

THE USE OF SMALL GROUPS WITHIN THE THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Based on the assumption that students and teachers have definite roles within the educational system, the concept of the small group is developed with the intention of giving both groups an optimal chance to fulfill their roles.

If a teacher's primary task is that of teaching, it is not difficult to see that the teacher is at a disadvantage if he spends considerable amounts of time dealing with discipline and social problems that might best be handled outside of the classroom situation. The group may be used by the teacher to deal with students that hinder his performance and take time away from the educational process.

The use of the group by the student will give him a chance to verbalize his feelings and give him an opportunity to understand some of the problems that he may be experiencing within the educational system. This concept of the small group within the school system is based on the contention that most students know what is expected of them by the school, but may have trouble meeting those expectations. The group experience may be one way of helping the student to do so. It would place some of the responsibility for improvement with the student where it rightfully belongs.

The group experience for Middle School and High School students will not be a particular kind of group using a specific technique or treatment plan. It will be a group where there is a shared experience of values, attitudes, and feelings by the group leader or co-leader and the group participants. There will be an attempt to form a common ground that we will work from to improve the relationship (s) that the student has with the educational system.

The goals stated below can be applied to both the Middle School and the Senior High School. These goals are desired but the success of the group is not contingent upon them, but rather on the fact that they are flexible and will be changed to meet the needs of the students and the teachers.

GOALS

1. Facilitate adjustment to the adolescent years.
2. Alleviation of classroom disruption by the child that:
 - a. Is seeking attention.
 - b. Has never been socialized into the classroom situation.
 - c. Has a need to interact with others but has not yet developed the skills to do so.
 - d. Has a need to be cared about and listened to.
 - e. Needs a positive self-image. (Of himself and by others)

3. Facilitate adjustment to a racially mixed situation.
4. Give the student a vehicle for expression of his personal ideas and beliefs that otherwise might not be possible.
5. Short term goals that the group will have to define for themselves.

RESTRAINTS OF THE GROUP

All children are not suited for a group experience. Some may find it threatening and will be unable to function in the group setting. Because of this it will be necessary to screen all referrals and when necessary, reject the child who is:

1. Suffering from severe emotional disturbances.
2. Is in need of individualized psychiatric counseling.
3. Is in need of tutorial services for problem subjects. (Though it may be possible that we can make arrangements for that service.)
4. Chronically absent.
5. Disruptive to the group process and is hindering the progress of the other students. (It is difficult to identify this child before the group starts and he may be dropped after several sessions. If this should happen the group leader will be responsible for seeing that the child gets the help he needs.)

EVALUATION OF THE GROUP

Evaluation will be an ongoing process. The group leader will have to assume the responsibility of evaluating the progress of each of the group members. The group will have time at the end of each session to evaluate what it has done that day and to decide what it needs to do to accomplish its goals.

Periodically the group meeting itself will be an evaluation device.

REFERRALS

Each teacher will be provided with referral forms. She should complete the form and channel it to the group leader. The leader will have to meet the child before the scheduled group meeting for screening.

The number of referrals will not be limited, but the group leader may find it necessary to set up more than one group at a particular school in order to keep the group at a manageable size. (Maximum number of students in a group being ten.)

The groups will meet for one class period, one day a week, at a time that best meets the needs of the group leader and students.

1. Please have all referral forms to Mrs. Courson by Monday, October 9, 1972.
2. Students will be screened for acceptance on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 10th and 11th.
3. The group meetings will be held during club period on Thursdays.
4. The group leader is Miss Josette Marquess. She is in the County School Office, phone number 226-7192.

GROUP WORK

REFERRAL FORM

We are concerned with students who have adjustment problems in school, and we would like to try to help students make the proper school adjustment. If you have students that you feel we can help, please use this form to refer them.

Student's name _____
Grade level _____ Age _____

Nature of problem:

_____ behavior problem (please be specific)

_____ low grades

_____ lack of interest

_____ isolation from peer group

_____ other (please be specific)

Teacher making referral _____

Date _____

Please leave the referral form with Mrs. Courson.