To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ann Marie Von Schipmann entitled "The Effects of Work Study on the Attendance, Grades, and Discipline of Secondary Students with Mild Disabilities." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Special Education.

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W. Jean Schindler, Major Professor

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Dean of The Graduate School

THE EFFECTS OF WORK STUDY ON THE ATTENDANCE, GRADES, AND DISCIPLINE OF SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ann Marie Von Schipmann

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to secondary special education students who are often overlooked. It is with them in mind that I dedicate my career to searching for more appropriate special education programs at the high school level. No matter how frequently they had failed in the past, my students never failed to try and they never failed to show me love.

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his busy schedule to assist me and also encouraged me. My committee's academic insights were very beneficial.

Most of all, I would like to thank the students for whom this paper is dedicated. Despite their academic difficulties, they never fail to try. It is with these students in mind that we constantly try to find better programs so that they may have expanded opportunities in life.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of work study on the attendance, grades, and discipline of secondary students with mild disabilities. Both paired and unpaired t-tests were administered to compare the means of the various groups. Students involved in work study programs were compared prior to placement and during placement in the three areas. No significant differences were found between the calculations from the sets data. Students involved in work study were also compared to students that were not involved in work study. There was a significant difference between the two groups in the area of discipline. There were no significant differences in the areas of attendance and grades. Also, a Pearson Correlation Test was used to determine correlation possibilities between attendance, grades, and discipline. The students involved in work study had a negative correlation between grades and absences from school. Students not involved in work study failed to show correlations among grades, attendance, or discipline. When both groups of students were combined, there was a negative correlation between grades and absences from school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The introduction focused on the difficulties secondary students with mild disabilities face including high dropout rates and low employment rates. Alternate programs that included work components were discussed. Six research questions were proposed along with the definition of terms. The purpose, significance, and limitations of this study were discussed.

Statement of the Problem

"The fundamental purpose of education is to prepare students to lead productive and rewarding lives (Benz and Hallpern, 1987; pg. 507)." Educators generally agree that a productive and rewarding life includes employment. Education should help prepare students for the working world. This philosophy evokes alarm when applied to secondary students served by special education programs, especially those with learning disabilities and mild mental retardation. These students often leave public education systems without skills necessary to lead productive and rewarding lives that include employment. A recent study found that students with disabilities only have a 35% chance of finding employment after leaving high school (Chadsey-Rusch, Rusch and O'Reilly, 1991). This realization should cause special educators to reevaluate programs available to secondary students.

If special education achieved what educators hoped it would, special education at

the secondary level would not exist. Students with mild disabilities would learn the skills they needed to compensate for their disability and they would return to regular education programs (Edgar and Polloway, 1994). In reality, many students remain in special education programs for the duration of their school careers. The question presented at the secondary level is: What should educators be teaching in their special education programs? If the goal of education is to prepare young people to be responsible citizens, then an alternate content model is necessary (Edgar and Polloway, 1994). What should this alternate approach be? If students have not learned basic academic skills by the time they reach the ninth grade, a more technical job skill approach should be considered. Educators should focus on functional, vocational, and independent living skills as opposed to academic skills (Edgar, 1987).

Students who continue their education in "resource programs," in which the professionals teach them "academics" they have not learned in 10 years of school, often enter a failure cycle. The results are evident in the dropout rate discussed in the following chapter. Special education programs often leave students without skills necessary to be successful in the working world. Placement in work study programs may be one possible solution. Such experiences may provide students with the necessary skills to attain employment after graduation. An example of a work study program may consist of placement at a job site for 25% of the school day. Students would be paid for their labor after some job training. Ideally, students would receive instruction at school concerning skills necessary for work. These skills may be more beneficial than traditional academic skills for students with mild disabilities at the high school level. Work study programs

would help ease the transition from school-to-work. Such training teaches skills readily transferred to the working world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if alternate programs for students with mild disabilities at the secondary level were viable, and, if so, should these programs include work during the school day? Viability of work study programs was evaluated by determining the effect of the program on students' attendance, grades, and discipline. The rationale behind the study was that if students feel that their program is relevant and beneficial to their future, their attitude towards participating in the program would improve. Improved participation would result in improved grades, higher attendance, and a lower amount of disciplinary infractions.

Research Questions

The following research questions were researched, and analyzed:

Research Question #1: Is there a difference between the attendance of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to placement in work study programs compared to their attendance during the two nine week grading periods of placement in work study programs.

Research Question #2: Is there a difference between the attendance of students participating in work study and the attendance of students not participating in work study during two sets of nine week grading periods.

Research Question #3: Is there a difference between the grades of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to participating in work study programs compared to their grades during the two nine week grading periods of placement in work study programs.

Research Question #4: Is there a difference between the grade average of students participating in work study and the grade average of students not participating in work study during two sets of nine week grading periods.

Research Question #5: Is there a difference between the number of disciplinary infractions of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to placement in work study programs compared to their number of disciplinary infractions during the two nine week grading periods during placement in work study programs.

Research Question #6: Is there a difference between the number of disciplinary infractions of students that do not participate in work study compared to students that do participate in work study over two sets of nine week grading periods.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined below: Attendance, grades, grade averages, disciplinary infractions, m-team, work study, Group C, and Group E.

Attendance. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines attendance as "the number of times a person attends (1986)." For the purpose of this study, attendance

will be defined by the number of days the students did not attend school during four nine week periods.

Grades. Grade is defined as "a mark indicating a degree of accomplishment in school" by Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1986). In the school district participating in the study, 100-93 represents an A; 92-86 represents a B; 85-75 represents a C; 74-70 represents a D and 69-0 represents an F.

Grade Average. The grade average is the average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of classes taken .

Disciplinary Infraction. Discipline is defined as "orderly or prescribed conduct or patterned behavior" by Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1986). Infraction means "to violate"(Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary , 1986). For the purpose of this study, a disciplinary infraction will be considered any breach in behavior that results in a notation in a student's disciplinary file.

M-team or multi disciplinary team. A m-team is a group of people that meet to develop an individual education plan (IEP) for a student with special educational needs. This group must consist of the student's parent/s, the school principal or a principal's designee, and a special education teacher. The m-team may also include but is not limited to: the student, any person that the parent/s wish to be present, a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, and regular education teachers.

Work Study. Work study will be defined by a student being placed at a work site for at least one period of the school day. The student does not necessarily have to be paid for his or her work. The work site may be on or off the school campus. The working

hours may extend past the school day but must include at least one period of the school day but no more than five periods of the school day. Credit must be available to the student if successful participation in the work program results.

Group C or the control group. Group C consisted of participants in the study that were not involved in work study for any of the class periods of the school day.

Group E or the experimental group. Group E consisted of participants in the study that were involved in work study programs for at least one class period but no more than five class periods of the school day.

Significance of Study

In recent years, the secondary special education population has been largely ignored. Research indicates that obstacles resulting in high dropout rates, high unemployment rates and high under employment rates seriously affect the lives of former special education students (Wagner, 1990). It is important that educators take a serious look at programs offered for students in secondary special education. Secondary special education is not meeting the needs of its clients. This study looks at work study as a possible alternative to the remedial curriculum often taught to students. Work study components in secondary special education may offer more viable training and preparation for students as they enter their communities. Educators should be constantly striving to offer programs that prepare students for their futures.

The Limitations of the Study

The evaluation criteria contained some limitations. The sample consisted of high school students between the ages of 16 and 20 receiving special education services in a rural county in the south-central United States. The sample was limited by number and location. Also, in the area of discipline, the number of infractions was evaluated, not the severity of infractions. There is a fundamental difference between tardies to class and insubordination towards a teacher. In this study, both infractions carried the same weight.

Additional statistical limitations included a relatively small sample size for both the experimental and control group. The total sample size was 101 with 39 participants in the experimental group and 62 participants in the control group. A variance in size between the two groups of 23 participants existed. This study assumed that any difference in attendance, grades, or discipline for the subjects was a result of work study, however; such may not be the case. Changes could be the result of another unstudied variable or variables. Truly normal distributions in the control and experimental group may not have been present.

Summary

The primary goal of education is to aid students in their journey to productive lives. High-functioning special education students often are not successful in procuring employment. Because employment is recognized as a component of a productive life, educators must assist students in becoming employees. This study investigated the effects of work study programs on students' attendance, grades, and discipline. If work study

improves the attendance, grades, and discipline of participating students, it may also increase their chances of living a productive and rewarding life that includes employment.

In this chapter, the problem was stated, the research questions were positioned, and the terms were defined. The purpose, significance, and limitations of this study were discussed.

Chapter Two provides a review of the recent literature available on work study and the effects it has on attendance, grades, and discipline.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of literature focused on the effects of work study programs on attendance, grades, and discipline of high school students with mild disabilities. Discussion focused on both recent literature and literature from the sixties and seventies when work study programs were more prevalent. A section about programs recommended in the included literature was also discussed.

Attendance

The problem of special education students dropping out of school has been studied in detail. Levin, Zigmond, and Birch (1985) in a longitudinal study of adolescents with learning disabilities found that 47% stopped attending high school prior to graduation. Edgar (1987) supports this finding by reporting that 30% of students enrolled in secondary special education programs drop out of school. The National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education found that 32% of students with learning disabilities dropped out of school from 1985 through 1987 (Wagner, 1990). These studies and many others establish the fact that dropping out of school is a too common phenomenon for special education students. One can assume that if a student drops out of high school, they are not attending school.

The next question often asked by researchers is: Why do these students drop out? Lichenstein (1993) did case studies involving students with learning disabilities who dropped out of school. It was found that students leave school because they feel that it is an anxiety provoking and humiliating place. Would these students feel humiliated if they were placed in a program that offered marketable skills needed by employers? It is important to note that some of the young adults in the study had jobs when they dropped out of school and were still employed at the end of the two years studied. One participant enrolled in the Job Corps said he wished his high school had gotten him involved with the program. He found out about the Job Corps from a friend. Lovitt (1994) suggests that students need a sense of belonging and the absence of it may be the fundamental reason why students leave school. Learning something that students feel is relevant may help students feel that they belong in their school.

This study queried: Does placement in a work study program improve secondary special education students' attendance? A few recent studies explored this question. A program specifically targeting attendance problems that included a work experience component began in 1972 and still exists today, has seen improvements in attendance for its participants (Abbott, 1995). Two other long-existing programs that began more than twenty years ago have also seen consistent improvements in attendance for participants (Levinson & Felderbaum, 1993; Sallade, 1993). Programs promoting business and education partnerships list improved attendance rates as an advantage for school systems beginning partnerships with businesses (Hall, 1993; Shumer, 1993). A program in Atlanta called Project Survival found exceptionally high improvements in attendance for its

participants. This program included a work experience component (Turlington, 1991). It is interesting to note that three of the above programs began in the late sixties and early seventies.

The fact that some students at the high school level drop out and opt for work hints that work may be seen as more valuable than school. Interest in the Job Corps is also a strong indicator that skills learned while working may be viewed as more valuable than academics.

Miller, Torres, Simmel, Frumerman, Oris, Quets, and Mulkey (1987) studied the influence of an Attendance Improvement/Drop Out Prevention program in New York state. This program included vocational and work study components. Attendance of participants improved by 38%. Other factors, such as counseling or health care, could be partially responsible for the improvement. Still, the existence of the work preparation component should be included as a possible factor.

During the late sixties and early seventies, work experience programs were more prevalent, especially at the high school level (Frehner, 1974; Rochow, 1971; Cangemi, 1964). Work experience programs were often implemented with special education students and students identified as potential dropouts (Arko, 1975; Nicolaysen, 1965). Attendance often improved once a student was placed in a program that included work experience (Reynolds, 1984; Fox, 1973; Williams, 1971). It is important to note that along with improvements in attendance, dropout rates also decreased (Reynolds, 1984).

In summary, it is understood that attendance is a major issue at the secondary special education level. A large percentage of students drop out of high school prior to

graduation. There are many reasons why students drop out of school. Many special education students are frustrated and simply do not see a reason to continue their frustration. Some students find employment while still in school and see greater benefits in work than in school. Students placed in job training programs after high school may wonder why they were not referred to these agencies while they were still in school. A study involving work preparation found that attendance improved once students were placed the program (Abbott, 1995). The question asked in relation to this study is: Does placement in a work-study program improve special education high school students' attendance? Some recent literature as well as literature from the sixties and seventies indicated programs that include work study components may improve attendance for participants.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement in special education as evaluated by grade averages received some attention in research literature, although not as much attention as attendance. Again, more literature in relation to work study and attendance was available in the sixties and seventies than in recent years. Lower interest in grades may be due to the use of individual education programs (IEP) for students receiving special services. Students' progress in their areas of need is monitored by achievement of goals and objectives established by the m-team, not by passing or failing a course in that area. Admission of a lack of academic progress seems to be generally recognized by many researchers (Zigmond & Sanson, 1986).

One study involving work study in conjunction with guidance counseling, health care, and life skills training found that 57% of the students who failed one or more subjects the previous year improved the number of subjects passed during the year of the study (Miller and et al., 1987). The reason for academic improvement may be the result of components other than work experience, but the work experience component should not be ignored. Students participating in work study two days per week through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program improved their grades in other courses (Shumer, 1993). The "Earn and Learn" program, which was a work experience-based program for at-risk students, reported participants earned higher grades in language arts and math and an increase in the number of credits earned at the high school level (Levison and Felberbaum, 1993). "The Academies Program" launched in the eighties included a work study component and also reported an increase in the number of credits earned for participants (Reynolds, 1984).

Literature from the sixties and seventies revealed more information related to work study programs and grades. A program in Georgia found that students placed in work study programs improved their grades in other subjects (Williams, 1971). "Project Emerge" also found grade improvements coincided with work study placement (Dayton, Ohio City School District, 1973). Yet another study in Memphis for struggling African American teenage girls also saw improvements in grades when students were placed in work study programs (Fox, 1973).

A possible reason for lack of recent research in the area of improving academic achievement is that researchers do not agree on what should be taught to high school

special education students, much less how to improve what is being taught. Halpern and Benz (1987) believe that students with mild disabilities should receive their instruction in regular classes as often as possible. In contrast, Edgar (1987) feels that functional vocational skills should be the primary emphasis for students with mild disabilities at the secondary level. Curriculum models for secondary special education students with mild learning disabilities range from full inclusion programs to resource room models where students spend no more than two hours per day receiving special services to self-contained models (Zigmond and Sansone, 1986). It is not surprising that we cannot discuss effectiveness of these models when we cannot decide which model to employ. The need exists for a variety of models because individual needs of students vary. Curriculums with multiple pathways should be available so that students can develop skills to become productive and well-adjusted citizens (Edgar and Polloway, 1994). Work study programs should be studied as a curriculum possibility.

If the goal of education for all students is to prepare them to be contributing members of society, then vocational and work study approaches may be appropriate for some special education students. Zigmond and Sansone (1986) propose a "work study model that emphasizes instruction in job skills and supervised on-the-job experience as part of the school day" (pg. 15) as a curriculum approach. While work study and vocational programs are discussed by researchers such as Zigmond, Sansone, and Edgar, the effects of work study programs on students' grades in other classes are not discussed. Edgar and Polloway (1994) did find that graduates of vocational education programs were more likely to attend and complete post secondary education programs. It is assumed that

enrollment in a post secondary program would require successful academic completion of a secondary education program.

Suggested Programs

It is important to include that although attendance and grades were not directly researched in relation to work study programs, including work as a curriculum component was suggested by researchers. In an article discussing special education curriculum, Edgar and Polloway (1994) suggest that special education students with limited academic skills be placed in a content model of the curriculum. The content model contains training for work and an emphasis on vocational education. They also suggest an apprenticeship model which would involve students with community businesses. Zigmond and Sansone (1986) discuss a work study model that focuses on job skills and supervised on-the-job experiences. A plan for rural schools and community-based job training for high school students with disabilities was created by Elrod, Devlin, and Obringer (1994). The Clinton Administration supported a School-to-Work Opportunity Bill that promoted a Youth Apprenticeship program (P.L. 103-239). This program would "be accessible to all youth 16 years and older, regardless of goals for college or non-college opportunity and presence or absence of conditions of disability (Mithaug, 1994; pg. 1)." These programs provide components for special education curriculums at the secondary level.

Discipline

Recent research shows that special education students have a higher number of

disciplinary problems (Wilkinson and Spano, 1991). Little literature, recent or old, exists concerning work study programs and discipline problems, although, some research alludes to a relationship between discipline and work study.

A study in the eighties found that students working, independently of school, did not have increased rates of delinquency (Gottfredson, 1984). "Project Emerge," which saw improvements in grades when students participated in work study, also saw a decrease in semester suspensions and expulsions for participants (Dayton, Ohio City School District, 1973). Little other literature was available in relation to discipline and work study.

Summary

The effects of work study programs on attendance, academic achievement, and discipline of high school students in special education programs are not totally clear. Recently, work study programs were not frequently researched in relation to the effects the programs had on attendance, grades, and discipline. A few studies containing work study components did result in improvements in attendance and grades although this was not the primary focus of the research. So little literature exists identifying a relationship between work study and the effect it had on discipline, it is difficult to reach a conclusion. More literature was available from the sixties and seventies when work study programs were more prevalent. These studies indicate that improvements in attendance and grades can be expected when students participate in work study programs. Discipline was not discussed in relation to work study in the sixties and seventies.

It is also important to note that recent dropout rates of students with mild learning disabilities are alarmingly high (Wagner, 1990). Reasons for dropping out were linked to general dissatisfaction with school and frustration (Wagner, 1990; Lichtenstein, 1993). Some programs that included work study components have shown decreased dropout rates. Vocational school programs and increased enrollment in post-secondary programs also seem linked (Jambor 1990; Thornton & Zigmond, 1988). Recently, transition programs from school to work have received attention in literature (Lichtenstein, 1993). Such programs seem to focus on what to do after students graduate, not on what to do while they are still in school. Laws concerning transition may explain the recent emphasis on transition from school to work. Finally, the review of the literature indicated that there is a relationship between work study programs and improved attendance and grades, although this was not the primary topic of many studies. Few studies exist that examined the relationship between discipline and work study so it is difficult to reach a conclusion in this area.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if programs that include work study components are more meaningful to secondary special education students than programs that do not include work study. One-hundred and one secondary students served by special education programs were studied. Sixty-two students did not participate in work study programs and 39 students did participate in work study programs. Data was collected. Once the groups and appropriate nine week grading periods were identified, means were calculated and paired t-test and unpaired t-tests were performed.

Purpose

The purpose of this causal-comparative study was to determine if programs that include work study components were more meaningful to the secondary special education students that participate in them. Two groups of students served by special education programs were compared. Subjects in the first group, the control group, did not participate in work study for any part of the school day. Subjects in the second group, the experimental group, participated in work study for one to five periods of the school day. A statistically significant difference among the experimental group during placement in work study compared to prior placement in the areas of attendance, grade averages, and

the number of disciplinary infractions were considered relevant. Statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the areas of attendance, grades, and discipline were also considered relevant. The assumption was that students who feel that school is preparing them for the future will feel better about their participation in school. The result would be improved attendance, grades, and discipline. The literature established that secondary students involved in special education programs have a significantly higher dropout rate than students in regular education programs. The literature further posits that special education students have higher rates of unemployment and under employment after leaving high school. High dropout rates and employment difficulties faced by special education students should cause educators to take a second look at the programs that are being offered.

Subjects

The participants studied included secondary students between the ages of 16 and 20 served by special education modified and inclusion programs in a rural county in the south-central United States. Students served in gifted and full day Comprehensive Developmental Classes (CDC) were not studied. The school system in which the study took place includes two high schools. Each high school educates students in ninth through twelfth grade. There are approximately 1,000 students at the first high school and 1,300 at the second high school. Approximately 200 students are served by resource and inclusion programs. They are identified as having specific learning disabilities, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbances, hearing impairments, visual impairments, or

health impairments.

Two naturally occurring groups of students were compared. Two nine week grading periods for each group were also studied. Group C, the control group, consisted of students that did not participate in a work study program during the school day. Group E, the experimental group, consisted of students that participated in work study one to five class periods per school day. The school day consisted of six periods. Placement in work study was in no way affected by this research. Information was obtained by reviewing past school records. Both groups were studied in the grade, attendance, and disciplinary categories at two sets of nine week grading periods.

Group C had 62 participants. Fourteen subjects were female and 48 were male. They ranged in age from 16 to 20. All participants spoke English as their primary language. They were primarily Anglo-Saxon. Two African American students participated in the study and were included in Group C. The participants were chosen because of their participation in programs for higher functioning special education students. None of the subjects in Group C participated in a work study program for any part of the school day. The participants' diagnosis was learning disabilities, consistent with the largest served special education population.

Group E had 39 participants. Eight subjects were female and 31 were male. They ranged in age from 16 to 20. All participants spoke English as their primary language. All participants were Anglo-Saxon. The participants were chosen because of their participation in programs for higher functioning special education students and participation in a work study program for one to five periods of the school day. Learning

disabilities constituted the diagnosis.

Instrumentation

Averaged grades, the number of days absent from school, and the number of disciplinary infractions were the research areas of this study. Two sets of two nine week grading periods for each subject in Group E and Group C were identified. For Group C, four nine week grading periods were selected, two from the 1994-95 school year and two from the 1995-96 school year. For Group E, two nine week grading periods prior to and two nine week grading periods during placement in work study were identified for each subject in the group. Attendance, grade averages, and disciplinary infractions were charted individually for each subject for each dependant variable. This information was charted and the point when work study began was identified.

For Group E, the mean number of absences, grades, and disciplinary infractions were calculated individually for the two nine week grading periods prior to placement in work study and the two nine week grading periods during placement in work study. The standard deviation and the standard error were calculated for the same two sets of nine week grading periods. A paired t-test was performed to determine if significant differences between before and during placement in work study occurred in attendance, grades, and disciplinary infractions. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error in the areas of attendance, grades, and disciplinary infractions were also calculated for Group C for the second set of nine week grading periods. An unpaired t-test was performed in the areas of attendance, grade averages, and disciplinary infractions to determine

whether or not a significant difference existed between the means of Group E and Group C.

All grade, attendance, and disciplinary records were obtained through the Horizon computer program. Horizon was the book keeping program used by administrators to track students' grades, attendance, and disciplinary records in the school system where this study was conducted.

Procedure

After obtaining permission from the university, the school system, parents of participants, and participants themselves, the study began. First, lists of all those students enrolled in resource and inclusion programs were provided by each high school. A copy of each student's report cards for each year the students were enrolled in high school, including grades for the current year, were obtained. Attendance and disciplinary records were also obtained. The two nine week grading periods prior to placement and the two nine week grading periods of placement in work study were identified as the time to analyze the data for subjects in Group E. The student's grades during the two nine week grading periods prior to work study and the two nine week grading periods after enrollment in work study were averaged. The averages were compared. The students'attendance records were also analyzed from the two nine week grading periods prior to, and the two nine week grading periods during, work study placement. Each student's attendance was charted in nine week segments. The number of disciplinary infractions per nine weeks was also charted. For subjects in Group C, the information was

charted using the same method except using only the second set on nine week grading periods.

The means, standard deviations, standard errors for each area in both groups were calculated. In Group E, additional means, standard deviations, and standard errors were calculated so before and after work study comparison could be made within the group. A paired t-test was used to make comparisons with each of the three dependent variables. An unpaired t-test was used to compare the three dependant variables between Group E and Group C.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose and presented the subjects, instrumentation, and procedures used to conduct this study.

In chapter four, the results found when evaluating the effects of work study programs on students' grades, attendance, and discipline are discussed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if work study programs have a significant effect on the attendance, grades, and discipline of participating students. First, this chapter reviews the research questions and answers these questions with statistical calculations. Second, this chapter will review correlations between attendance, grades, and discipline. The Pearson Correlation Test was used as a post hoc analysis. For the purpose of this study, attendance referred to days of school missed by the subjects.

Research Questions and Statistical Calculations

Research Question #1. Is there a difference between the attendance of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to placement in work study programs compared to their attendance during the two nine week grading periods of placement in work study programs. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for each set of grading periods. A paired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the group's attendance prior to and during work study. During the two nine week grading periods prior to work study, the experimental group's attendance had a mean of 6.2308 with a standard deviation of 4.6649 and a standard error of .7470 (see Table 1). During the two nine week grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's attendance had a mean of 6.3333, a standard deviation of 4.8576, and a standard error of .7778 (see Table 1). The paired differences between the two sets of grading periods were -.1026 for

the mean, 4.7837 for the standard deviation, and .7660 for the standard error. The results of the t-test were t= -.134 and p= .894 (see Table 2). There was not a statistically significant difference between the attendance of students prior to and during involvement in work study.

Research Question #2: Is there a difference between the attendance of students participating in work study and the attendance of students not participating in work study during two sets of nine week grading periods. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for the experimental group during work study placement

Table 1
Attendance: Experimental Group Compared Means

Paired Samples Statistics[a]

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Attendance: Non W.S.	6.2308	39	4.6649	.7470
	Attendance: W.S.	6.3333	39	4.8576	.7778

a. group = E

Table 2
Attendance: Experimental Group t-Test Results

Paired Samples Test[a]

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Attendance: Non W.S. - Attendance: W.S.	-.1026	4.7837	.7660	-1.6533	1.4481	-.134	38	.894

a. group = E

and the control group during the second set of grading periods. An unpaired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the experimental group during work study placement and the control group during the second set of grading periods. During the two nine week grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's attendance had a mean of 6.3333, a standard deviation of 4.8576, and a standard error of .7778 (see Table 3). During the second grading period, the control group's attendance had a mean of 5.6774, a standard deviation of 3.7407, and a standard error of .4751 (See Table 3). Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found F= 1.816 and p= .181. The unpaired differences, assuming equal variances, between the two groups were -.6559 for the mean, .8593 for the standard error with a two-tailed significance of .447. The results of the t-test were t= -.763 and p= .447 (See Table 4). There was not a statistically significant difference between the attendance of students involved in work study and the attendance of students not involved in work study.

Table 3

Attendance: Experimental and Control Group Compared Means

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attendance: W.S.	E	39	6.3333	4.8576	.7778
	C	62	5.6774	3.7407	.4751

Table 4

Attendance: Experimental and Control Group t-Test Results

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Mean	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Attendance: W.S.	Equal variances assumed	1.816	.181	.763	99	.447	.6559	.8593	-1.0492	2.3610
	Equal variances not assumed			.720	65.922	.474	.6559	.9114	-1.1639	2.4757

Research Question #3: Is there a difference between the grades of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to participating in work study programs compared to their grades during the two nine week grading periods of placement in work study programs. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for each set of grading periods. A paired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the group prior to work study and during involvement in work study. During the two nine week grading periods prior to work study, the experimental group's grades had a mean of 81.0695 with a standard deviation of 8.3919 and a standard error of 1.3438 (See Table 5). During the two nine week grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's grades had a mean of 82.4197, a standard deviation of 7.3776, and a standard error of 1.1814 (See Table 5). The paired differences between the two sets of grading periods were -1.3503 for the mean, 8.0066 for the standard deviation, and 1.2821 for the standard error. The results of the t-test were t= -1.053 and p= .299 (See Table 6). There was not a statistically significant difference between the grades of students prior to and during involvement in work study.

Table 5
Grades: Experimental Group Compared Means

Paired Samples Statistics[a]

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Grades: Non W. S.	81.0695	39	8.3919	1.3438
	Grades: W.S.	82.4197	39	7.3776	1.1814

a. group = E

Table 6
Grades: Experimental Group t-Test Results

Paired Samples Test[a]

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Grades: Non W. S. - Grades: W.S.	-1.3503	8.0066	1.2821	-3.9457	1.2452	-1.053	38	.299

a. group = E

Research Question #4: Is there a difference between the grade averages of students participating in work study and the grade averages of students not participating in work study during two sets of nine week grading periods. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for the experimental group during work study placement and the control group during the second set of grading periods. An unpaired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the experimental group during work study placement and the control group during the second set of grading periods. During the two nine week

grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's grades had a mean of 82.4197, a standard deviation of 7.3776, and a standard error of 1.1814 (See Table 7). During the second grading period, the control group's grades had a mean of 80.4245, a standard deviation of 6.7018, and a standard error of .8511 (See Table 7). Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found F= .382 and p= .538. The unpaired differences, assuming equal variances, between the two groups were -1.9952 for the mean, 1.4243 for the standard error and a two-tailed significance of .164. The results of the t-test were t= -1.401 and p= .164 (See Table 8). There was not a statistically significant difference between the grades of students involved in work study and the grades of students not involved in work study.

Table 7

Grades: Experimental and Control Group Compared Means

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Grades: W.S.	E	39	82.4197	7.3776	1.1814
	C	62	80.4245	6.7018	.8511

Table 8

Grades: Experimental and Control Group t-Test Results

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Mean	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Grades: W.S.	Equal variances assumed	.382	.538	1.401	99	.164	1.9952	1.4243	-.8309	4.8213
	Equal variances not assumed			1.370	75.086	.175	1.9952	1.4560	-.9053	4.8957

Research Question #5: Is there a difference between the number of disciplinary infractions of secondary students in inclusion and resource programs during the two nine week grading periods prior to placement in work study programs compared to the number of disciplinary infractions during the two nine week grading periods after placement in work study programs. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for each set of grading periods. A paired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the group prior to work study and during involvement in work study. During the two nine week grading periods prior to work study, the experimental group's discipline had a mean of 2.4103 with a standard deviation of 2.5825 and a standard error of .4135 (See Table 9). During the two nine week grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's discipline had a mean of 1.8205 with a standard deviation of 2.0374 and a standard error of .3263 (See Table 9). The paired differences between the two sets of grading periods were .5897 for the mean, 2.6726 for the standard deviation, and .4280 for the standard error. The results of the t-test were t= 1.378 and p= .176 (See Table 10). There was not a statistically significant difference between the discipline of students prior to and during involvement in work study.

Table 9
Discipline: Experimental Group Compared Means

Paired Samples Statistics[a]

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Discipline: Non W.S.	2.4103	39	2.5825	.4135
	Discipline: W.S.	1.8205	39	2.0374	.3263

a. group = E

Table 10
Discipline: Experimental Group t-Test Results

Paired Samples Test[a]

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Discipline: Non W.S. - Discipline: W.S.	.5897	2.6726	.4280	-.2766	1.4561	1.378	38	.176

a. group = E

Research Question #6: Is there a difference between the number of disciplinary infractions of students that do not participate in work study compared to students that do participate in work study over two sets of nine week grading periods. The mean, standard deviation, and standard error were calculated for the experimental group during work study placement and the control group during the second set of grading periods. An unpaired t-test was calculated to determine statistically significant differences between the experimental group during work study placement and the control group during the second set of grading periods. During the two nine week grading periods of work study placement, the experimental group's discipline had a mean of 1.8205, a standard deviation of 2.0374, and a standard error of .3263 (See Table 11). During the second grading period, the control group's discipline had a mean of 3.9839 with a standard deviation of 5.4787 and a standard error of .6958 (See Table 11). Levene's Test for Equality of Variances found F= 17.222 and p= .000. The unpaired differences, not assuming equal variances, between the two groups were 2.1634 for the mean, .7685 for the standard error and a two-tailed significance of .006.

Table 11

Discipline: Experimental and Control Group Compared Means

Group Statistics

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Discipline: W.S.	E	39	1.8205	2.0374	.3263
	C	62	3.9839	5.4787	.6958

Table 12

Discipline: Experimental and Conrtol Group t-Test Results

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Mean	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Discipline: W.S.	Equal variances assumed	17.222	.000	-2.362	99	.020	-2.1634	.9160	-3.9809	-.3458
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.815	84.235	.006	-2.1634	.7685	-3.6915	-.6352

The results of the t-test were t= 2.815 and p= .006 (See Table 12). There was a statistically significant difference between the discipline of students involved in work study and students not involved in work study from the control group as indicated by the two-tailed t-test.

Correlation Statistics

A Pearson Correlation Test was used to compute correlations post hoc between grades, attendance, or discipline for the experimental group, the control group, and the two groups combined. The level considered to be significant was 0.01 and the test was two-tailed.

Within the experimental group, the correlation between attendance and discipline was -.145 with a two-tailed calculation of .377. This was not considered to be significant. The correlation between attendance and grades was -.410 with a two-tailed calculation of .010. This negative correlation was considered significant. The correlation between discipline and grades was -.133 with a two-tailed calculation of .421. This was not considered to be significant (see Table 13).

Table 13
Experimental Group Correlations between Attendance, Grades, and Discipline

Correlations[a]

		ADIFF	DDIFF	GDIFF
Pearson Correlation	ADIFF	1.000	-.145	-.410**
	DDIFF	-.145	1.000	-.133
	GDIFF	-.410**	-.133	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	ADIFF	.	.377	.010
	DDIFF	.377	.	.421
	GDIFF	.010	.421	.
N	ADIFF	39	39	39
	DDIFF	39	39	39
	GDIFF	39	39	39

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. group = E

Within the control group, the correlation between attendance and discipline was -.142 with a two-tailed calculation of .272. This was not considered to be significant. The correlation between attendance and grades was -.208 with a two-tailed calculation of .105. This was not considered to be significant. The correlation between discipline and grades was -.089 with a two-tailed calculation of .492. This was not considered to be significant (see Table 14).

Table 14
Control Group Correlations between Attendance, Grades, and Discipline

Correlations[a]

		ADIFF	DDIFF	GDIFF
Pearson Correlation	ADIFF	1.000	-.142	-.208
	DDIFF	-.142	1.000	-.089
	GDIFF	-.208	-.089	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	ADIFF	.	.272	.105
	DDIFF	.272	.	.492
	GDIFF	.105	.492	.
N	ADIFF	62	62	62
	DDIFF	62	62	62
	GDIFF	62	62	62

a. group = C

When the experimental and control groups were combined, the following results were revealed. The correlation between attendance and discipline was -.149 with a two-tailed calculation of .137. This was not considered to be significant. The correlation between attendance and grades was -.274 with a two-tailed calculation of .006. This was considered to be significant. The correlation between discipline and grades was -.111 with a two-tailed calculation of .270. This was not considered to be significant (see Table 15).

Table 15
Experimental and Control Group Combined Correlations between Attendance, Grades, and Discipline

Correlations

		ADIFF	DDIFF	GDIFF
Pearson Correlation	ADIFF	1.000	-.149	-.274**
	DDIFF	-.149	1.000	-.111
	GDIFF	-.274**	-.111	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	ADIFF	.	.137	.006
	DDIFF	.137	.	.270
	GDIFF	.006	.270	.
N	ADIFF	101	101	101
	DDIFF	101	101	101
	GDIFF	101	101	101

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Summary

There were no statistically significant differences within the experimental group in the areas of grades, attendance, and discipline prior to and during placement in work study. There were no statistically significant differences between the experimental group during work study and the control group during the second period in the areas of grades and attendance. There was, however, a statistically significant difference between the experimental group during work study and the control group during the second period in the area of discipline. The experimental group had a lower number of disciplinary infractions than the control group.

Within the experimental, group there was not a statistically significant correlation between attendance and discipline or discipline and grades. There was, however, a statistically significant correlation between attendance and grades. Within the control group, there was not a statistically significant correlation between

attendance and grades, attendance and discipline, or discipline and grades. When the two groups were combined, there was not a statistically significant correlation between attendance and discipline or discipline and grades. There was a statistically significant correlation between attendance and grades.

Chapter five includes discussion and conclusions about the results of this study. Implications for future research, special education teachers, curriculum specialists, and parents are provided.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings and conclusions that may be made as a result of the research. Also discussed are the implications for future research, implications for special education teachers, implications for curriculum changes, and implications for parents.

Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the results of the study of the effects of work study on special education students' attendance, grades, and discipline. Two groups of students were studied. The experimental group consisted of students that were involved in a work study program for one to five periods of the school day. Two sets of two nine week grading periods were studied within the experimental group, the first set before work study and the second set during placement in work study. The control group consisted of special education students that did not participate in work study. The second set of nine week grading periods for the control group was compared to the set of nine week grading periods of work study for the experimental group. There were no significant differences between the attendance, grades, and discipline of students before and during placement in work study. There were no significant differences between the

attendance and grades of students participating in work study and students that were not participating in work study. There was a significant difference, however, between the discipline of students participating in work study and the students that were not participating in work study. Students participating in work study had fewer disciplinary infractions than the students that were not participating in work study.

A Pearson Correlation Test was performed to determine if there was a correlation between attendance, grades, or discipline within the experimental group before and during work study. Further, a Pearson Correlation Test was performed to determine if there was a correlation between attendance, grades, or discipline within the control group between two periods. The two groups were also combined including all grading periods to determine if there was a correlation between attendance, grades, or discipline. Within the experimental group, there was not a correlation between attendance and discipline or discipline and grades but, there was a correlation between attendance and grades. Within the experimental group, there was not a correlation between attendance and discipline, attendance and grades, or discipline and grades. When the experimental group and the control group were combined, there was not a correlation between attendance and discipline or discipline and grades but, there was a correlation between attendance and grades.

Conclusions

It can be deduced that students in this study involved in work study have lower amounts of disciplinary infractions than students who do not participate in work study.

Students already targeted for work study do not lower their disciplinary infractions once placed in work study. This indicates a fundamental difference between the two groups. Students asked to participate in work study may have certain traits that make them more likely to be asked to participate in work study. Placing the students in the control group into work study programs for a semester may achieve different results related to those students' attendance, grades, and discipline. Because attendance and grades are not negatively affected by work study, the chances of declines in these areas seem unlikely.

It is not surprising that improved grades correlated with a decrease in days of school missed. What is surprising is this was true for the experimental group but not true for the control group. When both groups were combined, there was still a correlation between improved grades and lower absenteeism. This further demonstrates that students cannot earn good grades if they are not attending school.

Outcomes resulting from the literature review indicated students that worked as part of the school day would have lower dropout rates than students that do not work. There is an indication, especially in the literature from the sixties and seventies, that students participating in work study had better grades and attendance than their non-working counterparts. This study found that while students involved in work study programs did not have worse attendance or grades, their grades did not significantly improve either. Therefore, the findings of this study were not consistent with the findings in the literature in the areas of work study and attendance and grades. Less information existed concerning students that worked during the school day and discipline. The limited literature that did exist in this area indicated that students involved in work study

programs would have lower amounts of disciplinary infractions. This study found that students involved in work study programs did have lower numbers of disciplinary infractions. This finding was consistent with the minimal amounts of existing literature.

Implications for Future Research

There are several ramifications for future research. One would be to take students that typically do not participate in work study, such as the members of the control group, and place them in work study programs. After participating in work study for the equivalent of one semester, apply the same methods and procedures that were applied to the experimental group in this study. Students that are not typically chosen to participate in work study programs may be affected by the program to a greater degree. Applying the same study to a population in a different demographic area would also be relevant. One question might be, would there be similar findings concerning discipline and a correlation between grades and attendance. If findings yielded other areas of significance, perhaps the study should be applied to yet other demographic areas.

It would also be interesting to compare the employment rates of the control and experimental groups again after they leave high school. Would work study participants in high school have higher or lower rates of employment? If so, how did their types of employment differ? What length of time were former students able to maintain employment with a single employer?

Studying dropout rates of students involved in work study warrants research. Current literature suggests that students involved in work programs have lower dropout

rates. Placing students from the control group into work study programs and monitoring dropout rates may result in interesting results.

There are many opportunities for future research concerning work study and secondary students with special educational needs.

Implications for Special Education Teachers

It is important for special education teachers to keep in mind that ultimately students need preparation prior to entering the work force. This study shows that adding a work study component does not negatively affect the attendance, grades, or discipline for the students involved. In fact, students involved in work study tend to have a lower number of disciplinary infractions. Also, students involved in work study have a correlation between improved attendance and improved grades. Teachers may want to complete their own action research and compare their results to the results found in this study.

Also, special education teachers may want to include work information when teaching their classes. This may incite interest toward working in unemployed students. It would create a forum for discussion concerning work issues for work study participants and non-work study participants.

Implications for Curriculum Changes

School systems considering curriculum changes for secondary special education programs should seriously study the value of adding a work study component for students.

Again, it is important to remember that working is part of being a contributing member of society. Students with special educational needs have high rates of unemployment. What better way to prepare students for the world of work than including a work component in the curriculum. School districts could do this knowing that work study will not have an adverse effect on students' attendance and grades, and may lower their number of disciplinary offenses.

School districts may want to offer a course where work situations are discussed. It is important to have a well supervised and a well-monitored work study program.

Implications for Parents

Despite the fact that many school systems do not offer work study programs, parents can still help their children with special needs enter the work force. Parents can encourage their children to get summer or weekend employment. They can discuss the handling of problems at work with their children.

If work study programs are offered at their child's school, parents can request participation at the m-team meeting. Students with special educational needs age 16 and older should have transitional goals discussed at the annual m-team. Transition may include work experience.

Summary

Students involved in work study have fewer disciplinary infractions than students who do not participate in work study. Students involved in work study had a negative

correlation between improved grades and a decrease in days of school missed. The grades and attendance of work study participants were not negatively affected by participation in these programs.

There are many implications for future research such as placing students that are not typically chosen to participate in work study programs to see if their attendance, grades, and discipline are affected by the program to a greater degree. Other possible studies include the effects of work study on the dropout and future employment rates of participants. There are also implications for teachers, curriculum specialists, and parents.

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VITA

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Ann Marie taught at Clinton High School in Anderson County from 1993 until 1997. She taught inclusion and resource English to students with various disabling conditions. She helped pilot an inclusion program which began with two classes in 1994 that has grown to fourteen predicted classes for the 1997-98 school year. Ann Marie also served as the head of the special education department beginning in 1996. She moved to Nashville, Tennessee during the summer of 1997 and is currently seeking a teaching position in the area.

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