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A comparative study of freshmen and sophomore male and female student perceptions of their teacher-advisor at Saydel High School

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A comparative study of freshmen and sophomore male and female student perceptions of their teacher-advisor at Saydel High School

Abstract

The teacher-advisement program at Saydel High School in Des Moines, Iowa began during the 1976-77 school year. The Saydel advisement program is an adaptation of the advisement program at the Ferguson-Florissant School District in Florissant, Missouri. Representatives from Ferguson-Florissant presented some of the basic mechanics of the advisement system during a one-day workshop/in-service program for Saydel teachers which preceded the 1976-77 school year. This program was a familiarization process with activities that had been used in the advisement program at Ferguson-Florissant. The Saydel staff was also made aware of other alternative uses for the program at this time.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORE
MALE AND FEMALE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
TEACHER-ADVISOR AT SAYDEL HIGH SCHOOL

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Department of Educational Administration
and Counseling
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Jerry W. Walker
August 1983

This Research Paper by: Jerry W. Walker

Entitled: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORE
MALE AND FEMALE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
TEACHER-ADVISOR AT SAYDEL HIGH SCHOOL

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The teacher-advisement program at Saydel High School in Des Moines, Iowa began during the 1976-77 school year. The Saydel advisement program is an adaptation of the advisement program at the Ferguson-Florissant School District in Florissant, Missouri. Representatives from Ferguson-Florissant presented some of the basic mechanics of the advisement system during a one-day workshop/in-service program for Saydel teachers which preceded the 1976-77 school year. This program was a familiarization process with activities that had been used in the advisement program at Ferguson-Florissant. The Saydel staff was also made aware of other alternative uses for the program at this time.

At Saydel teachers in the program have been used to "assist" the two counselors schedule students, check credits to determine whether or not students are making satisfactory academic progress, have conferences with students concerning their academic progress, fill out schedule cards for upcoming academic periods, and discuss any other significant problems the student may be having. The tasks mentioned are the fundamental components of the Saydel

teacher-advisor program. Some staff members, however, do go beyond the areas mentioned.

An advisor at Saydel High School has approximately sixteen "advisees"; students in each of the four classes that attend the high school. Usually, there is a balance of advisees from each class (freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior) although this can vary because of transfers, drop-outs, and mid-year graduations.

The entire professional staff is involved in the advisement process. The principal, vice-principal, athletic director, librarian, and both guidance counselors also serve as advisors.

Each teacher-advisor is given one class period of release time per week. Each advisor is assigned advisement on a specific day and that day never changes. The period the advisor is assigned to meet with advisees changes every week so that one particular class period is not slighted academically. An advisor may have advisement during sixth hour one week, during fifth hour the next week, and so on.

Generally twice per academic year the advisement sessions are doubled in length from one class period to two class periods. This is done so that students may examine and schedule course offerings for the upcoming academic year.

When incoming freshmen enter Saydel High School

they are allowed to select an advisor. The student may change advisors following an academic year if they desire, due to conflicts of one type or another. This concept is consistent with the policy of the Grossmont Unified School District (Valhalla High School) in San Diego, California. At Valhalla, students select their advisors during registration and they have the option of changing if they desire. (Clay, 1977)

Other schools, however, are not as flexible in advisor selection. Northern University High School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for example, generally will assign students to an advisor alphabetically, with very few exceptions. The primary advantage in this method of selection, according to Richard Strub, a guidance counselor at Northern University High, is that the selection process does not become a popularity contest. (Strub, 1981)

Statement of the Problem

The research problem: how well staff members are performing their role as advisors as measured by their advisees, is addressed in this paper. Did the students feel their advisors were providing them with an adequate amount of assistance? How well were advisors fulfilling their role as advisors in the eyes of their freshmen and sophomore students? Were they performing certain functions, such as helping students with a problem, interpreting

students' standardized test scores, or referring the students to another qualified individual for assistance in some area, to the satisfaction of their advisees? And more specifically, did male or female students in the classes polled feel their advisors were doing a better job in certain specific areas?

These were the general questions that were addressed in the study. If the classes polled and compared were directionally positive in their responses, it could be concluded that not only were advisors doing a good job but also that the program was meeting its objectives.

Significance of the Study

At the time this study was conducted, the writer was completing his fifth year of teaching at Saydel High School. During the time the advisement program had been in operation, only staff perceptions of the program had been studied. (Phillips, 1978) While there were many staff members who thought that the program was of great benefit to the students, a number of the staff felt that they were being asked to do tasks which previously had been undertaken by the counseling department. As a result, some seemed resentful of the program and considered it to be of minimal value.

The current study was undertaken to obtain student

perceptions of their advisors' performance of specific advisement tasks.

Limitations of the Study

At the beginning of the 1980-81 school year, Saydel High School had approximately 450 students in grades 9-12. The study involved polling the entire freshmen and sophomore classes. A total of 219 individuals responded to the questionnaire. This total represents the freshmen and sophomore students who were present on the day the instrument was administered.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The objectives of teacher-advisor programs vary from school to school. In some schools, such as Union 32 in East Montpelier, Vermont, the advisor's role is that of an academic counselor and student advocate. The advisor is an adult the student can identify on a personal basis and also a person who can give help to a student when needed. (Larson and Mable, 1975)

In the Grossmont Unified District in San Diego, California, the basic philosophy of the advisement program is that every student should know and have the opportunity to relate to an adult in an environment other than the classroom. (Clay, 1977)

At East High School in Wichita, Kansas, the teacher-advisor program started as a pilot project during the 1975-76 school year with about 340 students which was about one-half of the sophomore class. By 1977, every student at East High had an advisor. The emphasis on East's program focuses on the advisor giving information and assisting with educational and career planning. One of the major goals of this program is that the advisors should assist in creating a successful, goal oriented

experience for all of their advisees. (Johnson, Morton, and Obley, 1979)

A student-faculty advisory program has existed at St. Raphael Academy in Pawtucket, Rhode Island since 1971. The program operates on the premise of prevention rather than remediation; the basic concept being that each student should experience a faculty member who is interested in them personally. This, in turn, helps prevent many problems later on during the school year. (Steinbrecher, 1976)

In some situations in which this type of program exists the term "teacher-counselor" is used as opposed to "teacher-advisor." "Teacher-advisor" suggests that the primary emphasis may be on education, with activities such as registration, curriculum planning, conveying information, and performing other administrative functions. "Teacher-counselor," on the other hand, suggests that more emphasis may be on the total growth of the student, with such activities as values clarification, problem solving, decision making, and peer counseling. (Pilkington and Jarmin, 1977)

The program at Northern University High School in Cedar Falls, Iowa, has existed for over twenty years. It was developed by Dr. R. Paul Brimm, a professor in the education department at the University of Northern Iowa, when he was the principal at Northern University High

School. This program is academically oriented in that the advisor is involved in registration and scheduling of students as well as conducting parent-student grade conferences. (Brimm, 1977)

The advisement program in the Ferguson-Florissant School District, Florissant, Missouri, was designed to ensure that each student could identify with one professional person who would assist them in selecting learning programs. The advisor also would assist in assessing the student's needs, setting long range goals, and communicating the student's needs to the school as a whole.

The emphasis in the Ferguson-Florissant program is on developing a one-to-one relationship between the advisor and the student. Through this relationship, an advisement program can effectively combat the interpersonalization of today's highly specialized secondary schools. In addition, it can effect change in a school by continually keeping the school as an institution in touch with the feelings, attitudes, concerns, and needs of each student. This advisor/advisee relationship is a way for a school to show human concern.

As a school adopts more flexibility in its programs and in its graduation requirements, the students and their parents need additional help to match the educational experiences the schools offer with their own goals and career intentions. (Hawkins and Cowles, 1974)

At Ferguson-Florissant, advisors have eight major areas of responsibility: program planning, which involves course selection and evaluation of course schedule; self-assessment, including an analysis of the student's behavior and performance; school offerings awareness, involving an awareness of the school and its programs; parent relations designed to increase parent participation in the schooling process; feedback and evaluation which the student gives to the school; decision making skills involving an application of a process to make decisions; career planning/preparation which include activities to help students select and prepare for a career; and school/community issues dealing concerning the human aspects of individuals working together with one another. (Johnson and Salmon, 1979)

The emphasis in the Saydel advisement program is more oriented to assisting students in making course selections and establishing an academic program throughout the students' high school years. The concept of the teacher-advisor program in the Saydel district was borrowed from the Ferguson-Florissant system and has been modified to meet the needs of the district. At Saydel, the advisement program has evolved into primarily a counselor assistance program. ("Teacher Advisors Guide," 1976).

A literature review indicates there has been a very

limited amount of information concerning advisement program evaluation. There seems to be a general consensus that advisement programs are useful and can be very helpful when staff members are conscientious about their roles as advisors. It is believed the advisement concept could significantly humanize schools for teachers and students if it were not an "added on" responsibility. (Larson and Mable, 1975)

The primary purpose of student evaluation is to improve the program; a secondary purpose is to bring as many faculty as possible to a certain level of performance. (Larson and Mable, 1976)

The only evaluation of the advisement program at Saydel has been a limited evaluation that took place during the 1978-1979 school year. This assessment, however, was more concerned with teacher impressions of the advisement program. Because of this, the writer sought to determine the student impressions of the program. An instrument was devised which would be administered to a segment of the school population to determine whether or not advisors were adequately performing advisement tasks as perceived by the student. (Phillips, 1978)

Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Source of Data

Freshmen and sophomore students were polled for this study. A total of 219 freshmen and sophomore students of Saydel High School who responded to the questionnaire: fifty-six freshmen males, fifty-six freshmen females, fifty-eight sophomore males, and forty-nine sophomore females. The instrument was administered by three social studies instructors to sophomore classes and by three math instructors whose classes were all freshmen.

Description of the Instrument

The instrument that was used for the survey was an adaptation of an instrument that had been developed by Richard C. Phillips, a counselor at Saydel High School. The original instrument was designed to see how staff members felt about the advisement program. It was reworded so that students could rate the performance of their advisors concerning specific advisement tasks. (Phillips, 1978)

The instrument deals with the amount of assistance students receive from their advisors. Students are asked to rate their advisor's performance in several areas.

A sample questionnaire appears in the appendix.

Analysis of the Data

Of the 219 respondents who were surveyed, approximately 26 percent each were freshmen males and females; about 27 percent were sophomore males; and about 22 percent were sophomore females. (Table 1)

Table 1

Sex and Academic Class of Respondents

	Number	Percentage
Freshmen males	56	25.6
Sophomore males	58	26.5
Total males	114	52.1
Freshmen females	56	25.6
Sophomore females	49	22.3
Total females	105	47.9
Grand Total	219	100.0

It was determined that in the Saydel advisement program there were thirteen primary areas that advisors were to give students assistance in: schedule planning, making schedule changes, long range plans, provide better student understanding of themselves, obtaining career information, checking credits, helping a student with a teacher, helping a student with a problem, referring a

student to another professional for help (such as a school psychologist), in interpreting test scores, in providing encouragement to the student, in understanding a student's feelings or point of view, and in discussing school rules.

A sample population of twenty-two males (eleven freshmen and eleven sophomores) and twenty-two females (eleven freshmen and eleven sophomores) were randomly selected from each group and sample mean scores were calculated for each. T-scores for the random sample population were also calculated to determine whether results indicated any degree of significance. T-scores were indicated for each for twenty-one degrees of freedom.

Table 2 indicates that the vast majority of the students polled felt their advisors did an average job or better with over one-half of them (116 out of 219) stating that the performance was above average or excellent. The table indicates that female ranking of advisor performance in this area were somewhat higher than male ranking. The mean score for females was higher than the male mean score as far as the total population was concerned. Calculated t-scores indicate that there was no significance in this particular case.

Table 3 shows how well students felt their advisors performed the task of assisting the student in changing his or her schedule. Approximately one-fifth (thirty-eight) of those who responded hadn't made any schedule

Table 2
Assistance in Schedule Planning

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	1	4	5	17	16	13			
So. boys	1	7	6	17	18	9			
Total boys	2	11	11	34	34	22	3.35	2.90	-.692
Fr. girls	2	8	1	11	13	21			
So. girls	0	4	5	14	9	17			
Total girls	2	12	6	25	22	38	3.66	2.90	-.115
Grand total	4	23	17	59	56	60	3.50	2.90	-1.310

t=1.725
df-21
t > .05

Table 3
Assistance in Changing Schedule

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	11	6	8	19	6	6			
So. boys	2	10	14	18	7	7			
Total boys	13	16	22	37	13	13	2.85	3.10	.378
Fr. girls	21	2	6	11	5	11			
So. girls	4	10	5	14	6	10			
Total girls	25	12	11	25	11	21	3.15	2.76	-.976
Grand total	38	28	33	62	24	34	2.98	2.93	-.162

t=1.725
df-21
t > .05

changes that required assistance from their advisor. Table 3 shows that of the remaining students who had needed assistance were fairly evenly distributed in their responses. The greatest number of students felt their advisors were doing an average job in this area. Girls tended to rank their advisors higher than boys did. Calculated t-scores do not indicate significance in this case.

Table 4 indicates responses that students made concerning their advisors' performance in assisting them make long range plans. These would include such things as planning an academic curriculum for the student's high school career and helping the student explore areas that would be of interest in post high school years.

The majority of students felt their advisors did not perform very well in this area. Over one-half of the students felt their advisors were average or worse (124 of 219). The overall mean score indicates a less than average performance. Females ranked their advisors somewhat higher than males in this category. The calculated t-scores do not indicate significance.

Table 5 shows how students ranked their advisors in the process of helping the student to better understand themselves.

Students felt their advisors were doing somewhere between a poor and average job in this area. Many more students (89) felt their advisors did a poor to below

Table 4

Assistance in Making Long Range Plans

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	11	9	14	15	5	2			
So. boys	6	8	10	16	11	7			
Total boys	17	17	24	31	16	9	2.59	2.95	.735
Fr. girls	16	10	3	10	11	6			
So. girls	8	8	9	12	8	4			
Total girls	24	18	12	22	19	10	2.74	2.68	-.140
Grand total	41	35	36	53	35	19	2.66	2.82	.508

t=1.725

df=21

t > .05

Table 5
Helping Me Understand Myself

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	9	11	12	7	11	3			
So. boys	9	15	14	12	6	2			
Total boys	18	26	26	19	17	5	2.43	2.61	.368
Fr. girls	8	8	7	17	11	5			
So. girls	5	18	4	11	8	3			
Total girls	13	26	11	28	19	8	2.64	2.59	-.113
Grand total	31	52	37	47	36	13	2.53	2.60	.213

t=1.725
df=21
t > .05

average job. Only forty-nine felt their advisor did an above average to excellent job. Mean scores indicate an overall performance somewhere between below average and average. The calculated t-scores in this area do not indicate significance.

Table 6 shows the results of how students ranked their advisors' performance in helping them obtain career information concerning possible careers and advanced educational opportunities.

Close to one-fourth of the students polled (49) did not see the need for this type of information. Of those who had felt the need for this information, roughly one-third (76) felt their advisor wasn't doing an accurate job in this area. These were ranked as either poor or below average. Females felt their advisors did a better job than males did, however they felt the performance was only a bit above average (3.06) according to the population mean score. T-scores for males were larger (1.179) than females (.119) although there was not an overall degree of significance (1.028).

Table 7 indicates the rankings of advisor performance in checking credits. This area deals with checking academic progress of students to determine whether students are making satisfactory progress toward their high school diploma.

Students feel their advisors provide a good deal

Table 6

Helping Me Obtain Career Information

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	13	15	6	11	9	2			
So. boys	11	16	12	13	5	1			
Total boys	24	31	18	24	14	3	2.33	2.75	1.179
Fr. girls	14	6	7	10	11	8			
So. girls	11	9	5	10	8	6			
Total girls	25	15	12	20	19	14	3.06	3.10	.119
Grand total	49	46	30	24	33	17	2.68	2.93	1.028

t=1.725

df=21

t > .05

Table 7

Assistance in Checking Credits

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	3	7	4	20	13	9			
So. boys	2	9	6	18	12	11			
Total boys	5	16	10	38	25	20	3.15	3.43	.614
Fr. girls	2	3	7	12	15	17			
So. girls	0	7	5	9	11	17			
Total girls	2	10	12	21	26	34	3.60	2.86	-1.125
Grand total	7	26	22	59	51	54	3.37	3.14	-.549

t=1.725

df=21

t > .05

of assistance in checking credits. Roughly 70 percent (164) of those polled responded that their advisors ranged from average to excellent. The population mean score of 3.37 indicates that they rank between average and above average. Females ranked their advisors' performance higher than their male classmates. The calculated t-scores do not indicate a degree of significance.

Table 8 indicates the rank of advisor performance in helping a student with another teacher. This probably would concern a problem an advisee might have with another teacher in the classroom. In this situation, the advisor might act as a third party to help bring about a possible solution to a problem.

Table 8 shows that this particular function did not apply to a little more than one-fourth (56) of the students who responded. From the numbers that are indicated it appears that there is a fairly even distribution of those who felt their advisor performed this role adequately (a total of 52 ranked their advisors as above average to excellent) and of those who felt their advisor was below average to poor (a total of 56). About one-fourth (55) felt their advisor did an average job. The total population mean score of 3.05 indicates a slightly higher than average performance. The calculated t-scores do not indicate any degree of significance.

Table 8

Helping Me With a Teacher

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	18	8	4	14	10	2			
So. boys	12	11	11	16	5	3			
Total boys	30	19	15	30	15	5	2.67	2.20	-.897
Fr. girls	18	3	2	14	10	9			
So. girls	8	8	9	11	5	8			
Total girls	26	11	11	25	15	17	3.20	3.30	.364
Grand total	56	30	26	55	30	22	3.05	2.75	-.952

t=1.725

df=21

t > .05

Table 9 shows how advisors were rated in regard to how well they performed the function of helping their advisees with their problems. These problems could cover a wide range of topics that the advisee felt comfortable in talking about with their advisor.

About one-fourth (57) of the students felt their advisors were doing an average job in "helping me with a problem." A little less than one-third (68) felt they were doing an above average to an excellent job. The total population mean of 3.03 indicates a slightly above average performance. Females rated their advisors higher in this area than males did (3.19 vs. 2.88). Female t-scores indicated significance at the $p=.05$ level while male scores were not significant. Overall, the t-score was not significant.

Referring a student to someone else for help, such as another faculty member, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, is reported in Table 10.

One-fourth (53) of the students did not feel that this alternate applied to their particular situation. Sixty-two students felt that their advisor did a poor to below average job in referring them to others for help. Slightly more than one-fifth of those indicated that their advisor was doing an above average to excellent job. The total population mean score indicates a slightly below average performance in this area (2.90). Females continued

Table 9

Helping Me With a Problem

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	14	6	4	17	9	6			
So. boys	7	13	8	16	10	4			
Total boys	21	19	12	33	19	10	2.88	2.57	-.586
Fr. girls	12	4	4	17	10	9			
So. girls	5	11	6	7	11	9			
Total girls	17	15	10	24	21	18	3.19	3.60	1.890*
Grand total	38	28	22	57	40	28	3.03	3.07	.221

t=1.725

df=21

t < .05

Table 10
Referring Me to Someone Else for Help

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	21	8	4	13	4	6			
So. boys	12	14	11	13	3	5			
Total boys	33	22	15	26	7	11	2.57	2.90	1.120
Fr. girls	18	4	3	20	9	8			
So. girls	8	9	9	12	5	6			
Total girls	20	13	12	32	14	14	3.24	2.61	-.116
Grand total	53	35	27	58	21	25	2.90	2.76	.458

t=1.725
df=21
t > .05

to rate their advisors higher than their male classmates did (3.24 vs. 2.57). T-score calculations in this area were not significant.

Table 11 deals with the function of interpreting test scores to advisees. These would be scores of standardized tests which would include the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, and the Stanford Achievement Test. Generally the advisor would only be involved in interpreting a test which had been taken during the advisee's high school (9-12) years.

Table 11 indicates that students felt their advisors did a better job in helping to interpret test scores than they did in many of the other areas. Over one-third (87) of the students felt their advisor's performance was in the above average to excellent range. Approximately two-thirds (144) of the students felt their advisor did an average to an excellent job. Female mean score for their total population was one of their higher rankings that they gave to their advisors. The male population mean score, while lower than the female score, was still a bit above the average (3.07). This would seem to indicate that this is an area where advisors in this particular program seem to do a good job. T-score calculations were not significant in either case or in the total population.

Table 11
Interpreting My Test Scores

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	6	10	3	17	7	13			
So. boys	3	11	10	15	9	10			
Total boys	9	21	13	32	16	23	3.07	2.81	-.447
Fr. girls	9	2	3	18	11	13			
So. girls	4	10	4	7	8	16			
Total girls	13	12	7	25	19	29	3.50	3.00	-.876
Grand total	22	33	20	57	35	52	3.27	2.90	-.932

t=1.725
df=21
t > .05

Table 12 shows the results of student responses to the questionnaire which concerned whether or not the advisees felt they were receiving encouragement to do a better job as far as school activities were concerned.

According to students, advisors appeared to do quite well in encouraging them to do a better job in school. Almost 70 percent (169) of the students that responded felt their advisors did an average to excellent job. The total population mean score of 3.69 indicates that the advisors were doing a much better than average job of encouraging their advisees. It is interesting to note that a total of seventy-two students felt their advisors did an excellent job of encouraging them. This is the highest number of students that ranked advisors at this level in any of the functions that advisors performed. The table also shows that females ranked their advisors' performance higher than males did, although not by nearly as much as in many of the other categories. The t-scores that were calculated were not significant.

Table 13 shows the results of how well students felt their advisors were able to listen to the student and understand what the student's feelings or point of view was.

Students seem to feel their advisors did an average job (3.04 total population mean) in listening and understanding them. About the same number (67) felt their

Table 12
Encouraging Me to Do Better

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	5	7	1	10	13	20			
So. boys	2	5	4	17	14	16			
Total boys	7	12	5	27	27	36	3.66	2.67	-1.370
Fr. girls	4	4	5	10	15	18			
So. girls	3	5	5	9	9	18			
Total girls	7	9	10	19	24	36	3.71	3.45	-.498
Grand total	14	21	15	46	51	72	3.69	3.05	-1.459

t=1.725
df=21
t > .05

Table 13

Listening and Understanding My Feelings or Point of View

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	13	8	9	14	2	10			
So. boys	8	12	7	19	10	2			
Total boys	21	20	16	33	12	12	2.78	2.90	.271
Fr. girls	7	7	2	14	10	16			
So. girls	4	9	10	9	8	9			
Total girls	11	16	12	23	18	25	3.30	3.18	-.276
Grand total	32	36	28	56	30	37	3.04	3.05	-.032

t=1.725

df=21

t > .05

advisors did an above average to excellent job as those who felt their advisors' performance was below average to poor (64). As in other areas, females rated the performance of their advisor higher than their male classmates (3.30 vs. 2.78). Once again, t-scores were not significant.

Table 14 shows the results of student responses concerning advisor performance in discussing school rules with students.

Two-thirds of the students (146) felt their advisors did an average to excellent job in discussing school rules with them. About one-fourth (49) of the students felt their advisors were doing a poor to below average job of discussing school rules with them. The total population mean score (3.18) indicates a slightly above average performance by advisors. Females again rated their advisors higher than their male classmates (3.37 vs. 3.03). The t-scores that were calculated were not significant.

Table 15 shows the number and percentages of those who felt the program was of benefit to them as opposed to those who didn't.

The table indicates that of the freshmen and sophomore students surveyed, about 46 percent of those felt that the program was of benefit to them. Roughly 34 percent of the students felt the program was of no

Table 14
Discussing School Rules

	Non Appli- cation	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excel- lent	Mean	Sample Mean	T Score
Fr. boys	8	6	5	17	11	9			
So. boys	6	9	6	21	8	8			
Total boys	14	15	11	38	19	17	3.03	3.05	.042
Fr. girls	7	5	2	16	11	15			
So. girls	3	10	6	14	5	11			
Total girls	10	15	8	30	16	26	3.37	3.14	.489
Grand total	24	30	19	68	35	43	3.18	3.09	-.271

t=1.725
df=21
t > .05

benefit to them, while a little over 6 percent felt they benefited from the program at times. In comparing female responses and male responses, it can be noted that over half of the female students felt the program was of benefit to them while less than 40 percent of the males derived benefit. Roughly 40 percent of the males felt that they did not benefit from the program while only about one-fourth of the females felt this way.

Table 15

Is the Program of Benefit to You?

	Yes	No	At Times	No Response
Freshmen boys	23	21	2	10
Sophomore boys	21	25	5	7
Total boys	44 (38.6)*	46 (40.4)*	7 (6.1)*	17 (14.9)*
Freshmen girls	32	13	4	7
Sophomore girls	25	15	3	6
Total girls	57 (54.3)	28 (26.7)	7 (6.6)	13 (12.4)
Grand total	101 (46.1)	74 (33.8)	14 (6.6)	30 (13.7)

* Numbers in parentheses indicate percentages

The questionnaire's open endedness was illustrated by the last statement contained in the instrument: In what other ways could your advisor have been of more assistance to you? The responses given by the freshmen boys follow.

"more meetings; help me more and get me classes that I like; done more in planning my schedule; meet more; he could be there, he never was; helping me make decisions about my future; I only got called in once, when I needed to see him about other things like changing my schedule he never had time; meet with me more; listening; he was good enough; talk to me more; only saw me twice; help me more; asked me if I wanted my schedule changed; he was just fine."

The following comments were made by sophomore boys: "calling me in for counseling; I don't know; having TA, we only had it when the vice-principal said to; had more conferences; be more understanding; teachers worry too much about their jobs; getting a better idea what classes are about; helping me more with class arrangements; see me more; only met once to make schedule; planning my schedule; by helping me plan my future more; telling me more about my test scores; they tell you your grades when you ask for them, not when they're supposed to; I think we should have more class time to go over everything with every person; have a different one; let me take the classes I want to take instead of the ones they want me to take; see my advisor more often; I believe my advisor was concerned with my school year, as a whole I think he did a good job; help me on my schedule for next year and see me more; take you out of class to see you if you have any problems; see them more; I've only seen them three times by myself; keep in touch with me more often; tell me if I'm qualified to take a test; start doing what you get paid for; meeting more; see me more."

The following comments were made by freshmen girls: "spend more time with my advisor; only helps in filling out my schedule, might help if she could be there more often; have more time with our advisor; not putting me in someone else's place; I didn't see her except when the whole school had advisement; needs to call pupils in more often to talk; I think he did a pretty good

job; to meet more often with us individually and not so often in a large group; could have called me in more often than just twice; could have helped me plan my schedule; could have talked to me more than just once; he could have spent an equal amount of time with everyone, he just talked to the upperclassmen; see me more often; only people who have problems should go to them; I hardly see her; we don't really need them; she did a good job; if she would have helped my schedule better; every once in a while asking if we are doing ok in class and going over grade cards; talk to me more often, had TA more; advisor is too busy with different things; never any time to have a meeting; she is just right the way she is."

The following comments were made by sophomore girls:
"I haven't met with my advisor; meet with them more often; none, no real problems in the last two years; she's ok; my advisor could have called me in and helped a little more; by seeing me more; see me more often; only saw my advisor three times; she did the best to her ability; have advisor meet more often with their advisees; taking more time; meeting a little more; meet more than just once; didn't meet enough; she could have gotten more things for my schooling and career; he's doing fine now; she could have had more meetings with me; figure out my total number of credits; if she would have treated me more like a human being instead of like a squirrel; when I went in with a problem she just said try harder; only saw her twice the whole year; you only see your advisor to see test scores; call us in more; help change schedules faster; talk to a student's teachers in case of a problem with grades."

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Data presented in the preceding chapter would indicate that the areas in which students perceive their advisors as being most beneficial include providing encouragement, planning schedules, checking credits, interpreting test scores, and in discussing school rules. It should be noted that none of these areas are statistically significant, however.

The areas of planning schedules (Table 2), checking credits (Table 7), and discussing school rules (Table 14) are three of the basic duties advisors are expected to perform in the Saydel program. The data indicates that advisors are doing an adequate job in these areas.

Students surveyed felt their advisors did a good job in providing encouragement (Table 12). This area was rated highly by both boys and girls. It is possible that this may be one of the strengths the faculty possesses. Total population mean score for this area is the highest of any of the areas that are rated. Both mean scores for boys and girls are higher here than in any other category.

Students seem to indicate by their responses that their advisors do a better than average job in assisting

in the interpretation of standardized test scores.

(Table 11.)

Helping a student with a teacher (Table 8), listening and understanding feelings and point of view (Table 13), and helping a student with a problem (Table 9) were areas in which advisors were rated somewhat above average in their performance. It should be noted that in the written response section of the questionnaire a number of students mentioned that they felt they did not receive enough assistance in changing schedules. A minimum number also expressed the idea of not receiving any help with a problem they might be having or in having their advisor understand their point of view or feelings in certain matters.

Helping with a problem and listening concerning one's feelings and point of view are areas which are more oriented to the affective level than the cognitive level. This may be one reason why advisors didn't appear to score as well in the areas previously mentioned. Some advisors feel that these are areas in which the counselors should be working.

Assistance in changing schedules (Table 3) and referring a student to someone else for help (Table 10) were two areas that students rated their advisors slightly below average in performance. It should be noted that some students indicated that they did not receive enough

assistance in changing their schedules in the written portion of the questionnaire.

Students indicated that advisors did a below average job in the following areas: helping in obtaining career information (Table 6), assisting in making long range plans (Table 4), and helping students understand themselves (Table 5). None of these areas were statistically significant, however.

The area of encouraging a student to do a better job was rated most highly by students. Female mean scores were slightly higher (3.71 vs. 3.66) than male mean scores while the total population mean score of 3.69 was the highest of any of the categories.

The area in which advisors were rated second highest was assistance in schedule planning with a total population mean score of 3.50. This was followed by, in descending order: assistance in checking credits (3.37); interpreting my test scores (3.27); discussing school rules (3.18); helping me with a teacher (3.05); listening and understanding my feelings or point of view (3.04); helping me with a problem (3.03); assistance in schedule changing (2.98); referring me to someone else for help (2.90); helping me obtain career information (2.68); assistance in making long range plans (2.66); and helping me understand myself (2.53). In all areas females consistently rated the performance of their advisors higher than their male

classmates when total population mean scores are compared. There was only one instance in which a statistical significance was indicated. This concerned female responses in the area of helping students with a problem, where the t-score showed a $p < .05$ degree of significance (1.890).

In eleven of the thirteen areas, females rated their advisors as doing an above average job. The highest mean of these eleven areas was in encouraging me to do better with a population mean of 3.71. The two lowest areas were in helping me understand myself (2.64) and assisting in making long range plans (2.74).

Males, on the other hand, felt their advisors were above average in only five of the areas. These were encouraging me to do better (3.66), assistance in schedule planning (3.35), assistance in checking credits (3.15), interpreting test scores (3.07), and in discussing school rules (3.03). The areas rated lowest by males were helping me obtain career information (2.33) and helping me understand myself (2.43). Other areas which were rated below average by males were: referring me to someone else for help (2.57), assistance in making long range plans (2.59), helping me with a teacher (2.67), listening or understanding my feelings and point of view (2.78), assistance in changing schedule (2.85), and helping me with a problem (2.88).

In looking at the question "Is the program of

benefit to you?" (Table 15), a greater percentage of females polled feel that the program is beneficial to them. More males actually felt they were not receiving any benefits from the program. In examining Table 15, slightly more than half of the females who responded (54.3 percent) felt the program was beneficial while only about 38 percent of the males derived benefits from the program. As a result of these findings, it is possible to conclude that the program may not be adequately meeting the needs of the student population it should be serving.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the teacher-advisor program at Saydel High School in Des Moines, Iowa, as determined by student perceptions. Male students were compared with female students in fourteen different aspects of the program.

Design of the Study

A questionnaire previously used by the counseling staff at Saydel High School to determine staff perceptions of the program was modified so students could respond to their individual advisor's performance in specific areas.

The students were given an opportunity to respond to the statement "In what ways could your advisor have been of more assistance to you?" at the end of the questionnaire.

Point values were given to the responses that were made. For example, if a student circled a 5 it was assigned a value of 5 points; if a student circled a 3 it was assigned a value of 3 points, and so on. All responses of male participants in a particular category were then totaled

to determine a mean score for the responses given. The same procedure was used to determine mean scores for female responses.

Following the determination of mean scores for each category, sample mean scores were determined for a sample population of 10 percent of the total population of 219 students. Twenty-two males and twenty-two females were included in this random sample of the population. T-scores were then determined for twenty-one degrees of freedom in the following manner:

$$T = \frac{\bar{x} - u}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$

Findings

In all areas females consistently rated their advisors as doing better jobs than their male classmates rated their advisors in the same areas. Highest marks given to advisors in both groups involved giving encouragement to students to do a better job, giving assistance in schedule planning, and in giving assistance in checking credits. Lowest marks given to advisors by males were in the areas of helping obtain career information and helping students to understand themselves while girls gave their advisors low marks in helping them understand themselves and giving assistance in making long range plans.

A majority of the female students who were polled

felt the program was of benefit to them while more boys felt they were not receiving any benefits from the program. Overall, less than one-half of the freshmen and sophomore students polled felt the program was of benefit to them.

The most common complaint to the question "In what ways could your advisor have been of more assistance to you?" was that they did not get to see their advisor often enough. Many only saw their advisors at required sessions which were used primarily to have students fill out copies of their schedules for clerical use.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It becomes very obvious that female students surveyed felt their advisors do a better job in giving them assistance than males do. This may be due somewhat to the differences in personalities between boys and girls in this age group. It has been the writer's experience in dealing with high school age adolescents that more often than not, girls seem to appreciate more the things that a teacher does for them than boys do. This may be somewhat responsible for girls consistently rating their advisors higher than boys in this particular study.

It would also seem that some of the lower scores that are indicated may be due to advisors who are "doing what the counselor should be doing" and as a result, resenting the program as an added-on responsibility. This

resentment of shouldering an extra "burden" carries over in the advisor-advisee relationship and the student suffers because of it. As a result, advisors do not get good ratings in some of the areas and then the program doesn't do what it was designed to do.

For future study, these same classes should once again be polled so a comparison can be made between the groups to see whether or not advisors are following through with the advisement tasks to the satisfaction of their advisees. If scores indicate they are not, the program needs to be re-evaluated.

In the writer's opinion it may be necessary for the counseling staff to use some in-service time to help advisors improve their skills so they can be of more benefit to their advisees. If teachers aren't willing to take the time to improve in areas to provide assistance, the value of the program would be seriously questioned. Good advisors can make a program good; apathetic advisors can do more harm than good. It would be counterproductive to eliminate a program of this type that many students are deriving benefits from because of teacher indifference.

Future study could be undertaken to determine specifically which advisors are doing the best jobs. From this type of study it could also be determined specifically which areas an advisor needs to work on to improve his/her skills as an advisor and the relationship with advisees.

A final recommendation would be to poll junior and senior students who, theoretically, would have had more experience in being involved in the program at the high school level as opposed to freshmen and sophomores.

APPENDIX

This questionnaire is for the purpose of determining how you as a student perceive your advisor in our teacher-advisor program. For each statement, circle the number which most closely describes your advisor in each area. If you feel that your advisor is doing an excellent job in a certain area, circle the number 5. If your advisor does a poor job in an area, circle the number 1. If you feel your advisor's performance is somewhere between these two extremes, circle 2, 3, or 4 depending on how you feel your advisor performs these tasks. Please respond as honestly as you can concerning each statement.

1=poor; 2=below average; 3=average; 4=above average; 5=excellent

Rate your advisor's performance in the following areas:

Assistance in planning my schedule: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in changing my schedule: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in making long range plans: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in helping me understand myself better: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in helping me obtain career information: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in checking my credits: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in helping me with a teacher: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in helping me with a problem: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in referring me to someone else for help: 1 2 3 4 5

Assistance in interpreting my test scores: 1 2 3 4 5

Encouraging me to do better: 1 2 3 4 5

Listening and understanding my feelings or point of view: 1 2 3 4 5

Discussing school rules: 1 2 3 4 5

Do you feel this program is beneficial to you?

In what other ways could your advisor have been of more assistance to you?

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