school students" were led by 13 pairs of co-counselors. Each group met for 14 sessions, over a five-week period. Evaluation was by pre- and postadministrations of a 70 item Q-sort, with 35 items for "good" and 35 for "bad" adjustment. Seventy-eight subjects began the counseling and 54 of them completed the experimental period with sufficient data to be considered experimental subjects at the close of counseling. A significant change was found in scores for self-adjustment, especially for female group members. No significant changes were

noted, however, for perception of either ideal person or ordinary others.

As shown in Table 1, three of the criteria were met in full. Research objectives were adequately stated, a full description of the counseling process itself was provided, and observation was unbiased.

Four of the ten criteria were partly met. The 26 counselors were fairly well described, although no reference was made to their cultural or socio-economic backgrounds. A control group was used, though it was established by a "matched pairs" procedure and was only "somewhat similar to the experimental group." The description of the subjects in the study was not adequate and the population was not readily identifiable. The instrument used appeared validated by references to other studies, but no reference was made to reliability. This omission was serious, as "changes were made in order to make the instrument more appropriate for high school students (p. 203)."

Three criteria were not met at all. No baseline data were gathered, no participant comments or reactions were given, and no follow-up was carried out.

Clements (1966). Transitional Adolescents, Anxiety, and Group Counseling

Clements (1966) assessed the efficacy of small group counseling in aiding students through transitional

periods. Specifically, he studied the concept of anxiety concerning self with an experimental group of 60 senior students from an identified high school, who were preparing for life and work in a college environment. Two series of counseling sessions were held, with six meetings in each series. The first was in high school, just prior to graduation; the second took place after college enrollment in the fall. At the conclusion of each series of counseling sessions experimental group subjects showed significantly lower anxiety scores than those in the control groups. Evaluation was by means of (i) an adaptation of the Bills Index of Adjustment and Values, and (ii) an unpublished Self Concept Inventory. It was concluded that small group counseling experience was capable of reducing anxiety in transitional adolescents.

As indicated in Table 1, only two of the ten criteria used in the present review were met in full. Two control groups were used, with 60 subjects randomly assigned to each. The objectives of the research were adequately described and supported.

Three criteria were met in part. No attempt was made to describe the population sampled, beyond that the subjects were college-bound seniors in an identified high school. Although the spring term counseling was well described, nothing was said about the process and

content of the fall term counseling. Further, the reader was not told how many students (now at college) participated for how many of the fall term sessions. It was merely stated that 33 students "availed themselves of one or more group sessions." Participant comments and reactions were minimally reported and, for the most part, most of the group members' experiences were described by the counselor himself.

Five criteria were not met at all. The group counselors were described simply as "two full-time doctoral students," who met with three groups each. No baseline measure was used. In fact, no measures were taken at all until the end of the first series of counseling sessions. The criterion concerning validity and reliability was not even partly met. No information was given about the validity or the reliability of the two instruments used, though one was unpublished and the other "an adaptation" for the research being conducted. No statement can be made about the amount of bias in observation due to the lack of information about the instruments involved. No follow-up was made. Post-tests were administered at the end of each series of counseling sessions.

Finney and van Dalsem (1969). Group Counseling for Gifted Underachieving High School Students

Finney and van Dalsem (1969) conducted research with gifted, yet underachieving, high school students. Their objective was to evaluate the group counseling of underachievers with larger samples and over a longer time period than had been used in former studies. Sixty-nine boys and girls were counseled weekly for two years, through grades ten and eleven. The average group had twelve members. The original time plan called for one school year of counseling, but counseling was continued for a second year when little change was evident at the end of the first. Areas of special interest were grades and certain desirable personality changes. The California Study Methods Survey did not show a significant improvement in study habits, neither did grades improve significantly. However, teachers rated counseled students as more co-operative in the classroom. The California Psychological Inventory showed results that favored counseled students in such areas as tolerance, sociability, and self-acceptance. This study may be regarded as supporting the view that a longer time period than that usually used is necessary for group counseling to have its fullest impact.

Only two of the criteria used in the present study were met in full, as shown in Table 1. The objectives of

the research were fully presented and developed and the process and procedures of counseling were described in detail.

Five criteria were partly met in this study. Some information was given concerning the group counselors involved, though not in the areas of their sex, or their ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds. They were described as "mostly the regular high school counselors." A control group of 85 students was used, but students were divided according to sex before being randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Further, assignment was not random in that the counseling of the eight experimental groups took place within six different schools. The sample subjects were well described, though no reference was made to their ethnic characteristics, and the population was identifiable along many dimensions. A variety of instruments was used to measure changes in subjects, but the report contained no reference to their reliability or validity. This omission was particularly serious in the case of the questionnaire, "devised for this study," as a measure of teachers' opinions of classroom attitudes and behavior. The use in this study, however, of the California Study Methods Survey and the California Psychological Inventory appeared to be substantiated by Krumboltz (1965) and Kelly (1965) respectively. Other measures included grade

point average, absences, and "department referrals." The criterion of unbiased observation was only partly met. A student behavior questionnaire, for instance, involved teacher opinions in assessing counseling outcomes.

Three of the ten criteria used were not met at all in this study. No baseline information was gathered. No participant reactions or comments on the counseling were included in the report. There was no follow-up, though it should be borne in mind that this was a two-year study.

Hoffnung and Mills (1970). Situational Group Counseling with Disadvantaged Youth

Hoffnung and Mills (1970) assessed the influence of situational (on-the-job) group counseling on selected changes concerning work attitudes and personal adjustment. The subjects were male adolescents enrolled in a job training program for culturally disadvantaged youngsters. The young men were unemployed and vocationally unskilled school dropouts, aged 16 to 22, and came from severely disadvantaged family situations. Some had been previously institutionalized for correctional or mental health reasons. Two experimental groups were used. One, with 15 members, met weekly, while the other, with 13 members, met twice per week, throughout the 14 weeks of counseling. Evaluation was by means of rating

scales to measure trainee change and counseling group participation. The group that met twice weekly showed greater gains than the group that met once weekly, while both groups showed improvement over control subjects in job performance and in attitudes towards self, peers, and work.

As shown in Table 1, the study met only two of the ten criteria in full. A baseline was included in the design, using data from the files of the youth program in which the subjects were already involved. An aim of counseling was to determine whether the base rate of improvement being achieved by the trainees could be improved upon still further by group counseling. The study also met the requirements of the criterion concerning the statement and support of research objectives.

Four criteria were partly met. A no-counseling control group of 32 subjects was used, but allocation to the control and the two experimental groups was by work crew, and therefore not completely randomly conducted. The subjects in the sample were moderately well described, though a description of their ethnic backgrounds would have constituted a significant addition to the report. Though the population represented was not fully described, it might be inferred in large part from the description of the sample. The study

included no mention of the validity or reliability of the measures used to assess change, though the rating scales themselves were described in detail. Scales were completed by caseworkers, work trainers, and the observer-summarizer who attended counseling sessions. Interobserver reliability levels were not mentioned. The criterion concerning the description of the group process and procedures was largely met. The report included a fairly detailed description of the topics discussed and other appropriate facts.

Four of the criteria were not met at all in this study. The study was very weak in its description of the group leader. There was merely a reference to "a leader (psychologist)." In another paragraph he was said to be "client-centered." The omission of a detailed description of the counselor was a very serious one in this particular counseling situation. Observation was biased, as ratings were completed by persons involved in the project. The report stated, however, that the staff were generally unaware of the nature of the criterion measures or how they would be used. Further, two of the three ratings were not study-specific, but served as part of the program for all trainees. Thus, stated the report, contamination was minimized. No participant comments were provided and there was no follow-up of the effects of counseling.

Laxer, Quarter, Isnor, and Kennedy (1967). Counseling Small Groups of Behavior Problem Students in Junior High Schools

Laxer et al. (1967) intended to initiate a series of evaluations of the effects of counseling small groups of behavior problem students in junior high schools. In this study, particular emphasis was placed on grades and detentions. Group counseling began in January 1966 and all subjects received ten hours of counseling over an eight-week period. Subjects were males, aged 13 to 16, from three schools in the greater Toronto area. Twenty "problem students" were selected from each school, matched according to four variables, then randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Tests administered before and after counseling were (i) Alpert-Haber Test Anxiety Scales; (ii) a scale constructed to measure attitudes towards counseling and psychological services; (iii) Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale; and (iv) a 50-item Q-sort for self-ideal congruence. No significant differences were found between counseled and non-counseled groups for any of the variables involved.

Only one of the ten criteria used was fully met by this study. The objectives of the research were stated and supported in detail.

The study met seven of the criteria in part. There was no reference to the sex, academic background, or training of the three group leaders involved, though

emphasis in the four orientation sessions was on client-centered approaches. A baseline was used for only two measures out of the seven taken. Counseling took place from January to March and two precounseling measures were Christmas grades and detentions for the first two months of the school year. Three control groups were used, but the students were matched before being assigned to experimental and control groups, and the process took place separately in each of the three schools. The boys involved, from three unidentified schools, were not adequately described, for the report lacked information concerning their academic backgrounds and abilities, as well as their ethnic and socio-economic origins. As a result, the population represented by the sample was not readily identifiable. No mention was made of the validity or the reliability of the instruments used. The Q-sort was constructed for the research in question, and little information was given concerning the questionnaire used to measure attitudes to the helping services. Taylor (1953) showed that the normative data for the anxiety scale was obtained by working with individuals who were older than the subjects in the Laxer et al. (1967) study, and were mostly college students. Some observation was biased. While grades and detentions were being used as post-counseling measures, there was no evidence that teachers were unaware which boys had and

had not had counseling. A follow-up was conducted on only two of the seven variables considered. June grades were used as a post-counseling measure, as was detentions during the last three months of the school year.

Two criteria were not met even in part. The report contained no description of the group counseling itself and no participant comments or reactions were presented.

McCowan (1968). Group Counseling with Underachievers and their Parents

McCowan (1968) evaluated the effectiveness of parent and student group counseling for improving the personality adjustment, study habits, and academic status of underachievers. Subjects, whose I.Q.'s (WISC) ranged from 110 to 125, were tenth grade white males who had averaged less than 75% in their previous two years of school. Students displaying discipline problems, reading problems, or serious psychological disturbances were excluded from the study. Thirty-two boys were matched on five variables then randomly assigned to four groups of eight. The four groups were (i) a non-counseled control group; (ii) a parents-only counseling group; (iii) a students-only counseling group; and (iv) a parents and students counseling group (in separate sessions). Students were counseled weekly for 15 weeks, parents weekly for 12 weeks. Three tests were administered to the treatment groups before and after counseling.

These were an Essential High School Content Battery, the Bell Adjustment Inventory, and the California Study Methods Inventory. Counseling groups of underachieving students without the involvement of their parents was not effective in raising school grades. Possibly the most significant finding of the study was that parental counseling was effective in improving student academic achievement.

As shown in Table 1, the study met only one of the ten criteria in full. The objectives of the research were adequately explained and supported.

Seven of the criteria were partly met in this study. A baseline was used in an important area under investigation, consisting of the record of the subjects' low academic performance during the previous two years. A non-counseled control group was included in the research, but subjects were matched on five variables (I.Q., age, achievement, reading level, and socio-economic status) before being randomly assigned to the four groups involved. Subjects were well described, even to the inclusion of the socio-economic classification of their fathers, and of the statement that students from broken homes were excluded from the study. Although the name or location of the school involved was not given, it was found to be relatively easy to identify the population represented by this group of tenth grade white males.

No information was given concerning the validity or reliability of the tests used, though the Adjustment Inventory appeared to have been used appropriately (Vance, 1965a). The description of the counseling process itself was incomplete and lacking in detail. The amount of experimenter bias in the study was difficult to estimate, owing to insufficient information about two of the tests used. The Adjustment Inventory, however, was an "objectively scored personality questionnaire (Vance, 1965a)." A follow-up study involving all groups took place concerning academic grades five months after the termination of counseling.

Two criteria were not met even in part. No group leader information was given and participant comments and reactions to the counseling were not reported.

McWhirter (1969). Group Counseling with Transfer Students

McWhirter (1969) conducted research at an identified high school in Portland, Oregon. The purpose of his report was "to describe a program which was developed at a four-year high school to help the transfer student (p. 300)." Ninety-eight transfer students were identified at the start of a school year. They were students new to the school but not in the freshman class. They had registered in years two, three, and four of a four-year high school. The students were divided into "several

groups of 10 or 12," and were counseled once a week "for a period of at least six weeks." Research objectives were not described and counseling objectives varied from counselor to counselor. Evaluation was in two parts. First, there was "the opinion of the counselors involved" Secondly, in order to "evaluate the program more objectively," the students were given a questionnaire. Sixty-six questionnaires were returned. In the opinion of the counselors and many of the students the program succeeded in providing help for transfer students.

Table 1 shows that the study met in full none of the ten criteria being used in the present review. Only two were met even in part. Minimal information was given concerning the process of counseling. It was merely described as a place where the transfer student could feel accepted, learn more about himself, and express his feelings about his situation. The criterion concerning participant comments was partly met, five "revealing" student comments from the questionnaire being included in the report.

The remaining eight criteria were not even met in part. The group leaders were not described, but were merely identified as belonging to the school counseling staff. No baseline was used, though it was difficult to envisage how baseline data could have contributed to

the research. A control group could have been included in the design, though none was used. The subjects were not described, and the population represented in the sample could not be identified. As noted above, no research objectives were stated. The student questionnaire was not described and its assumed validity and reliability were not mentioned. The requirements of the criterion dealing with unbiased observation were not met, evaluation being done by the students and counselors involved. No follow-up study was conducted.

Prediger and Baumann (1970). Developmental Group Counseling: An Outcome Study

Prediger and Baumann (1970) provided developmental group counseling to students in a vocational high school. Thirty groups, with six to eight members each, were counseled for one 40-minute period per week for a minimum of one academic year. The research design included three experimental programs. These were a group counseling program, an education skills instruction program, and a program offering both group counseling and instruction in education skills. The programs developed and evaluated concerned the ability of high school students to undertake vocational education and profit from it to the full level of their ability. An inactive control group and a placebo control group were included in the research. Juniors entering the school in the falls of 1966 and 1967

were randomly, and nonvoluntarily, assigned to the groups. For purposes of evaluation 30 measures were obtained in 11 categories of "socially valued, external, objective" outcome variables. These included such areas as attendance, discipline, drop-out rate, student satisfaction, and ratings of instructors. The effectiveness of the experimental groups was not shown to be superior to the "ordinary" experiences of control group subjects. Perception of personal benefit, however, was greater in the counseled group than in the placebo group.

The study fully met the requirements of three of the ten criteria used in the present review. Subjects were randomly assigned to the no-counseling and placebo control groups, research objectives were well described and documented, and the study fully met the criterion concerning the description of the process and procedures of the treatment itself.

Another five criteria were met in part. The group leaders were well described, except in the areas of their ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. The large number of subjects was not described in sufficient detail and the population was not readily identifiable. The report contained no statement on the reliability or the validity of any of the instruments employed, though certain outcome criteria, such as attendance, could be

measured directly without the use of an instrument. The criterion concerning unbiased observation was met in some cases and unmet in others. Evaluation of counseling varied from student assessment of teacher sense of humor to state-wide achievement tests. Some participant comments were reported. Group members evaluated their self-benefit from the program and some of the results were reported.

The study failed to meet two of the criteria even in part. First, no use was made of baseline data. Secondly, there was no follow-up. However, counseling was fairly long-term, being for a minimum of one academic year. Data collection was related to the students' continued progress through school and through the experimental programs.

Rappoport (1966). Small Group Counseling

Research objectives were not stated explicitly by Rappoport (1966). The aim of his counseling program, however, was to achieve better pupil adjustment and identification with school and to stimulate thinking with regard to occupations and further education. Nine grade-nine boys were counseled together weekly for a total of approximately 40 hours. The subjects showed a general lack of school success and adjustment and had achieved low academic and citizenship grades in their

previous two years of school. The effects of counseling were assessed by periodic re-evaluation by, and constant communication among, the counselor, the vice-principal, teachers, and an assistant supervisor of child welfare and attendance. Each participant "expressed strong satisfaction with the program and advocated its continuance." The boys' graduation from junior high school was said to have been doubtful when the group counseling began. In fact, six of the nine succeeded in graduating and seven of the nine predicted they would graduate from senior high school.

Table 1 shows that the study met none of the ten criteria in full and met only three of them in part. Though the school involved was identified, few facts were given concerning the boys counseled and the population the subjects represented was not accurately identifiable. The counseling process itself was described in some, though insufficient, detail. Some participant comments were given in the report. All graduating members, for instance, felt they would not have graduated without the help of the group counseling program.

The remaining seven criteria failed to meet even the minimum requirements. No facts were given about the counselor, the writer himself, and there was no baseline or control group in the design. As noted above, the wider research objectives were not stated. The report

included no mention of the validity or reliability of the means of evaluation by "constant communication" referred to above. The subjects were receiving individual counseling concurrently with the treatment in the group. This fact reduces further the validity of the study as a whole as an assessment of the effectiveness of group counseling. Observation was not unbiased, since evaluations of change and progress were made by teachers and others concerned with the changes themselves. There was no follow-up to this study, though the report included a summary of the boys' situations at a later date.

Stetter (1969). A Group Guidance Technique for the Classroom Teacher

Stetter (1969) conducted a "controlled experiment" to test the hypothesis that the anxiety level of students is lowered when they learn that others their age have personal-social problems similar to their own. There were 20 boys and girls in the experimental group and 21 in the control group. Both groups were given Form A of the IPAT-8 Parallel-Form Anxiety Battery before the group counseling. The junior high school form of the Mooney Problem Check List was completed two days later by the experimental group, and the responses used as a basis for group discussion on the following day. A parallel form of the anxiety battery was then administered

to both groups. Evaluation was (i) subjective, being teacher opinion of student reactions; and (ii) objective, being based on the scores of the standardized anxiety tests. The number of individual students showing a reduction in anxiety following the group counseling session was "considerably greater" in the experimental group. Though the difference was non-significant, it was found that a greater percentage of boys than girls experienced a reduction in tested anxiety level.

The study met three of the ten criteria in full, as shown in Table 1. Research objectives were adequately described. The criterion concerning a description of the counseling itself was well met, the activities of the group being fully described. Considerable attention was given to the reactions and thoughts of the group members. Observation was unbiased, change being measured by means of standardized test scores. Though subjective teacher evaluation was included in the report, it was not used in the data analysis.

Four criteria were met in part by this study. A control group was used. However, "no attempt was made to match the two groups." Subjects in the two groups were members of "two core classes," and the groups "had much in common." The subjects in the experiment were not described in sufficient detail and the population represented was therefore not completely identifiable.

The students were described as low achievers and slow learners and were in the ninth grade. The mean I.Q. and the mean age were given for both groups. Information concerning the validity and reliability of the anxiety-measuring instrument were not included in the report. However, Cohen (1965) appeared to support the use of the test in the study under consideration. Some participant comments were included in the research report.

Three criteria were not met at all. No information was given about the group leader. The experimental group was led by the subjects' regular classroom teacher to "avoid any irregularities in the daily routine that might cause added anxiety." No baseline data were gathered for use in the study and no follow-up study was conducted.

Warner and Hansen (1970). Verbal-Reinforcement and Model-Reinforcement Group Counseling with Alienated Students

Warner and Hansen (1970) assessed the effectiveness of group behavioral counseling on problems of a personal or social nature. Specifically, it was their intention to determine whether such counseling could be used to reduce feelings of alienation in students and to make them more fully-functioning and participating members of society. A sample of 180 alienated grade 11 students was drawn from three high schools in suburban western New York. Alienated students were defined as those who

scored one standard deviation above the mean on a scale developed by Dean (1961). In each school the students were randomly assigned to one of four groups. These were a model-reinforcement, a verbal-reinforcement, a placebo, and a no-counseling control group. The models in each group were unaware they were acting as models. The counseling treatment consisted of six sessions, each lasting 40 minutes. All four groups in each of the schools were readministered Dean's Scale of Alienation at the close of counseling. It was found that both verbal-reinforcement and model-reinforcement group counseling reduced alienation feelings in students. There was no significant difference between the effects of the two approaches. There was also a lack of significant difference between placebo and control group effects. It was concluded that behavioral counseling techniques may be effective even when the problem under consideration does not concern specific and well-defined behaviors.

As shown in Table 1, the study met in full the requirements of four of the ten criteria. Research objectives were adequately described. The study was noteworthy in that details of the validity and reliability of the means of measuring alienation were included in the report. The activities of the various groups were described in detail. Observation was unbiased, evaluation

being by means of a well-described, objectively scored self-report type instrument.

The study met three of the criteria in part. The three group leaders were well described. They were males with counseling experience and work in counseling beyond the master's level. Before the study under review, all three underwent a training program in behavioral counseling. However, the report contained no reference to the ethnic characteristics of the three men. Though a control and a placebo group were used, the allocation of the subjects to groups was not completely random, being conducted in each of the three schools separately. Though information was provided concerning the socio-economic backgrounds of the subjects, no facts were given about their ethnic origins. Further, a statement of the relative academic status of the "alienated" sample would have been a valuable contribution to the description of the subjects. The population represented could be identified, other than with regard to ethnic and intellectual considerations.

Three criteria were not met at all in this study. No use was made of baseline data, participant comments and reactions were not given, and no follow-up study was undertaken.

Winder and Savenko (1970). Group Counseling with
Neighborhood Youth Corps Trainees

Winder and Savenko (1970) stated that they had conducted a field study rather than an experimental design. Nevertheless, their report was included in the present review as it was claimed to "evaluate a group counseling program." Further, the aim of the study was "an objective assessment of results." The aim of the counseling, with alienated, unemployed, and disadvantaged youth, was to apply the hypothesized benefits of group counseling to trainees in the Neighborhood Youth Corps, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Two counselors worked with three groups of enrollees each, average group size being ten members. Subjects were boys and girls aged 16 to 21. Meetings were one hour long, and each group met twice weekly for nine months. Group membership was kept open, as members left and rejoined for a variety of reasons. For comparative purposes, use was made of information concerning a similar group which had been in the youth program for a period of nine months before the introduction of the group counseling sessions. "Total Participation" in the program was used to measure counseling benefit. The goal of increased work involvement by the trainees in the counseling program was not realized. However, counseling was considered to have provided many trainees with "some sense of

community," and self-esteem was often heightened by the counseling sessions.

Four of the ten criteria were fully met by this study. The subjects were carefully described and the population could be readily identified. Procedures for quantitative evaluation appeared to have validity and reliability, for the "Total Participation Index" was the mathematical product of attendance and length of stay in the program. In the same way, observation may be considered to have been unbiased. The criterion concerning participant comments and reactions to the counseling was fully met. Though the description came from the writer of the report, much attention was paid to the group activities and the apparent changes in attitude of several group members.

Four other criteria were partly met. The counselor-training and group experience of the leaders were partly described and reference was made to their middle-class background. However, there was no indication of their sex or ethnic origins--crucial variables in a study involving minority group youth. Although a control group was included in the design, it was not a simultaneous one. It consisted of individuals who had been through the program the previous year, all the same conditions being present except the group counseling itself. It should be noted that the experimental group

contained more Southern immigrants and Puerto Ricans than the control group. The report was not clear and specific in its statement of research objectives. A major consideration seems to have been to search for a methodology of working with unmotivated youth and to open channels of communication with them. A good attempt was made to describe the process and procedures of the experimental group during counseling.

Two criteria were not met at all. No baseline data were considered and no follow-up study was carried out.

Zimpfer (1967). Expression of Feelings in Group Counseling

Zimpfer (1967) related process findings to outcome in group counseling to determine the extent to which the nature of feeling interaction in group counseling is related to measured changes in counselees' self-evaluation and to changes in evaluation by peers. Subjects were 70 high school students who had been referred for counseling because of questions relating to conduct, attitude, or achievement. Assignment to the nine groups was not random, as students were registered in eight different schools. Counseling was conducted by nine different counselors and took place twice a week, for 45 minutes each session, for a total of 12 sessions. Three nonparticipant observers attended four of the sessions and classified verbal and nonverbal behavior on the spot

as it occurred. Two instruments were administered as pre- and post-counseling tests. First, a Q-sort was used for self-evaluation; secondly, peer-evaluation was measured by the Succorance scale of the Syracuse Scales of Social Relations. Six hypotheses were tested, relating changes in the affective behavior of counselees in the group to the measured outcomes of counseling. None of the correlations was found to be significant at the .01 level set.

Two of the ten criteria used in the present review were not applicable for the Zimpfer (1967) study. A baseline and a control group would not have been appropriate in a correlational study of this type.

Of the remaining eight criteria, one was met in full. The research objectives for the study were adequately described.

Four criteria were met in part. Information about the nine counselors was minimal. It was merely stated that they were "generally client-centered," and all had completed preparation for group counseling at the same graduate institution. Nor was much information given about the subjects. For instance, the reader was not told anything about their sex or academic abilities. For this reason, the population represented by them could be only partially identified. The report included statements concerning the validity of the Q-sort

(Baymur & Patterson, 1960), and the peer-evaluation scale. Reliability of the Q-sort was not mentioned, though it would appear that the test possesses moderate reliability for purposes such as the one in the study under consideration (Baymur & Patterson, 1960). The use of the Succorance scale of the Syracuse Scales of Social Relations in this study also appeared to be appropriate (Campbell, D. T., 1965). The criterion concerning unbiased observation was partly met. Interobserver reliability levels were given for the three nonparticipant observers who attended sessions 2, 3, 11, and 12. On the measures of counseling outcome, however, subjects evaluated themselves and also their peers.

Three criteria were not met at all by this study. There was no indication of what constituted the "group counseling," and no participant comments on or reactions to the process of counseling were given. No follow-up was conducted, indicating that outcomes were understood to be what was measured by the tests immediately following the counseling.

Summary of Findings

The criteria most commonly met in full were criterion #5, dealing with a statement of the objectives of the research, and criterion #7, dealing with a description of the process and procedures of the counseling itself.

Ten reports were found to contain a fully adequate statement of the objectives of the research conducted and six studies adequately described the process and procedures of the group counseling.

The criteria least commonly met in full were criterion #1, concerning information about the group leader himself, and criterion #10, concerning a follow-up study. No study fully met the requirements of either of these criteria.

The criteria that were most frequently unmet even in part were criterion #2, concerning the baseline, and criterion #10, concerning the follow-up. Ten studies were found to make no use of baseline data and twelve were found in which no follow-up was conducted.

The criterion least frequently unmet even in part was criterion #4, dealing with a description of the population and sample. Only one of the fifteen studies totally failed to meet this criterion. Only two of the studies totally failed to meet criterion #5, dealing with the statement of research objectives, and only two totally failed to meet criterion #3, dealing with the use of a control group.

The number of criteria not met even minimally ranged from eight in the McWhirter (1969) study to zero in the study by Benson and Blocher (1967).

The studies which fully met the largest number of criteria were Warner and Hansen (1970) and Winder and Savenko (1970). These studies each met in full the requirements of four of the ten criteria used in the present review.

Three studies were found to meet none of the ten criteria in full. They were Bates (1968), McWhirter (1969), and Rappoport (1966).

TABLE 2*

Mean Number of Criteria Met Per Study

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Criteria met in full | 1.9 |
| Criteria met in part | 4.5 |
| Criteria not met at all | 3.5 |

*The study by Zimpfer (1967) was evaluated according to eight criteria only

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

One purpose of the present review was to determine whether group counseling research had increased in quality and effectiveness during the previous six years. Shaw and Wursten (1965) noted that many improvements, in controls, procedures, and in outcome criteria, were needed before much of the group counseling research literature could be taken at face value. Kagan (1966) and Lifton (1966) suggested that the areas of positive knowledge and certainty in the field of group counseling research were very restricted. That more recent research endeavors in group counseling have been largely unrelated to each other, have been characterized by methodological shortcomings, and have been of doubtful assistance to practicing counselors, has been suggested by Anderson (1969), Kemp (1970a), Lewis (1970), Mahler (1969b), and Thoresen (1969).

In the present study ten criteria of sound experimental design were described and supported. All the criteria had considerable support from the literature, though certain ones were seen to have been challenged by some authorities. The criteria were then used to

evaluate a sample of fifteen research studies in group counseling. Not one of the fifteen studies evaluated met even half of the ten criteria in full. Only two studies fully met even four of the criteria used. More than one third of the studies evaluated failed to meet more than one criterion in full. Five of the fifteen studies failed to meet four or more of the ten criteria even minimally.

The criticisms of Lewis (1970) and Sax (1968) concerning the frequent lack of a description of the subjects in the experiment were not supported by the present review. Only one of the fifteen studies was found not to meet this criterion, in part at least.

Similarly, the study failed to support the assertion of Muro and Freeman (1968) that many counseling studies have failed to attend to the basic consideration of a statement of research objectives. Ten studies were found to be fully adequate on this criterion, and three more met the requirements in part.

The present study did support the observation that much group counseling research has been conducted with a design that lacked the adequate provision of a control group (Gazda & Larsen, 1968; Kemp, 1970b). The criterion concerning a satisfactory control group was fully met by only three studies, and a control group was totally absent from two of the studies. The tendency in the

remaining studies was to match subjects before assigning them to control and experimental groups.

In a similar way, the present study supported the view of Gazda and Larsen (1968) and Ohlsen (1970) that many group counseling research reports have been deficient in the area of information concerning the group leader himself. No study fully met the requirements of this criterion and seven failed to do so even in part.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have illustrated the continued neglect of the experimental criteria with which the research reports in group counseling were evaluated. It is suggested that the quality of the research would improve, and that published research in the field might become more helpful to the practicing counselor in his day-to-day work with clients, if the research were conducted with stricter adherence to the experimental criteria described, supported, and used in the present study.

The present review showed that the criteria most commonly neglected in recent group counseling research literature were those criteria that dealt with information about the group leader himself, the importance of a completely random assignment of subjects to experimental

and control groups, and the essential nature of the use of baseline data and a follow-up study. It is particularly emphasized that future group counseling research endeavors might be of superior quality and effectiveness if greater emphasis were placed on the four areas mentioned above.

The ten criteria used, selected by the present writer on an a priori basis, were found to be adequate and workable for purposes of an experimentally-oriented examination of group counseling research literature. The criteria could presumably be used in a similar manner by others writing reviews of research in group counseling and group psychotherapy.

The exact requirements of most of the criteria, for example the one dealing with information about the group leader himself, were defined in advance. An appropriate rating for a particular research study was therefore made in an objective manner. However, the requirements of three of the ten criteria were found to be less easily quantifiably definable and the ratings were therefore more subjective. These criteria concerned the satisfactory statement of research objectives, the description of the group process and procedures, and the comments and reactions of the participants.

A method was recommended above to make published research in the field of group counseling of superior

quality and of increased usefulness to the practicing counselor. It may be, however, that to pursue answers to counseling questions by such means would be to go even further in the wrong direction. There is still the possibility that empirical research is not the answer to more effective counseling practice, to the growth of the counseling profession, and to our understanding of counseling psychology and human beings. At issue is the question of whether research can reach and deal with what counselors see as the necessary and sufficient variables in bringing about changes through counseling. Or perhaps, after all, the problem may be found to be largely one of a communication gap between researchers and practitioners. The present study has raised these interesting possibilities; and many crucial questions are opened to further investigation.

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APPENDIX

THE FIFTEEN RESEARCH REPORTS EXAMINED

IN THE PRESENT REVIEW

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