To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by David Rich Roberts entitled "Participant Characteristics and Perceptions of a Basic Skills Oriented Dropout Prevention Program." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Administration and Supervision.

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PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND PERCEPTIONS OF A BASIC SKILLS DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

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David Rich Roberts

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Harold and Edna Roberts who always stressed the importance of education and sacrificed so much in order that I might have every opportunity possible.

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ABSTRACT

A major weakness of the dropout prevention movement throughout the country has been the lack of program evaluation. The purpose in the study was to examine and evaluate the long-range effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on the lives of program participants, and to determine if background characteristics of participants influenced the impact of the program.

The program studied and evaluated was a basic skills dropout prevention program serving a ten-county geographical area in upper east Tennessee. The program had been operational for three years and served economically disadvantaged at-risk high school students.

Twelve hundred seventy-six (1276) subjects were included in the study population. These subjects had participated in the basic skills program during at least one of the first three years of operation (1987-88 thru 1989-90) and were enrolled in high school upon entry into the program. A random sample of 300 subjects was selected from the population. Data were obtained from existing records relative to program outcomes for the entire study population. Background characteristics were obtained from existing records of the participants selected in the random

sample. In addition, responses to a survey instrument were obtained from the subjects in the sample.

The program was found to have contributed significantly to the retention of students in school. Improvements in the areas of student performance in other classes, attitudes toward school, and self-esteem were found. The caring attitudes of the program's staff and the computer-based learning materials were found to be prime factors in the program's success. Interestingly, many of the participants in the program who had been identified as at-risk youth by teachers and counselors did not perceive themselves as at-risk.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since A Nation at Risk, a report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, was published in 1983, concern over the failure of America's educational system to keep students in school and provide necessary basic skills training for the future workforce has continuously intensified. Estimates of a national dropout rate vary somewhat, but most researchers agree that it is approximately 25 percent, with some high schools having rates as high as 40 or 50 percent (Cooper, Van Dexter, and Williams, 1988, p. iii; Strumpf, 1985, p. 2). Some evidence suggests that this rate has remained steady since the 1960's (Clark et al., 1988, p. 2). However, the National Alliance of Business in a 1986 paper entitled Employment Policies: Looking to the Year 2000 suggests that the number of dropouts is increasing above the present one million a year, and that rates for the poor and minorities are even higher (p. 2).

National concern over the high dropout rate and the lack of skills of the nation's workforce has prompted educational institutions throughout the country to begin developing various programs aimed at remedying the dropout problem. Offices have been created to head statewide

dropout prevention programs, and teacher training programs for dealing with "at-risk" students have been planned ("McWherter Program," 1988, p. A4). In 1986 the National Dropout Prevention Center was established at Clemson University with a goal of significantly reducing the dropout rate in America's schools. The center serves as a clearinghouse for information on dropout prevention, and attempts to raise the public's awareness of the student dropout crisis ("Focus Update," 1990, p. 8).

School systems with high dropout rates that have not yet implemented prevention programs will most certainly be required to do so in the near future (Folger and Wisniewski, 1989, p. 67). Systems that have already implemented programs for dropouts are now beginning to look at the results of their initiatives.

Most research into the dropout problem has been focused toward identifying the reasons why students decide to leave school. Lists of student characteristics which would predict the likelihood of dropping out are extensive. Such lists have been used to define students as being "at risk" of leaving school before graduation.

Recent correspondence from one state's department of labor to directors of job-training programs lists no less than 44 characteristics which might be used in identifying in-school youth as at-risk (White, 1990). These

characteristics range from factors concerning academic deficiencies to poor home environment and lack of community value of education. Berryman (1988) in Breaking Out of the Cycle: Rethinking Our Assumptions About Education and the Economy, takes issue with such lists that are based on demographics and stereotypes. She defines at-risk youth as "those who don't do well in a traditional learning environment either because they don't want to or because they don't see a need to" (p. 6).

Regardless of whether a list of specific characteristics is used to label youth as at-risk or a more generalized definition such as that of Berryman is accepted, it is basically agreed that students who do not function well in the traditionally structured classroom are likely to leave school prematurely. Moreover, lacking the skills necessary to successfully function in the classroom is generally accepted as being a major cause of dropping out. Jibrell (1987), in a paper prepared for the National Governors' Association, states that absenteeism and low grades often precede dropping out, and that "inadequate basic skills is the strongest predictor of dropping out" (p. 2). She further explains that "A lack of basic skills combined with either poverty, minority group membership or social alienation are the characteristics which most school dropouts have in common" (p. 2).

Although much research has been done to identify the causes of the dropout problem, little work has been conducted in the area of evaluating dropout prevention programs. A 1987 survey of local school dropout programs conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office found that although most program administrators saw their programs as effective, only about 20 percent of those surveyed had evidence of rigorous evaluation. The study concluded that "since most of the surveyed programs have not been independently evaluated, there is a lack of evidence to establish definitively the approaches that are effective in reducing the number of dropouts" (School Dropouts: Survey of Local Programs, 1987, p. 20). Natriello (1986) agreed that evidence documenting significant program effects is very rare (p. 9).

When evaluation of dropout programs is conducted, it usually involves investigating generalized student outcomes such as system-wide vs program dropout rates. The New York City School System recently analyzed the results of its prevention programs over the past four years and decided to completely restructure its efforts. The school system's study indicates that most of those enrolled in dropout prevention programs did not improve in attendance and left school at more than twice the rate of the citywide student population ("NYC School Scraps," 1990, p. 1001).

Since a lack of basic skills has been identified and generally accepted as a major factor in determining school completion, it would be expected that most dropout prevention programs would include some aspect of academic remediation. However, the recent research conducted by the New York City School System indicates that dropout programs have focused mainly on support services rather than on improving instruction. As a result, not enough students have benefitted from such programs ("NYC School Scraps," p. 1001).

Programs that have focused on basic skills instruction have been evaluated mainly on the results of short term participant outcomes such as test scores and grade gains. Rumberger (1986) suggests that evaluations of program effectiveness should determine the extent to which the programs are producing their desired outcomes. In dropout prevention programs desired outcomes may be "a reduced incidence of dropping out among the target population or improvements in some of the known correlates of dropping out, such as student involvement or academic performances" (p. 14). It could be assumed that if the lack of basic skills is a major cause of dropping out, and a program has been successful at increasing the basic skills level of participants, then such a program has been successful at preventing dropouts. However, no evidence exists to support such an assumption.

A basic skills dropout prevention program that has been successful at increasing the basic skills level of participants was implemented in 1987 in east Tennessee. This program was the subject of the study.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A major weakness of the dropout prevention movement throughout the country has been the lack of program evaluation. To date, most evaluation efforts have focused on quantitative data. Some studies have analyzed relatively short-term results of programs, basing success or failure on various objective measures such as student retention rates and academic grade level gains.

Although research indicates that lacking basic skills is a major factor in identifying students in danger of dropping out, no evidence exists that retention programs aimed at improving academic skill levels will cause participants to remain in school. Few studies have investigated the impact of basic skills programs upon students. Little insight has been gained into the perceptions of participants concerning long-range influences of dropout programs, particularly programs which focus on basic skills improvement. Are students who have participated in basic skills programs more likely to stay in school? Do background characteristics of participants influence the effectiveness of such programs? Do basic

skills programs enhance career opportunities for participants? Are participants' attitudes toward school and self affected? Do newly acquired basic skills transfer into improved performance in other academic areas? What are the effects of these influences over a one, two, or three year period?

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose in the study was to examine and evaluate the long-range effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on the lives of program participants, and to determine if background characteristics of participants influenced the impact of the program.

III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Addressing the problem of dropping out of school is a major educational concern facing this nation which will inevitably consume more and more tax dollars. The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship has recommended that the federal government significantly increase funding for the country's at-risk youth over the next ten years. According to the foundation, even an expenditure of $50 billion would "be less than society's loss of tax dollars from dropouts in a single

school year over these youths' lifetime" (Smith and Lincoln, p. 5). Thus, the cost of youth leaving school early will be a burden to the taxpayer in one way of another.

The cost of students leaving school without the basic skills needed to perform adequately in the nation's workforce is also readily apparent. In Jump Start: The Federal Role in Adult Literacy, Chisman (1989) states that "There is no way the United States can maintain the health of its economy, fend off foreign competition, improve productivity, and, in general, maintain its standard of living unless we substantially increase the skills of our workforce" (p. 2). Taggart, Sum, and Berlin (1987) view basic skills deficiencies as a common denominator of our nation's most serious social problems. These researchers suggest that by raising the basic skills level of young Americans aged 19 to 23 by one grade equivalent, lifetime earnings of this group would rise by three to four percent; the number of births out of wedlock annually would decline by six to seven percent; a reduction of five percent in welfare payments would be realized; and arrests would be cut by five percent during the high-risk years from ages 19 through 29 (p. 13).

As the costs of low basic skills and high dropout rates continue to mount, federal, state, and local governments will feel more public pressure to develop and implement effective programs to deal with these problems. Results of

innovative programs that have been operational for some time will need to be analyzed and evaluated to add to the body of available knowledge concerning dropouts and the lack of basic skills of America's youth. Tax dollars can be more efficiently and effectively spent on programs shown to be successful.

An evaluation of long-term outcomes of a program which addresses both dropout prevention and raising the basic skills level of participants is not only important, but necessary for all who are truly concerned with the nation's most pressing educational and economic problems.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on participants' staying in school?

2. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' performance in other academic classes?

3. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' attitudes toward school and self?

4. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program influence job readiness for participants?

5. What characteristics of the program were most important to the participants?

6. Do students who have remained in school or who have graduated after participation in the program share different background characteristics from those who have dropped out of school after participation in the program?

7. Does the time which has elapsed since program participation affect the perception of participants regarding the impact of the program?

V. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A descriptive study design using two methods of data collection was used. Data concerning program outcomes pertaining to school completion were gleaned from local school and program records. Participant background characteristics were also obtained from existing program records. Perceptions of participants regarding the impact of the program upon their lives were obtained using a survey instrument.

VI. ASSUMPTIONS

1. The respondents were aware of their feelings about program services and outcomes and could accurately report them.

2. The respondents were capable of honestly expressing their own views and perceptions.

3. The respondents' perceptions were accurate indications of the actual program effects.

VIII. DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1. The population under study was limited to participants in a basic skills dropout prevention program serving a ten-county area in east Tennessee.

2. The number of separate dropout prevention centers studied was ten.

3. The results of the study may only apply to the program studied.

VII. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

For the purpose of this study the following definitions of terms and abbreviations were utilized:

1. Basic Skills. Skills that are necessary to begin and/or continue an educational learning pattern. These are primarily in the area of reading, language, and math.

2. CCP. Comprehensive Competencies Program.

3. JTPA. Job Training Partnership Act.

4. Long-range effects. Those effects that remain with the student beyond the immediate period of enrollment in the Comprehensive Competencies Program.

5. Still in school. Being enrolled in high school at the beginning of the fall semester of the 1990-91 school year.

6. Graduated. Having completed the requirements for and received a regular high school diploma.

7. Dropout. Being no longer enrolled in any high school and not having received a high school diploma.

IX. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter I contains an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the research questions, the design of the study, the assumptions, the delimitations and limitations, definitions of terms and abbreviations, and the organization of the study. Chapter II contains a review of related literature. Chapter III includes the methodology and procedures used in the study, and a description of the program which was studied. Chapter IV provides the presentation and analysis of data. Chapter V contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, accounts of the dropout problem go back as far as the late nineteenth century, but the more comprehensive studies dealing with the problem began appearing in the early part of the twentieth century. These early studies centered around the issue of "early school leavers" and dealt mainly with students who left elementary school, since few students were enrolled in high schools (Fernandez and Shu, 1988, p. 365).

In the 1930's researchers began focusing on the issue of the secondary school's ability to hold students. In the 1950's, as high school graduation rates began to increase, there seemed to be very little concern about those students who did not complete the full twelve years of school, and the cause of non-completion seemed to land obviously in the lap of the students themselves and not with the schools. In the 60's and 70's the dropout problem began to be addressed from a social-psychological perspective and began being recognized as a major educational problem. In the 1980's, as the inability of the U.S. economy to absorb the large numbers of dropouts into meaningful jobs became apparent,

the dropout problem began to loom as an undeniable threat to the American way of life. In recent years an outpouring of research studies and initiatives on this topic has occurred (Fernandez and Shu, 1988, p. 364-365).

Information and findings from the literature relevant to the dropout problem have been organized and presented in this chapter under the following major headings: characteristics of at-risk youth and reasons for dropping out, dropout prevention methodologies and strategies, and evaluations of dropout prevention programs. Next, a summary of the literature pertaining to dropouts is presented. Finally, since the program studied is computer-based, a review of several studies dealing with computer-assisted instruction is presented and summarized.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF AT-RISK YOUTH AND REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT

A wealth of data is available in the literature regarding demographic characteristics which describe both students believed to be at-risk of leaving school prematurely and those who have dropped out of this country's educational system. A review of the literature by Weber (1988) resulted in the identification of at least 43 variables being used by different program personnel to identify potential dropouts (p. 21). In addition, many researchers have studied the reasons why students drop out. Some go so far as to list "causes" of the dropout problem.

A report describing dropouts in the Sacramento City Unified School District for the four school years from 1980 to 1984 revealed that more males drop out than females, but for years 1980-84, the percentage of females who dropped out increased, while that of males decreased. Ninth graders were found to have less tendency to drop out than tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders ("Sacramento City,"1985, p. 3-5).

Casserly and Stevens (1986) after reviewing dropout data from schools which are members of the Council of Great City Schools agreed that dropout rates for males were consistently higher than those for females (p. 21). These researchers added that Native Americans and Hispanics have the highest overall dropout rate. They also found that tenth or twelfth graders were more likely to drop out, with eleventh graders showing the second highest dropout rate (p. 20). Sherman (1987) also found that minorities drop out at higher rates than whites, but that the gap has narrowed significantly since the mid-1970's, and the nation's largest urban areas and some rural areas have dropout rates which are considerably higher than the national average (p. 6).

The Sherman study also revealed that male and female youth drop out at slightly different rates and for different reasons. He noted that males now leave school at a higher rate than females, although the dropout rate for females exceeded that of males up through the late 1970's (p. 5).

According to this study, marriage was reported by females as the reason for leaving school over four times more often than it was given as a reason by males. Economic factors affected males' decisions to leave high school more than females, and males cited the inability to "get along with teachers" and discipline problems as reasons for dropping out more than females (p. 8). Magyar (1986) agreed. She found the reason most often given by male students for dropping out was the need to go to work, while the most common reason given by females was marriage or childbirth (p. 30).

In 1989 Klingstedt, as a part of a national research project, studied both elementary and high school students in the El Paso, Texas area. Information concerning 296 students was gathered from principals, counselors, and teachers in three schools. The presence or absence of 45 at-risk factors was investigated. Findings of this study indicated that 40 percent of the students were considered seriously at risk. Males were slightly more at risk than females, and Hispanics were most at risk, followed by Blacks, Native Americans, Whites, and Asians (p. 50-51).

Several studies tied the dropout problem to low academic or basic skills, low socio-economic standing, poor attendance, and various other school and home related factors. Weber and Silvani-Lacey (1983) studied the existing data and information on the characteristics of both

actual and potential dropouts. They investigated school performance, job proficiency data, and standardized test scores of secondary vocational students by reviewing literature and examining various research studies. Their study revealed that the basic skills levels of both potential and actual dropouts were well below average for their expected grade level. The performance of potential and actual dropouts across the different basic skills areas was about the same and, in general, was poor. Students who dropped out of high school usually had significantly lower basic skills than do those who complete school (p. 5).

Cox and Spivey (1986) studied the dropout problem in the Appalachian region and found a dropout rate of 39 percent, more than 1.5 times the national average according to most sources. They noted that 60 percent of the dropouts in this region experienced low economic status, and they found the main reason for dropping out was poor academic achievement (p. 6). Karp (1988) describes the typical dropout of Ontario's (Canada) secondary schools as non-academic, a short-range and not a long-range goal setter, a hands-on learner, and a frustrated learner (p. 16).

Wittenburg (1988) listed the following characteristics of students who are most at-risk of dropping out: poor academic record; low parental education level; dislike for school; little or no participation in extra-curricular activities; discipline problems; disrupted home life; low

socioeconomic status; age of 16 or 17 years in grades nine through 11; and poor reading ability (p. 2-3). A similar list of characteristics of at-risk students was submitted by Cuellar and Cuellar (1990). Their list included frustration with school, poor academic records, discipline and attendance problems, a disadvantaged social and economic level, and low aspirations with an even poorer self-concept. In addition, they too found that the at-risk group was disproportionately represented by minorities (p. 2).

Mueller (1990) studied students in a ninth grade class in the Cincinnati (Ohio) public schools in an effort to identify and assess factors that may characterize students at-risk of dropping out. Students who were in the class in the 1984-85 thru 1988-89 school years were followed. Being male, having low reading scores, repeating the ninth grade, and being enrolled in a comprehensive (non-alternative) school were found to be risk factors for the ninth grade cohort (p. 3-10).

Natriello, Pallas, McDill, McPartland, and Royster (1988) reviewed the relevant literature on dropouts and grouped the reasons for leaving school into four categories: (1) success in school; (2) positive relationships in school; (3) relevance of school; and (4) outside interferences. They described candidates who were most likely to dropout as students who had serious difficulties in passing their school tests and courses, and did not believe that anyone in

an adult role in their school personally cared about their welfare. These students failed to see the value of continuing their education in order to succeed in life, and many times were overwhelmed by their own personal problems (p. 3-6).

Cuellar and Cuellar (1990) grouped the causes of dropping out into two main subsets: internal and external. Internal or school related included having poor academic records, having low reading and writing skills, finding a culturally hostile environment, and an inability to identify cohesively with teachers and peers. External or family and socioeconomic conditions included having parents with little or no education, having siblings who had dropped out, having little, if any family support, limited proficiency English, and early marriage and/or pregnancy (p. 2).

Matranga and Mitchell (1988) studied the dropout problem in the Western Region (Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah) and found that over 35 percent of students entering the ninth grade in 1980 failed to complete high school. They identified seven factors that increase the probability that students will leave early: poor grades; feelings of not belonging or alienation; irregular attendance and frequent tardiness; family socio-economic status; economic need and/or the opportunity to work; teenage pregnancy; and socially deviant behavior including drug and alcohol abuse (p. 6).

Speas (1989), in a effort to explore factors which put a student at risk of dropping out, investigated school behavior and performance differences between graduates and dropouts in the state of North Carolina. Students with reported discipline problems, and students who had repeated grades were found to be twice as likely to drop out when compared with students with no reported problems or who had not repeated grades. This study also revealed that the type of curriculum selected by a high school student and participation in extra curricular activities are other indicators of the probability of dropping out. Students in the general curriculum were at higher risk of dropping out. Only 58.1 percent of dropouts had participated in high school sports or clubs, while 87.3 percent of graduates reported having participated in one or more school activities (p. 13). Interestingly, graduates were found to have held regular part-time jobs at a far higher rate than dropouts. Speas suggested that the smaller percentage of dropouts who worked while in school might indicate that financial need was not the major reason for leaving school for many dropouts. Contrastingly, Sherman (1987) found that students who worked for pay left school at slightly higher rates than those who did not work (p. 8).

Speas also asked the dropouts themselves, via telephone interviews, why they had dropped out. Over sixty percent reported that they left high school for school-related

reasons such as discipline problems, academic performance, and general dislike of school, as opposed to external factors such as economic, health, or personal reasons (p. 16).

Others have investigated reasons given by dropouts and at-risk students that contributed to their leaving school. A students's tendency to see himself as a loser, according to Howe II (1985), was one of the highest ranking reasons for dropping out of school. "The students who are most 'at-risk' in schools are those for whom the school is a place of discouragement" (p. 292).

A study involving 75 young women participating in Philadelphia's Comprehensive Teen Parenting program was conducted in 1988. The participants had either dropped out of school or were at risk of dropping out. In-depth interviews were conducted with each of the young ladies. Twenty four percent of the group was white, 57 percent Black, 17 percent Hispanic, and two percent "other." Forty percent had dropped out and were in the process of getting their GED; 16 percent had dropped out and later returned to school; and 34 percent had never officially left but were considered "at risk" of leaving ("Now Legal Defense," 1988, p. 4).

The women in this study were asked to talk about the one or two most important reasons why <u>other</u> young people leave school. The categories of reasons given and some of

the actual specific responses were: poor academic performance ("They think they are dumb so they give up"); students don't like school ("School's boring and kids are sick of being ignored"); marriage or pregnancy; the desire or need to work; using or selling drugs ("Once you make a lot of money by being on the corner and selling drugs, it's really hard to go back to school or think about minimum wage work"); peer pressure; uncaring, uncreative, and unjust teachers ("Teachers are always putting the students down -- making you stand up and read when you don't know how -- and then passing you on to get you out of the class"); and pressing family problems (p. 6).

The participants were also asked to give reasons why they left school or wanted to leave. Responses given included: family problems ("Mother has seizures.... She urged me to go to school but I couldn't when I was worrying about her"); failure and the frustration of not learning ("I'd come home from school and ask myself, 'What did I learn today?'.... I'd have to say, 'Nothing, I didn't learn nothing'"). Some saw themselves as stupid or unable to learn, and others labeled themselves as lazy and uncooperative (p. 7-8). However, most of the participants "placed the blame with teachers, the nature of their course work, and the educational system as a whole" (p. 8).

Garibaldi and Bartley (1988), citing a 1987 U.S. General Accounting Office survey, reported that students in

over a thousand dropout prevention programs who were surveyed gave the following reasons for dropping out: poor grades in school or school was not for them (66 percent in each category); planned to get married (38 percent); chose to work or had been offered a job (38 percent); could not get along with teachers (31 percent); were pregnant (23 percent); had been suspended or expelled (18 percent) (p. 232).

De Jung (1988) surveyed a sample of approximately 2,000 students who entered three Oregon urban high schools in the fall of 1983 or 1984. When asked what were the principal reasons why their friends quit school, a third of this group cited poor attitude and not caring. Poor grades, pregnancy, and drugs were reasons also reported, but by far fewer respondents. Over a fourth of those surveyed said they didn't know why their friends had quit school (p. 57-58).

Egginton, Wells, Gains, and Esselman (1990) conducted a study to compare the factors that student dropouts report as contributing to their leaving school with those factors that at-risk students report as influencing their attitudes toward school. Data for the comparisons were gathered from in-depth interviews of 65 white female school dropouts who were participating in the Kentucky Department of Education single parent/displaced homemaker programs and 68 white female disadvantaged high school students who were considered at-risk. Results of the study revealed that in

general respondents from both groups consistently reported factors involving home-life experiences which were highly incompatible with school demands (lack of discipline, little parental interest in school/education, many home responsibilities, financial problems, abuse). Also, respondents from both groups cited related problems with peer pressure, drug use, and absenteeism (p. 9-10). One conclusion suggested by the researchers is that "there is a key relationship between absenteeism/dropping out and home structure, school environment, and peer support systems" (p. 34).

The idea that the dropout problem is complex and involves factors derived from several different supporting groups is submitted by other researchers. Clark (1986) reported that research on dropouts and their persistence in Adult Basic Education programs has attempted to examine specific variable in isolation, often ignoring the interaction of a given factor with other related factors (p. 77).

Bloch (1988) agreed with the assessment that factors which have sometimes been identified as causes may really be symptoms of the problem, not causes, and that there is no one factor or combination of factors which clearly leads to a student dropping out (p. 5).

Rumberger (1986) added, "Dropping out of high school is a complex, multi-faceted problem....Researchers need to

develop a better understanding of the long-term, causal process that leads up to a student's decision to drop out of school" (p. 15). Matranga and Mitchell (1988) noted that the factors that increase the risk of dropping out obviously interact in "complex ways that are difficult to understand and almost impossible to measure" (p. 6). These authors also felt that there were other factors, "not yet adequately studied or fully understood, which further complicate the picture" (p. 11).

Garibaldi and Bartley (1988), after studying the problems of black school dropouts and pushouts, concluded that the problems were multifaceted and required complex solutions. However, these researchers suggested that the best strategy was to "ensure that black children learn the necessary academic and cognitive skills in school to proceed to the next grade level" (p. 234).

Webster and Larson (1989) designed and developed a comprehensive longitudinal monitoring system that allowed for the identification of at-risk students and the evaluation of district programs and services. The efforts of six districts and the School of Education at San Jose State University were used to develop the system. Although socio-economic characteristics (e.g., family mobility, SES), school related behaviors and characteristics (e.g., socialization patterns), and psychological states (e.g., self-esteem), were found to correlate with students who

dropped out of school, the researchers found no single factors or patterns of characteristics that guaranteed that a student would not finish high school (p.1-5).

After extensively reviewing the literature on the causes of dropping out, McMullan, Leiderman, and Wolf (1988) found that much of the fairly large body of research on why students drop out is inconclusive. They cited three major weaknesses in the available literature:

> First, researchers often do not distinguish underlying causal factors from those merely associated with dropping out (p. 7).
>
> Second, much of the literature that describes who drops out of high school treats dropping out as an event and not as a process.... Evidence suggests that these events are themselves symptoms of repeated school failures or the breakdown of important aspects of the child's life outside of school and are not the underlying causes of dropping out.
>
> Third, there simply are very little data that consider the interaction between school factors that might contribute to dropping out and characteristics of the students who leave (p. 8).

III. DROPOUT PREVENTION METHODOLOGIES AND STRATEGIES

Cetron (1985) in Schools Of The Future: How American Business and Education Can Cooperate To Save Our Schools, recommended that schools take major steps to prevent dropouts. He suggested that remedial academic programs and work placement appear to be important preventive measures. "Schools must address the problem now. Programs must be

offered to help students meet academic standards", according to Cetron (p. 13).

In 1987 Sherman and Levine investigated the various dropout prevention initiatives that states had developed to meet the needs of dropout-prone youth and school dropouts. They found that a number of states, including New York, California, Florida, and North Carolina, were funding prevention initiatives at relatively high levels, and several other states were either supporting initiatives or were in the process of planning and developing programs. Even in states where the dropout issue appeared to be dormant, bills had been introduced into the legislature that would provide prevention or recovery programs. Thus, these authors found that "the landscape of state dropout prevention runs the gamut from inactive to fairly intense (p. 1).

Three basic program and funding strategies being used by states were identified by Sherman and Levine. (1) Demonstration or model program grants, used mostly by states with few resources available to fund dropout programs or in states that were unwilling to provide substantial funding for this purpose. (2) Grants for programs based on research and dissemination, used by states which were providing funds to develop programs based on "effective" practices for serving dropout-prone youth as identified in existing research literature. After development these

programs were disseminated to districts and school with similar types of students. (3) Grants for regular programs, used in states where more abundant funds were available and had been committed to providing intensive prevention programs as a part of the general educational plan (p. 2-4).

Program services being provided by states were categorized into four generic areas: (1) academic improvement - involving a variety of interventions, including alternative schools or classes, alternative curricula and instructional techniques, and extracurricular activities. (2) attendance improvement - involving more contact and follow-up with parents, rewards for attendance, and better recordkeeping. (3) personal adjustment - involving individual or group counseling, family counseling, mentors or buddies, and collaborative relationships with social service agencies to provide services to students. (4) career preparation and job training - including career counseling and seminars on employability, internships with community service agencies or private employers, modified scheduling to permit after-school employment, and in some cases, guaranteed employment upon completion of the program or a high school diploma or its equivalent (p. 6).

In the Appalachian region 241 school districts that sponsored dropout prevention programs were identified by Cox and Spivey (1986). From the program descriptions submitted by the school districts, these researchers recognized seven

clusters of dropout reduction/remediation strategies that appeared to include all of the reported program activities. Counseling/advising strategies included small group or one-to-one sessions aimed at improving self-awareness, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, understanding of options and consequences of school and life decisions. Twenty-five percent of the reported activities were grouped into this category. Twenty-two percent of the activities were described as alternative curriculum or classes either as a part of, or separate from, the regular school program. Nineteen percent were considered work related activities, fourteen percent were tutorial in nature, eight percent were attitudinal or self-awareness related, six percent were related to parental involvement, and five percent dealt with attendance incentives (p. 8-9).

Characteristics of "effective or successful" dropout prevention programs have been identified by several authors, although the criteria for describing such programs are still questionable. Mann (1986) characterized the elements of successful dropout prevention programs as the four C's - cash, care, computers and coalitions. Cash meant that students should be involved in programs in which they can see linkages between making money and school subjects. Caring described the concern students needed from teachers and other adults. Computers were for teaching students and management of records to identity those at-risk. Coalitions

should be developed among schools, businesses, and local educational foundations (p. 72-73).

Characteristics of successful dropout prevention programs as identified by Cuellar and Cuellar (1990) included: (1) well trained teachers and staff, (2) program autonomy, (3) individualized instruction, (4) small size, (5) team teaching, (6) program incentives, (7) community involvement, and (8) early identification. These researchers also suggested that successful programs tend to exhibit non-traditional ideas and experimental methods (p. 2).

Matranga and Mitchell (1988) reported that educators who felt they had dropout prevention programs that were effective pointed with pride to such factors as smaller class sizes; innovative student reward systems, fast-paced learning cycles, flexible time options, and an overall "student centeredness" (p. 12).

Sherman (1987) observed that "effective" or "successful" dropout programs appeared to have many of the same characteristics as effective schools in general, particularly the presence of energetic leadership from school principals. He found that in the successful dropout prevention programs:

> the principal was almost always an "entrepreneur" who was willing to take risks, to try out new ideas, and to seek out resources in the larger community to meet the needs of his or her students. The principal also exercised a collegial style of leadership, working closely

> with teachers and program staff to plan program services and implement the program. This leadership style worked to create a greater esprit de corps in the school and generated more of a commitment to the program itself (p. 12).

Successful methodologies that address the needs of at-risk youth do not necessarily come in the form of model programs or programs separate and apart from the traditional classroom. Ryan and Brewer (1990) suggested that teachers who were risk takers may be able to adapt a set curriculum in order to better respond to the needs of at-risk high school students. They reported that a high school English teacher in Orlando, Florida, substituted tradebooks and other books of high interest for the classical literature text and was able to meet the objectives and teach the same skills that were required in the regular curriculum. The material was broken down into manageable chunks, and the teacher provided direct instruction in the use of reading strategies, which helped students see and understand how the ideas presented in the text were related to their own experiences. This approach has proven successful because it builds on the students small successes and gives them the opportunity to experience self esteem, self respect, and a sense of accomplishment--something that they have not had in their other classes (p. 270-273).

A teacher in a high school on a small Navajo reservation in the Southwest used a video curriculum to involve at-risk students in unique learning activities. The

program was based on the work of a Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. By viewing and producing videos that deal with real life situations of teenagers, students were taught basic skills and values of the dominant society which surrounded them, and were motivated through promises of future gains, grades, and/or punishment. Outcomes of the program included improved communication and critical thinking skills. In addition, evidence of increased self-direction and dedication of program participants has been noted (Squires and Inlander, 1990, p. 49-56).

An alternative high school in the Jefferson County school district in Louisville, Kentucky, used computer-assisted instruction (CAI) as a drawing card to entice students who couldn't make it in the traditional school to come back and try for their GED. The school's administrators pointed out that the computers provided flexibility and easy monitoring of student progress. They also presented challenging problems for students but kept them well within the students' frustration tolerance (Gross, 1990, p. 625-627).

Peck and Catello (1990) considered instructional media and innovative technologies to be powerful tools that could be used to address the needs of at-risk students. Programs that provide appropriate, interactive instruction can improve attitudes, keep students in school, and contribute to the total educational environment by producing measurable

academic achievement. Effective instructional materials and methods identified by these authors included: videotapes, computer-assisted instruction, satellite broadcasts, interactive video-based modules, CD ROM databases, hands-on experiments and demonstrations (p. 54). "Appropriate use of instructional media can captivate, motivate, and maintain interest" (p. 57).

After studying the characteristics of dropouts, the causes related to the dropout dilemma, and the services being provided by programs that have shown promise in addressing the problem, several researchers have submitted recommendations for those educators who may be developing dropout prevention strategies. Wehlage, Rutter, and Turnbaugh (1987) developed a program model for at-risk high school students. These authors felt that educators must find and implement ways to "promote broad personal and social development as well as academic skills and knowledge" (p. 70). Schools must change their policies and practices in order to influence students beliefs and attitudes. Fundamental school-student interactions must be changed (p. 71).

The characteristics of the program model can be described under four categories: (1) <u>administration and organization</u>--Programs should be organized to provide personalized and individualized instruction in small-sized classes that allow for face-to-face relationships. Teachers

should have the authority to control admissions and dismissals from the program. (2) teacher culture--Teachers must believe at-risk students deserve a renewed opportunity to learn. They must develop a strong sense of joint decision making and cooperation. (3) student culture--The program should be voluntary and students need to apply for admission. Students should be willing to admit that they are having difficulty in school and that a change in attitude and behavior is necessary. Clear rules concerning attendance and work expectations are essential and consequences for breaking rules should be spelled out in detail. (4) curriculum--Curriculum and teaching must be substantially different from that which is found in most high schools. Individualization, clear objectives, prompt feedback, concrete evidence of progress, and an active role for students should be dominant program features. Basic skills must be given attention (p.71-73).

Weber and Silvani-Lacey (1983) recommended that programs developed to address the needs of actual and potential dropouts should integrate basic skills instruction or remediation with vocational or occupational training, and should provide individualized instruction whenever possible (p. 19-20). Weber and Sechler (1988) also suggested that vocational education has a role to play in efforts to alleviate the dropout problem. Their research indicated that "when comparing students with comparable backgrounds,

participation in vocational education is positively correlated with high school retention" (p. 2).

McMullan, Leiderman, and Wolf (1988), after citing weaknesses in the available literature on the reasons why students dropped out, did feel that the literature strongly indicated that dropping out was a developmental process that involved a complicated interaction among factors such as students' family backgrounds, early ability, achievement in school, the school's ability to enhance or interfere with that achievement, and personal stresses within and outside of the schools. Based on these findings, these researchers suggested that successful dropout prevention efforts should consider the interrelationships that drive dropping out behavior. Programs designed to keep students in school ought to compensate for some of the results of poverty; consider changing school factors as seriously as they do changing student behaviors in response to those factors; focus on root causes rather that precipitating events, and, since learning and failure are cumulative, intervene as early as possible (p. iv).

Wittenburg (1988), citing the works of several other researchers, recommended that dropout prevention programs should be organized to include the integration of counseling, vocational/occupational training, and basic skills instruction. These services should be delivered through individualization using a variety of materials and

media, competency-based objectives, and methods that accommodate the student's learning style (p. 24).

Crawford (1988) emphasized the need to coordinate public and private resources to build the social and basic academic skills of these youngsters so that they can function effectively in the school, family, and community. These skills are "the foundation of reliable work habits and behaviors that will increasingly be required in the workplaces of the 21st century" (p. vii).

Sherman (1987) visited nine dropout prevention programs throughout the nation and reviewed the relevant literature concerning the dropout dilemma. He recommended the following guidelines for those who are planning to formulate dropout prevention efforts:

> Direct dropout prevention efforts at younger students who evidence the characteristics of potential dropouts (p. 12).
>
> Establish linkages between the different levels of schooling (elementary-middle-secondary) to facilitate students' transitions from school to school.
>
> Keep dropout prevention programs small in size and organize student instruction in small classes (p. 13).
>
> Focus dropout prevention programs on basic skills as an initial step in improving academic performance (p. 14).
>
> Provide students with adults (teachers, counselors, volunteers) who can establish a personal relationship with their students and who can provide them with the support they need to deal with personal as well as academic problems (p. 15).

> Provide students with regular feedback about their progress to help stimulate improvements in school work and behavior (p. 16).
>
> Link job training to long-term employment prospects in dropout programs with a vocational component (p. 17).

IV. EVALUATION OF DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Little is actually known about what works to reduce the number of dropouts. Natriello (1986) stated "conclusive evidence documenting significant program effects is even more rare than careful evaluation in this field" (p. 9).

McMullan, Leiderman, and Wolf (1988) noted that, although many dropout prevention programs have been developed to address the needs of students at risk of leaving school before graduating, few offered strong evidence that they could substantially reduce the chances of dropping out. The lack of evidence results from a lack of solid research on the effects of these programs (p. 23).

In 1987, the U.S. General Accounting Office submitted a report to Congress entitled SCHOOL DROPOUTS: Survey of Local Programs. Concerning the effectiveness of dropout programs, respondents to a national survey were asked to send any available information on their programs. Only a few submitted any material, and of those who did, only about 20 percent produced rigorous evaluations. However, about three-fourths of the program administrators who returned the survey were of the opinion that their programs were

effective to a "very great" or "great" extent. Only 15 percent felt their programs were "moderately" effective, and only one respondent viewed a program as ineffective. Over 90 percent of the program administrators cited a caring and committed staff and a non-threatening classroom environment as the top factors that influenced the effectiveness of their programs. Others factors regarded as important were low student-teacher ratio, individualized instruction, and program flexibility (p. 19-20).

Despite the conclusions of those who have suggested that little meaningful evaluation of dropout programs was available, some reports of dropout program evaluations do exist. Project STAY, a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program designed to impact the dropout problem in Stockton, California, was evaluated by Magyar in 1986. The program focused mainly on providing personal counseling and training in the survival skills of how to get a job and become a happy, productive employee, but offered little direct remediation for deficient academic skills. The effectiveness of the program in the areas of grade-point average, attendance, job readiness skills, and dropout rate was evaluated. Fall and spring data from a 1985 class at one high school were used to test for significant changes in these areas. Pearson's Product Moment r and t-test were used for matched groups (p. 27-29).

Magyar found that Project STAY was effective in teaching job readiness skills and met objectives of JTPA in this area, but the program did not have a significant impact on either attendance or academic performance, and had little effect on the dropout rate. However, Magyar conceded that her study was severely limited by the ethnic distribution of the sample population and the possible inaccuracies of dropout data (p. 43-49).

Project SCAT (Students Concerned About Tomorrow), a dropout intervention program in Southern Virginia, was evaluated by Goldsmith in 1987. At-risk high school students participated in after school workshops designed to improve decision making and interpersonal skills, attended weekend recreational activities, were given both personal and family counseling and were provided with encouragement in school work. Also, basic skills development was emphasized during an eight-week summer program for the participants (p. 1). Standardized test scores revealed that the students did show improvement in basic reading, writing, and math skills. However, The Demos D (Dropout) scale measured no improvement in students' attitudes toward school. Even though counselors reported individual cases in which students showed improvements of behavior, attendance, and grades after entering the program, no overall improvement in these areas could be reported (p. 18-19).

To evaluate the effects of the high school Attendance Dropout Prevention Program (ADPP) in schools in New York City, comparisons were made with a cohort of students who met the program's attendance eligibility, but were not placed in the program. After one year of the program's operation, 41.3 percent of all participants in the program had dropped out of school. Almost 50 percent of the participants who met ADPP's attendance eligibility dropped out, compared to only 30.5 percent of those who did not meet the attendance criteria. Over 58 percent of the comparison group of non-participants had dropped out, but only 10.5 percent of the rest of the school were listed as dropouts. These findings suggest that the program's effect in reducing the dropout rate may be questionable, but a positive impact on some students had been realized ("New York City Board," 1988 p. 6-16).

Grannis, Riehl, Berdock, Jones, and Torres-Guzman (1990) conducted an in-depth longitudinal evaluation of the New York City Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI) from 1985-86 through 1987-88. Services that were provided through the DPI included: program facilitation; attendance outreach; guidance and counseling; health services; linkages between middle and high schools; alternative education programs; and increased school security. The evaluation revealed that the DPI did not improve attendance or the number of courses passed and probably did not reduce the number of dropouts.

In the final summary of the DPI evaluation, the authors recommended that "the most effective dropout prevention programs will be built around a comprehensive restructuring of the school experience," and that "the governing aim of interventions at all levels should be to increase students' engagement in their education" (p. 105).

Wilkinson, Frazer, Stewart, and Ligon (1989) reported the results of Project GRAD (Grant Research About Dropouts) in the Austin Texas Independent School District. These authors reported that the dropout rate in the Austin District has remained roughly unchanged since 1982 despite State education reforms and major dropout prevention efforts within the district. The findings of Project GRAD led the authors to suggest that three major factors work together to keep students enrolled in school: Academic Success--as evidenced by being promoted, earning passing grades, earning credits, etc.; A Reason to be in School--belonging, participating in extracurricular activities, having a supportive peer group that values education; and An Ability to be in School-- economic and family support to attend school. Based on these findings they state that dropout prevention programs should be at the secondary level and should include activities that address these three major factors (p. iv - viii).

The authors of the Project GRAD report also suggested that the ultimate goal and the one measure of success of a

dropout prevention program was graduation. Other interim measurement criteria were important but were not sufficient to claim success. Objective interim criteria that should be used to measure success across programs include average daily attendance, discipline problems, credits earned, grade points average, courses failed, promotion, achievement test scores, and mastery of state tests. Subjective criteria that should be developed and also used included parental support, student aspirations, and study skills (p. ix).

An evaluation of another dropout prevention project in the Austin (Texas) Independent School District revealed somewhat positive results concerning school attendance and completion. The project employed three specialists who worked with incorrigible and delinquent students at a detention center and two alternative schools for secondary students. Students were given assistance in areas of school attendance, academic achievement, disruptive behavior, and contacts with the courts. Findings indicated that very few students dropped out while they were at the alternative schools, but once they returned to their home school, the rates increased. Students who were referred to the alternative schools more than once were more likely to remain in school after leaving the alternative schools than were those that did not have a repeat referral. Interestingly, the attendance of students declined while they were enrolled at the alternative school, but increased

slightly after they returned to their home school (Frazer and Baenen, 1988 p. 22-30).

McDaniel and Davis (1989) evaluated a JTPA Summer Youth Enhancement Program which provided computer-assisted summer remediation for 14- and 15-year-old West Virginia students who were below grade level in mathematics and reading. The participants were considered economically disadvantaged and at-risk of not completing school. The students received basic skills instruction in the mornings and work experience in the afternoons for four days a week for a period of six weeks. In addition to the basic skills instruction, the participants received personal guidance and career exploration two hours a day, twice a week, for the six-week period. Pretest and posttest assessments using the Stanford Diagnostic Reading and Mathematics Tests revealed that most students showed substantial grade level gains in each of the three years of program operation. Gains in reading comprehension were 1.3 grades in the first year, 1.4 grades the second year, and .64 grades for the third year. Math gains were 1.2 grades the first year, 1.6 grades the second year, and .93 grades the third year (p. 16-17).

A longitudinal follow-up study for two years of the summer program indicated that it reduced the dropout rate, had a positive effect on grade point average for the majority of the students, reduced absences from school, improved motivation and attitude toward learning and school,

and increased the participants' enrollments in vocational education. Of the 310 participants in the program in 1987, sixty-three graduated, 184 were still in school and 63 or 20 percent had dropped out. As of January of 1989, four of the participants in the summer of 1988 had graduated, 304 were still in school and 13 or 3.9 percent had dropped out (p. 17-18). In both years, more students had a gain in grade point average than had a decrease. The 1987 group had an average of 10.8 absences in the 1986 school year, 9.3 in 1987, and 7.3 in 1988. The 1988 group had an average of 9.4 absences in 1987 and 7.5 in 1988 (p. 18).

Teachers' ratings of the participants in the summer youth program showed that 141 students improved in the areas of motivation and attitude, 99 stayed the same and only 17 got worse for the 1987 group. Similar results were found for the 1988 group with 141 showing improvement, 99 staying the same, and nine regressing. Sixty percent of the participants were enrolled in vocational programs after participation in the JTPA program compared to only 40 percent prior to enrollment (p. 18).

Whelan, Torbet, and Teddlie (1990) conducted an evaluation of a statewide dropout prevention strategy initiated by the Louisiana State Department of Education. Thirteen prevention projects were included in the evaluation. Monitors visited the thirteen sites to review documents, observe classes and interview school

administrators, teachers, and students. In addition, the attitudes of 831 10th-grade students were measured using a pretest and posttest attitude survey. Four projects in the study that demonstrated significant positive effects were described as: (1) a computer-assisted intervention program for at-risk students; (2) a project focusing on training teachers and administrators in dropout prevention; (3) an integrated educational and social service delivery system to assist in dropout prevention; (4) an interactive instructional program combining the use of microcomputers and videodiscs to improve reading and writing skills of high-risk youth (p. 7-8). The results of the student attitude survey revealed that after participating in a dropout prevention program, students were more likely to believe that the positive consequences of staying in school and the negative consequences of dropping out would indeed occur. Also, at posttest time, students were more likely to view the consequences of staying in school as positive and the consequences of dropping out as negative, compared to their attitudes toward these factors at pretest time (p. 6).

Gross (1989) reported that a dropout prevention program in Pensacola, Florida, which was computer-based and aimed at increasing the basic skills of participants, has been very successful. The program used the system developed by the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) of Palo Alto, California. The system offered students individualized

computer-assisted instruction at academic levels 1-12. Amazingly, only two of the 374 at-risk students assigned to the program had dropped out after the first six months. Over 2000 students have been served since the beginning of the program with less than 1 percent of the JTPA-verified at-risk students having dropped out. The program's directors attributed the high success rate to being able to provide these students, who had failed throughout their school years, a successful academic experience (p. 49-50).

In Newport News, Virginia, public school have implemented a proactive program using computer technology to address the needs of high school students who are considered at-risk. Students were assigned to the program on the basis of poor attendance, but most had a history of disruptive behavior and low academic performance. To evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative, a sample of 50 of the approximately 500 students referred to the program during the 1988-89 school year was randomly selected. Attendance data concerning students in the sample were collected, and measures revealing academic improvement in reading comprehension, language arts, and writing were taken. Although encouraging gains were found in all areas of academic emphasis, erratic attendance by the students in the program was found to have continued (Divine and Whanger, 1990, p.46-48).

V. SUMMARY--AT-RISK YOUTH AND DROPOUTS

The literature revealed a substantial number and variety of characteristics that have been found which describe those that are prone to dropout, as well as numerous possible reasons why students do dropout. Presently, there appeared to be general agreement among researchers that being a minority male places one into a high at-risk group. According to the research, as well as from a purely logical standpoint, lacking basic skills was also a major factor in determining the degree to which a student is likely to dropout. Poor attendance, low socio-economic background, and lacking support from family and peers are some of the other factors most often listed as contributing to a student's leaving school before completion.

Also, there appeared to be a reasonable level of agreement among researchers that the dropout phenomenon involves a process with no true, undeniable causes that can be identified, except for specific cases. Moreover, when reasons why students dropout have been grouped or categorized, it becomes apparent that several different reference groups are influential in determining whether a young person is able to complete school. The school itself is but one environment in which a student exists. The community, the home, and peer group environments certainly have at least some influence on critical decisions that a

student makes. Therefore, the dropout problem becomes a complex enigma involving not only several different reference groups, but also an infinite number of possible interactions and relationships between the different groups.

Given the complexity of identifying the so called "causes" of the dropout scenario, it is certainly understandable that a variety of preventive methodologies and strategies have been adopted and are being recommended to address the dropout problem. It is equally understandable that since at-risk youth generally are functioning below grade level some type of academic remediation was usually included in a list of recommended dropout prevention services. Individualized basic skills instruction appeared very often in the literature as a means for addressing the dropout problem. Job readiness and vocational oriented activities were also often recommended. Computer-assisted instruction and computers in general were recognized as tools for dropout prevention. Various types of counseling and parental involvement were sometimes recommended.

The literature revealed that many dropout prevention initiatives have blossomed in recent years. However, most investigators, after researching the literature relevant to the evaluation of dropout prevention programs, have concluded that few evaluation studies exist which meet reasonable scientific standards. Despite the many

prevention programs that have been implemented by schools and districts, little significant evidence can be found that truly identifies what "works." Evaluations that have been conducted had most often revealed that programs may have been successful at addressing many of the problems associated with dropouts, such as low academic performance, low self esteem, and attendance rates, but the question of what will significantly reduce the dropout rate remains largely unanswered.

VI. COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION (CAI)

One of the earliest computer-assisted instruction (CAI) systems was the PLATO system (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching). The development of this system actually began in 1950's. Substantial use of this system, which involved a large computer with the ability to connect over 4000 student terminals, began to appear in the late 1970's (Novak, 1977, p. 183-184). Software programs based on the original PLATO system are still being utilized. CAI or computer-based education (CBE) became common-place in the late 70's after Apple's introduction of its first microcomputer in 1978 (Nordstrom, 1988 p. 1).

In the early 80's CAI began to emerge as an alternative method of teaching basic skills. Early evaluations of such initiatives usually showed improve gains in basic areas of reading and math for students utilizing the new technology.

Geller and Shugoll (1983) studied the impact of CAI on disadvantaged students participating in the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps Program. Data from 1980-81 were collected from experimental and control groups in basic skills reading and mathematics classes. Analysis of pretest and posttest data indicated that members of the experimental group, who received paper-and-pencil materials supplemented by CAI, showed substantially greater gains in reading than students in the control group, who received only paper-and-pencil instruction. Differences in gains in the area of mathematics were found to be insignificant (p. 12-25).

Smith, Gohs, and Mason (1982) reported that CAI was used as a part of an innovative approach using multi-media technology to individualize learning in rural Alaska in the early 80's . An evaluation of this project revealed that over 90 percent of the 304 students enrolled in one or more courses in which microcomputers were used considered the computer exercises interesting. Most of the students found the difficulty level of the material "about right," and over half indicated that they almost always understood what needed to be done and could work by themselves on their coursework (p. 14). Instructors in this project found that the computerized instruction was compatible with their teaching styles (p. 18).

An early review of studies involving the use of computers in instruction was conducted by Kulik, Schwalb,

and Kulik (1982). Findings from 48 independent evaluations of the effectiveness of programmed instruction in secondary schools were analyzed. Forty-seven of the studies contained results from achievement examinations, 16 reported on the correlation between aptitude and achievement measures, 13 contained results from retention measures of learning, and nine studies reported findings from attitude measures (p. 134-135). This meta-analysis of the studies showed that "in general programmed instruction did not improve the effectiveness of secondary school teaching" (p. 137). It failed to raise student achievement on final examinations. It did not make students feel more positive about the subject matter they were studying. It did not reduce the role that aptitude played in determining how much secondary students learn in their classes. However, these "average" effects of programmed instruction, according to the authors, may not have told the whole story. They suggested that in certain applications programmed instruction did make a significant contribution to secondary school teaching particularly in the areas of social science. Also, they indicated that student achievement was more positively affected in more recent implementations than in earlier ones (p. 137).

Kulik, Bangert, and Williams (1983) reported on 51 studies involving computer-based teaching, an obvious extension of Kulik's earlier work. This analysis revealed

that computer-based teaching did raise final examination scores by approximately .32 standard deviations, or from the 50th to the 63rd percentile. These researchers also found that students who were taught on computers developed very positive attitudes towards the computers and gave good ratings to the courses in which they received instruction through the use of computers. Finally, these authors reported that the computer substantially reduced the amount of time that students needed for learning (p. 24).

In 1987, Kulik and Kulik reported the results of four separate statistical analyses of findings on computer-based instruction. A total of 199 comparative studies, which met predefined standards for methodological adequacy, were included in the analyses. Thirty-two of the studies were in elementary schools, 42 in high schools, 101 in universities and colleges, and 24 in adult education settings. The studies covered the use of computers in (a) CAI, including drill-and-practice and tutorial instruction; (b) computer-managed instruction (CMI); and (c) computer-enriched instruction (CEI), including the use of the computer as a calculating device, programming tool, and simulator (p. 1).

These researchers reported that most of the studies that involved CAI revealed positive findings. They listed the following overall results of their meta-analysis:

1. Students generally learned more in classes in which they received computer-based instruction. The average effect of computer-based instruction in all 199 studies was to raise

instruction in all 199 studies was to raise examination scores by 0.31 standard deviations, or from the 50th to the 61st percentile.

2. Students also learned their lessons with less instructional time. The average reduction in instructional time in 28 investigations of this point was 32 percent.

3. Students also liked their classes more when they received computer help. The average effect of computer-based instruction in 17 studies was to raise attitude-toward-instruction scores by 0.28 standard deviations (p. 1).

4. Students developed more positive attitudes toward computers when they received help from them in school. The average effect size in 17 studies on attitude toward computers was 0.33.

5. Computers did not, however, have positive effects in every area in which they were studied. The average effect of computer-based instruction in 29 studies of attitude toward subject matter was near zero, and the average effect was also near zero in 23 studies of course withdrawals (p. 2).

These authors also noted that study results were consistently stronger in published studies and weaker in unpublished ones; when different teachers taught the experimental and control groups, the effects were larger; more recent studies tended to report larger effects than did older studies; and effects were somewhat larger in short studies and weaker in longer ones (p. 2).

Roblyer (1990) also used a meta-analysis of the literature to investigate the effects of CAI. Thirty-eight published and unpublished studies and 44 dissertations were analyzed to determine the impact or "effect size" of

computer use in instruction. The studies had been conducted between 1980 and 1987. Results of Roblyer's undertaking indicate that computer applications had a statistically significant positive effect ($p<.05$) in a majority of the areas examined. However, this researcher pointed out that due to the wide variation in the focuses, procedures, materials, and findings among the studies, and the relatively few studies in many categories, the results should be taken cautiously (p. 54). Nevertheless, Roblyer offered the following additional findings: (1) Significant effects were found at all levels, however larger effects were found at college and adult levels than at elementary and secondary levels. (2) Computer applications seemed to have slightly greater effects with mathematics than with reading/language skills, although this difference was not statistically significant. (3) No statistically significant evidence of a relationship between student ability level and the effectiveness of computer-based applications was found. No firm evidence was found that effectiveness is linked to a student's gender. (4) With respect to attitudes, student attitudes toward school and subject matter was the most studied variable and seemed the most affected by computer use. Improving students' self-image and self-esteem, while much talked about in the literature, was not much studied, but the trend in the data was positive (p. 54-55).

Nordstrom (1988) conducted an extensive review of the literature to examine the effectiveness of CAI in rasing the achievement levels of students at various levels and areas of instruction. He found a number of experimental studies that had assessed the effectiveness of various software packages. Many of these concluded that CAI enhances achievement in the absence of any other programmed instructional materials. However, he found little, if any, evidence that a statistical significance existed between achievement levels attained by using CAI and achievement levels attained with paper-and pencil supplemental materials (p. 2). He also concluded that the best results from using CAI were obtained with elementary school children. He suggested that at higher levels of education, the novelty of using computers tended to wear off and no significant difference in achievement could be detected (p. 13).

Perkins (1988) reported that "Effective instruction using microcomputers capitalizes on student motivation, increases academic learning time, and leads to academic gains" (p. 129). The following guidelines, offered by Perkins for teachers who use microcomputers for instruction in elementary and secondary schools, indicated that computers should be integrated into the normal instructional process as much as possible: (1) encourage students to combine microcomputer experiences with the use of manipulative materials, (2) utilize small cooperative

groupings of students as well as allowing individual microcomputer time, (3) provide direct teaching and monitor student performance, and (4) promote generalization through application of skills and strategies to the curriculum (p. 129-130). Perkins concluded that, to a great extent, the effectiveness of computer-assisted instruction is dependent upon the way the teacher uses a particular software package rather than the specific piece of software chosen (p. 134).

Goldman and Pellegrino (1986) agreed that the methods employed by teachers is an important factor in the use of CAI. They reported that microcomputers can be truly effective for drill and practice, particularly in the subject of math, if the teacher takes into consideration some important design considerations. Areas that should be considered include the purposes of the drill and practice, the use of game formats, computer feedback and monitoring, use time and scheduling, and teacher monitoring (p. 133-134).

Dees (1990) reported that vocational teachers in the Jefferson County school district in Louisville, Kentucky have found that computer technology is a valuable tools for teaching the basic skills that are essential for their students. One administrator said, "computers offer a way to reach students who have burned out on pencil and paper"

(p. 31). This administrator added that working on computers builds self-esteem for many of the students and this gives them the motivation to become involved in learning again.

Hanson (1990) found that CAI is an effective means of improving student achievement in grammar and punctuation (p. 46). This researcher submitted that CAI provides motivation and reinforcement, rapid feedback, accurate and consistent instruction, and cost efficiency (p. 43). Several researchers agreed that the advantages of CAI would almost certainly insure that computers in the classroom will continue to be a high priority objective. Traylor and Ballard (1988) claimed that high tech instructional delivery systems that are competency-based and are coupled with effective teacher intervention can provide instruction at its highest level of quality, equity for all students, and accountability for measurable and demonstrable gains (p. 2). Kulik (1984) suggested that computer-based education is the third stage, following programmed learning and individualized instruction, in what he calls the "fourth revolution in teaching" (p. 1). Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), in Education Under Siege, put it this way, "When 'high tech' is the name of the game, parents and teachers should combine forces to make sure that junior begins his or her computer education even before kindergarten" (p. 186).

Nathan (1983) in Free To Teach: Achieving Equity and Excellence in Schools, stated that "computers can help

schools develop new courses, and allow for truly individualized, self-paced, self-directed learning.... Computers can stimulate and challenge" (p. 64). Suppes and Fortune (1985) made a strong case for CAI as a valuable tool for individualizing instruction (p. 30).

Finally, the National Education Association included in its 1985 plan for school reform a recommendation calling for computers, video equipment, and other high-tech devices for teachers. This technology "can help us better diagnose students' individual learning needs and prescribe appropriate opportunities" ("NEA's Plan For School Reform," 1985, p. 411).

VII. SUMMARY--CAI

The literature revealed that CAI can be a valuable tool in the educational setting. However, the manner in which computers are utilized certainly influences the effectiveness that can be realized. The most positive results of using CAI have been found when computer activities have been integrated as much as possible into the "normal" instructional process.

The literature did not reveal a perfectly clear picture of what areas of the educational spectrum are best suited for CAI, although effectiveness in the basic skills areas of math and reading was certainly apparent. There was some disagreement as to which grade levels (elementary,

secondary, or post-secondary) have engulfed the most effective CAI program results.

There did appear to be general agreement that CAI will continue to be used increasingly in the pursuit of providing better quality education, particularly for students who do not function well in the more conventional instructional activities.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose in the study was to examine and evaluate the long-range effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on the lives of program participants, and to determine if background characteristics of participants influenced the impact of the program.

Presented in this chapter is a description of the program that was studied, the population and sample selected for the study, the data collection process including the development of the survey instrument, and the treatment of the data.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program studied and evaluated was a basic skills oriented dropout prevention program serving a ten-county geographical area in upper east Tennessee. The program had been operational for three years and was federally funded through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). All participants in the program were economically disadvantaged or had other barriers to employment. Program administration was provided by a community college which was

the grant recipient and administrative entity of the state's 2nd JTPA Service Delivery Area (SDA).

Through the program a basic skills learning center had been established in each of the ten counties included in SDA 2. Eight of the centers were located in high schools or vocational schools. One center was based in rental property adjacent to a high school. One center was located on a branch campus of the community college which administered the program, but it was in close proximity to a county vocational school. The centers served mainly at-risk high school students ranging in age from 14 thru 21. However, some high school dropouts were served in GED preparation activities.

Participants were referred to the program from classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and/or principals. Those who were referred had been identified as at-risk based on failure to successfully function in the regular school classroom. Most participants were referred from language arts or math classes, however some were referred from social studies, science, and other subject area classes. The majority of program participants were functioning below grade level and lacked the basic reading and math skills needed to achieve acceptable performance levels in the regular academic classes. Many students were referred for supplemental help toward passing Tennessee's high school

proficiency exam, a requirement for obtaining a high school diploma.

The program component was titled the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP). The CCP is a competency-based, individualized learning system which was developed in 1983 by the Remediation and Training Institute in Washington D.C. The agency, now known as U.S. Basics Incorporated, distributes the program on a franchise basis. Over 400 CCP centers have been established nationwide. Originally, centers targeted adult high school dropouts, however more recently use of the program as a tool for addressing the needs of in-school, at-risk youth has increased. The structure of the program is such that new materials can easily be integrated into the existing framework, thus tailoring activities to specific target populations is relatively easily accomplished.

The CCP consists of an array of print, audiovisual, and computer-based materials. Two major components of the program cover a wide range of competencies. The academic component covers competencies ranging from elementary reading and arithmetic, through high school-level science, mathematics, humanities, social studies, and writing. A functional component of the program covers competencies determined as necessary for success in the family, society, and economy. Such competencies include job getting and

holding, consumer skills, citizenship, health and community participation.

Both components of the CCP are subdivided into basic, intermediate, and advanced tiers, each spanning four levels of difficulty in the subject strands within these tiers. Each level is divided into sequenced units of related competency objectives. The units are subdivided into progressions of lessons, which address specific skills. The lessons are designed to enable mastery in a single learning period. Materials and activities included in the basic and intermediate tiers target remediation and developmental needs, while the advanced tier addresses high school and some college prep work. (The CCP centers in this study had integrated into the base system a series of print and computer-based materials which were specifically aimed at instruction for the state's high school proficiency exam).

A CCP center can offer flexible, individualized, self-paced instruction with a variety of delivery options. The system includes over 700 mastery tests and a sophisticated computer management system which facilitates detailed tracking of student progress, as well as a high degree of instructor accountability. Electronic test scoring provides immediate feedback and assists in assuring maximum student time-on-task.

Upon entry into a CCP learning centers participants complete a series of diagnostic tests to determine their

specific functioning level in the subject area for which they are referred. Participants are then placed in appropriate instructional activities based on the results of the initial tests. Progression through the system's lessons is dependent upon mastery of lesson, unit, and level tests. Participants remain in the CCP for varying amounts of time, generally for at least one school semester. In addition to the diagnostic tests, each participant is given the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at entry and exit to determine any grade level gain as a result of program participation.

During the first three years of operation the ten CCP centers in the study had served 1482 participants. Fifty-eight participants had been in the program all three years, 248 had been served two of the three years, and 1176 had been enrolled at least one of the three years. Of the 1482 individuals served, 1375 were enrolled in high school when they entered the program. One hundred and seven participants were not enrolled in a high school upon program entry.

The overall program had been judged extremely successful based on short-term student grade gains in the basic skills areas. Gains in basic reading and mathematics had averaged from 1.5 to 1.8 for the three years, while participants enrolled in integrated language arts had average gains between 2.4 and 2.7 grade levels. These data are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

AVERAGE GRADE LEVEL GAINS FOR CCP PARTICIPANTS BY YEAR (1987-1990)

Subject Area	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Basic Reading	1.8 (85)	1.7 (141)	1.5 (157)
Language Arts	2.5 (200)	2.7 (267)	2.4 (276)
Mathematics	1.6 (149)	1.7 (188)	1.6 (156)

Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of participants for which the average gain was calculated. The results were achieved in approximately 90-100 hours of CCP instruction.

The program had also been judged successful based upon results of participants' scores on the Tennessee State Proficiency Exam. Well over 500 students had been referred to the program for help in at least one subject area of the test. The majority of those referred for this purpose had failed the test one or more times before enrollment in the program. The goal of the program was to have a 50% success rate for participants referred for proficiency assistance. Success rates between 52 and 62 percent had been achieved for the three years. These data are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

TENNESSEE STATE PROFICIENCY RESULTS FOR CCP PARTICIPANTS BY YEAR (1987-1990)

	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Percent Passing[a]	62	52	58

[a]Percentages represent success on the portion of the test for which the participant was referred to the CCP.

III. STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The study was designed to gather and analyze data concerning participants in a basic skills dropout prevention program which was in its fourth year of operation. Fourteen hundred eighty-two (1482) participants had been served during the first three years of the program. Since the study was aimed at evaluating program effectiveness in dropout prevention, only participants who were enrolled in a high school at program entry were considered when determining the population for the study. Thirteen hundred seventy-five of the 1482 participants fell into this category.

The 1375 in-school participants were classified into four categories: those who were still in school after participating in the program; those who had graduated from high school after participating in the program; those who

had transferred to other schools after participating in the program; and those who had dropped out of school after program participation. These data were gathered from CCP staff information, school personnel knowledge, and school records.

Because participants who had transferred to other school districts were not readily accessible for data collection, the study population was delimited to those in-school participants who were still in school, had graduated, or had dropped out of school. Twelve hundred seventy-six (1276) subjects were included in the study population. Five hundred fifty-five (555) or 43 percent were still in school, 459 (36 percent) had graduated, and 262 (21 percent) had dropped out. Three hundred thirteen (313) or 25 percent had last participated in the program in 1987-88, the first year of program operation; 397 (31 percent) had last participated in 1988-89; 401 (31 percent) had last participated in 1989-90; and 165 (13 percent) had participated in the program during the first three years and were still enrolled in the program in the 1990-91 school year.

A random sample of the population was drawn. This sample provided a study group that reflected the characteristics and opinions of the population from which they were drawn. For the population of 1276, a sample size of 300 produced a 90% confidence level.(Hauskin, 1963 p. 3).

One hundred forty (140) or 47 percent of the subjects in the sample were still in school, 101 (34 percent) had graduated, and 59 (19 percent) had dropped out. Forty-nine or 16 percent of the participants in the sample had last participated in the program in the 1987-88 school year, the first year of program operation; 92 (31 percent) last participated in 1988-89; 111 (37 percent) last participated in 1989-90; and 48 (16 percent) had participated in the program during the first three years and were still enrolled in the program in the 1990-91 school year. Tables 3 and 4 present a comparison of the population and sample data.

IV. DATA COLLECTION

To answer the seven research questions, which are presented in Chapter 1, page 9, data were collected from existing participant program records and from responses to a survey instrument. The data were organized relative to each research question and are presented in Chapter 4.

Participant Program Records Review

The researcher obtained permission to review records of program participants from the director of the CCP program. Background characteristics were obtained from existing program records of the participants selected in the random sample. The background characteristics included: age; sex; race; highest grade completed upon program entry; reading level upon program entry; success on the Tennessee State

TABLE 3

A COMPARISON OF PROGRAM OUTCOME DATA FOR POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Program Outcome	Population		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Still-in-School	555	43	140	47
Graduated	459	36	101	34
Dropped Out	262	21	59	19
Total	1276	100	300	100

TABLE 4

A COMPARISON OF LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION FOR POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Year	Population		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1987-88	313	25	49	16
1988-89	397	31	92	31
1989-90	401	31	111	37
1990-91	165	13	48	16
Total	1276	100	300	100

Proficiency Exam upon program entry. Data regarding the last year in which each participant was enrolled in the program were also obtained from existing records.

The Survey Instrument

To determine the perceptions of participants concerning the impact of the program a structured survey questionnaire was used. In accordance with the research questions, the questionnaire was designed to assess participants' opinions of the influence of the program in the following areas: school completion; performance in other academic classes; job readiness; attitude toward school and self; and positive characteristics of the program.

To begin development of the survey instrument, input was obtained from one current CCP center manager and one former CCP center manager. Using this input, the researcher drafted a list of sample survey items which were pertinent to research questions. The sample survey questions were used to draft a thirty item questionnaire.

Five items on the draft were designed to assess participants' perceptions of the influence of the program upon their school completion; five items concerned the influence of the program upon the participants' performance in other academic classes; five items pertained to the program's impact on the participants' job readiness; and five items were designed to assess the effect of the program on the participants' attitudes toward school and self. A

format for these items was designed in which participants were asked to respond to statements about the program by marking a Likert-type scale indicating a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements.

Ten items on the draft were designed to determine participants' perceptions of the importance of certain characteristics of the program. On these items participants were asked to respond to statements describing characteristics of the program by rating the degree of importance of each of the characteristics on a Likert-type scale.

Finally, an opened-ended question was place at the end of the questionnaire to afford participants an opportunity to make additional comments about the program.

The initial draft of the questionnaire was designed for those participants who were currently in school. Since the study sample included both those who had graduated from high school and those who had dropped out of school, two additional drafts of survey instruments were produced that used appropriate language for these groups.

Cover letters were also drafted to accompany the questionnaires. The letters were designed to explain the purpose of the study and to give clear directions in regard to the completion and return of the instrument. A letter for participants who were still in school was produced, as was one for those who were no longer in school. The letter

for participants who were still in school was slightly altered for those who were under the age of eighteen since parental consent was necessary for these students to participate in the study. In addition, a letter was drafted to obtain parental consent for the participation of participants who were under the age of eighteen. The language used in the cover letters and the questionnaires was designed to be appropriate for the age and academic functioning level of the study group.

The three survey instruments, one for those still in school, one for those who had graduated, and one for those who had dropped out, along with the appropriate cover letters, were field tested. Twenty students who were currently enrolled at one of the CCP centers were asked to complete the questionnaire and make any appropriate comments concerning either the questionnaire or the cover letters. Also, the students were asked if there were any additional questions that might be appropriate for the purposes of the study. After the questionnaires were completed and collected, the researcher interviewed each of the students to gain additional input into the suitability of the survey instrument.

After the results of the field testing were analyzed, final drafts of the survey instruments, the cover letters and the parental consent letter were produced. These are presented in Appendices A,B,and C.

Procedures

Participants' perceptions of the impact of the program were obtained through use of the survey instrument sent to those who were selected in the random sample. Participants' opinions of the influence of the program in the following areas were assessed: school completion; performance in other academic classes; attitude toward school and self; and job readiness. Also, the participants' perceptions of the importance of the characteristics of the program were assessed.

Each selected participant who remained enrolled in a high school was contacted by a CCP staff member who was stationed at the school and given the appropriate survey questionnaire, cover letter, and a return envelope. These participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, seal it in the return envelope, and return it to the CCP center in their school. The CCP manager forwarded the sealed envelopes to the researcher. The participants in the sample who were no longer enrolled in a high school (those who had graduated or had dropped out of school) were mailed the appropriate questionnaire, cover letter, and a stamped, addressed, return envelope. These participants were asked to complete the survey and return it directly to the researcher.

Prior to mailing the questionnaires to those participants who were no longer in school, the researcher,

with the assistance of the CCP center staff members, attempted to contact the participants by phone to alert them to the coming mailed survey and to answer any questions about the purposes of the study. Mailing addresses and phone numbers were obtained from existing CCP records. Questionnaires were coded to assist in accurate, efficient follow-up of all non-returns.

A return rate of eighty percent for completed questionnaires was targeted. After a two-week response period has elapsed, participants who had not returned the questionnaire were contacted directly or by phone to encourage a return of the survey instrument. A second questionnaire was mailed or given to those who had lost the original instrument.

V. TREATMENT OF THE DATA

The data gathered describing program outcome for each participant were considered discrete and nominal. These data were considered discrete since they consist of units which exist separately, and nominal since classification into groups existed. These data were obtained for all participants in the population and were organized to show overall program results and effectiveness. Frequencies and percentages were determined for categories of participants who were still in school, participants who had graduated

from high school, and participants who had dropped out of school.

Data describing the background characteristics of participants upon program entry were gathered for those selected in the random sample. These data were also considered discrete and nominal, and were organized to show relationships between program outcomes and background characteristics of participants. Participants who were still in school or who had graduated were combined into a group indicating program success. Those who had dropped out of school represented unsuccessful program outcomes. After collection, these data were entered into a computer data base program to aid in tabulation and sorting and analysis. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was employed to facilitate the analysis of the data. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the following categories of background characteristics upon program entry: age--(14-15)-(16-21); sex--(male)-(female); race--(white)-(non-white); highest grade completed--(8th-9th)-(10th-11th); reading level--(below 7th)-(above 7th); Tennessee Proficiency Exam--(passed)-(not passed). The Chi-square statistic was used to test for detectable differences among the proportions of the groups by using the observed and expected percentages. The .05 level of significance was used.

Data collected from completed survey questionnaires were also entered into a computer data base for ease of tabulation and sorting. These data were considered interval. Since responses to questionnaire items were on a Likert-type scale, the data were assumed to be interval for statistical treatment purposes. Frequencies and percentages of responses for each survey item were compiled and presented to measure the perceptions of participants of program influence in the following areas: school completion; performance in other academic classes; attitude toward school and self; and jop readiness. Also, participants' perceptions of the importance of the characteristics of the program were presented.

Data were organized to show relationships between responses to survey items measuring the participants' perceptions of the impact of the program and the last year of participation in the program. Numerical values ranging from one to four were assigned to response categories in order to facilitate the use of a Likert-type scale for the analysis of these data. A value of one was assigned to the response of strongly agree; a value of two was assigned to the response of agree; a value of three was assigned to the response of disagree; and the value of four was assigned to the response of strongly disagree. Means for the total responses to each survey item and for responses in each response category were calculated for groups regarding the

last year of program participation. One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to detect statistical differences in the means of the responses of the different groups. The .05 level of significance was used. To use this statistical treatment the following assumptions were met: 1. Students in the study sample were randomly selected 2. Responses were normally distributed for each group 3. The variances of the groups were equal. When significant differences were found, Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was used to further support the statistical difference and to determine which of the groups were significantly different from the others.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose in the study was to examine and evaluate the long-range effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on the lives of program participants, and to determine if background characteristics of participants influenced the impact of the program. Seven research questions were developed to guide the study. The population selected for the study was 1276 participants in a basic skills dropout prevention program from 1987 through 1990. The program was titled the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP). A random sample of 300 participants was selected from the population.

Data were obtained from existing records relative to program outcomes for the entire study population. Existing records were also used to identify background characteristics of the participants selected in the sample. In addition, responses to a survey instrument were obtained from the subjects in the sample. This chapter includes a discussion and presentation of the data pertaining to each research question. A complete list of frequencies and

percentages of responses to each survey item is presented in Appendices D and E.

II. RESPONSE RATES

The survey instrument was returned by 235 of the 300 subjects selected in the random sample for a response rate of 78 percent. Although this rate was slightly lower than the targeted 80 percent, the 235 respondents appeared to adequately represent the subgroups in the sample. Sixteen percent (n = 49) of the subjects in the sample had last participated in the program under study in the 1987-88 school year; 15 percent (n = 35) of the respondents represented this subgroup. Thirty-one percent (n = 92) of the subjects in the sample had last participated in the program in 1988-89; 28 percent (n = 65) of the respondents represented this subgroup. Thirty-seven percent (n = 111) of the subjects in the sample had last participated in the program in 1989-90; 38 percent (n = 90) of the respondents represented this subgroup. Sixteen 16 percent (n = 48) of the subjects in the sample had participated in the program during one of the first three years of the program and remained enrolled in the program in the 1990-91 school year; 19 percent (n = 45) of the respondents represented this subgroup. These data are presented in Table 5.

Forty-seven 47 percent (n = 140) of the subjects in the sample were still-in school after participating in the

program; 49 percent (n = 116) of the respondents represented this subgroup. Thirty-four 34 percent (n = 101) of the

TABLE 5

A COMPARISON OF SUBGROUPS IN THE SAMPLE TO SUBGROUPS OF RESPONDENTS FOR YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Year[a]	Sample		Respondents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1987-88	49	16	35	15
1988-89	92	31	65	28
1989-90	111	37	90	38
1990-91	48	16	45	19
Total	300	100	235	100

[a]Represents last year of participation in the program under study.

subjects in the sample had graduated after participating in the program; 32 percent (n = 74) of the respondents represented this subgroup. Nineteen percent (n = 59) of the subjects in the sample had dropped out of school after participating in the program; 19 percent (n = 45) of the respondents represented this subgroup . These data are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

A COMPARISON OF SUBGROUPS IN THE SAMPLE TO SUBGROUPS OF RESPONDENTS FOR PROGRAM OUTCOME

Program Outcome	Sample		Respondents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Still-in-School	140	47	116	49
Graduated	101	34	74	32
Dropped Out	59	19	45	19
Total	300	100	235	100

III. DATA PRESENTATION

In this part of the study the data are organized and presented to answer the seven research questions first presented in Chapter 1, page 9.

Staying in School

What are the effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on participants' staying in school?

Program outcome data were collected for the entire study population. Participant outcomes were categorized into three groups: participants who were still in school after participating in the program; participants who had graduated from high school after participating in the program; and participants who had dropped out of school after participating in the program. These data are

presented in Table 7. Of the 1276 participants in the population, 43 percent (n = 555) were still in school after participating in the program; 36 percent (n = 459) had

TABLE 7

PROGRAM OUTCOME DATA FOR THE STUDY POPULATION

Program Outcome	Number	Percent
Still-in-School	555	43
Graduated	459	36
Dropped Out	262	21
Total	1276	100

graduated from high school; and 21 percent (n = 262) had dropped out of school.

Five items on the survey instrument pertained to the program's impact on participants' staying in school. These data are presented in Table 8. The survey items were worded slightly different for participants who were still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A. The participants were asked to respond to the statement "Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school." Thirty-two percent (n = 76) of those responding to this item strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 68 percent (n = 157) disagreed or strongly

TABLE 8

RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' STAYING IN SCHOOL

Survey Item[a]	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		
	*N	P	N	P	NR
Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school	76	32	157	68	2
Being in CCP helped me decide to stay in school	148	64	84	36	3
Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma	205	88	27	12	3
If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have dropped out of school	80	35	153	65	2
If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP	201	91	19	9	15[b]

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*N = Number
P = Percent of total responses to each item
NR = No response

[a]Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

[b]The large number of non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

disagreed with the statement. Two of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "Being in CCP helped me decide to stay in school," 64 percent (n = 148) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 36 percent (n = 84) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Three of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma," 88 percent (n = 205) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 12 percent (n = 27) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Three of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have dropped out," 35 percent (n = 80) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 65 percent (n = 153) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Two of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP," 91 percent (n = 201) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; nine percent (n = 19) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Fifteen of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item. The large number of

non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

Significant comments from respondents pertaining to the program's effect on participants' staying in school included:

I would like to say that if it wasn't for CCP I would not have graduated. I believe more students should have the chance that I did. One of my friends in school didn't. He failed and dropped out of school and doesn't have a job and drinks all the time. I believe it was because he didn't get into CCP.

The teachers were great in helping anyone if they had any problems. I liked how we did our lessons, but it did not help me in quitting school. I love being in school.

Although dropping out of school was never an option, CCP helped me to graduate.

I would have liked to finish school, but I had to quit for different reasons. I liked CCP, the attention and the computers.

The reason I quit school is because I got pregnant, but I've gone back to the CCP to get my GED.

If it hadn't been for CCP I would probably not have graduated. Before I got accepted into the class, I had failing grades. With the help of my two teachers I found that I could learn, and that helped me more than anything.

Being in CCP helped me through my Senior year.

CCP was a very good learning experience and helped me complete my Senior year without trouble.

I now plan on finishing school and going on to college and have a career.

CCP helped me get my high school diploma. Thank you.

I learned a lot in the program and if I had to do it over again, I would like to take the class again.

A complete list of all comments from the respondents is presented in Appendix F.

The data relative to the program's impact upon participants staying in school can be summarized as follows:

Almost eighty percent of the participants either graduated from high school or remained in school after participating in the program. Twenty-one percent of the participants dropped out of school after participating in the program.

The 21 percent drop out rate for participants in the program compares favorably with the national rate of 25 percent (Cooper, Van Dexter, and Williams, 1988; Strumpf, 1985) and the regional, Appalachian rate of 39 percent (Cox and Spivey, 1986). This comparison is even more favorable when the characteristics of the population are considered. All of the subjects in the population were economically disadvantaged or had other barriers to employment, and most were functioning below grade level in reading or math. However, it should be noted that 43 percent of the participants in the population were still in school after program participation and had neither left school prematurely or graduated at the time of the study. A true comparison of the dropout rates would not be appropriate given the available data.

The participants' responses to survey items provided mixed perceptions relevant to the program impact on their staying in school. Almost two-thirds of the participants felt that being in the program helped them decide to stay in

school and an overwhelming majority felt that the program would help them get their high school diploma and that they would want to be in the program again. However, only about one third said that they had thought about dropping out before entering the program and that they would have probably dropped out had they not been able to get into the program.

Comments from participants relative to the program's impact upon staying in school were also mixed. Some felt the program was a major factor in their being able to complete school. Others, while rating the program very highly, felt they would have completed school with or without the benefits of the extra help. Some cited reasons that were not associated with their academic efforts, such as pregnancy, for their dropping out of school.

Performance in Other Academic Classes

Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' performance in other academic classes?

Five items on the survey instrument pertained to the program's impact on participants' performance in other academic classes. These data are presented in Table 9. The survey items were worded slightly different for participants who were still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A. The participants were asked to

TABLE 9

RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' PERFORMANCE IN OTHER ACADEMIC CLASSES

Survey Item[a]	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		
	*N	P	N	P	NR
I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes	225	96	9	4	1
I am a better reader after being in CCP	184	80	46	20	5
I can do math better after being in CCP	163	71	64	29	7
I made better grades in most of my other classes after being in CCP	188	81	43	19	4
I studied more in my other classes after being in CCP	152	70	65	30	18[b]

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*N = Number
P = Percent of total responses to each item
NR = No response

[a]Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

[b]The large number of non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

respond to the statement "I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes." Ninety-six percent (n = 225) of those responding to this item strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; Nine percent (n = 4) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I am a better reader after being in CCP," 80 percent (n = 184) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 20 percent (n = 46) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Five of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I can do math better after being in CCP," 71 percent (n = 163) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 29 percent (n = 64) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Seven of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I made better grades in most of my classes after being in CCP," 81 percent (n = 188) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 19 percent (n = 43) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Four the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I studied more in my other classes after being in CCP," 70 percent (n = 152) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 30 percent (n = 65) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighteen of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item The large number of non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

Significant comments from respondents pertaining to the program's effect on participants' performance in other academic classes included:

It made me think on my subjects more and kept me away from a lot of hassle from other teachers.

I feel that since I started in the CCP program that I have improved greatly in my reading, spelling, and math skills.

I have noticed that being in CCP has helped me in my reading and English skills.

It helped me with my math skills.

Since I've been in CCP I've made better grades and really like the kinds of books and instructors that they have.

The class would really help a lot of people pass more of their classes.

I enjoy school a lot more and am now making at least a "C" average in all of my classes.

My grades were better after I started the CCP lab.

They pushed me a lot to do good in my other classes and their's too.

A complete list of all comments from the respondents is presented in Appendix F.

The participants' responses to survey items provided very positive perceptions of the program's impact on performance in other academic classes. More than nine out of ten felt that they learned things in the program that helped them in other classes. Eight out of ten felt that they made better grades in most of their other classes and that they were better readers after being in the program. Seven out of ten felt that they studied more in other classes and that they could do math better after being in the program.

Comments from participants relative to the program's impact on performance in other academic classes were also very positive. Many said that their skills in reading, language arts, and math had improved. Some stated that their overall grades had improved as a result of their experiences in the program.

Attitude Toward School and Self

Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' attitude toward school and self?

Five items on the survey instrument pertained to the program's impact on participants' attitude toward school and self. These data are presented in Table 10. The survey items were worded slightly different for participants who were still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A. The participants were asked to

TABLE 10

RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL AND SELF

Survey Item*	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		
	*N	P	N	P	NR
I liked school better after being in CCP	186	79	48	21	1
My school attendance improved after being in CCP	132	57	101	43	2
My teachers liked me better after being in CCP	105	46	125	54	5
I feel better about myself after being in CCP	211	90	24	10	0
I have more of a feeling that 'I can make it' after being in CCP	199	85	36	15	0

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*N = Number
P = Percent of total responses to each item
NR = No response

*Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

respond to the statement "I liked school better after being in CCP." Seven-nine percent (n = 186) of those responding to this item strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 21 percent (n = 48) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. One of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "My school attendance improved after being in CCP," 57 percent (n = 132) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 43 percent (n = 101) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Two of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "My teachers liked me better after being in CCP," 46 percent (n = 105) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 54 percent (n = 125) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Five of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I feel better about myself after being in CCP," 90 percent (n = 211) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 10 percent (n = 24) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. All of the 235 participants who returned the survey responded to this item.

When responding to the statement "I have more of a feeling that 'I can make it' after being in CCP,"

85 percent (n = 199) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 15 percent (n = 36) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. All of the 235 participants who returned the survey responded to this item.

Significant comments from respondents pertaining to the program's effect on participants' attitude toward school and self included:

Being in CCP didn't help my attendance because I'm always here. It really did help me in a lot of ways.

CCP classes helped me understand my teachers more and get along with them.

The time that I spent in CCP was very helpful, and the individual attention that the instructors gave made me more confident.

After attending the CCP class, I feel much more confident in other aspects of my life.

CCP has made a remarkable difference in my life. I enjoy school a lot more and am now making at least a "C" average in all of my classes.

They were really nice to me in CCP. They made me feel like a real winner, when I felt like a loser. CCP made my whole life different and better. Thank you.

I actually saw people that had almost no chance, turn their lives around in this class.

I think my CCP instructor has had a great influence on my future.

A complete list of all comments from the respondents is presented in Appendix F.

The participants' responses to survey items provided somewhat positive perceptions relevant to the program's impact on their attitude toward school and very positive perceptions of the program's impact on their attitude toward

themselves. Almost eight out of ten felt that they liked school better after being in the program, and over half felt that their attendance had improved. However, less than half felt that their teachers liked them better after program participation. Nine out of ten felt better about themselves after being in the program, and almost as many had more of a feeling that they could be successful.

Comments from participants relative to the program's impact on attitude toward school and self were positive particularly in the area of self-esteem. Some said that the program had given them more confidence in themselves and in their outlook toward life in general.

Job Readiness

Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect job readiness for participants?

Five items on the survey instrument pertained to the program's impact on participants' job readiness. These data are presented in Table 11. The survey items were worded slightly different for participants who were still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A. The participants were asked to respond to the statement "I learned things in CCP that will help me find a job." Eighty-five percent (n = 195) of those responding to this item strongly agreed or agreed with the statement;

TABLE 11

RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS' JOB READINESS

Survey Item[a]	Strongly Agree or Agree		Disagree or Strongly Disagree		
	*N	P	N	P	NR
I learned things in CCP that will help me get a job	195	85	34	15	6
I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job	192	83	39	17	4
I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future	199	85	36	15	0
Being in CCP will help me be a better worker	188	81	44	19	3
Being in CCP will help me make more money	103	45	124	55	8

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*N = Number
P = Percent of total responses to each item
NR = No response

[a]Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

15 (n = 34) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job," 83 percent (n = 192) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 17 percent (n = 39) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Four of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future," 85 percent (n = 199) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 15 percent (n = 36) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. All of the 235 participants who returned the survey responded to this item.

When responding to the statement "Being in CCP will help me be a better worker," 81 percent (n = 188) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 19 percent (n = 44) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Three of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "Being in CCP will help me make more money," 45 percent (n = 103) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement; 55 percent (n = 124) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Eight

of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

Significant comments from respondents pertaining to the program's effect on participants' job readiness included:

I really enjoyed CCP class. I learned a lot, and the teachers were great in helping me. I want to make computers my career, so CCP class was my favorite. I also learned a lot about computers that will help me in the job I hope to have someday.

The CCP is a great program. It shows that people care what you do in life. Being in CCP showed me that my goals are important. CCP will help you with any job that you are capable of doing. Thanks to the CCP program I believe in myself and in finding a job that will make my life more important to me.

The work is really too easy and doesn't teach us much about getting a job. They just help us get a job with the summer youth program.

My grades were better after I started the CCP lab. I have made more money too. In my job I talk to all kinds of people. In one year I was in seven different states. I'm a wildfire fighter.

A complete list of all comments from the respondents is presented in Appendix F.

The participants' responses to survey items provided mostly positive perceptions relevant to the program's impact on job readiness. At least eight out of ten felt that they learned things in the program that would help them find a job, be useful to them on the job, make them a better worker, and make a difference in their future. However, it was interesting that fewer than half felt that the things they learned in the program would help them make more money.

Only a few comments from participants were relevant to the program's impact on job readiness. Some participants did say the program had helped them in finding a job, but at least one participant stated very strongly that the program taught very little relative to job preparedness.

Program Characteristics

What characteristics of the program were most important to participants?

Ten items on the survey instrument pertained to the importance of the program's characteristics for the participants. These data are presented in Table 12. The participants were asked to respond to statements describing characteristics of the program. Choices given the respondents were: very important, important, somewhat important, or not important.

When responding to the statement "working on something different from everyone else," 73 percent (n = 166) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 27 percent (n = 62) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Seven of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "taking my time and doing things at my own pace," 94 percent (n = 216) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; six percent (n = 13) reported that this characteristic was

TABLE 12

RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS PERTAINING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROGRAM'S CHARACTERISTICS

Survey Item	Very Important or Important		Somewhat Important or Not Important		
	*N	P	N	P	NR
working on something different from everyone else	166	73	62	27	7
taking my time and doing things at my own pace	216	94	13	6	6
taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	205	90	24	10	6
getting the results of tests back immediately	213	93	16	7	6
having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	204	90	23	10	8
being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	214	94	14	6	7
having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	198	86	31	14	6
individual attention from teachers	206	90	22	10	7
the print (workbook type) learning materials	179	78	49	22	7
the computer learning materials	219	96	10	4	6

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*N = Number
P = Percent of total responses to each item
NR = No response

somewhat important or not important. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level," 90 percent (n = 205) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 10 percent (n = 24) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "getting the results of tests back immediately," 93 percent (n = 213) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; Seven percent (n = 16) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test," 90 percent (n = 204) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 10 percent (n = 23) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Eight of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well," 94 percent (n = 214)

reported that this characteristic was very important or important; six percent (n = 14) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Seven of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one," 86 percent (n = 198) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 14 percent (n = 31) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "individual attention from teachers," 90 percent (n = 206) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 10 percent (n = 22) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Seven of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "the print (workbook type) learning materials," 78 percent (n = 179) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; 22 percent (n = 49) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Seven of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

When responding to the statement "the computer learning materials," 96 percent (n = 219) reported that this characteristic was very important or important; four percent (n = 10) reported that this characteristic was somewhat important or not important. Six of the 235 participants who returned the survey did not respond to this item.

Significant comments from respondents pertaining to the importance of the program's characteristics for the participants included:

I enjoyed working at my own pace in the lab. I got a lot more work done than usual. Thank you.

I wish all my classes were like CCP, because in there you do the work at your pace. If you don't finish a test or work, you finish the next day and you cannot copy and others can't copy. I find myself doing better work at my own pace.

I am a slow learner, and working at my own pace really helped.

I like CCP better last year than this year. I do not like the way it is being operated. It's like you're being pushed.

You can work at your own pace. You can work as fast as you need and they help you a lot better too.

It would have been easier to learn if there had been another student at my level, working with me. Example: discuss certain things.

I enjoyed working at my own pace. In other classes people are in a race with each other and that is not what school is all about.

The teachers were nice to me very helpful. I liked the manager, she is a very nice person.

It was fun working with the manager and specialists and I thank all of them. You are good teachers.

The manager is the best teacher I ever had in my life.

I liked the individual attention that I got in CCP. I think it helped me learn better.

I had a good teacher.

I really enjoyed CCP class. I learned a lot, and the teachers were great in helping me.

I thought the teachers helped out a lot.

I really enjoyed being in CCP. It was a very good learning experience. The manager and the specialist are excellent teachers.

I have learned a lot because the teachers have more time to spend with me when I need help.

I thought the teacher I had was very nice. She was a nice lady and would try to do her best to help you when she was not running to help someone else. She even had another teacher to help her with the other kids.

I think the program is very good because you get more of the teachers time and that way you can fully understand it better.

You couldn't ask for a better teacher in CCP than the manager.

The teachers are what make you understand the most. Having two of them lets you get help when you need it. Thank you. If you need help, you have it!

Learning the computer was good experience and the book work materials helped me learn lots of new and interesting things.

I love working on different types of computers. My favorite is the IBM.

The computers were fun and you learn things easy and quicker on them and the computer made time go by faster.

I liked the computers. The manager encouraged me to stay in school.

CCP has helped me so much and I strongly agree with all of it.

The CCP lab is perfect.

A complete list of all comments from the respondents is presented in Appendix F.

The participants' responses to survey items relative to importance of the program's characteristics revealed that the majority of participants felt that all of the program characteristics were important. The computer learning materials ranked highest among the characteristics in importance, followed closely by doing things at their own pace and being able to retake a test. Taking a test after each lesson, unit, and level also ranked very high in importance, as did getting immediate feedback on test and having to go back and relearn material if a test was failed. Nine out of ten felt that the individual attention from teachers was important and almost as many felt the same about having two teachers in the room. Even though almost eight out of ten felt that the print (workbook type) material was important, this percentage was substantially lower than those who felt that the computer learning materials was important. Working on something different from everyone else was ranked lowest in importance of all the program characteristics, however, more than seven out of ten felt that this was important.

A very large number of comments from participants were relative to the importance of the program's characteristics. Several comments referred to the importance of working at their own pace, and many referred to the use of computers in

the program. An exceptionally large number of very positive comments referred to the program's staff. Many called the teachers by name and expressed sincere appreciation for the help that had been given to them.

Background Characteristics

Do students who have remained in school or who have graduated after participation in the program share different background characteristics from those who have dropped out of school after participation in the program?

Data describing the background characteristics of participants upon program entry were gathered for those selected in the random sample (N = 300). These data were organized to show relationships between program outcomes and background characteristics of participants. Participants who were still in school or who had graduated after participating in the program were combined into a group indicating program success. Those who had dropped out of school after participating in the program represented unsuccessful program outcomes. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the following categories of background characteristics which describe participants upon entry into the program: age--(14-15)-(16-21); sex--(male)-(female); race--(white)-(non-white); highest grade completed--(8th-9th)-(10th-11th); reading level--(below 7th)-(above 7th); Tennessee State Proficiency Exam--(passed)-(not passed). Passing this proficiency exam is a requirement for a regular

high school diploma. The Chi-square statistic was used to test for detectable differences among the proportions of the groups by using the observed and expected percentages. The .05 level of significance was used. These data are presented in Table 13.

Of the six background characteristics analyzed, a significant difference was found in two cases: age upon program entry and highest grade level completed upon program entry. Eighty-nine percent of participants who were 14 or 15 years of age at program entry experienced a successful program outcome (remained in school or graduated after program participation); 11 percent of this age group experienced an unsuccessful program outcome (dropped out of school after program participation). Seventy-eight percent of participants who were between the ages of 16-21 at program entry experienced a successful program outcome; 22 percent of this age group experienced an unsuccessful program outcome. An X^2 value of 4.158 indicated that the difference between these age groups was significant at the .05 level.

Analysis of the actual and expected frequencies for these age groups indicated that more participants than would have been expected (58 vs. 52) who were 14 or 15 years of age at program entry experienced a successful program outcome, and fewer participants than would have been expected (7 vs. 12) in this group experienced an

TABLE 13

A COMPARISON OF PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS TO PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Group	Successful Program Outcome	Unsuccessful Program Outcome	Background Characteristic	Group	Successful Program Outcome	Unsuccessful Program Outcome	df	X^2
	(Percent)				(Percent)			
14 - 15	89	11	Years of Age	16 - 21	78	22	1	4.158*
Male	81	20	Sex	Female	79	21	1	0.085
White	80	20	Race	Non-white	92	8	1	1.016
8 - 9	75	25	Grade Level[a]	10 - 11	85	15	1	4.991*
Below 7th	81	19	Reading Level	Above 7th	81	19	1	0.013
Passed	83	17	Proficiency[b]	Failed	79	21	1	0.748

* Value significant at the .05 level.

Note: Successful Program Outcome includes participants who were still in school or who had graduated after participating in the program.

Unsuccessful Program Outcome includes participants who had dropped out of school after participating in the program.

Background Characteristic describes participants upon entry into the program.

[a]Highest grade level completed

[b]Tennessee High School Proficiency Exam - requirement for a regular high school diploma

unsuccessful program outcome. Of the participants who were between the ages of 16-21 at program entry, fewer than would have been expected (183 vs. 188) experienced a successful program outcome, while more participants than would have been expected (52 vs. 46) in this group experienced an unsuccessful outcome. These data are presented in Table 14. Thus, the data indicated that participants who were 14 or 15 years of age at program entry experienced a higher rate of successful completion than those who were between 15 and 21 years of age at program entry.

Seventy-five percent of participants who had completed either the 8th or 9th grade at program entry experienced a successful program outcome (remained in school or graduated after program participation); 25 percent of this group experienced an unsuccessful program outcome (dropped out of school after program participation). Eighty-five percent of participants who had completed either the 10th or 11th grade at program entry experienced a successful program outcome; 15 percent of this group experienced an unsuccessful program outcome. An X^2 value of 4.991 indicated that the difference between these groups was significant at the .05 level.

Analysis of the actual and expected frequencies for these groups indicated that fewer participants than would have been expected (100 vs. 107) who had completed either the 8th or 9th grade at program entry experienced a successful program outcome, and more participants than would

TABLE 14

A COMPARISON OF ACTUAL AND EXPECTED FREQUENCIES FOR AGE GROUPS AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Age Group[a]	Successful Program Outcome		Unsuccessful Program Outcome	
	Actual	Expected	Actual	Expected
14 - 15 year of age	58	52	7	12
16 -21 years of age	183	188	52	46

N = 300

[a]Age at program entry

Note: Successful Program Outcome includes participants who were still in school of who had graduated after participating in the program.

Unsuccessful Program Outcome includes participants who dropped out of school after participating in the program.

have been expected (34 vs. 26) in this group experienced an unsuccessful outcome. Of the participants who had completed the 10th or 11th grade at program entry, more than would have been expected (141 vs. 133) experienced a successful program outcome, while fewer participants than would have been expected (25 vs. 32) in this group experienced an unsuccessful outcome. These data are presented in Table 15. Thus, the data indicated that participants who had completed the 10th or 11th grade at program entry experienced a higher rate of successful completion than those who had completed the 8th or 9th grade at program entry.

Significant differences were not found for any of the other background characteristics (sex, race, reading level, proficiency) when compared them with program outcomes.

Thus, the findings relevant to background characteristics compared to program outcomes revealed that participants who were older experienced a lower rate of successful program outcome, yet participants who had completed the higher grade levels experienced a higher rate of successful program outcome.

Time Elapsed Since Program Participation

Does the time which has elapsed since program participation affect the perception of participants regarding the impact of the program?

Data was organized to show relationships between responses to survey items measuring the participants'

TABLE 15

A COMPARISON OF ACTUAL AND EXPECTED FREQUENCIES FOR GRADE LEVEL AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Grade Level[a]	Successful Program Outcome		Unsuccessful Program Outcome	
	Actual	Expected	Actual	Expected
8th - 9th	100	107	34	26
10th - 11th	141	133	25	32

N = 300

[a]Highest grade completed at program entry

Note: Successful Program Outcome includes participants who were still in school of who had graduated after participating in the program.

Unsuccessful Program Outcome includes participants who dropped out of school after participating in the program.

perceptions of the impact of the program and the last year of participation in the program. Numerical values ranging from one to four were assigned to response categories in order to facilitate the use of a Likert-type scale for the analysis of these data. A value of one was assigned to the response of strongly agree; a value of two was assigned to the response of agree; a value of three was assigned to the response of disagree; and the value of four was assigned to the response of strongly disagree. Means for the total responses to each survey item and for responses in each response category were calculated for groups regarding the last year of program participation. One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to detect statistical differences in the means of the responses of the different groups. The .05 level of significance was used. When significant differences were found, Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was used to further support the statistical difference and to determine which of the groups were significantly different from the others.

The survey items were worded slightly different for participants who were still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

Figure 1 presents a graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item

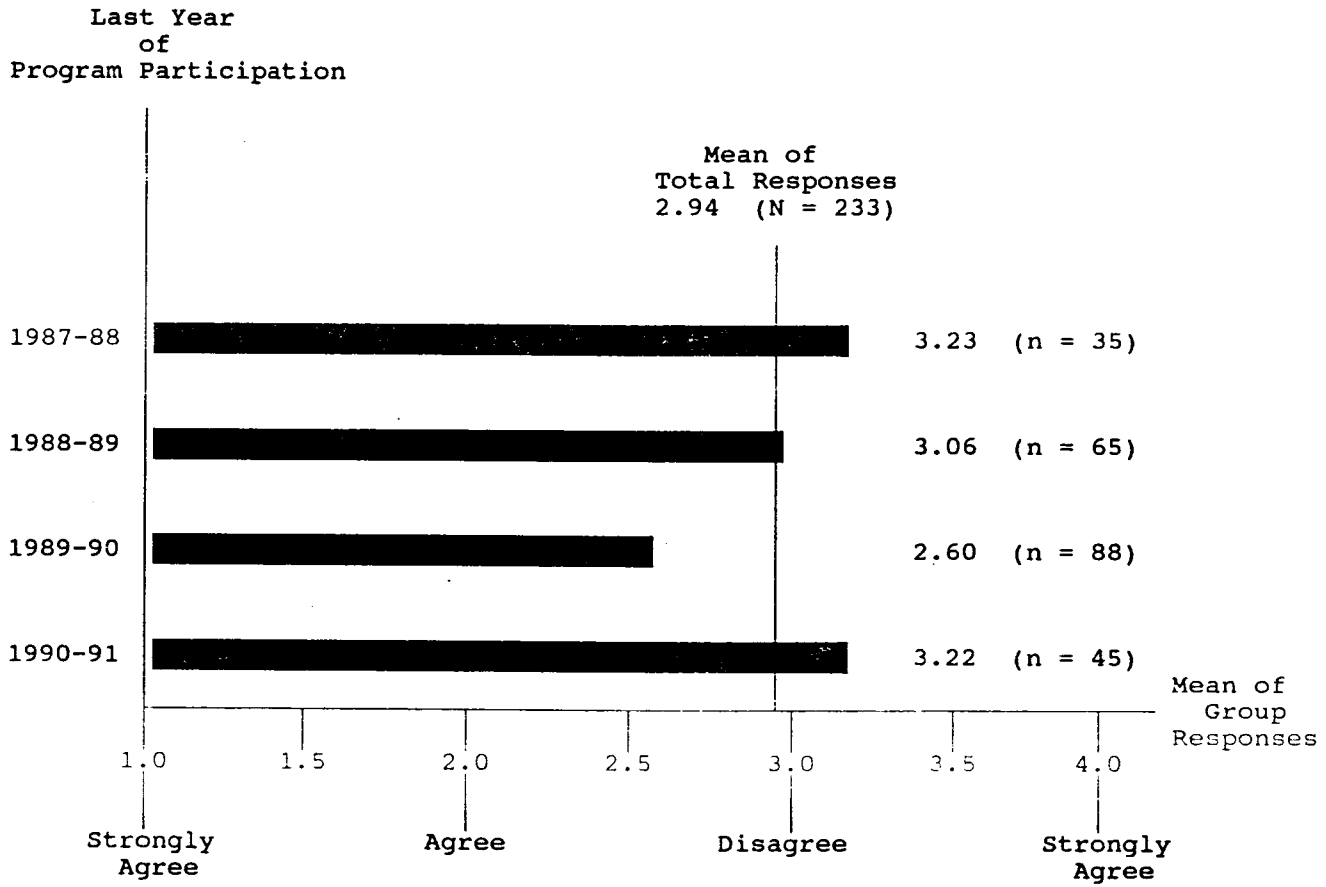


FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
BEFORE GETTING INTO CCP, I THOUGHT ABOUT DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

"Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school." Two hundred and thirty-three total responses to this item yielded a mean of 2.94. Thirty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 3.23. Sixty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 3.06. Eighty-eight participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.60. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 3.22.

A one way ANOVA revealed there was statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 4.56 was significant at the .05 level. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 16. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the Scheffe, presented in Table 17, revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1989-90 group (2.60) and the mean of the 1990-91 group (3.22). The differences in the means of

TABLE 16

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
BEFORE GETTING INTO CCP, I THOUGHT ABOUT DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL
WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	17.49208015	3	5.83069338	4.56*
Within Groups	292.78259796	229	1.27852663	
Total	310.27467811	232		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 17

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
BEFORE GETTING INTO CCP, I THOUGHT ABOUT DROPPING OUT
OF SCHOOL

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
3.23	87-88				
3.06	88-89				
2.60	89-90				*
3.22	90-91			*	

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year disagreed to a greater degree that before getting into CCP they thought about dropping out of school than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "Being in CCP helped me to decide to stay in school" is presented in Figure 2. Two hundred and thirty-two total responses to this item yielded a mean of 2.29. Thirty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.74. Sixty-four participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.23. Eighty-eight participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.10. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.38.

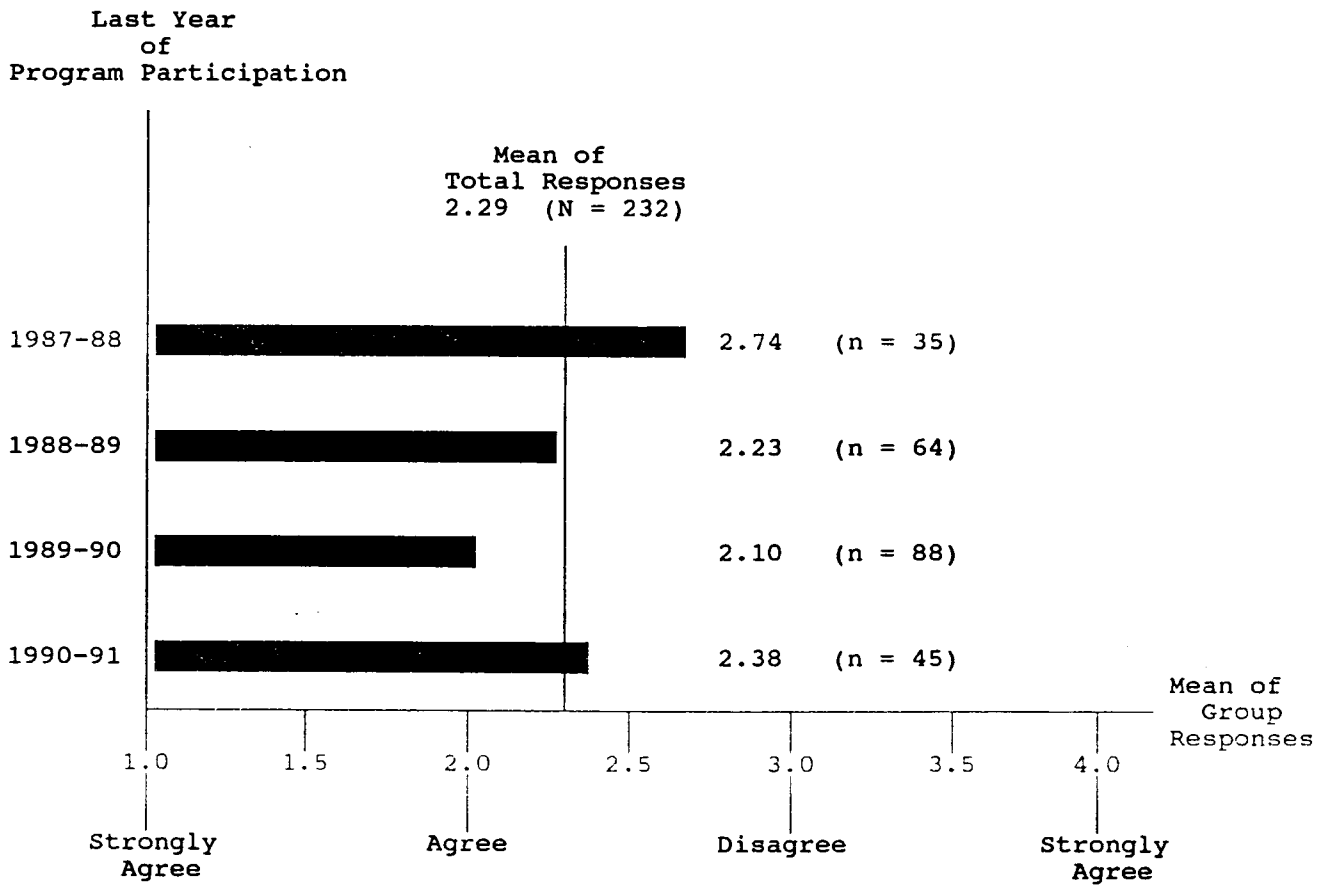


FIGURE 2

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
BEING IN CCP HAS HELPED ME TO DECIDE TO STAY IN SCHOOL

A one way ANOVA revealed there were statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 4.14 was significant at the .05 level. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 18. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the Scheffe, presented in Table 19, revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1987-88 group (2.74) and the mean of the 1989-90 group (2.10). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year felt that being in CCP did not help them to decide to stay in school, while those who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90, tended to feel that being in CCP had helped them to decide to stay in school.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma" is presented in Figure 3. Two hundred and thirty-two total responses to this item yielded a mean of 1.63. Thirty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.91. Sixty-four participants who had last

TABLE 18

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO BEING IN CCP HAS HELPED ME DECIDE TO STAY IN SCHOOL WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	10.82344955	3	3.60781652	4.14*
Within Groups	198.82741252	228	0.87205005	
Total	209.65082071	231		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 19

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO BEING IN CCP HAS HELPED ME TO DECIDE TO STAY IN SCHOOL

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
2.74	87-88			*	
2.23	88-89				
2.10	89-90	*			
2.38	90-91				

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

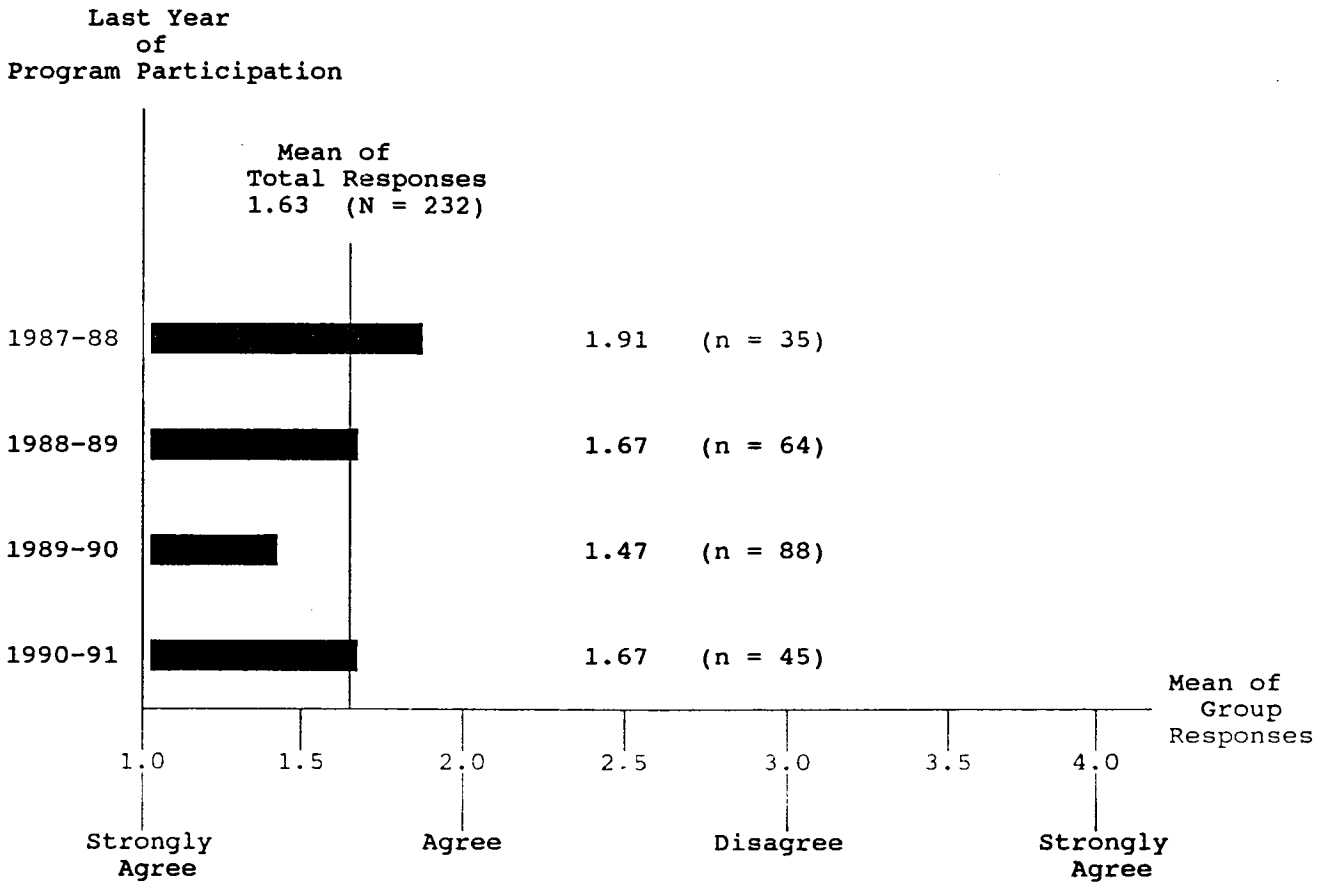


FIGURE 3

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
BEING IN CCP HELPED ME GET MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.67. Eighty-eight participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.47. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.67.

A one way ANOVA revealed there were statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 3.13 was significant at the .05 level. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the F-test and Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons are presented in Tables 20 and 21. The results of the Scheffe revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1987-88 group (1.91) and the mean of the 1990-91 group (1.47). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year agreed to a greater degree that being in CCP helped them get

TABLE 20

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
BEING IN CCP HELPED ME GET MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	5.05098102	3	1.68366034	3.13*
Within Groups	122.80677760	228	0.53862622	
Total	127.85775862	231		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 21

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
BEING IN CCP HELPED ME GET MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
1.91	87-88			*	
1.67	88-89				
1.47	89-90	*			
1.67	90-91				

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

their high school diploma than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "My school attendance improved after being in CCP" is presented in Figure 4. Two hundred and thirty-three total responses to this item yielded a mean of 2.30. Thirty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.60. Sixty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.26. Eighty-eight participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.10. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.51.

A one way ANOVA revealed there were statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 3.99 was significant at the .05 level. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of

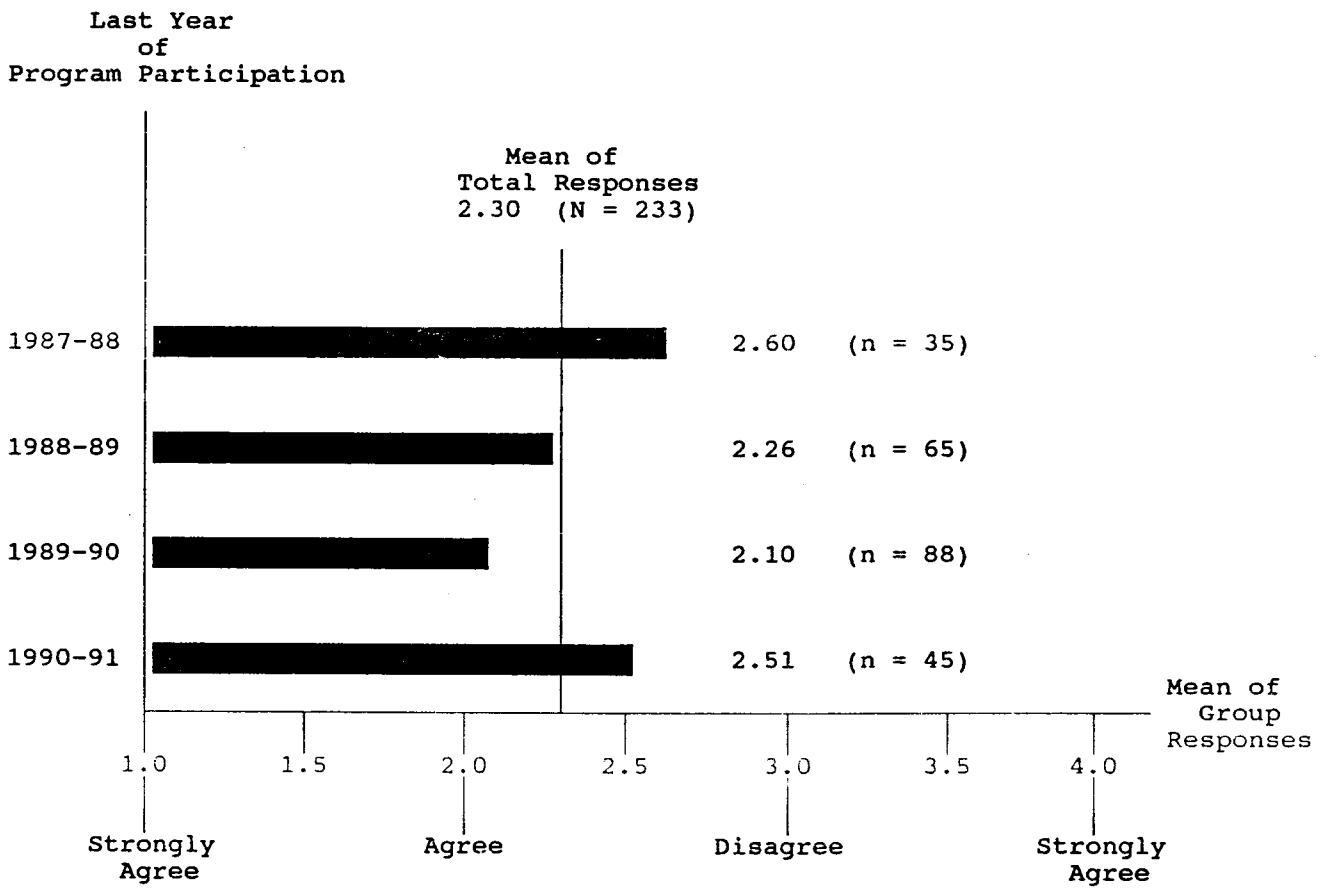


FIGURE 4

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
MY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVED AFTER BEING IN CCP

statistical difference. The results of the F-test and Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons are presented in Tables 22 and 23. The results of the Scheffe revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1987-88 group (2.60) and the mean of the 1989-90 group (2.10). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year felt that their school attendance improved after being in CCP, while those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year felt that their attendance did not improve after participating in the program.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have probably dropped out" is presented in Figure 5. Two hundred and thirty-three total responses to this item yielded a mean of 2.87. Thirty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 3.25. Sixty-five participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.78. Eighty-eight participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of

TABLE 22

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
MY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVED AFTER BEING IN CCP
WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	8.69212103	3	2.89737368	3.99*
Within Groups	166.27783605	229	0.72610409	
Total	174.96995708	232		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 23

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
BEING IN CCP HELPED ME GET MY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
2.60	87-88			*	
2.26	88-89				
2.10	89-90	*			
2.51	90-91				

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

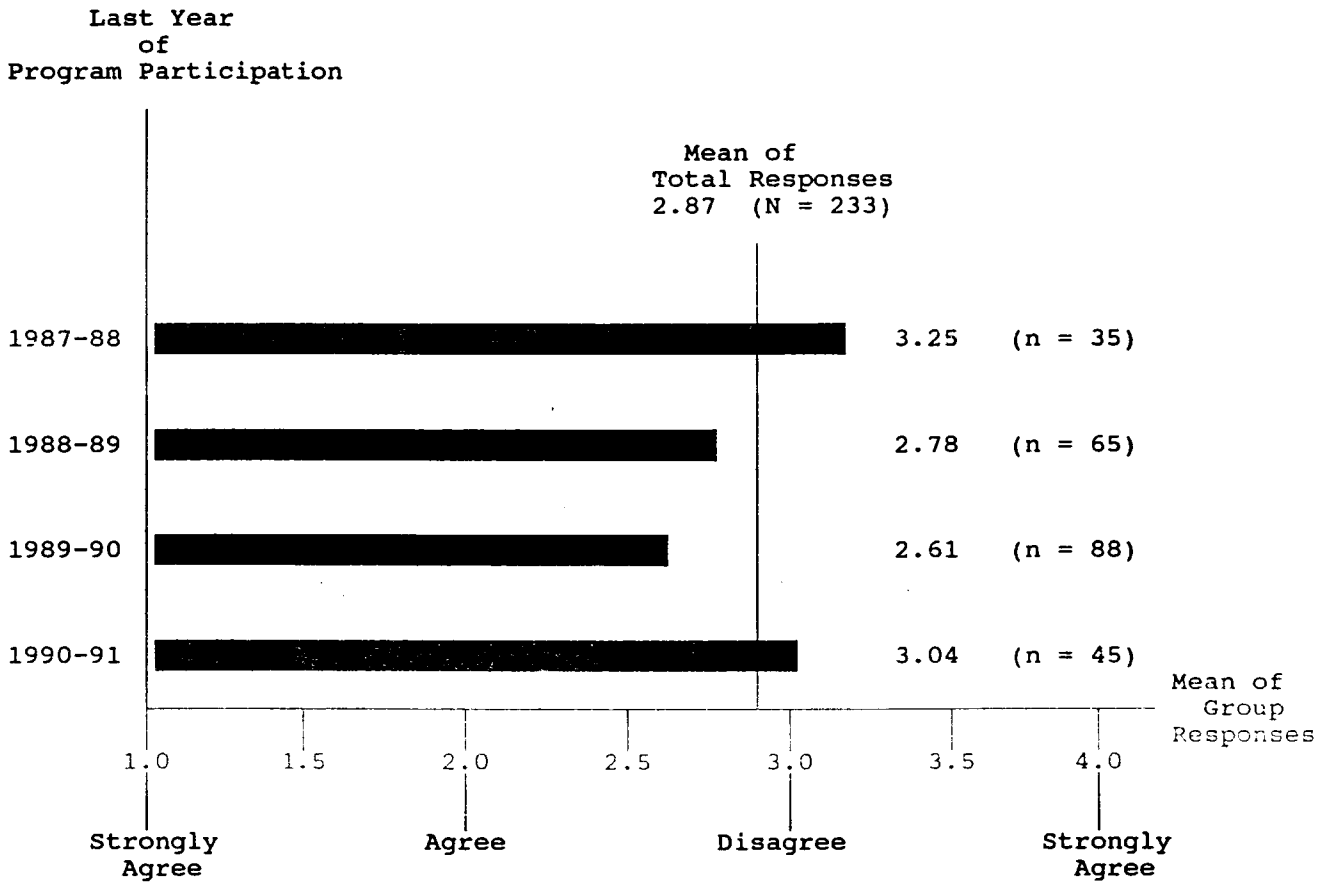


FIGURE 5

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
IF I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET INTO CCP,
I WOULD HAVE PROBABLY DROPPED OUT

the responses of this group was 2.61. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 3.04.

A one way ANOVA revealed there were statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 3.36 was significant at the .05 level. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 24. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the Scheffe, presented in Table 25, revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1987-88 group (3.25) and the mean of the 1989-90 group (2.61). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year disagreed to a greater degree that they would have probably dropped out if they had not been able to get into CCP, than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "I studied more in my other classes after being in CCP" is presented in Figure 6. Two hundred and seventeen total responses to this item

TABLE 24

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
IF I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET INTO CCP,
I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL
WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	12.67938637	3	4.22646212	3.36*
Within Groups	288.44507715	229	1.25958549	
Total	301.12446352	232		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 25

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
IF I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET INTO CCP,
I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
3.25	87-88			*	
2.78	88-89				
2.61	89-90	*			
3.04	90-91				

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

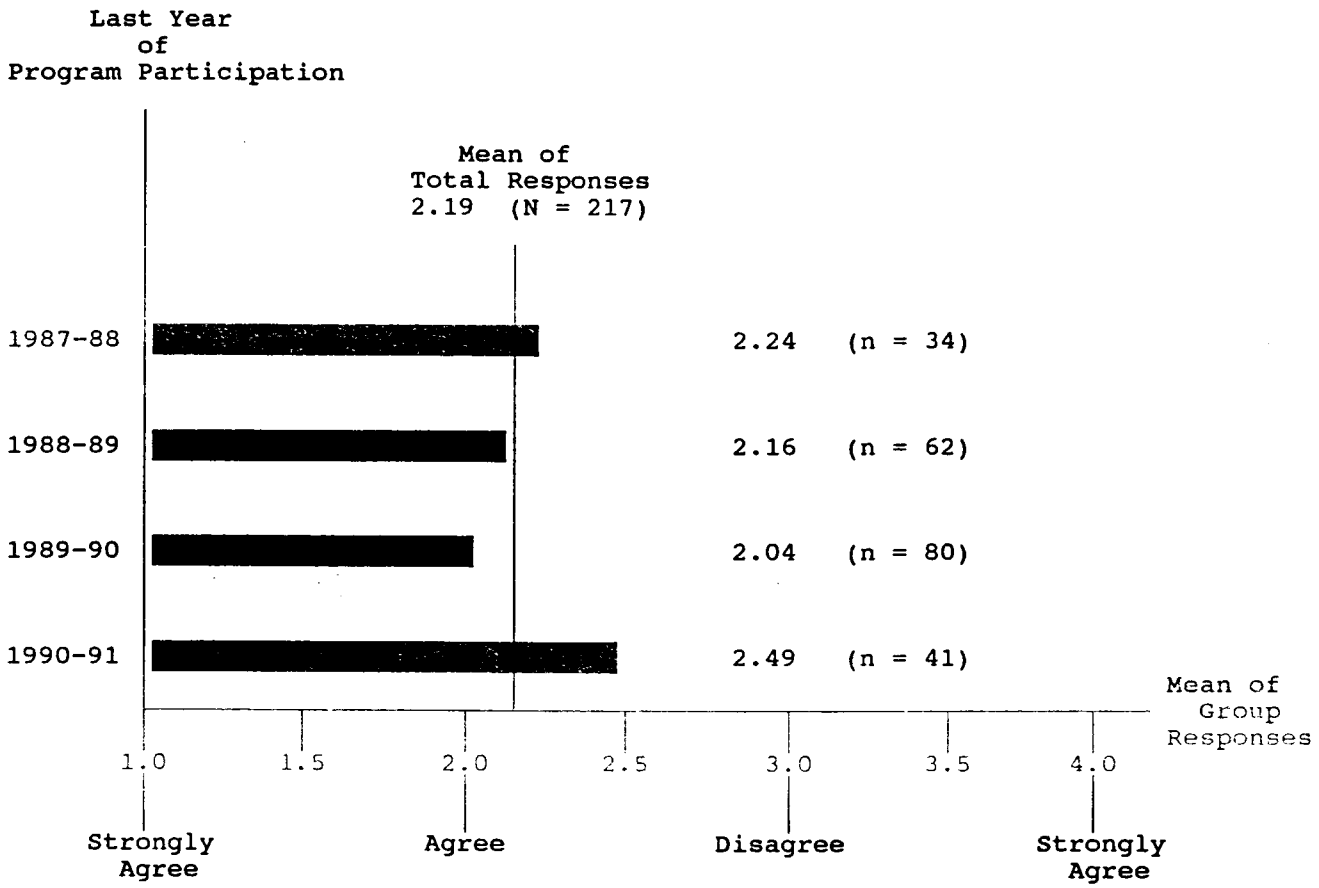


FIGURE 6

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
I STUDIED MORE IN MY OTHER CLASSES AFTER BEING IN CCP

yielded a mean of 2.19. Thirty-four participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.24. Sixty-two participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.16. Eighty participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.04. Forty-one participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.49.

A one way ANOVA revealed there were statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 3.23 was significant at the .05 level. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 26. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the Scheffe, presented in Table 27, revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1989-90 group (2.04) and the mean of the 1990-91 group (2.49). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that

TABLE 26

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
IF I HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET INTO CCP,
I STUDIED MORE IN MY OTHER CLASSES AFTER BEING IN CCP

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	5.67130995	3	1.87243665	3.23*
Within Groups	123.63614627	213	0.58045139	
Total	129.25345622	216		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 27

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
I STUDIED IN MY OTHER CLASSES AFTER BEING IN CCP

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
2.24	87-88				
2.16	88-89				
2.04	89-90				*
2.49	90-91			*	

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year agreed to a greater degree that they studied more in other classes after being in CCP than did those who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year.

A graphical comparison of the means of the different groups' responses to the survey item "I learned things in CCP that will help me find a job" is presented in Figure 7. Two hundred and twenty-nine total responses to this item yielded a mean of 1.91. Thirty-three participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 2.06. Sixty-four participants who had last participated in the program during the 1988-89 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.94. Eighty-seven participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.93. Forty-five participants who had participated in the program during one of the first three years and remained enrolled during the 1990-91 school year responded to this item. The mean of the responses of this group was 1.64.

A one way ANOVA revealed there was statistical differences in the responses of the four groups for this survey item. An F-value of 3.73 was significant at the .05

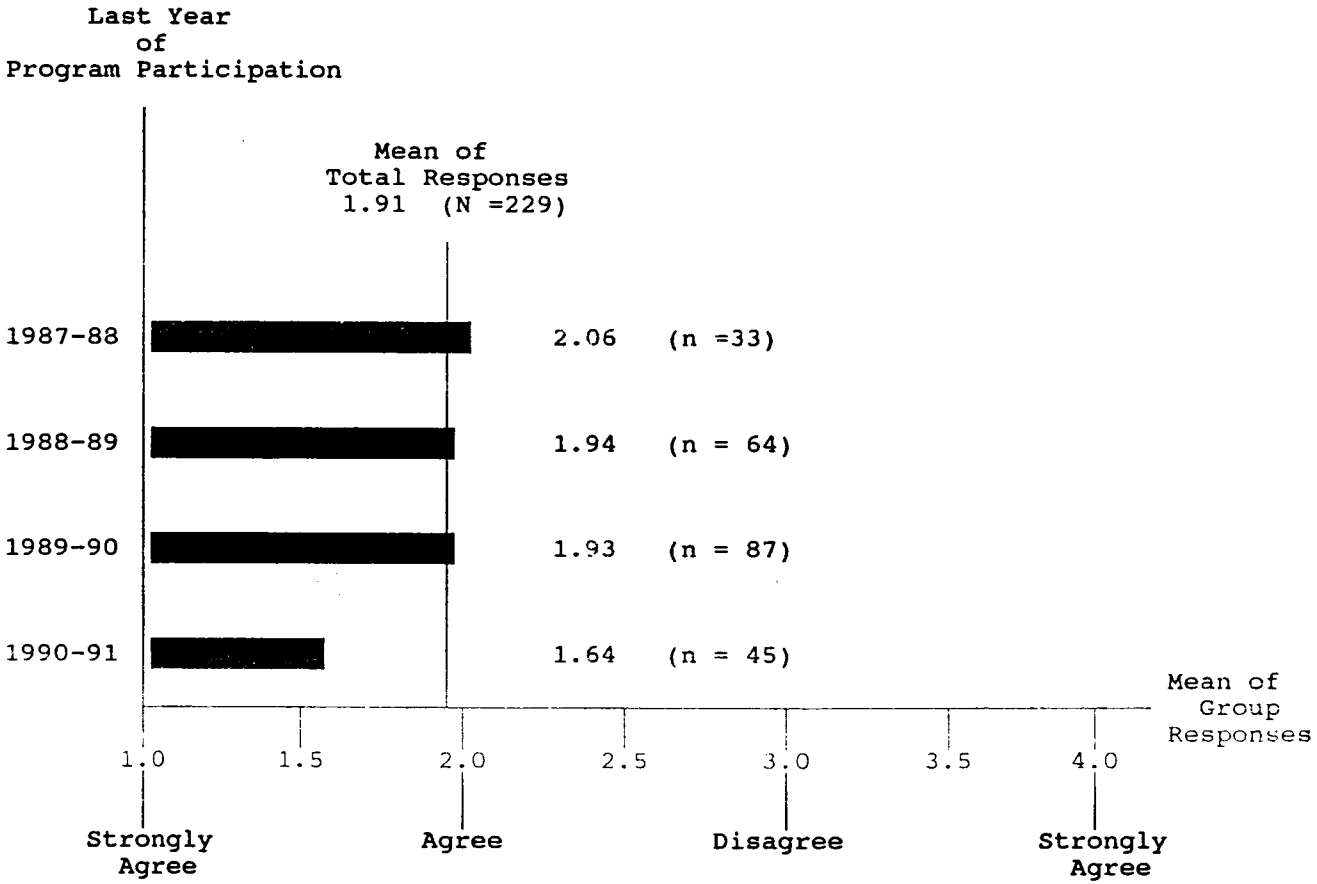


FIGURE 7

COMPARISON OF THE MEANS OF RESPONSES AMONG GROUPS
FOR LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION
FOR SURVEY ITEM
I LEARNED THINGS IN CCP THAT WILL HELP ME FIND A JOB

level. The results of the F-test are presented in Table 28. Scheffe's test for multiple comparisons was applied to the data and provided support for the claim of statistical difference. The results of the Scheffe, presented in Table 29, revealed a statistical difference at the .05 level between the mean of the 1987-88 group (2.06) and the mean of the 1990-91 group (1.64). The differences in the means of the other groups were not found to be significant. Thus, analysis of the data presented above suggests that participants who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year agreed to a greater degree that they learned things in CCP that will help them find a job than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year.

For the survey item, "I am a better reader after being in CCP," the one way ANOVA revealed a significant difference among the responses of the comparison group. However, the conservative Scheffe test of multiple comparisons fail to detect the difference. Therefore no significant difference was claimed.

Statistical analysis of twelve survey items which measured the impact of the program upon the lives of participants revealed no significant differences in the responses of the comparison groups. The items for which no statistical difference was found included:

If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP.

TABLE 28

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING RESPONSES TO
I LEARNED THINGS IN CCP THAT WILL HELP ME FIND A JOB
WITH LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value
Between Groups	4.31373492	3	1.43791831	3.73*
Within Groups	86.7604089	225	0.38560214	
Total	91.07423581	228		

* Value is significant at the .05 level

Note: Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

TABLE 29

SCHEFFE'S TEST FOR MULTIPLE COMPARISONS FOR
LAST YEAR OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GROUPS
RELATIVE TO RESPONSES TO
I LEARNED THINGS IN CCP THAT WILL HELP ME FIND A JOB

Mean	Group	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
2.06	87-88				*
1.94	88-89				
1.93	89-90				
1.64	90-91	*			

* Denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the .05 level.

I learned things in CCP that have helped me in other classes.

I can do math better after being in CCP.

I like school better after being in CCP.

I made better grades in most of my other classes after being in CCP.

My teachers liked me better after being in CCP.

I feel better about myself after being in CCP.

I have more of a feeling that "I can make it," after being in CCP.

I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future.

Being in CCP will help me be a better worker.

Being in CCP will help me make more money.

I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job.

Thus, statistical analysis of the comparison groups' responses relative to the last year of program participation can be summarized as follows:

1. Participants who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year disagreed to a greater degree that before getting into CCP they thought about dropping out of school than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year.

2. Participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year felt that being in CCP did not help them to decide to stay in school, while those who had last participated in the program during the

1989-90, tended to feel that being in CCP had helped them to decide to stay in school.

3. Participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year agreed to a greater degree that being in CCP helped them get their high school diploma than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year.

4. Participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year felt that their school attendance improved after being in CCP, while those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year felt that their attendance did not improve after participating in the program.

5. Participants who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year disagreed to a greater degree that they would have probably dropped out if they had not been able to get into CCP, than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year.

6. Participants who had last participated in the program during the 1989-90 school year agreed to a greater degree that they studied more in other classes after being in CCP than did those who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year.

7. Participants who were still enrolled in the program during the 1990-91 school year agreed to a greater degree

that they learned things in CCP that will help them find a job than did those who had last participated in the program during the 1987-88 school year.

The comparison groups actually responded with different opinions in only two of the seven instances in which statistical differences were found. Interestingly, these two occurrences involved the same comparison groups. The 1987-88 group felt that the program did not help them decide to stay in school, nor did they feel that their attendance improved after being in the program. The 1989-90 group felt that the program did help them decide to stay in school and that their attendance did improve after being in the program.

The comparison groups responded with the same general opinion but with differing degrees of agreement or disagreement in the other five instances in which statistical differences were found.

Statistical analysis of the remaining thirteen survey items which measured the impact of the program upon the lives of participants revealed no significant differences in the responses of the comparison groups.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is organized into five sections. The introduction serves as section one. A summary of the study is presented in section two. Section three provides a summary of the findings. The conclusions are presented in section four, and recommendations are presented in the final section of the chapter.

II. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

A major weakness of the dropout prevention movement throughout the country has been the lack of program evaluation. Although research indicates that lacking basic skills is a major factor in identifying students in danger of dropping out, no evidence exists that retention programs aimed at improving academic skill levels will cause participants to remain in school.

The purpose in the study was to examine and evaluate the long-range effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on the lives of program participants, and to determine if background characteristics of participants

influenced the impact of the program. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the effects of a basic skills dropout prevention program on participants' staying in school?

2. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' performance in other academic classes?

3. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program affect students' attitudes toward school and self?

4. Does participation in a basic skills dropout prevention program influence job readiness for participants?

5. What characteristics of the program were most important to the participants?

6. Do students who have remained in school or who have graduated after participation in the program share different background characteristics from those who have dropped out of school after participation in the program?

7. Does the time which has elapsed since program participation affect the perception of participants regarding the impact of the program?

The program studied and evaluated was a basic skills dropout prevention program serving a ten-county geographical area in upper east Tennessee. The program had been operational for three years and was federally funded through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Through the

program a basic skills learning center had been established in each of ten counties included in the project area. All participants in the program were economically disadvantaged or had other barriers to employment. The centers served mainly at-risk high school students ranging in age from 14 thru 21.

The program component was titled the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP). The CCP is a competency-based, individualized learning system which was developed in 1983 by the Remediation and Training Institute in Washington, D.C. Twelve hundred seventy-six (1276) subjects were included in the study population. These subjects had participated in the basic skills program during at least one of the first three years of operation (1987-88 thru 1989-90) and were enrolled in high school upon entry into the program. A random sample of 300 subjects was selected from the population.

Data were obtained from existing records relative to program outcomes for the entire study population. Background characteristics were obtained from existing records of the participants selected in the random sample. In addition, responses to a survey instrument were obtained from the subjects in the sample. The response rate for the survey was 78 percent. Data were analyzed and presented relative to each research question. Appropriate statistical

analyses were used to determine if significant differences existed between various comparison groups.

III. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

1. Almost eighty percent of the participants either graduated from high school or remained in school after participating in the program. Twenty-one percent of the participants dropped out of school after participating in the program. Considering the characteristics of the program participants, the percentage of those who had graduated or remained in school was relatively high. However, since those who were still in school might not complete school and graduate, a true dropout rate could not be determined with available data.

2. Although a great majority of participants were considered at risk, since they were economically disadvantaged and were functioning below grade level, most participants did not perceive themselves as being likely to dropout of school.

3. Participants did not perceive the program as having a major impact upon their staying in school, but they did feel that the program had a very positive influence on their being able to complete school successfully.

4. Participants felt that the program had a very positive impact upon their performance in other academic classes. They felt that their grades in other classes had

improved after being in the program, and that their reading and math skills had improved.

5. Participants felt the program had a very positive impact upon their self-image, and felt that their attitude toward school in general had improved since being in the program.

6. Participants felt the program had a positive impact upon their job readiness, however, in general, they did not feel this would translate into an ability to make more money.

7. Participants felt that all of the characteristics of the program were important. The computer-based learning materials and specifically the managers and specialists seemed to be most important.

8. The program had a significantly higher success rate with participants who were younger, and also with participants who had completed higher grade levels at program entry.

9. The time that had elapsed since program participation had very little practical effect upon the perceptions of participants relative to the impact of the program upon their lives.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted in an attempt to determine the perceptions of participants regarding the impact of a basic skills dropout prevention program. In addition, a comparison of the background characteristics to program outcomes was made to determine if the program was more or less successful with different groups. Finally, the perceptions of the participants were compared relative to the last year of program participation to determine if the time that had elapsed since participating in the program affected the perceptions about the program.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The basic skills program (CCP) contributed significantly to the retention of students in the schools of the area being served. The positive carryover effects of the program in the areas of performance in other classes, attitudes toward being in school, and improved self-esteem served as a catalyst for successful completion of school.

2. The uniformity of the perceptions of the students who participated in the program during the three-year period being studied indicated the program had achieved a stable and consistent pattern of operation.

3. The caring attitude of the program's staff probably was the most important factor in creating the positive learning climate that led to program success.

4. The computer-based material was used as a very effective learning tool and a positive motivating factor for the program.

5. Many of the participants in the program who had been identified as at-risk youth by teachers and counselors did not perceive themselves as at-risk and may not realize that they are in danger of not completing school.

6. The program appeared to be least successful with participants who, upon program entry, were older and had not completed the grade level consistent with their age group.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the overall findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered for educators who are designing and implementing programs created to meet the needs of at-risk youth:

1. A basic skills learning component should be the core of programs designed to serve students who are not functioning as expected in the traditional academic classroom environment.

2. If financially feasible, computer-based learning materials should be included in a basic skills learning program for at-risk youth.

3. Criteria used to identify at-risk students should be closely scrutinized to insure that programs are serving those who are most at risk.

Further Research

1. Research using more longitudinal data is needed to more accurately determine the effectiveness of basic skills dropout prevention programs. Preferably such research should involve a true experimental design tracking the activities of a control group and a treatment group over a number of years.

2. Research should be conducted using Multiple Discriminate Function Analysis to determine what background characteristics of students can be used to predict the likelihood of dropping out.

3. Research is needed to determine if a program such as the one studied could be applicable to "regular" classroom settings. Such research should involve not only the effectiveness of the program with regular students, but also the costs-benefit feasibility of using such a program on a widespread basis.

4. Research should be conducted to determine what differences exist between how teachers and administrators perceive at-risk students and how the students perceive themselves relative to being at risk.

5. Research is needed to determine what kinds of teacher preparation and experience are crucial for successfully serving at-risk youth.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

(Participants Still in School)

CCP EVALUATION SURVEY

Please decide whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Then circle the number that most describes how much you agree or disagree. Circle [1] if you Strongly Agree with the statement and [2] if you just Agree with it. Circle [3] if you Disagree with the statement and [4] if you Strongly Disagree with it.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I learned things in CCP that will help me find a job.	1	2	3	4
2.	I feel better about myself after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
3.	I learned things in CCP that have helped me in other classes.	1	2	3	4
4.	Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school.	1	2	3	4
5.	I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job.	1	2	3	4
6.	I like school better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
7.	I am a better reader since being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
8.	Being in CCP has helped me decide to stay in school.	1	2	3	4
9.	I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future.	1	2	3	4
10.	I have more of a feeling that "I can make it" after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
11.	I can do math better since being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
12.	Being in CCP will help me get my high school diploma.	1	2	3	4
13.	Being in CCP will help me be a better worker.	1	2	3	4
14.	My school attendance has improved after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
15.	I make better grades in most of my classes since being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
16.	If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have probably dropped out by now.	1	2	3	4
17.	Being in CCP will help me make more money.	1	2	3	4
18.	My teachers like me better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4

(OVER)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19.	I study more in my other classes since being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
20.	If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP.	1	2	3	4

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The following is a list of statements which describe things about CCP. Please rank each as to how important it was to you while you were in CCP. Circle [1] if it was Very Important, [2] if it was Important, [3] if it was Somewhat Important, and [4] if it was Not Important.

		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
21.	working on something different from everyone else	1	2	3	4
22.	taking my time and doing things at my own pace	1	2	3	4
23.	taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	1	2	3	4
24.	getting the results of tests back immediately	1	2	3	4
25.	having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	1	2	3	4
26.	being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	1	2	3	4
27.	having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	1	2	3	4
28.	individual attention from teachers	1	2	3	4
29.	the print (workbook type) learning materials	1	2	3	4
30.	the computer learning materials	1	2	3	4

If you would like, in the space below please make any other comments about your experience in CCP.

THANKS !

(Participants Who Had Graduated)

CCP EVALUATION SURVEY

Please decide whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Then circle the number that most describes how much you agree or disagree. Circle [1] if you Strongly Agree with the statement and [2] if you just Agree with it. Circle [3] if you Disagree with the statement and [4] if you Strongly Disagree with it.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I learned things in CCP that have helped me find a job.	1	2	3	4
2.	I feel better about myself after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
3.	I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes.	1	2	3	4
4.	Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school.	1	2	3	4
5.	I learned things in CCP that have been useful to me on the job.	1	2	3	4
6.	I liked school better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
7.	I became a better reader after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
8.	Being in CCP helped me decide to stay in school.	1	2	3	4
9.	I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future.	1	2	3	4
10.	I have more of a feeling that "I can make it" after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
11.	I do math better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
12.	Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma.	1	2	3	4
13.	Being in CCP has helped me be a better worker.	1	2	3	4
14.	My school attendance improved after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
15.	I made better grades in most of my classes after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
16.	If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have probably dropped out of school.	1	2	3	4
17.	Being in CCP has helped me make more money.	1	2	3	4
18.	My teachers liked me better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4

(OVER)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19.	I studied more in other classes after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
20.	If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP.	1	2	3	4

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The following is a list of statements which describe things about CCP. Please rank each as to how important it was to you while you were in CCP. Circle [1] if it was Very Important, [2] if it was Important, [3] if it was Somewhat Important, and [4] if it was Not Important.

		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
21.	working on something different from everyone else	1	2	3	4
22.	taking my time and doing things at my own pace	1	2	3	4
23.	taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	1	2	3	4
24.	getting the results of tests back immediately	1	2	3	4
25.	having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	1	2	3	4
26.	being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	1	2	3	4
27.	having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	1	2	3	4
28.	individual attention from teachers	1	2	3	4
29.	the print (workbook type) learning materials	1	2	3	4
30.	the computer learning materials	1	2	3	4

If you would like, in the space below please make any other comments about your experience in CCP.

THANKS !!

(Participants Who Had Dropped Out)

CCP - EVALUATION - SURVEY

Please decide whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Then circle the number that most describes how much you agree or disagree. Circle [1] if you Strongly Agree with the statement and [2] if you just Agree with it. Circle [3] if you Disagree with the statement and [4] if you Strongly Disagree with it.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I learned things in CCP that have helped me find a job.	1	2	3	4
2.	I feel better about myself after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
3.	I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes.	1	2	3	4
4.	Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school.	1	2	3	4
5.	I learned things in CCP that have been useful to me on the job.	1	2	3	4
6.	I liked school better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
7.	I became a better reader after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
8.	Being in CCP made me want to try to stay in school.	1	2	3	4
9.	I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future.	1	2	3	4
10.	I have more of a feeling that "I can make it" after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
11.	I do math better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
12.	Being in CCP would have helped me get my high school diploma, if I had stayed in school.	1	2	3	4
13.	Being in CCP has helped me be a better worker.	1	2	3	4
14.	My school attendance improved after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
15.	I made better grades in most of my classes after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
16.	If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have probably dropped out sooner.	1	2	3	4
17.	Being in CCP has helped me make more money.	1	2	3	4
18.	My teachers liked me better after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4

(OVER)

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19.	I studied more in other classes after being in CCP.	1	2	3	4
20.	If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP.	1	2	3	4

==========

The following is a list of statements which describe things about CCP. Please rank each as to how important it was to you while you were in CCP. Circle [1] if it was Very Important, [2] if it was Important, [3] if it was Somewhat Important, and [4] if it was Not Important.

		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
21.	working on something different from everyone else	1	2	3	4
22.	taking my time and doing things at my own pace	1	2	3	4
23.	taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	1	2	3	4
24.	getting the results of tests back immediately	1	2	3	4
25.	having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	1	2	3	4
26.	being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	1	2	3	4
27.	having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	1	2	3	4
28.	individual attention from teachers	1	2	3	4
29.	the print (workbook type) learning materials	1	2	3	4
30.	the computer learning materials	1	2	3	4

If you would like, in the space below please make any other comments about your experience in CCP.

THANKS !!!

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTERS

(Participants Still in School and Over Age 18)

Hi,

My name is David Roberts. I work at Walters State Community College and I need your help. I am trying to find out some things about the CCP class that you have been in. I want to know how you feel about the program and how it has affected you. This will help us find ways to improve the program, and it will also help me finish some school work that I'm doing at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The survey that is attached to this letter won't take long for you to complete. Please read each question on the survey and answer it as best you can. Then seal the survey in the enclosed envelope and return it to the CCP center at your school. There is no need for you to sign the survey. The CCP manager will see that your completed survey gets to me. None of the envelopes will be opened until I get them, so no one except me will see your answers. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can.

By completing and returning the survey, you are saying that you want to help and that it's OK for your answers to be used as a part of this project. Thanks so much for your help, I really need it, and if you have any questions at all about the survey, just contact the CCP manager in your school, or you can call me at 587-7034.

Thanks again,

David Roberts
Assistant Director for CCP
Walters State Community College

(Participants Still in School and Under Age 18)

Hi,

My name is David Roberts. I work at Walters State Community College and I need your help. I am trying to find out some things about the CCP class that you have been in. I want to know how you feel about the program and how it has affected you. This will help us find ways to improve the program, and it will also help me finish some school work that I'm doing at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The survey that is attached to this letter won't take long for you to complete. Please read each question on the survey and answer it as best you can. Then seal the survey in the enclosed envelope and return it to the CCP center at your school. There is no need for you to sign the survey. The CCP manager will see that your completed survey gets to me. None of the envelopes will be opened until I get them, so no one except me will see your answers. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can.

By completing and returning the survey you are saying that you want to help and that it's OK for me to use your answers, but there's one more way you can help. In order for me to use your answers, your parents or guardian must sign the enclosed form that says it's OK for you to help in this porject. Please get them to look over the form and sign it, and return it along with the survey. This form is very important because I can't use your answers unless it is signed.

Thanks so much for your help, I really need it, and if you have any questions at all about the survey, just contact the CCP manager in your school, or you can call me at 587-7034.

Thanks again,

David Roberts
Assistant Director for CCP
Walters State Community College

(Participants Out of School)

Hi,

My name is David Roberts. I work at Walters State Community College and I need your help. I am trying to find out some things about the CCP class that you were in. You know, the class with all the computers where you had to take a lot of tests. I want to know how you feel about the program and how it has affected you. This will help us find ways to improve the program, and it will also help me finish some school work that I'm doing at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The survey that is attached to this letter won't take long for you to complete. Please read each question on the survey and answer it as best you can. Then seal the survey in the preaddressed, stamped envelope which is enclosed, and return it to me. There is no need for you to sign the survey. No one except me will see your answers, so please answer the questions as honestly as you can.

By completing and returning the survey, you are saying that you want to help and that it's OK for your answers to be used as a part of this project. Thanks so much for your help, I really need it, and if you have any questions at all about the survey, just contact the CCP manager in your school, or you can call me at 587-7034.

Thanks again,

David Roberts
Assistant Director for CCP
Walters State Community College

APPENDIX C

PARENTAL CONSENT LETTER

Dear Parent of Guardian:

My name is David Roberts and I work at Walters State Community College. I am gathering some information concerning the CCP class that your child has been in at school. Your child has been asked to help with this project by answering a few questions about how he or she feels about the class, and how being in the class has affected him of her.

The answers given by your child will only be seen by me and will be used only for this project. I'm doing this project to find ways to improve the CCP class and to help me complete a class I'm taking in college.

Since your child is under 18, I need to get an OK from you to use his or her answers in my project. The questions that I am asking are really very simple and should not be any problem for anyone, but I still need your OK to let your child do this. By signing the statement below you are saying that's it alright for your child to help me. If you have any questions at all about the survey, you can call the CCP center at your child's school, or you can call me at 587-7034.

Thanks very much for your help.

Sincerely,

David Roberts
Assistant Director for CCP
Walters State Community College

==========

It is OK for_____ to help you with your
child's name

study about the CCP class by answering your survey questions.

_____ _____
parent of guardian signature date

THANKS

APPENDIX D

FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS

TABLE 30

FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS

Survey Item[a]	*SA	A	D	SD	TR
Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school	43	33	51	106	233
Being in CCP helped me decide to stay in school	49	99	52	32	232
Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma	117	88	22	5	232
If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have dropped out of school	46	34	64	89	233
If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP	131	70	13	6	220[b]
I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes	117	108	8	1	234
I am a better reader after being in CCP	61	123	44	2	230
I can do math better after being in CCP	75	88	22	5	228
I made better grades in most of my other classes after being in CCP	65	123	38	5	231
I studied more in my other classes after being in CCP	36	116	53	12	217[b]
I liked school better after being in CCP	73	113	42	6	234
My school attendance improved after being in CCP	47	85	85	16	233
My teachers liked me better after being in CCP	27	78	104	21	230
I feel better about myself after being in CCP	68	143	23	1	235
I have more of a feeling that 'I can make it' after being in CCP	67	132	28	8	235
I learned things in CCP that will help me get a job	56	139	33	1	229
I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job	60	132	37	2	231

TABLE 30 (continued)

Survey Item[a]	*SA	A	D	SD	TR
I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future	80	124	25	6	235
Being in CCP will help me be a better worker	61	127	42	2	232
Being in CCP will help me make more money	26	77	102	22	227

Survey Item	*VI	I	SI	NI	TR
working on something different from everyone else	67	99	45	17	228
taking my time and doing things at my own pace	158	58	12	1	229
taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	116	89	20	4	229
getting the results of tests back immediately	140	73	12	4	229
having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	129	75	21	2	227
being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	145	69	12	2	228
having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	129	69	22	9	229
individual attention from teachers	133	73	17	5	228
the print (workbook type) learning materials	78	101	43	6	228
the computer learning materials	154	65	8	2	229

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree
VI = Very Important I = Important SI = Somewhat Important
NI = Not Important TR = Total Responses

[a]Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

[b]The large number of non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

APPENDIX E

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS

TABLE 31

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY ITEMS

Survey Item[a]	*SA	A	D	SD	TR
Before getting into CCP, I thought about dropping out of school	18	14	22	46	233
Being in CCP helped me decide to stay in school	21	43	22	14	232
Being in CCP helped me get my high school diploma	50	38	10	2	232
If I had not been able to get into CCP, I would have dropped out of school	20	15	27	38	233
If I had it to do over again, I would want to be in CCP	59	32	6	3	220[b]
I learned things in CCP that helped me in other classes	50	46	3	1	234
I am a better reader after being in CCP	27	53	19	1	230
I can do math better after being in CCP	33	38	23	6	228
I made better grades in most of my other classes after being in CCP	28	53	17	2	231
I studied more in my other classes after being in CCP	17	53	24	6	217[b]
I liked school better after being in CCP	31	48	18	3	234
My school attendance improved after being in CCP	20	37	36	7	233
My teachers liked me better after being in CCP	12	34	45	9	230
I feel better about myself after being in CCP	29	61	10	0	235
I have more of a feeling that 'I can make it' after being in CCP	29	56	12	3	235
I learned things in CCP that will help me get a job	24	61	14	1	229
I learned things in CCP that will be useful to me on the job	26	57	16	1	231

TABLE 31 (continued)

Survey Item[a]	*SA	A	D	SD	TR
I learned things in CCP that will make a difference in my future	34	53	11	2	235
Being in CCP will help me be a better worker	26	55	18	1	232
Being in CCP will help me make more money	11	34	45	10	227

Survey Item	*VI	I	SI	NI	TR
working on something different from everyone else	29	44	20	7	228
taking my time and doing things at my own pace	69	25	5	1	229
taking a test at the end of each lesson, unit, and level	51	39	8	2	229
getting the results of tests back immediately	61	32	5	2	229
having to go back and relearn, if I didn't pass a test	57	33	9	1	227
being able to retake a test on which I didn't do well	64	30	5	1	228
having two people (teachers) in the room instead of one	56	30	10	4	229
individual attention from teachers	58	32	8	2	228
the print (workbook type) learning materials	34	44	19	3	228
the computer learning materials	67	29	3	1	229

Total survey questionnaires returned = 235

*SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree
VI = Very Important I = Important SI = Somewhat Important
NI = Not Important TR = Total Responses

[a]Survey items were worded slightly different for those still in school, those who had graduated, and those who had dropped out. The survey instruments for each group are presented in Appendix A.

[b]The large number of non-respondents to this item is probably due to the location of the item on the survey instrument.

APPENDIX F

COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS

Note: When the manager or the specialist appears in parenthesis, a subsitution for the actual name has been made.

It helped me with my math skills.

It was fun and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being around people. It was a learning experience.

I really liked CCP, but I would like to see one thing changed. If any way possible, I think kids should be able to get a credit or at least a half credit, because the kids do work hard. Thank you!

I liked being in the CCP class. The teachers were very nice to me and very helpful. I learned a lot in the program and if I had to do it over again, I would like to take the class again. I liked (the manager), she is a very nice person.

CCP has helped me so much and I strongly agree with all of it. Thumbs up!

The reason I quit school is because I got pregnant, but I've gone back to CCP to get my GED. Thanks CCP.

It was fun working with (the manager and specialists) and I thank all of them. You are good teachers.

CCP is very important to me. Thanks for helping me reach my goals.

CCP classes helped me understand my teachers more and get along with them.

There are other people who may need this class, but cannot get into it because of financial status.

(The manager) is the best teacher I ever had in my life.

I liked the individual attention that I got in CCP. I think it helped me to learn better.

Hi, I have really enjoyed doing the poll, and thanks for contacting me. I really enjoyed CCP class. Thank you.

My experience in CCP has helped me a lot. I learned English and Algebra. CCP can help everyone who needs it if given a chance.

The work is really too easy and doesn't teach us much about getting a job. They just help us get a job with the summer youth program.

I enjoyed working at my own pace in the lab. I got a lot more work done than usual. Thank you.

Good place.

I wish all my classes were like CCP, because in there you do the work at your own pace. If you don't finish a test or work, you finish the next day and you cannot copy and others can't copy. I find myself doing better work at my own pace. I passed everything. When I did have to do everything at the same pace as everyone else. I failed everything.

I think that the CCP was a great class. I liked it better than any other class because it really wasn't like a class because the computers were fun and you learn things easy and quicker on them and the computer made time go by faster.

I was in CCP due to the fact that I was financially supported through my first year in college by an agency. I have always planned to continue and finish my schooling, but CCP did help in the history I am in at ETSU.

The CCP was very effective in my studies. I am a slow learner, and working at my own pace really helped. I personally recommend CCP to any student who has a deficiency in any subject. I'm now at Walters State seeking a Business Degree thanks to CCP.

I really liked CCP. It has helped me a lot.

They were really nice to me in CCP. They made me feel like a real winner, when I felt like a loser. CCP made my whole life different and better. Thank you.

The CCP lab is great, don't do anything to change it. P.S. maybe let people talk a little more!

The CCP lab is perfect. The teachers were understanding and took time with all the kids. My grades were better after I started the CCP lab. I have made more money too. In my job I talk to all kinds of people. In one year I was in 7 different states. P.S. I'm a wildfire fighter.

CCP was a great experience! It's set at a level so anyone could understand and learn. If not there was always someone there who could help and understand.

I think (the manager) should be more considerate of other peoples feelings!

(The specialist and the manager) were good teachers. They pushed me a lot to do good in my other classes and their's too!

I was failing my English class until I got in CCP. After being in CCP, my grades came back up.

I would like to say that if it wasn't for CCP I would not have graduated. I believe more students should have the chance that I did. One of my friends in school didn't. He failed and dropped out of school and doesn't have a job and drinks all the time. I believe it was because he didn't get into CCP.

I learned things I could not understand. They were nice about explaining thing to me and had enough patience with me.

CCP was great. It helped me advance in some parts of my education.

It was the Best class I had while I was in school.

CCP is fun, but a good learning program that I enjoyed a lot. I would tell my friends to take CCP if they could.

I like the teachers I had in CCP and I learned a lot.

CCP helped me to pass Junior English. Without it I would probably have failed.

I was only in CCP for a short period of time while refreshing my memory on a few subjects, but I want to say I think it's the best thing for some (most) people because some people need more than others and the teachers and equipment of CCP really make a difference. I actually saw people that had almost no chance, turn their lives around in this class.

If I had it to do over, I would love to go back to CCP.

I thought the teacher I had was very nice. She was a nice lady and would try to do her best to help you when she was not running to help someone else. She even had another teacher to help her with the other kids. Sometimes there are not enough computer to work on.

CCP was a very good learning experience and helped me complete my Senior year without trouble.

CCP has been great to me. It has helped me a lot. I had two great teachers also (the manager and the specialist). I would like to thank them.

Since I've been in CCP I've made better grades and really like the kinds of books and instructors that they have. I can get the information I need. I really like my teachers, they're a big help. The best part is the computers. I wish everybody could go to the CCP class, because CCP is the best.

I think if more people understood what the class was all about and that it wasn't just for stupid people, more students would get into it. The class would really help a lot of people pass more of their classes.

If it wasn't for (the manager and the specialist), I would have never graduated. Thank you for all you have done for me.

It was a fun class. You learn and meet great friends. When one teacher is busy, there is always another teacher to go to. Working on the computer was a great learning experience.

I enjoyed being in CCP. The instructors and teachers were very helpful and seemed concerned about the students in the class. If possible, I would return to school if I could still receive help from CCP.

CCP has made a remarkable difference in my life. I enjoy school a lot more and am now making at least a "C" average in all of my classes. I've learned more study guides and learning techniques, which have helped me tremendously. I now plan on finishing school and going on to college and have a career.

Being in CCP helped me through my Senior year. If anyone has problems with any subject, I'd advise them to try and get into CCP classes as soon as they know they're trouble. With the extra help you receive in the class, you feel like you've accomplished a lot.

I enjoyed working at my own pace. In other classes people are in a race with each other and that is not what school is all about.

When I was in CCP, I learned how to work on my own. But if I needed help, the teacher would be right there to help me immediately. I liked the class better than regular school room classes because there was not a teacher talking all period and you could learn more.

I would like to say I have learned more in CCP than I have in my other classes. Thank you.

If it hadn't been for CCP I would probably not have graduated. Before I got accepted into the class, I had failing grades. With the help of my two teachers (the specialist and the manager), they showed me I could learn, and that helped me more than anything. Thank you for letting me be in your program.

After attending the CCP class, I feel much more confident in other aspects of my life. The class also helped me improve my ACT score. (I jumped from a composite score of 16 to a 21).

You couldn't ask for a better teacher in CCP than (the manager).

You can work at your own pace. You can work as fast as you need and they help you a lot better too.

I liked the computers. The teacher (the manager) encouraged me to stay in school.

CCP was important to me because I learned more quickly than most students and I didn't have to wait on them to catch up. CCP is a good program, very helpful to the students, and I think it was successful in my situation. (The manager) was a wonderful instructor!

I learned a lot from being in CCP. I learned a lot about English and my teachers were very helpful.

The teacher at _____ High is the best person for the job. (The manager) has been helpful to me when other teachers did not care.

I was taught more in CCP than in any other classes.

This was a very good class and I really enjoyed it. It also gave me a chance to get acquainted with computers.

It would have been easier to learn if there had been another student at my level, working with me. Example: discuss certain things.

CCP was a very important class for me. It helped me learn a lot and I believe it will go on to help others. Thank you.

The teachers were great in helping anyone if they had any problems. I liked how we did our lessons, but it did not help me in quitting school. I love being in school.

The instructor in CCP helped me realize I could go to college. Being exposed to the different computers in the center helped with my computer literacy class this past semester. I enjoyed the attention I received from the instructor.

I really enjoyed CCP class. I learned a lot, and the teachers were great in helping me. I want to make computers my career, so CCP class was my favorite. I also learned a lot about a computer that will help me in the job I hope to have someday.

I would have liked to finish school, but I had to quit for different reasons. I liked CCP, the attention and the computers.

I was always interested in school and learning, and CCP gave me a better chance to learn more. Learning the computer was good experience and the book work materials helped me learn lots of new and interesting things.

I had a good teacher.

It has been fun and most of all very helpful.

I feel that since I started in the CCP program that I have improved greatly in my reading, spelling, and math skills. P.S. I think my CCP instructor has had a great influence on my future.

I wish I had known about it earlier.

I enjoyed (the manager's) class very much.

Although dropping out of school was never an option, CCP helped me to graduate. I feel that my instructors, (the manager and the specialist) should be given a raise because I know they couldn't be paid as much as they are worth.

I thought the teachers helped out a lot.

I really enjoyed being in CCP. It was a very good learning experience. (The manager and the specialist) are excellent teachers.

Thanks to CCP I made better grades in English than I would have in the other classes. Thanks a lot.

The time that I spent in CCP was very helpful, and the individual attention that the instructors gave made me more confident.

The CCP is a great program. It shows that people care what you do in life. Being in CCP showed me that my goals are important. CCP will help you with any job that you are capable of doing. Thanks to the CCP program I believe in myself and in finding a job that will make my life more important to me.

I like CCP better last year than this year. I do not like the way it is being operated. It's like your being pushed.

I want to thank you for being a part of CCP. CCP helped me a lot in English. I was failing my English classes until CCP was provided for me. CCP helped me get my high school diploma. Thank you.

Being in CCP didn't help my attendance because I'm always here. It really did help me in a lot of ways.

I love working on different types of computers. My favorite is the IBM.

I really enjoyed the class. It helped me out a lot. It was fun too. Everyone that needs help should take the class.

It helped me in my math.

CCP has shown me that I can do my work with just a little help form someone who cares.

I have enjoyed being a student in CCP. I have learned a lot because the teachers have more time to spend with me when I need help. I hope I can continue being in CCP next year.

I think the program is very good because you get more of the teachers time and that way you can fully understand it better.

CCP gave me the desire to want to learn more and to understand that if you want to make it in life, let your mind learn. Thank you for everything. The teachers are what make you understand the most. Having two of them lets you get help when you need it. Thank you.

CCP is a good class to take because you take your time and you do it right. If you need help, you have it!

I have noticed that being in CCP has helped me in my reading and English skills.

I think the CCP class helps teenagers pass and I feel my experience in the CCP has helped me to do a better job at my work and my learning abilities.

It made me think on my subjects more and kept me away from a lot of hassle from other teachers.

I really enjoyed being in CCP. I could go at my own pace. It's fun working on computers and not having homework all the time. I enjoyed the teachers (the manager and the specialist). If it hadn't been for CCP I wouldn't have passed any of my English.

VITA

David Rich Roberts was born in Cookeville, Tennessee on August 5, 1949. He grew up in Gainesboro, Tennessee, where he attended elementary school and graduated from Jackson County High School in 1967. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Tennessee Tech University in 1971, he served in the Unites States Army for three years.

Upon leaving the Army, he married the former Helen Ann Roberts and returned to Gainesboro where he pursued a career in public education. After receiving a Masters degree in Physical Education from Tennessee Tech in 1976, he became a teacher in the Jackson County School System. He received a Specialist in Education degree from Tennessee Tech in 1978. He taught at both the elementary and high school levels, and became Supervisor of Instruction for the school system in 1982.

In 1986 he moved his family to Knoxville, Tennessee, where he entered the Graduate School of The University of Tennessee. He received the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Educational Administration and Supervision in December 1991.

From 1987 to the present he has been employed at Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee.