1988

Characteristics necessary for effective rural elementary student study teams as a pre-referral intervention technique

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CHARACTERISTICS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE RURAL ELEMENTARY STUDENT STUDY TEAMS AS A PRE-REFERRAL INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

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May 1988

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DEDICATION

To my loving and supportive husband,

Kurt.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Hugh McBride, chairperson of the committee and advisor, who provided guidance, constructive criticism, and encouragement which facilitated the completion of the doctoral program.

Dr. Hopkins, Dr. Morrow, Dr. Erickson, and Dr. Malarz, dissertation committee members who provided expertise and assistance, support and personal and professional time.

Carol Sarnoff, who provided professional expertise and the typing while never allowing a deadline to be missed.

The members of the 100 Student Study Teams who responded to the questionnaire survey and shared their perceptions of effective team processes.

Marjorie Geiszler, Calaveras County Superintendent of Schools, who allowed the flexibility in my job necessary to make the participation in the program feasible.

Diane Hunt and Rose Hoffman, my dear Secretaries, who cheerfully assisted with some preliminary typing.

Gill Grimsley-McKee, Coordinator and good friend, who not only provided support but helped pick up loose ends in my absence.

Dr. Marilyn Errett, a dear friend and colleague, who provided never-ending support through the course work, the comps, every chapter, and the defense.

My dear husband, Kurt, who provided continued encouragement and understanding of the many hours of our personal life sacrificed for the accomplishment of my educational goals.

My mom and best friend, who with special pride, never doubted for a moment that I would finish in an exemplary manner.

And finally, in remembrance, my dad who provided the inspiration which drove me to achieve my educational aspirations and "Mumsie," my mother-in-law, who patiently listened and encouraged as I completed all my course work. Especially at this time in my life, you are both remembered and missed.

CHARACTERISTICS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE RURAL ELEMENTARY STUDENT STUDY TEAMS AS A PRE-REFERRAL INTERVENTION TECHNIQUE

Abstract of Dissertation

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study was two-fold. First, it was conducted to determine if the factors identified as prerequisites for successful general team decision making are also the prerequisites for successful Student Study Team functioning. A secondary purpose was to determine the extent to which these compositional and operational variables are incorporated into current Student Study Team processes.

PROCEDURE: A stratified random sample of 100 elementary schools located within seven counties was selected to participate in the study. Survey questionnaires were sent to each principal for dissemination to three Student Study Team members at each site.

Agreement was obtained from 91% of the schools to participate. The data generated from the returned surveys were analyzed utilizing ANOVA's, Pearson Product Moment Correlations and Spearman Rho Correlations. The statistical treatments determined if overall differences in perceived success existed when compared according to role/gender, community, enrollment, compositional and operational variables. In addition, correlations were computed between the compositional and operational variables and the success

factors to determine the extent to which the effectiveness of the decision making processes were influenced by the inclusion of these variables.

FINDINGS: The study revealed that a significant difference in perceived effectiveness of Student Study Teams was not found between team members when compared according to role/gender, community, enrollment, compositional, and operational variables. Significant correlations were not found between the perceived importance of the compositional and operational variables and the success factors. However, significant correlations were found between the implementation of many of these variables and the success factors. Moreover, a positive correlation was found between the importance and implementation of every compositional and operational variable.

CONCLUSIONS:

Student Study Team members implement compositional and operational variables which they interpret as important.

The most important compositional and operational variables necessary for success are the equal participation of team members, full participation by regular education teachers, the existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust between team members and the presence of special education members on the Student Study Teams.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1975, a landmark piece of federal legislation was passed. PL 94-142 mandated that all handicapped children be identified, assessed, and provided with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (Education of all Handicapped Act, 1975). This requirement meant that handicapped children were to be removed from the regular education setting only to the extent necessary to receive appropriate specialized services.

Students exhibiting academic, social, and behavioral difficulties, as well as those students displaying symptoms of a handicap, were to be referred for special education testing and possible placement. As a result of unclear eligibility criteria, inadequate testing instruments, insufficient use of pre-referral intervention techniques, and a lack of other alternatives for remediation, too many youngsters were being referred for special education assessment and placement. This condition continues today. Approximately 92% of students who are referred for assessment are also evaluated. Moreover, 73% of those referred students are placed in a special education setting which does not

always meet the least restrictive environment requirement (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1983).

The law stipulates that evaluation and programmatic decisions be made by a team so that placement decisions are not the ultimate responsibility of one individual. Unfortunately, the decision is often predicated on the need to remove the student from the regular education classes where difficulty is being experienced and where there is a dearth of viable remedial alternatives. Consequently, some children are placed on a one-way track from referral to evaluation to placement because no other vehicle for assistance is available (Christensen, Ysseldyke, & Algozzine, 1982; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1983).

California special education legislation has mandated that regular education program modifications be made before a student is referred for special education assessment and placement (California Special Education Programs, 1987). The use of intervention strategies and regular education resources prior to assessment or during Individualized Educational Plan development and implementation have not been maximized because many regular education teachers do not know how to modify programs (Poland, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Mirkin, 1982). In cases where program modifications have been attempted, teachers have not always systematically documented the adjustment or the effect of the adjustment. Some teachers do not realize that the

documentation is necessary, while others fail to have a vehicle to facilitate this modification and documentation process (Butler, 1984; Thurlow, 1983; Ysseldyke, Pianta, Christenson, Wang, and Algozzine, 1983).

Student Study Teams were created by school districts in an attempt to remediate the problem resulting from an insufficient use or documentation of pre-referral intervention techniques and a lack of viable remediation alternatives--too many students being referred for assessment and too many students being placed in special education (Poland et al., 1982). Student Study Teams evolved spontaneously from a need for professionals to work together to find solutions to legislated regulatory changes placed on school districts and to provide remedial help for children experiencing learning difficulties.

Student Study Teams are viewed as vehicles for facilitating utilization and documentation of all possible remediation alternatives, ensuring appropriate placements, minimizing failure through program modifications, and maximizing success for students through improvements in instructional environments. One of the main advantages of the Student Study Team process is its ability to minimize the placement of students into special programs which are often stigmatizing. By receiving appropriate suggestions regarding regular education modifications and pre-referral intervention techniques, teachers may be able to provide

assistance to regular education students exhibiting learning difficulties in their own classrooms (Evaluation Studies, 1983-84; Schram et al., 1983).

Student Study Teams are being utilized in approximately 50% of California schools (Schram et al., 1983). Characteristics and functions vary, but most professionals view the teams as an effective vehicle for regular education teachers to assist one another and receive suggestions from special education personnel serving on the team. Successful regular education modifications may divert some youngsters from eligibility for special education and possible segregation from peers. For other children, the modifications may not solve the problem but may facilitate the development of an appropriate referral for specialized services.

The number of schools utilizing Student Study Teams to adapt and document regular education program modifications is increasing in California. The compositional and operational variables influencing the efficacy of these teams have not been rated as to which of them contribute to decision making effectiveness. Thus, the determination of factors necessary for successful Student Study Team processes was chosen as the topic to be addressed by this study.

Purpose of the Study

Elements necessary for successful operation of general

team decision making processes have been delineated in previous studies, but these elements have not been related to Student Study Teams. The purpose of this study is to determine if these same compositional and operational factors are viewed as prerequisites for successful functioning of the Student Study Team decision making processes. These data will be contributed by teachers, parents, specialists and administrators serving on Student Study Teams.

Members of Student Study Teams completed a survey questionnaire in order to determine the significance of special education personnel or parents serving on Student Study Teams and the significance of the principal serving as chairperson. Team members also rated to what extent successful Student Study Team decision making processes are dependent upon variables such as the development of goals and objectives and documentation of decisions for a referred student, the existence of written communication between team members, the comprehensive and equal participation of team members, the rotation of the assignment of chairperson among members, the existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support and trust among members, the clarification of goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members, the adequate designation of time for planning and presenting information, the participation of team members in training prior to serving on the team, and the participation of team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions. In

addition, team members indicated whether or not their Student Study Team currently entails these significant compositional and operational variables of successful general team decision making.

A definitive model for these teams has not yet been established. Presently, Student Study Teams vary in member composition and roles, function, procedure, and evaluation. As schools attempt to establish new teams, the knowledge of variables prerequisite for successful team functioning could produce more effective and efficient planning. If the effectiveness of certain characteristics and functions of Student Study Teams can be determined, teams reflecting these characteristics could then be developed. A team duplicating these attributes could serve as a state and national model.

Significance of the Study

Previous studies have delineated characteristics which are perceived as prerequisites for successful team decision making. The significance of this study is that it attempts to determine whether or not these same elements are perceived as prerequisite factors for successful and effective Student Study Team procedures.

Various factors regarding purpose, function, composition, and procedures were evaluated by the survey participants. First, the gender and professional background of participating members were designated. Second, the role

of the administrator, specialists, chairperson, parents, and student was suggested. Third, the preferred time and frequency with which members meet was delineated. Fourth, proposed activites for planning, implementation, and follow-up as well as suggested functions and procedures of the team were proposed.

The main advantages of Student Study Team structures are that they help teachers understand the nature of handicapped children's learning and behavioral problems. Since instructional alternatives are generated, individual needs of students can be met, and immediate crisis interventions can be provided. A positive attitude between teachers and administrators may be created, and professionalism can be enhanced as information, resources, or training are generated. Finally, if effective, Student Study Teams may help reduce inappropriate referrals to special education.

Regular education teachers have not always systematically documented their utilization of program modifications. In some cases, they have not been trained to complete such documentation. In other cases, a vehicle to facilitate this documentation has failed to exist. By utilizing the Student Study Team process, a child may not be referred to special education until the suspected handicap has been established, less restrictive alternatives have been attempted and documented, and a group consensus has been reached that more specialized services are needed.

Once the characteristics of successful Student Study Teams are delineated by this study, a model may be developed for suggesting and documenting pre-referral intervention techniques as well as developing appropriate remedial educational programs for students in need of academic, behavioral, and social assistance. School personnel may utilize the information resulting from the study to develop a mechanism for maximizing regular education modifications prior to referring a child for special education service and assuring placement of their children in a less restrictive environment. Guidelines evolving from this study may assist administrators in developing organizational and procedural policies as they initiate a new Student Study Team process or modify an existing one. More effective and efficient functioning teams could result in fewer students being placed in special education programs and more students being placed successfully in regular education settings.

Objectives of the Study

This study was planned to meet the following objectives:

1. To summarize demographic data.

2. To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Team differs between the following categories of raters:

    a) role (administrative/non-administrative,

chairperson/non-chairperson, regular education/special education, parent/other),

b) gender.

3. To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differ between the following demographic categories of the school:

a) size of school (1 - 500 ADA [average daily attendance], 501 - 1000 ADA, 1001 - 1500 ADA),

b) type of community (rural, suburban, or urban).

4. To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team compositional variables including the following:

a) presence or absence of special education members serving on Student Study Team

b) presence or absence of principal serving as chairperson

c) presence or absence of parent serving on Student Study Team

d) presence of student serving on Student Study Team.

5. To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team operational variables including the following:

a) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members

b) SST meeting regularly

c) SST meeting during released time or during school.

6. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to importance of team compositional and operational variables including the following:

a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student

b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally

c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions

d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members

e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members

f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members

g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members

h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson

i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members

j) equal participation by team members

k) designation of time for planning and presenting information is adequate

l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

7. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to <u>implementation</u> of team compositional and operational variables including the following:

a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student

b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally

c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions

d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members

e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members

f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members

g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members

h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson

i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members

j) equal participation by team members

k) designation of time for planning and presenting information is adequate

l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

8. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to the following Student Study Team functions:

a) assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs

b) developing pre-referral intervention techniques

c) providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques

d) reducing referrals to special education

e) providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education

f) assisting mainstreamed students

g) assisting students exited from special education.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The procedure used for the selection of the panel of experts was appropriate for the purpose of the study.

2. Members serving on the panel of experts were appropriate for the purpose of the study.

3. The distribution of surveys is an acceptable methodology for collecting valid data.

4. The stratified random sampling plan is adequately representative to afford reliable generalization.

5. The opinions shared by the participants in the study were sincere honest beliefs regarding the importance of specific variables to successful Student Study Team functionning and the degree to which these same variables are part of current Student Study Team processes.

6. The opinions shared by the participants in the study were sincere honest beliefs regarding the indicators of successful team functioning and the extent to which these same indicators are part of current Student Study Team processes.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was based on the following delimitations:

1. The random sample did not include Student Study Teams operating at the secondary level.

2. The random sample did not include Student Study Teams operating in all counties of California.

3. Not all members of each Student Study Team completed the survey.

4. Schools with an enrollment of 1501 and more were not included in the random sample.

Limitations of the Study

The study was based on the following limitations:

1. Student Study Teams are not operational at all schools.

2. Many teams operate in the state of California; these teams have various names. It may be difficult to identify Student Study Teams as defined in this research study.

3. The interpretation of "successful" team processes may vary among sample participants.

4. Student Study Teams have not been specified as the most effective way to document regular education modifications.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study and are defined for the purpose of clarity.

Due Process

Procedures protecting the rights of the handicapped in the areas of identification, assessment, and Individualized Educational Plan implementation (Heward & Orlansky, 1980, 362-63).

Individualized Educational Planning Team Meeting

Meeting held after a student has been referred and assessed for special education services. Placement in special education usually is discussed (California Special Education Programs, 1987, 32-37).

Least Restrictive Environment

Special education students are to be educated outside of the regular education environment the least amount possible as established by PL 94-142 (Heward & Orlansky, 1980, 373).

Local District Resources

Remedial programs (excluding special education) provided by regular education i.e. Chapter I - Chapter II, Bilingual, Federal Indian Education Program, Migrant Education, School Improvement Program, and Economic Impact Aid (Graden, Casey & Christenson, 1985).

Mainstreaming

The inclusion of special education students in regular education activities i.e., recess, lunch, non-academic and academic subjects according to needs (Lerner, 1981, 41).

PL 94-142

A federal act passed in 1975 outlining local district responsibilities in providing special education services for the handicapped (Heward & Orlansky, 1980, 15).

Referral Process

Process by which a student is referred for testing for determination of a handicap and possible special education services. Parent permission and

due process procedures are negotiated (California Special Education Programs, 1987, 26).

Regular Education Modifications

Changes made to regular education programs to accommodate for individualized needs i.e., utilization of local district resources, change of grade, teacher, or seating, cross-age tutoring, change of assignment or testing requirements (Ballard, Ramirez, & Weintraub, 1982, 33).

Special Education Student

A student who has been assessed and identified by an Individualized Educational Planning Team as exhibiting a handicap and requiring special education services (California Special Eduation Programs, 1987, 26-32).

Student Study Teams

Teams composed of regular education, and in some instances, the parent and special education personnel. The team generates and documents the utilization of pre-referral intervention techniques for students exhibiting academic, social, and behavioral problems. A referral for special education services may result from the team's activities, but it will not precede these meetings. The purpose of the team is to provide assurance that before a referral is made for special education assessment and placement that all regular education remediation programs and modifications have been attempted (Butler, 1984).

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 includes the introduction, purpose and significance of the study. The objectives, assumptions, delimitations and limitations are stated to provide guidelines for the study. Terms are defined so that the meaning and significance of the results are fully understood.

Chapter 2 expands the introduction, statement of the problem, and background to provide a more complete understanding of the purposes of the study. It also contains the review of the related literature in terms of the evolution of Student Study Teams and in reference to their purpose, composition and procedure, function and perceived measurements of effectiveness. An analysis of broader topics in relation to the Student Study Team process is completed due to a dearth of specific research concerning the Student Study Team process.

Chapter 3 describes the sample, research design, and statistical measures utilized in this study. The population from which the sample was drawn and the method of selection of the stratified random sample is defined. The criteria for identifying schools at each of the strata or levels and the method for selecting schools from those available in each level is delineated. The methods of establishing reliability and content validity and the steps taken to collect the data are explained. The elements of the research design and rationale for applying each research procedure to the objectives are identified.

Chapter 4 explains the research findings and includes an analysis of the data. Tables and figures are utilized to describe pictorially the research results and to show trends that have emerged from the analyses. Supplemental analyses

provide additional data and interesting information or results unrelated to the original objectives of this study.

Chapter 5 contains a brief summary of the information concerning the problem, methodology, and findings of the study. An interpretation of the findings is presented in relation to the context of previous research and methodological limitations. Problems which have occurred in sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, and data analyses are noted. A section of implications and speculations presents possible applications of the findings to other situations as well as suggestions for further research in this field.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

A large percentage of children experience difficulty in learning and fail to meet minimum performance competencies. Approximately 10% of California's school population (ages 3-21) receive special education services (USDE, 1984). Those children who do not qualify for special education assistance remain in regular education programs and receive extra help from their teachers or from remedial program specialists who by meeting individual needs attempt to make those academic and social goals of success more achievable.

Legislation mandates the utilization of all regular education resources and the modification of present programs before a child is referred for special education assessment and instructional services (California Special Education Program, 1987). However, the manner in which these modifications are accomplished or documented is not specified by law. Thus, educators, individually and cooperatively, search for ways to modify educational programs for students experiencing learning difficulties and to assure that referrals made to special education are appropriate.

One cooperative pre-referral technique initiated in approximately 50% of California's schools is the Student Study Team (Schram et al., 1983). This multi-disciplinary approach involves administrators and regular and special education staff members in the development of a plan which documents educational adaptations and facilitates academic, behavioral, and social success for youngsters experiencing difficulty in school. The characteristics and functions of these teams vary from school to school. These variables have not yet been rated as to their importance as contributing factors to team effectiveness. Thus, despite the increase in utilization throughout the state, data fail to substantiate possible prerequisites for Student Study Team effectiveness.

The inclusion of students with exceptional needs in the regular education setting to the greatest extent possible is important if students are to be educated in their least restrictive environment. Student Study Teams are viewed as possible vehicles for ensuring appropriate placements, minimizing failure through program modifications, and maximizing success for students through improvements in instructional environments. The teams are not only seen as possible facilitators for solutions to students' problems, but they can be the vehicle to address the problems caused by restrictiveness in eligibility criteria. These efforts might result in fewer students being identified and served in special education settings. Finally, the teams might serve

as vehicles for providing required documentation of modifications completed prior to initiating a referral for special education services.

Statement of the Problem

The Problem

Student Study Teams are being used in the California public school system as a method of suggesting pre-referral intervention techniques. Regular education, and in some cases, special education personnel work together to facilitate success for children in educational environments. These educators discuss and document all classroom modifications and regular education resources utilized before referring a child for special education assessment.

The rationale for the existence of Student Study Teams rests partially upon the belief that students may not need to be removed entirely from the regular education classroom so that special educators can "fix them." The environment where the child receives the best help may, in fact, be the regular education classroom; the "least restrictive environment" is determined by the amount of time a student should be separated from regular education peers. The professional responsible for remedial assistance in many least restrictive environments may be the regular education teacher.

" Student Study Teams have evolved partly because modifications in regular education programming have not always been made prior to referring students for special education assistance. In addition, most regular education teachers have been inadequately trained to provide for specialized needs while some feel intimidated when working with a handicapped youngster for the first time (Cummings & Nelson, 1982). For these reasons, many teachers require assistance in making effective instructional modifications (Butler, 1984). This problem increases proportionately as the population of students requiring assistance grows.

The number of students with exceptional needs in regular education classrooms may increase due to the expanded implementation of the least restrictive environment philosophy, funding restrictions, and the effect of recently modified eligibility criteria. Due to this increase, it will be imperative that regular education teachers meet individual needs to an even greater extent than current practices allow. An increased knowledge of remedial techniques and placement options is necessary as individualization is provided by regular education teachers.

The Student Study Team provides a vehicle for regular education teachers to assist one another and receive suggestions from special education personnel serving on the team. Teachers apply these techniques and methods in

their classrooms not only as possible solutions for the referred child but to other children who have similar needs.

Successful regular education modifications may prevent some youngsters from being declared eligible for special education. For other children, the modifications may not solve the problem. For these cases, once the modifications are attempted, and it is determined that more assistance is needed, referrals may be made to special education programs with more certainty that they are appropriate within the scope of the new eligibility criteria.

Student Study Teams may be a viable vehicle for helping regular education teachers modify programs, for promoting closer communication between regular and special education, for promoting the least restrictive environment, and for decreasing inappropriate referrals to special education. If effective, the teams could play a substantial role in reducing the number of handicapped students served in special education and in increasing the amount of time handicapped youngsters spend in regular education settings.

Determining possible factors contributing to the effectiveness of Student Study Teams is worthwhile if specialized needs are to be met in the regular education classroom. An exploration of the characteristics and functions of the Student Study Team could provide information for some of the variations in effectiveness. The background

of the development of the Student Study Teams is necessary to explain further the problem and the significance of the study to be completed as a result of this literature review.

Background

In 1975, PL 94-142 was passed; this landmark piece of federal legislation mandated that all handicapped youngsters be identified, assessed, and provided with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (Education of all Handicapped Children Act, 1975). This requirement meant that handicapped children were to be removed from the regular education setting only to the extent necessary to receive required services.

Students exhibiting academic, social, and behavioral difficulties, as well as displaying symptoms of a handicap, were referred for special education testing and possible placement. The numbers of students served, and the costs involved in meeting all requirements of special education identification, referral, assessment, and placement procedures reached the point that such extensive services could not be provided statewide in a cost effective manner (Algozzine & Korinek, 1985; Chalfant, Pysh & Moultrie, 1979; Graden et al., 1985; Pryzwansky, 1981). Thus, fiscal problems resulted and prompted the passage of new legislation and policies governing special education operations.

A funding and service provision bill (SB 1870) was passed in order to place restrictions on special education services and expenditures and to impose additional requirements on referral procedures. SB 1870 placed a ten percent limit on the number of students served in special education. In addition, the bill required the utilization of intervention techniques before referring students to special education service. Furthermore, SB 1870 mandated that prior to securing parental permission for testing, a referral form reflecting documentation of intervention attempts must be completed (SB 1870, 797, 1980).

In 1983, new and more restrictive eligibility criteria were developed, and many minimally handicapped students previously served by special education were no longer eligible for this service. These children, however, continued to experience difficulties and problems in school. They remained in the regular classroom and received some assistance from local district remedial specialists and from regular education teachers. Many of these professionals had received little training in remediation techniques: in curriculum, instruction, classroom organization, or behavior management (Cummings & Nelson, 1982). Teachers and administrators sought additional sources of information or assistance to help these youngsters who no longer qualified for special education services and those newly referred

youngsters who would subsequently fail to meet the new eligibility criteria.

Many school districts developed school based teams to allow professionals to meet together and jointly develop instructional plans for children experiencing failure in regular education classrooms (Schram L., et al., 1983). The structure of such a team process became known as Student Study Teams. These meetings allowed sharing of ideas and alternatives that had been successfully tried previously in one setting and which could be considered as appropriate applications in other settings. The process facilitated closer working relationships between teachers and their peers, parents, and other professionals. Thus, Student Study Teams evolved spontaneously from a need for professionals to work together to find solutions to legislated regulatory changes placed on school districts and to provide remedial help for children experiencing learning difficulties.

Scope of the Review

The term, Student Study Teams, is found abundantly in the literature, but in very few cases does the term refer to the concept explored in this literature review. The term often refers to another team process, the Individualized Educational Planning Team. The Student Study Team used as a mechanism to develop pre-referral intervention

techniques is a relatively new concept in the field of education.

The literature review presents a background, "state of the art" and summarizing reference to this relatively new team process. The background reference relates to the evolution of Student Study Teams as well as the differentiation between Student Study Teams and Individualized Educational Planning Team Meetings. The definition of the term provides the reader with a conceptual framework. The evolution section reviews legislative mandates and studies which substantiate the requirements as well as difficulties encompassed in identifying and serving youngsters with special needs.

The "state of the art" reference describes the Student Study Team in terms of purpose, composition, procedure, function, and perceived measurements of effectiveness. The limited studies which have been completed on functional Student Study Teams throughout California are reviewed. A lack of specific research concerning the topic establishes a need for an exploration of broader topics in relation to the Student Study Team process. A review of general research completed on teams and on decision making processes helps determine advantages and disadvantages of working with teams rather than individuals. Problems faced by team members are identified as well as requirements for structuring teams for success and effectiveness. From the studies of various team

processes, possible characteristics of successful Student Study Teams evolve.

The summarizing reference of the literature review provides a need for the proposed study as well as the suspected results and significance. The relationship between the literature review and the topic to be studied is established as well as suspected effects in the field of education of the completed research.

The Student Study Team Process

The Evolution of Student Study Teams

The importance of determining characteristics necessary for the successful functioning of Student Study Teams is best understood if the rationale for their establishing is explained. Legislative mandates have justified the existence of Student Study Teams. These teams attempt also to address problems associated with referral, identification, classification, and placement of special education students.

The concept of a Student Study Team process evolved from legislative requirements. Public Law 94-142 provides a legislative mandate that students be educated with regular education students as much as possible; thus, they must be educated in their least restrictive environment (Education for all Handicapped Children Act, 1975). In addition, the law stipulates that evaluation and

programmatic decisions be made by a team so that placement decisions are not the ultimate responsibility of one individual.

California special education legislation has mandated also that regular education modifications be made before a student is referred for special education assessment and placement (SB 1870, 797, 1980). These modifications might include specialized education from the teacher, consultation with a specialized teacher, provision of specialized equipment and materials, and modifications in instructional or curricular programs (Makuch, 1980).

Research supports the least restrictive environment legislative requirement. Studies concluded that children should be removed from the regular class setting only to the extent necessary to provide special education services (Algozzine, Christenson, & Ysseldyke, 1982; Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1981; Graden, et al., 1985; Massey & Henderson, 1977; Schubert & Landers, 1982). The main advantage of the Student Study Team process is its ability to minimize the placement of students into special programs by suggesting appropriate regular education modifications. Reducing special education placements may reduce segregation from peers and stigmatizing labels for students exhibiting learning difficulties.

The justification for the existence of Student Study Teams reaches beyond legislative requirements. These

teams have evolved also as a result of the difficulties involved in identifying youngsters with special needs and in serving these youngsters in the regular education setting. Presently, the alternative of placing mildly handicapped children in the regular education classroom full-time without remedial assistance is not highly accepted (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Hill, 1982; Docherty & Culbertson, 1982; Tymitz, 1984; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1981). The Student Study Teams have been developed to address this need for assistance.

Making the decision to refer a child to special education is a difficult one, one which is not only complicated by a lack of guidelines but prompted by a need to provide help to a child having trouble academically, behaviorally, and/or socially. Identification, classification/ placement definitions, and criteria for special education placement are vague and indefensible (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Hill, 1982; Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1981). Furthermore, the psychoeducational decision made by multidisciplinary teams is not related always to assessment information received about a child referred for possible special educational placement. Rather, the decision is predicated on the need to remove the student from regular education classes where difficulty is being experienced and because no other remediation alternative exists.

Not only do problems result from unclear criteria for

identification and classification, but problems exist with the present referral system as well. Some children are placed on a one-way street from referral to evaluation to placement because no other vehicle for assistance is available (Christenson et al., 1982; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1983).

The use of intervention strategies prior to assessment or during Individual Educational Plan development and implementation have not been maximized (Poland et al., 1982). Individualized Educational Planning Teams appear to be pre-occupied with verification of existing problems rather than considering alternative instructional interventions. Thus, the first step in the identification process is not an analysis of attempted interventions but a completion of assessment tasks. The absence of these interventions can impose a restraint to serving children in the least restrictive environment since evaluation alone may result in automatic placement. Discussion of alternatives, possibly through the Student Study Team process, could also prevent children from being referred, assessed, declared ineligible, and returned to a regular education classroom teacher. This teacher may know no more about helping the student at the end of an assessment/placement meeting than prior to the referral.

The use of pre-referral interventions may facilitate an increased exposure of regular education teachers to

remedial techniques (Graden, et al., 1985). These interventions may compel additional accountability for instruction provided to students prior to initiating a referral (Thurlow, 1983; Ysseldyke, Pianta, Christenson, Wang, and Algozzine, 1983). Regular education teachers have failed to systematically document the kinds of interventions utilized before referring students for evaluation. It may be necessary to stress the utilization of such interventions when formulating individualized instructional objectives, adapting appropriate content level, and designing various reinforcers (Tymitz, 1984). A period of intervention implementation may need to be specified, and an evaluation of the measures of success or behavior change may need to become an integral part of the decision making process.

As a result of unclear elibility criteria, inadequate testing instruments, insufficient use of pre-referral intervention techniques, and a lack of other alternatives for remediation, too many youngsters are being referred for special education assessment and placement. Approximately 92% of the students who are referred for assessment are also evaluated; moreover, 73% of those referred are placed in a special education setting (Algozzine & Yssldyke, 1983). Because of the high number of students experiencing difficulties with learning, a need exists to identify mechanisms for providing assistance to teachers and students.

This assistance may reduce the percentage of students requiring special education services.

To meet the goals of helping regular education teachers become more self-reliant, of providing for a least restrictive environment, and of documenting pre-referral interventions, Student Study Teams evolved. To fully understand the Student Study Team concept discussed in this review, it is described in relation to the referral process and in contrast to the Individualized Educational Planning Team Meeting, a meeting associated with the assessment and possible placement of a child into special education. These two teams are confused often by professionals because they frequently have the same title. In addition, the purposes, procedures, and participating members are addressed so that characteristics which could be perceived as factors associated with successful team functioning can surface.

Student Study Teams vs. Individualized Educational Planning Team Meetings

The term "Student Study Team" is utilized frequently in the literature. However, in many cases, the term fails to refer to the concept proposed in this literature review; instead a Student Study Team refers to an Individualized Educational Planning Team Meeting (Docherty, et al., 1982; Hyman, Carroll, Duffey, Manni, & Winikur, 1973; Knoff, 1983a;

Knoff, 1983b; Lyons, 1979; Pfeiffer, 1981; Pfeiffer, 1980a; Pfeiffer, 1980b; Trailor, 1982; Vautour, 1976).

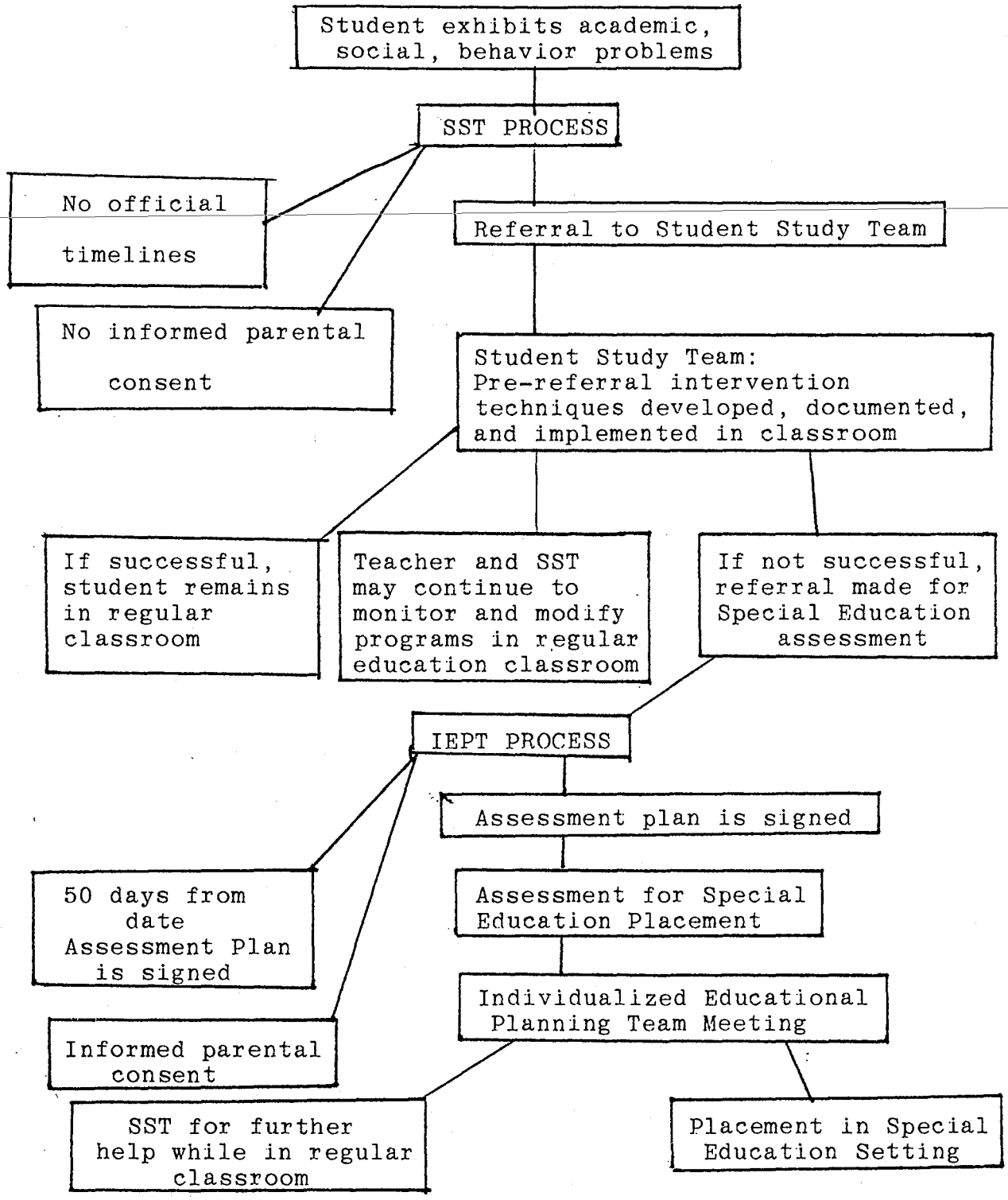
Major differences between the two meetings exist. These differences include the time during the referral process at which the meetings are held, the inclusion or exclusion of parental rights, and the adherence or nonadherence to mandated timelines. It is important that these differences are understood. Otherwise, references in the literature about Student Study Teams may be inappropriately associated with references concerning Individualized Educational Planning Team Meetings (see Diagram, page 35).

Student Study Team Meetings are scheduled when a problem with a child's learning pattern is discovered initially and occur prior to a formal referral for special education assessment. The Student Study Team process is not governed by parental consent and timelines as prescribed by the requirements of P.L. 94-142. Individualized Educational Planning Team meetings refer to a formalized step in the special education process which occurs within fifty days following the development of an assessment plan to determine the existence of a handicap. Thus, an Individualized Educational Planning Team Meeting culminates the process of referral and assessment of a child for possible special education service and provides informed consent and due process protections to the parent. In contrast, a Student Study Team Meeting initiates the process of determining

Student Study Teams

vs.

Individualized Educational Planning Team Meetings



appropriate pre-referral intervention techniques and is a relatively new concept in the field of education.

Since one of the perceived goals of a Student Study Team is to facilitate success in the regular education classroom and prevent placement in a special education setting, it is important that the concept of Student Study Teams be understood. A better awareness of the Student Study Team process will result from a more complete description of the purpose and functioning of the team. An awareness of the team's structural composition, procedures, and perceived advantages will facilitate a better understanding of the functioning teams.

Student Study Teams

Schools have adopted teams to help teachers address academic, social, and behavioral problems and to make pre-referral interventions more successful (Brezel & D'Aniello, 1983; Graebner & Dobbs, 1984). These teams have been formed under various names i.e., Teacher Assistance Teams, Assessment Teams, Evaluation and Placement Committees, Screening Committees, School Instructional Teams, Planning and Placement Teams, Educational Management Teams, and School Appraisal Teams (Mainzer, 1982; Pfeiffer, 1981).

The formation of the teams reflect four assumptions. First, regular classroom teachers have the necessary skills and knowledge to assist students experiencing

educational difficulties, or they can be trained to individualize for these students' academic and behavioral needs (Chalfant, et al., 1979). Second, it is assumed that not all students who learn differently or who have trouble learning should be referred for special education services. Third, it is believed that teachers can solve more problems working together than alone; without teams, teachers have no one to help them. Finally, in the event that the child's referral reaches the Individualized Educational Planning Team, it progresses more efficiently since several pre-referral techniques have been tried with minimal success, and the need for additional assistance has been substantiated (Mainzer, 1982).

The Student Study Team is viewed as a regular education entity so the process is not restricted by timelines or due process procedures required by P.L. 94-142. Members of the team vary, but usually the core team includes the administrator, referring teacher, and parent (Butler, 1984).

Some teams include only regular education personnel such as regular education teachers from the same department or grade as the referring teacher, Title I or resource curriculum personnel, counselors, school psychologists, and district administrators. In most schools, the principal chairs the team; however, the disadvantage to the administrator serving on the team is that some teachers may

not want to admit there are problems and consequently may be reluctant to refer a child.

Other teams include special educational personnel as permanent members (Mainzer, 1982). The disadvantage to a large number of specialists serving on the team is that specialists may dominate the discussion, and regular education teachers may not share as readily in discussion and decision making processes. For the teams to be interdisciplinary in nature, however, members must participate in contributing and interpreting information and in proposing, evaluating, and making final decisions about a student's program while providing resources and moral support to one another (Yoshida, Fenton, Maxwell, & Kaufman, 1978b).

The purposes of the teams include assisting teachers in identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as forming interventions for students having trouble learning. As opposed to discussing eligibility for special education, regular education teachers discuss ways to individualize for students in their classroom (Chalfant, 1979; Pfeiffer, 1980b). The teams can prevent costly and time consuming assessment procedures used to determine if a child is handicapped. They may prevent the lag time associated with the assistance provided, once it is decided that a child is ineligible for special education services (Pfeiffer, 1981;

Tymitz, 1984). Thus, the teams can be used to teach and intervene rather than diagnose and place.

Without Student Study Teams, students often are referred to specialized resources, and the responsibility of program improvement for the regular classroom teacher ends with a referral (Ellis, 1981). By utilizing this team process, once the decision is made to refer a child to special education, the suspected handicap has been established, less restrictive alternatives have been attempted, and a group consensus has been reached that more specialized services are needed.

The team is structured so that any child experiencing difficulty may be referred to the team by a parent, child, teacher, or administrator. One team member assumes the responsibility of coordinator. This individual handles referrals, schedules meetings, consults with referring teachers, takes recommendations, and assures that follow-up activities occur. Many teams rotate the management and coordination of cases even though the entire team studies each case (Graebner & Dobbs, 1984). In this way, no member is viewed as an expert; the team works together to provide suggestions to teachers who request assistance.

Once the team meets, objectives for the team are written. These objectives may include obtaining information about the child and developing a plan which may include scheduling, instructional methods, and

evaluation methods. In addition, records of follow-up recommendations and pupil progress are kept.

The description of the purposes, procedures and policies of the teams provide several variables which could contribute to differing levels of perceived success. The degree of involvement of special education personnel, the presence or absence of an administrator, the source of the designated chairperson, the degree of fluidity of the team members, the number and duration of interventions attempted, the degree of coordination between regular and special education services, the development of an action plan including specific objectives, and the amount of follow-up to suggested interventions are factors which could differ from team to team.

The possible advantages of utilizing Student Study Teams as well as the previously described variables within the teams have been the basis of informal studies completed on functioning Student Study Teams in California. In addition, these studies have evaluated perceived effectiveness of the teams. However, little attention has been given to specific characteristics which could contribute to the success of Student Study Teams.

Local Evaluation Studies

Local evaluation studies have been conducted by

certain counties in California on Student Study Team processes (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Los Angeles, Mount Diablo, Orange, Placer-Nevada, Sacramento, San Diego, Tuolumne, State Department of Education, 1983-84; Schram et al., 1984). The purpose of the informal studies was to describe various characteristics, purposes, operational procedures, and expectations of the teams and to determine potential perceived levels of effectiveness, usefulness, and acceptance by regular and special education personnel.

The results of the aforementioned studies showed that the assistance provided to teachers contributed to the continued assignment of many students to regular education settings. The initiation of referrals for special education services was shown to be effectively circumvented. As the percentage of schools operating Student Study Teams increased, the referral/placement ratio of students referred for possible special education placement decreased.

The coordination of Student Study Team referrals was assumed by psychologists or resource specialists in some districts and by district administrators in others. The composition of the teams, especially the involvement of the parent and student, and the roles, responsibilities, and participation levels of team members in the implementation and follow-up activities varied. Teachers did not always feel that closure was reached at Student Study Team Meetings. Time was a crucial factor since all Student Study Team Meetings

were not scheduled at the same time of day, on a regular basis, or for a sufficient length of time.

Teachers indicated that the team provided successful suggestions and supplied resources to help solve instructional and management problems. Modifications of regular education programs were noted in many students' files. However, the effect of the interventions on students' learning and behavioral problems were not documented adequately and consistently.

Communication and cooperation between parents, staff members, and administration improved. The lack of team success appears to be attributable to deficient administrative support, teacher resistance, and a lack of training of team members and parents. Possible additional factors may include an awareness of the ability of Student Study Teams to provide assistance, reluctance to share problems or seek assistance or counsel, a lack of necessary time commitment, a low number of referrals due to teachers' fear of work, and a lack of follow-up activities (Grayson, 1984).

The conclusions of the Local Evaluation Studies and the research projects conducted within the last few years indicate that the Student Study Team process is well accepted. Participating members perceive specific advantages in the utilization of these teams to suggest pre-referral intervention techniques. Factors contributing possibly to

the teams' success seem to include administrative support and participation, parent involvement, released time for meetings, regularly scheduled meetings, role specification of team members, the documentation of pre-referral interventions, and inservice training for team members. However, no attempt has been made to rate the importance of these variables in previously completed studies.

Because the research on the Student Study Team process has been so limited, studies on other educational teams and decision making processes have been reviewed. Factors contributing to the success of these team decision making processes in general might be applicable to the formation of successful Student Study Teams.

Teams and Decision Making

The Local Evaluation Studies (Amador, 1983-84) and the studies conducted by Schram, Semmel, Gerber, and Bruce (1983) in conjunction with the California State Department of Education examined such topics as membership, roles, procedures, training, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of Student Study Teams. Beyond these studies, the literature review revealed minimal research on such topics even though many studies have been completed on the utilization of a team approach in education.

A review of general research on teams and decision making, advantages and disadvantages of working with teams

rather than individuals, problems faced by team members, and requirements for structuring successful and effecive teams was completed. The advantages may reveal factors contributing to the teams' successful functioning as well as provide substantiation for the utilization of the Student Study Team process. The information reflecting disadvantages and problems faced by team members could be utilized in the development of a list of characteristics necessary for the development of successful Student Study Teams so that similar problems could be prevented.

Advantages

Numerous studies have suggested that groups are more effective at making decisions than individuals (Abelson & Woodman, 1983; Anderlini, 1983; Pfeiffer, 1980b; Pfeiffer, 1982; Pfeiffer & Naglieri, 1983; Vautour, 1976). Decisions made by multidisciplinary teams are superior and less variable than those made by individuals acting independently. Thus, the chance of erroneous placement decisions can be reduced by utilizing team decision making processes.

Group decision making allows for higher collaboration and greater opportunities to initiate innovative solutions to problems (Armer & Thomas, 1978; Bailey, Helsel-DeWert, Thiele, and Ware, 1983; Pfeiffer, 1980a). Collaboration increases involvement, ensures greater validity in

decision making, and increases the possiblity of implementing recommendations. The interprofessional team serves as a vehicle for converging differing points of view and resources. It also facilitates sharing the responsibilities of planning and programming.

Emotional support is provided as professionals interact, make suggestions regarding placement, provide services, and evaluate progress of students in programs (Anderlini, 1979b; Pfeiffer, 1980a). Teams with a high degree of collaboration may be viewed positively by school members because communication is increased through regular meetings with faculty and administration (Armer & Thomas, 1978; Bailey, et al., 1983).

In summary, research indicates that group decision making is valued more highly than individual decision making. Working as a group results in more collaboration, more appropriate placements, and better alternatives for student problems. However, despite the fact that group decision making accounts for individual opinions, the team process is not without problems which deserve consideration in determining characteristics which make Student Study Teams effective.

Problems

Legislation requires that assessment and placement be conducted by a multidisciplinary team even though there

are problems inherent in the team approach. Extensive research has been completed on the problems faced by team members serving on Individualized Educational Planning Teams and regular education teams. Variables which were viewed as important by these team members may be viewed as important by Student Study Team members as well.

One of the major problems of the team process reflects a failure of team members to recognize individual and team goals (Abelson & Woodman, 1983; Fenton, 1976; Fenton, Yoshida, Maxwell & Kaufman, 1979; Pfeiffer, 1980a). When goals are clarified, members are more apt to focus efforts collectively and give attention to tasks thus making decision making more orderly and efficient (Schmuck, Runkell, Saturen, Mortell and Durr, 1972). The failure by team members to recognize goals results in diminished attention to activities and in off-task behavior (Anderlini, 1979a).

Goals are more likely to be fulfilled and serve as a measure of success if responsibilities are clearly known, internalized, and operational (Katz & Kahn, 1966; March, 1958). Role clarification is important if members are to share information and become involved in program decisions with minimal stress or friction (Pfeiffer, 1980a; Graebner, 1982; Yoshida, 1980; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Allen, 1981).

Problems surface when roles or assigned responsibilities conflict due to incompatibility or inflexibiity (Bailey, 1984; Fleming & Fleming, 1983b; Kabler

& Carlton, 1983; Pryzwansky, 1981; Yoshida, 1983). Members may have mutually exclusive expectations for job functions and be reluctant to share responsibilities causing team rivalry. This lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust may affect decision making (Hyman et al., 1973; Yoshida, 1980). Thus, the acceptance of differing points of view and levels of responsibility may be a crucial factor in successful decision making (Bardon, 1983; Knoff, 1983b).

Team members operating in a loosely coupled system due to a lack of leadership, structure, or coordination may experience little team interaction (Weick, 1976). Often, it is the responsibility of the chairperson to reduce disproportionality, minimize its effects on the group process and coordinate steps toward acceptable resolutions. However, the chairperson requires support if adequate leadership is to be provided and group processes are to be maximized (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Hill, 1982; Fenton, 1976; Knoff, 1983b).

Identifying team members as well as their level of participation seems to be a significant issue in successful team functioning. Despite the fact that parents are viewed as valuable team members and the major benefactors of the teams' discussions and decisions, their participation rate is low. Yet, the involvement of parents with teachers in the development of an educational program may allow for better understanding, less

defensiveness, and a more successful and significant change in behavior (Butler, 1984; Gilliam, 1979; Pfeiffer, 1980a; Pfeiffer & Tittler, 1983; Trailor, 1982; Yoshida, Fenton, Kaufman & Maxwell, 1978; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Mitchell, 1982).

Parents are not the only members whose roles are minimized in team functioning. Some regular education teachers are not satisfied with the team process, because they rarely make suggestions even though they assume the responsibilities of coordinating, planning, and implementing the student's program. The lack of participation may be due to intimidation or a lack of necessary background and knowledge (Lyons, 1979; Yoshida, Fenton, Maxwell & Kaufman, 1978a; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1983). Increasing the level of participation of regular education teachers may be a prerequisite for success.

The level of participation seems to be a crucial factor in the degree of satisfaction felt by team members. Effort needs to be expended to encourage all team members to participate (Yoshida et al., 1978a; Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Allen, 1981). The amount of time allotted to team meetings appears to be an additional factor in the level of team satisfaction (Fleming & Fleming, 1983a). Research has suggested that there has been an overall lack of sufficient time for planning and presenting information. This added pressure can cause ambiguity and conflict (Pfeiffer, 1981;

Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Allen, 1981; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Mitchell, 1982).

Once decisions are made, they must be communicated to program implementers. The manner in which the information is communicated seems to be an important consideration. Written communication is preferred over oral communication since it provides more consistency and clarity and increases the possibility of decision implementation (Yoshida, 1980; Yoshida, et al., 1978b).

Written documentation of decisions is not only important for implementation but accountability as well (Yoshida, et al., 1978; Ysseldyke, Pianta, Christensen, Wang-Jing-Jen, & Algozzine, 1983). To meet the accountability goal, many team members indicate an interest in being involved in follow-up activities. These activities might result in increased job satisfaction, involvement and support of regular education teachers and parents, and shared responsibility by team members (Pfeiffer, 1981).

In summary, there are numerous advantages and problems for members working together as a team. Both factors could contribute to the formation of characteristics necessary for successful team functioning. Researchers have indicated that it is important for members to clarify group and individual goals, exhibit on-task behavior, participate interdependently and communicate directly with

one another, develop an awareness of assigned responsibilities, minimize role conflict and interprofessional rivalry, and initiate leadership and structure. It may be important to analyze the degree of administrative support, the role of the chairperson, the influence of parents and regular education teachers, the amount of time allotted to a meeting, the manner in which decisions are communicated, and the types of follow-up activities planned for students referred to the teams. Even though these considerations surfaced from research completed on general educational team processes, many of the results may be applicable to the planning of successful Student Study Team meetings.

Structuring Teams for Success

The utilization of Student Study Teams to initiate and implement pre-referral strategies is expanding throughout elementary and secondary schools in California. Administrators face the challenge of providing documentation that all regular education resources have been utilized prior to referring a child to special education service and of providing assurance that these referrals are appropriate. The Student Study Team may be a vehicle for meeting these legislative requirements as well as addressing programmatic needs of students with learning difficulties.

This literature review explored studies completed on practicing Student Study Teams, but most of the studies reflected practices of another educational team, the Individualized Educational Planning Team. Since the Student Study Team process, as referred to in this proposed study, is relatively new, little research is available. Because of the limited amount of available information, an attempt was made to review studies not only relating to Student Study Teams but to general educational team processes.

The team's purpose, composition, function, procedures, and perceived level of success have been studied. However, no attempt has been made to discern the variables contributing to the team's success. The advantages of working cooperatively together as a team help substantiate the use of Student Study Teams. Attention has been given to problems experienced by staff members, but no attempt has been made to utilize this information in order to structure teams for successful functioning.

Presently, guidelines for establishing Student Study Teams are limited, and the procedures vary from school to school. If strengths or weaknesses of the teams exist especially in terms of operating variables, this information is not being shared extensively with colleques. As regular education teachers begin working with more handicapped youngsters, and parents become more involved in educational planning and programming, the need

for utilizing available resources and information becomes more important.

The Student Study Teams may be able to bridge regular and special education services as professionals continue to work more cooperatively in addressing problems associated with the referral, identification, classification, and placement of special education students. If Student Study Teams are going to provide solutions to some of these problems, members need to know what variables make the teams effective.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Population

The target population for the study included all members serving on Student Study Teams at elementary schools within California. The accessible population was composed of members serving on 100 Student Study Teams at elementary schools in the counties of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne. The counties in central California were chosen to facilitate follow-up procedures on data received from the survey questionnaire.

The elementary schools from which the sample was chosen were listed in the California Public School Directory (1987) prepared by the California State Department of Education. The majority of the schools were located within rural or suburban communities. Almost all of the schools had an enrollment of 1000 students or less. From this population, a stratified random sample of schools was chosen.

Within the seven counties chosen to participate in the study, a total of 319 schools were listed. Table 1 depicts the numerical and percentage breakdown of the total number of schools within the counties as well as the division according to enrollment.

Table 1

Counties and Schools in Accessible Population

Numerical and Percentage Breakdown

County	Number of Schools in Each County	Percentage of Total Number of Schools in Each County	Number and Percentage of All Schools Represented in Each County According to Enrollment		
			1 - 500	501-1000	1001-1500
Amador	6	1.9	4 (1.3)	2 (.6)	--
Calaveras	10	3.1	10 (3.1)	--	--
El Dorado	30	9.4	20 (6.3)	10 (3.1)	--
Mariposa	9	2.8	9 (2.8)	--	--
Merced	49	15.4	23 (7.2)	26 (8.1)	--
San Joaquin	111	34.8	49 (15.4)	57 (17.9)	5 (1.6)
Stanislaus	93	29.2	54 (16.9)	38 (11.9)	1 (.3)
Tuolumne	11	3.44	7 (2.2)	4 (1.3)	--
Total Number of Schools and Percentages of Total	319	100.0	176 (55.2)	137 (42.9)	6 (1.9)

The members of the Student Study Teams constituting the accessible population included principals, vice-principals, counselors, Chapter 1 teachers, regular education teachers, remedial reading teachers, psychologists, special education teachers, resource specialists, language speech and hearing specialists, nurses, adaptive physical education specialists, coordinators of special education, program specialists, and/or parents of referred students. The principals of each of the schools chosen to participate in the study chose the chairperson, a regular education teacher, and one other member of the Student Study Team to complete the survey.

Sample

A stratified random sample of 100 Student Study Teams was drawn from the accessible population using a table of random numbers. Each school was numbered from 1-100 using the California Public School Directory. The unified district offices were not assigned numbers. Only local schools operating within each district were assigned a number from the table. The schools and counties were listed in the Directory in alphabetical order. Thus, in preparation for completing the random stratified sample, the schools were numbered alphabetically as well.

The sample was stratified according to the percentage of the 319 schools represented in each county as well as the percentage of schools represented in the three categories of

enrollment i.e., small (1-500), medium (500-1000), and large (1001-1500). By utilizing the stratified random sampling procedure, the number of teams chosen were proportional to the number of schools located in each county and the number of schools classified in the three categories of student enrollment.

The random sampling technique described in Educational Research was utilized (Borg & Gall, 1983). If a number was chosen twice or if the number represented a school from which the total number of schools to be chosen from the county or from the category of enrollment had been reached already, the number was disregarded. The following table represents the number of schools within each county and within each category of enrollment which was chosen to participate in the study (Table 2).

As in the target population, the majority of schools in the sample were located within rural or suburban communities. Almost all of the schools had an enrollment of 1000 or less. The sample was a representation of the accessible population.

The principal of each school chosen to be in the sample was identified through the listings in the California Public School Directory. The principal was the recipient of the survey questionnaire, cover letter, and follow-up communication. Three members serving on each Student Study

Table 2

Number of Schools in Each County and within Each Category of Enrollment Participating in Study

County	Total Number of Schools	Number of Schools in Each Category of Enrollment		
		1-500	501-1000	1001-1500
Amador	2	1	1	0
Calaveras	3	3	0	0
El Dorado	9	6	3	0
Mariposa	3	3	0	0
Merced	15	7	8	0
San Joaquin	34	15	18	1
Stanislaus	31	18	12	1
Tuolumne	3	2	1	0
TOTAL	100	55	43	2

Team were to participate in the study. The chairperson, one regular education teacher, and one other member of the team to be chosen by the principal was to complete the survey questionnaire.

Data Collection

The content validity and reliability of the survey instrument was established before the data were collected. A

panel of experts was given a pilot questionnaire to elicit clarification suggestions (Appendix A). An analysis of the survey allowed the members to determine to what extent the questions included in the survey would elicit information required to meet the objectives of this study. Additions and deletions of questions were made as a result of the input provided by the members of the panel.

Once the content validity was established, the panel of experts reviewed the survey one month later. The purpose of this meeting was to determine if the questions were completed similarly the second time. Instructions and questions were reviewed for clarity and ease of completion. Questions which appeared to be confusing or which elicited different responses from individuals were reworded. The format of the survey was reviewed for length, ease of readability, appearance, and professionalism which might influence a Student Study Team member to complete the survey rather than disregard it.

The panel of experts was composed of regular and special education teachers and administrators as well as State Department Personnel employed by the Research Unit who had participated in studies pertaining to Student Study Teams operating in California. The individuals were chosen to serve on the panel of experts because they were considered forward looking leaders in their fields and/or were

knowledgeable of the most current developments and advancements in the topical area of Student Study Teams. Once the survey questionnaire had been revised, a pilot test of the questionnaire was given to a sample composed of the chairperson and a regular education teacher from twenty-five Student Study Teams. These members reviewed the survey for further clarification and redefinition.

Eighty-four percent of the Student Study Teams involved in the pilot study responded. As a result of the information received by these members, instructions on some of the questions were reworded, and the format of two of the lengthy questions was changed. The finalized survey questionnaire was reviewed by the panel of experts for final approval before it was disseminated to the seven counties participating in this study.

In the spring of 1987, the questionnaire (Appendix B) was mailed to the stratified sample of 100 Student Study Teams which had been selected randomly. The principal of each school was the recipient of the surveys and correspondence regarding the study.

A cover letter (Appendix C) explained the purpose of the study and the importance of each participant's response. The responses were to be handled with complete confidentiality; only the researcher would have access to the data. The deadline for the return of the questionnaire was three weeks from the dissemination date.

The questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope were sent to each principal in the sample. To provide incentive for the principal to encourage the chairperson and two other members to complete the questionnaire, a commitment to share the results of the study was made.

The principal was instructed to have the chairperson, one regular education teacher, and one other member complete the survey. If more than one regular education teacher, or member of another group, i.e., counselor, parent, special education teacher to which the principal directed the survey served on the team, the teacher or member whose last name appeared last alphabetically was to be given the survey for completion.

Follow-up letters (Appendix D) and phone calls were directed to the principals who had neglected to return the survey within the four-week period. An objective script (Appendix E) composed the researcher's phone conversation so schools and principals were approached in a consistent manner.

The phone calls revealed some interesting information. In a few cases, the principals listed in the Directory were no longer at a particular school. The names of their replacements were given, and the introductory information and surveys were subsequently sent to them. In several cases, the phone calls revealed that the surveys were in the mail or

they served as an important reminder to the principal to distribute them for completion. A few principals indicated they were simply too busy to participate in the study. However, after the phone call, responses were received from two of those principals.

Moreover, three principals from one particular school district revealed that they could not participate in the study without approval from their Superintendent. Unfortunately, that information was received too late to seek such approval.

The original instructions, follow-up letters, and phone calls resulted in responses from 91% of the schools randomly selected to participate in the study. The original goal had been set at 80%. The data analysis process was initiated in the spring of 1987.

Data Analysis

The statistical analyses for this study included two-way ANOVA's, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, Spearman Rho Correlations, and charts depicting percentages and frequency distributions. Due to the large number of statistical tests which were completed, the .01 level of significance was adopted for the Pearson Product Moment Correlations to give appropriate protection against the possibility of Type 1 errors. Information from surveys received during the spring of 1987 was utilized to meet the objectives by applying

Objectives	Research Design	Variables Related to Effectiveness
1. To summarize demographic data	Percentages Frequency Distributions	Compositional Principal Serving as a Member Members Serving as Chairperson Membership - Special vs. Regular Education Gender of SST Members Parents serving on SST Students serving on SST Operational SST Based on Guidelines Assignment of Chairperson Rotating among SST Members Frequency of SST Meetings Time SST Meetings Held

The data analysis for Objective 1 provided a global summary of demographic data in regard to compositional and operational variables. These variables provided a basis for statistical analyses to be completed on the measures of success as defined in this study.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
2. To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following categories of raters: a) role (administrative/non-administrative, chairperson/non-chairperson, regular/special education, parent/other), b) gender.	ANOVA	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis for Objective 2 detected whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived the level of success of their Student Study Teams differently. ANOVA's were computed between each category of rater and each success oriented goal of the team as established in this study.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
3. To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following demographic categories of the school: a) size of school (1-500 ADA, 501-1000 ADA, 1001-1500 ADA). b) type of community (rural, suburban or urban).	ANOVA	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis of Objective 3 detected whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived their Student Study Team's rate of success differently. ANOVA's were computed between each category of school enrollment and each success oriented goal of the team as well as each type of community and each success oriented goal of the team as established by this study.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
4. To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team compositional variables including the following: a) presence or absence of special education members serving on Student Study Team b) presence or absence of special education member serving as chairperson c) presence or absence of parent serving on Student Study Team d) presence or absence of student serving on Student Study Team	ANOVA	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis for Objective 4 detected whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived their Student Study Team's rate of success differently. ANOVA's were computed between each compositional variable and each success oriented goal of the team as established by this study.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
5. To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team operational variables including the following: a) assignment of "chairperson" rotating among team members b) SST meeting regularly c) SST meeting during released time or during school.	ANOVA	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis of Objective 5 detected whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived their Student Study Team's rate of success differently. ANOVA's were computed between each operational variable and each success oriented goal of the team as established by this study.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
6. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to <u>importance</u> of team compositional and operational variables including the following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members e) clarification of roles and responsibilities to team members f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members j) equal participation by team members k) designation of time for planning and presenting information is adequate l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.	Pearson Correlation	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis for Objective 6 detected the extent to which a correlation exists between the importance of compositional and operational variables and the success oriented goals of the team as established by this study. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed between each compositional and operational variable and each goal.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
7. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to implementation of team compositional and operational variables including the following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members j) equal participation by team members k) designation of time for planning and presenting information is adequate l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.	Pearson Correlation	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis for Objective 7 detected the extent to which a correlation exists between the implementation of compositional and operational variables and the success oriented goals of the team as established by this study. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed between each compositional and operational variable and each goal.

Objective	Research Design	Measures of Success
8. To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to the following Student Study Team functions: a) assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs. b) developing pre-referral intervention techniques. c) providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques. d) reducing referrals to special education. e) providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education. f) assisting mainstreamed students. g) assisting students exited from special education.	Spearman Rho	Helps develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps document pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Helps decrease number of students referred. Helps decrease number of students assessed. Helps decrease number of students placed. Enables students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The data analysis for Objective 8 detected whether or not a correlation existed between the functions of Student Study Teams and the measurement of success as established by this study. Spearman Rho Correlations were computed to analyze the data.

various data analysis techniques as indicated in the charts below:

Rationale

A correlational study was chosen because previous studies regarding Student Study Teams have been descriptive in nature. Previous attempts have been made to describe characteristics of functioning Student Study Teams. However, the researcher was unable to find studies designed to discern which of these characteristics or variables contribute to successful Student Study Team processes and which of these characteristics are presently being incorporated into functioning Student Study Teams.

A survey instrument was chosen to facilitate the collection of information necessary to establish relationships and correlations between these variables. The survey provided additional data such as gender and position of Student Study Team members as well as size and type of school. Statistical procedures such as ANOVA's, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, Spearman Rho Correlations, and charts were chosen to test and depict relationships and correlations between variables of team decision making processes and demographic data.

The two level survey form was devised to determine whether or not a significant difference existed between the perceived necessity of compositional and operational

variables for successful Student Study Team functioning and the actual incorporation of these variables into existing Student Study Teams.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

The purpose of this study was to delineate prerequisite compositional and operational variables necessary for successful Student Study Team functioning.. This was done through an analysis of the perceptions of Student Study Team members relative to factors which were believed to contribute to their team's effectiveness. The California Public School Directory listed 319 schools located in the seven counties chosen to participate in the study. A stratified random sample of 100 schools was selected to receive the questionnaire surveys which would elicit these perceptions. Representatives from ninety-one schools agreed to participate in the study by returning the completed survey questionnaires. The 91% response rate provided information which was compiled to address eight objectives.

Objective 1

To summarize demographic data.

The first objective addressed information which was descriptive in nature. An attempt was made to summarize demographic data concerning the role, gender, and background

of the members as well as the organizational and operational structure of the meetings. These percentages and frequency distributions reflected some of the compositional and operational variables which were thought to make Student Study Teams effective. The data was also utilized as a basis for the statistical treatments developed to address the remaining objectives of the study.

All three members of each school's Student Study Team were asked to complete and return the surveys. However, all members did not comply in every instance. In situations where teams were not operating, one questionnaire was often returned indicating that the school did not have a Student Study Team in place.

Within the overall 91% response rate, only 222 of the possible 273 responses were received. Nearly all of the respondents (91.8%) indicated that their schools operated Student Study Teams, while 8.2% of the respondents indicated that no Student Study Teams existed at their school site (Table 3). The determination of the number of schools utilizing the SST process was necessary in order to interpret the increase or decrease of the California schools' utilization of these team processes.

The percentage of schools utilizing written guidelines for the basis of SST operations were examined, in part, to substantiate the significance of the study. Of the 222 respondents, over four-fifths (83.1%) of the members

indicated that the formation and operation of their Student Study Teams were based on District or County developed guidelines (Table 4). Nevertheless, sixty-six percent of the respondents indicated that their Student Study Team members could benefit from written compositional and operational guidelines generated from this study (Table 5).

Table 3

Schools Operating Student Study Teams

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	201	90.5	91.8
No	18	8.1	8.2
Didn't Respond	3	1.4	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 4

Formation and Operation of SST Based on District or County Guidelines

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	152	68.5	83.1
No	31	14.0	16.9
Didn't Respond	39	17.5	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 5

Respondents Would Benefit from Written Compositional and Operational Guidelines

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	122	55.0	66.7
No	61	27.5	33.3
Didn't Respond	39	17.6	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

The compositional and operational factors of the Student Study Teams varied from site to site. Not always did the principal serve on each site's SST. However, in 81.2% of the cases, the principal served as a member (Table 6). Most members of the team held non-administrative positions. Only 42.9% of the members completing the survey actually served on the SST in an administrative capacity (Table 7).

Table 6

Principal Serving as Member of SST

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	160	72.1	81.2
No	37	16.7	18.8
Didn't Respond	25	11.3	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 7

Respondents Serving on SST in Administrative Capacity

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	85	38.3	42.9
No	113	50.9	57.1
Didn't Respond	24	10.8	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

The members of the team serving as chairperson also varied. Approximately one-third of the respondents served as chairperson of their Student Study Team (Table 8), and over one-third of the teams' positions as chairperson were assumed by the principals of their respective school sites (Table 9).

Table 8

Respondents Serving as Chairperson

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	76	34.2	38.2
No	123	55.4	61.8
Didn't Respond	23	10.4	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 9

Principal Serving as Chairperson

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	71	32.0	35.5
No	129	58.1	64.5
Didn't Respond	22	9.9	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Various people besides the principal accepted the role of chairperson in other schools (Table 10). Most often, when the principal did not serve as chairperson, the resource specialist assumed the position. In schools where the resource specialist or the principal did not accept this responsibility, members in an administrative role such as the vice-principal often served as chairperson of the Student Study Team. Responses to the research questionnaire by chairperson assignment were examined in order to determine the importance of the administrator, particularly the principal, assuming the leadership role of the Student Study Team.

Table 10

Other Members of SST Serving as Chairperson

Respondents	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Regular Education Teacher	12	5.4	5.4
Resource Specialist	33	14.9	14.9
Vice-Principal	25	11.3	11.3
School Psychologist	15	6.8	6.8
Chapter 1 Teacher	3	1.4	1.4
Counselor	11	5.0	5.0
Spec. Education Teacher	6	2.7	2.7
Mentor Teacher	3	1.4	1.4
Dir. Student Guid.	3	1.4	1.4
Didn't Respond	111	50.0	50.0
Total	222	100.0	100.0

In most schools, the assignment of the chairperson was constant and did not rotate among the members of the SST. The person serving a specific position usually assumed the leadership role of the team (Table 11). The determination of constancy was examined in order to determine whether or not the effectiveness of the SST was dependent upon the position of chairperson remaining static.

Table 11

Assignment of Chairperson Rotates among SST Members

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	30	13.5	15.5
No	164	73.9	84.5
Didn't Respond	28	12.6	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

The greatest percentage of the Student Study Team members were serving in a special education rather than regular education capacity. Only about 9.0% of the Student Study Team members indicated they were employed as regular education personnel (Table 12). Over one-third of the SST members completing the surveys served as special education teachers (Table 13), while approximately one-fourth of the respondents served as regular education teachers (Table 14). Over two-thirds of the SST respondents were female (Table 15). Responses to the questionnaire by position and gender were examined in order to determine whether or not perceptions of SST effectiveness differed between role/gender categories. The analysis of team composition also revealed whether or not the operation appeared to be a regular education or special education process.

Table 12

Members of SST Serving as Special Education Member

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	181	81.5	91.0
No	18	8.1	9.0
Didn't Respond	23	10.4	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 13

Members of SST Serving as Special Education Teacher

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	78	35.1	39.4
No	120	54.1	60.6
Didn't Respond	24	10.8	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 14

Members of SST Serving as Regular Education Teacher

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	58	26.1	29.7
No	137	61.7	70.3
Didn't Respond	27	12.2	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 15

Gender of Members Serving on SST

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	148	66.7	73.3
Male	54	24.3	26.7
Didn't Respond	20	9.0	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

The inclusion of non-educational team members varied from site to site. However, for the most part, the majority of the SST members were employees of their respective school district. Approximately one-fourth of the respondents indicated that parents were invited to serve on Student Study Teams (Table 16), while only 7.7% of the members revealed

that students were invited to participate as members (Table 17). Responses to the research questionnaire by parent and student participation were examined in order to determine the extent of such participation as well as the relationship of parent and student involvement to the successful functioning of Student Study Teams.

Table 16

Parents Invited to Serve on SST

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	56	25.2	29.5
No	134	60.4	70.5
Didn't Respond	32	14.4	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 17

Students Invited to Serve on SST

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	15	6.8	7.7
No	180	81.1	92.3
Didn't Respond	27	12.2	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Beyond information regarding team membership, the survey results revealed noteworthy data concerning operational factors. One of the factors was related to the time of day during which the meetings were held. According to the respondents, over three-fourths of the Student Study Team Meetings were held regularly, and most meetings were held before or after school. Only 8.8% of the respondents indicated that SST meetings were held during their released time (Tables 18 and 19). The determination of regular scheduling and the optimum time of day during which the meeting should be held was examined in order to determine the relationship of scheduling to the effectiveness of the Student Study Team.

Table 18

SST Meetings Held Regularly

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	149	67.1	76.0
No	47	21.2	24.0
Didn't Respond	26	11.7	Missing
Total	222	100.0	100.0

Table 19

Time During which SST Meetings Held

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Before School	79	35.6	35.6
After School	70	31.5	31.5
During Lunch	4	1.8	1.8
Before & After School	24	10.8	10.8
Before-During-After School	2	.9	.9
During Released Time	19	8.8	8.8
Didn't Respond	24	10.8	10.8
Total	222	100.0	100.0

In summary, the demographic data provided some interesting information concerning compositional and operational variables which could possibly be related to the effectiveness of Student Study Teams. Over 90% of the schools participating in the study operated Student Study Teams, and the operation of the majority of them was based on written guidelines. The assignment of chairperson was static in nature and was usually assumed by the principal or resource specialist. The Student Study Team was for the most part a special education process which failed to encourage parent or student participation. Most members completing the survey were female special education personnel. In most

cases, released time was not allotted for Student Study Team Meetings which were usually scheduled on a regular basis.

The data analyses for Objectives 2, 3, 4, and 5 utilized the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures to determine whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived the level of success of their respective SST differently.

Seventeen compositional and operational variables thought to be necessary for effective Student Study Team functioning were identified in the data portion of the research questionnaire. These variables were generated from a comprehensive literature review and the resulting survey questionnaire which was expanded by a panel of experts and the dissertation committee.

Each of the 222 participants indicated how successfully their SST was functioning by revealing to what extent the SST met each of the team's possible outcomes. The outcomes of the SST examined for the purpose of this study were: helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques, helping document pre-referral intervention techniques, helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques, helping decrease the number of students referred for special education assessment, helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education placement, helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs,

and helping enable students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

The respondents marked each of the outcomes on a continuum of 1 through 5 designating perceived success. The research questionnaire was designed utilizing a 5 point Likert rating scale with 1 designating a low degree of success and 5 designating a high degree of success. The opinions of the members were compared according to role/gender, demographic, compositional, and operational categories. Means were computed, and ANOVA's were calculated for each measure of success. Comparisons were completed to determine the existence of significant differences between the means of responses within the various categories.

The level of significance for the purpose of this study was established at the .05 level for all ANOVA outcomes. Only those items statistically significant at least at the .05 level of significance were discussed.

Objective 2

To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following categories of raters: a) role (administrative/non-administrative, chairperson/non-chairperson, regular/special education, parent/other), b) gender.

To address Objective 2, an ANOVA was computed between role/gender categories and each measure of success to

determine if intrateam member differences concerning the effectiveness of their SST existed. There were six role/gender categories and seven measures of success. The role/gender categories included male/female, administrative/non-administrative, chairperson/ non-chairperson, regular education/non-regular education, special education/non-special education, and regular education/special education. The measures of success were the seven possible outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study (Table 20).

Of the 42 ANOVA's computed between the role/gender categories and the measures of success, only one difference between the means was found to be significant at the .05 level. The significant difference was found between the ratings of the last measure of success by the special and non-special education members. The two groups of raters viewed the SST differently in its ability to enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom. The special education members ranked this measure of success a "4," and the non-special education members ranked it a "3.63." The resulting statistical analyses revealed that the difference in which this measure of success of Student Study Teams was perceived was significant between these two rater categories. However, due to the large number

Table 20

Difference of Perceived Success of Student Study Teams by Rater Categories

Success Factors	Rater Categories					
	Male vs Female	Admin vs Non-Admin	Chair vs Non-Chair	Regular vs Non-Regular	Special vs Non-Special	Regular vs Special
1. Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques	F= .08 p= .7723	F=2.69 p= .1027	F= .44 p= .5082	F=1.05 p= .3072	F=1.13 p= .2892	F= .01 p= .9386
2. Helping document pre-referral intervention techniques	F=1.74 p= .1891	F= .20 p= .6532	F= .03 p= .8678	F= .03 p= .8565	F= .31 p= .5782	F= .17 p= .6781
3. Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques	F= .09 p= .7694	F= .20 p= .6555	F= .48 p= .4907	F= .35 p= .5560	F=1.38 p= .2409	F= .04 p= .8506
4. Helping decrease the number of students referred for special education assessment	F= .53 p= .4694	F= .10 p= .7482	F= .12 p= .7285	F=1.09 p= .2973	F= .48 p= .4891	F= .95 p= .3323
5. Helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education placement	F= .12 p= .7343	F=2.80 p= .0960	F=1.42 p= .2354	F=1.12 p= .2905	F= .25 p= .6178	F= .62 p= .4316
6. Helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs	F= .89 p= .3470	F=1.31 p= .2547	F= .00 p= .9912	F= .25 p= .6146	F= .57 p= .4509	F= .26 p= .6082
7. Helping enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom	F= .72 p= .3987	F= .67 p= .4156	F=1.87 p= .1729	F= .35 p= .5558	F=5.80* p= .0170	F=2.65 p= .1058

* $p < .05$

of F-tests conducted, this finding must be viewed with some reservations until further collaboration.

In summary, the SST members did not view the measures of success differently according to gender or role except in one tentative instance. Although the special education members ranked the SST more successful than regular education teachers in enabling students to experience more success in the regular education classroom, the finding must be viewed with some reservation.

Objective 3

To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following demographic categories of the school: a) size of school (1-500 ADA, 501-1000 ADA, 1001-1500 ADA); b) type of community (rural, suburban, or urban).

The data analysis for Objective 3 utilized ANOVA procedures to determine whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived the measures of success differently according to demographic categories. Comparisons were made between each demographic category and each level of success to determine if SST members in the various demographic categories viewed the effectiveness of their SST differently. The demographic categories included the size of school (1-500 ADA, 501-1000 ADA, 1001-1500 ADA) and the type of community (rural, suburban, or urban) served

Table 21

Difference of Perceived Success of Student Study Teams by Demographic Categories

Success Factors	Categories: Size of School (1-500 501-1000 1001-1500)	Categories: Community (Rural Suburban Urban)
1. Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques	F=3.20 p= .0431*	F= .15 p= .8597
2. Helping document pre-referral intervention techniques	F=8.79 p= .0002*	F= .09 p= .9168
3. Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques	F=3.28 p= .0397*	F= .02 p= .9833
4. Helping decrease the number of students referred for special education assessment	F= .47 p= .6263	F= .08 p= .9234
5. Helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education service	F= .47 p= .6240	F=2.75 p= .0666
6. Helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs	F=1.05 p= .3525	F=1.48 p= .2298
7. Helping enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom	F=1.12 p= .3293	F= .01 p= .9887

* $p < .05$

by the SST. The measures of success were the seven outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study (Table 21).

Of the 12 F-ratios calculated between the demographic categories and the measures of success, three differences between means were found to be significant at the .05 level. Significant differences were found between the size of schools on three measures of success: the team's ability to help develop pre-referral intervention techniques, the team's ability to help document pre-referral intervention techniques, and the team's ability to help implement pre-referral intervention techniques (Table 22).

Table 22

Differences According to Enrollment

Measures of Success	1 -500	501-1000	1001-1500
Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques	3.37	3.84*	3.50
Helping document pre-referral intervention techniques	3.12	3.88*	3.33
Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques	3.34	3.80*	3.67

* $p < .05$

The respondents representing the schools of 501-1000 enrollment ranked these three success factors higher than the schools of lesser or greater enrollment. According to the statistical analyses, the perceived success of Student Study Teams was significantly different between the demographic categories according to enrollment on three outcomes of the SST. However, no significant differences in perceived success of the teams were found between the types of community served by the Student Study Teams.

In summary, the members viewed the measures of success differently when compared by enrollment but not when compared by the type of community served. The members of SST in schools of 501-1000 ranked the teams more successful in helping develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques than members of SST in schools of 1-500 and in schools of 1001-1500. There were no significant differences between members of SST in various communities. Members of rural, urban, and suburban communities did not perceive the effectiveness of their SST differently.

Objective 4

To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team compositional variables including the following: a) presence of special education members serving on Student Study Team; b) presence of principal serving as

chairperson; c) presence of parent serving on Student Study Team; d) presence of student serving on Student Study Team.

The data analyses for Objective 4 utilized ANOVA procedures to determine whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived the level of success of their Student Study Team differently according to compositional categories. F-ratios were completed between each compositional category and each level of success to determine if specific members serving on the SST contributed to the effectiveness of the team. There were four compositional categories and seven measures of success. The compositional categories included the presence of special education members on the team, the assumption of the position of chairperson by the principal, the presence of students serving on the team, and the presence of parents serving on the team. The measures of success were the seven outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study (Table 23).

Of the 28 ANOVA's completed between the compositional categories and the measures of success, two differences between means were found to be significant at the .05 level. A significant difference was found between the compositional variable of whether or not the principal served as

Table 23

Difference of Perceived Success of Student Study Teams by Compositional Variables

Success Factors	Compositional Variables			
	Special Education Members on Team	Principal as Chairperson	Student on Team	Parent on Team
1. Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques	F=1.45 p= .2309	F=14.01 p= .0002*	F= .00 p= .9683	F= .23 p= .6351
2. Helping document pre-referral intervention techniques	F=1.14 p= .2867	F= 1.47 p= .2770	F=1.26 p= .2640	F= .02 p= .8932
3. Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques	F=2.59 p= .1094	F= 5.45 p= .0207*	F= .04 p= .8374	F= .03 p= .8642
4. Helping decrease the number of students referred for special education assessment	F= .11 p= .7428	F= 1.62 p= .2054	F= .09 p= .7619	F= .00 p= .9711
5. Helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education service	F= .17 p= .6853	F= .01 p= .9214	F= .07 p= .7934	F= .23 p= .6290
6. Helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs	F= .24 p= .6224	F= .02 p= .8971	F= .01 p= .9132	F= .57 p= .4501
7. Helping enable students to experience more success in the regular classroom	F= .58 p= .4473	F= 2.92 p= .0892	F=1.26 p= .2631	F= .01 p= .9352

* $p < .05$

chairperson and two measures of success: the team's ability to help develop pre-referral intervention techniques and the team's ability to help implement pre-referral intervention techniques (Table 24).

The SST members who served on teams on which the principal served as chairperson ranked the first measure of success a "4.11," and the second measure of success a "3.79," while those who served on teams on which the principal did not serve as chairperson marked this measure a "3.46" and the second measure of success a "3.57." According to the statistical analyses, the differences of perceived success of the SST were significant within these compositional categories. However, differences in perceived success were not found between levels of the other compositional categories involving special education members, students, and parents serving on the Student Study Teams.

Table 24

Differences Between Compositional Categories

Measures of Success	Compositional Categories			
Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques.	Special Education Members on Team		Principal as Chairperson	
	Yes	3.71	Yes	4.11*
	No	3.35	No	3.46
	Student on Team		Parent on Team	
	Yes	3.69	Yes	3.65
	No	3.71	No	3.75
Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques.	Special Education Members on Team		Principal as Chairperson	
	Yes	3.67	Yes	3.79*
	No	3.35	No	3.57
	Student on Team		Parent on Team	
	Yes	4.00	Yes	3.71
	No	3.62	No	3.69

* $p < .05$

In summary, the members did not view the measures of success differently according to most compositional variables. Those team members whose principal served as chairperson did perceive the team more effective in developing and implementing pre-referral intervention techniques than those members whose principal did not serve as chairperson. However, in most cases, the effectiveness of the SST was not influenced by specific members serving on the team.

Objective 5

To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team operational variables including the following: a) position of "chairperson" rotating among team members; b) SST meeting regularly; c) SST meeting during released time or during school.

The data analyses for Objective 5 utilized ANOVA procedures to determine whether or not various members of functioning Student Study Teams perceived the level of success of their Student Study Team differently according to operational categories. F-tests were computed between the operational categories and levels of success to determine if specific operational procedures of the SST contributed to the effectiveness of the team. There were three operational categories and seven measures of success. The operational categories included the position of chairperson rotating among team members, the SST meeting regularly, and the SST meeting during released time or during school. The measures of success were the seven outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study (Table 25).

Of the 21 F-tests conducted between operational categories and the measures of success, differences between means were found to be significant at the .05 level in three cases. The significant differences were found between

Table 25

Difference of Perceived Success of Student Study Teams by Operational Variables

Success Factors	Position of "chairperson" rotates among team members	SST meets regularly	SST meets during released time or during school
1. Helping develop pre-referral intervention techniques	F= .04 p= .8455	F=1.29 p= .2578	F=1.24 p= .2564
2. Helping document pre-referral interventon techniques	F= .11 p= .7379	F=3.65 p= .0577	F=1.22 p= .2667
3. Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques	F= .66 p= .4181	F=6.20 p= .0137*	F=1.13 p= .3368
4. Helping decrease the number of students referred for special education assessment	F=1.71 p= .1931	F=2.25 p= .1352	F= .99 p= .4667
5. Helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education service	F=3.38 p= .0676	F=4.81 p= .0296*	F= .95 p= .5062
6. Helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs	F=3.65 p= .0578	F=6.60 p= .0110*	F= .97 p= .4876
7. Helping enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom	F= .41 p= .5250	F=1.26 p= .2631	F=1.37 p= .1791

* $p < .05$

the operational variable of whether or not the SST was held regularly and three measures of success: the team's ability to help implement pre-referral intervention techniques, the team's ability to help decrease the number of students assessed for special education services, and the team's ability to help decrease the number of students placed in special education programs (Table 26).

Table 26

Differences between Operational Categories

Success Factors	Operational Categories	
	SST Held	Regularly
Helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques.	Yes 3.79*	No 3.31
Helping decrease the number of students assessed for special education service.	Yes 3.45*	No 3.00
Helping decrease the number of students placed in special education programs.	Yes 3.58*	No 3.05

* $p < .05$

The respondents who served on teams which met regularly consistently ranked these three measures of success higher than those who served on teams which did not meet regularly. According to the statistical analyses, the difference in perceived success of Student Study Teams was significant for

this operational category. Statistically significant differences in perceived success of Student Study Teams were not found for the other two operational variables: the position of chairperson rotating among members and the SST meeting during released time or during school.

In summary, the SST members did not view the measures of success differently according to most operational variables. However, those members who served on SST who met regularly did believe the team was more successful at helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques and helping decrease the number of students assessed and placed in special education programs than members who served on teams which did not meet on a regularly scheduled basis. However, in most cases, the effectiveness of the SST was not influenced by specific operational procedures being implemented by the team members.

The data analyses for Objectives 6 and 7 utilized Pearson Product Moment Correlations to determine whether or not a relationship existed between the team members' perceived importance and implementation of the compositional and operational variables and each level of success. There were 17 compositional and operational variables and 7 measures of success. The compositional and operational variables included:

a. Presence or absence of special education members serving on SST

b. Presence or absence of principal serving as chairperson of SST

c. Presence or absence of parents serving on SST

d. Presence or absence of students serving on SST

e. Receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support from the chairperson

f. Team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provision of documentation of decisions

g. Communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally

h. Participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions

i. Existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust between members

j. Clarification and understanding of goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members

k. Minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members

l. Full participation by regular education teachers as team members

m. Equal participation by team members

n. Designation of adequate time for planning and presenting information

o. Team meetings being held during teaching hours (released time)

p. Participation of team members in training prior to serving on team

q. Rotation of position of "chairperson" among SST members.

The measures of success were the seven outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study.

Each of the 222 participants indicated to what extent each variable was viewed as important to the successful SST functioning and to what degree the SST presently was implementing these variables as part of the SST process. The respondents, in both cases, marked each variable on a continuum of 1-5. The research questionnaire was designed utilizing a 5 point Likert rating scale with 1 designating a low degree of success and 5 designating a high degree of success.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were computed between each of the compositional and operational variables and each measure of success to determine if a relationship existed between the perceived importance and implementation of the operational variables and the success factors. Additional Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were computed between the perceived importance and implementation of each compositional and operational variable. These statistical treatments were implemented in

order to determine the relationship between variables thought to be important and the team's reluctance or eagerness to implement them.

Since the number of correlation coefficients was so large, a .01 level of significance was used to determine statistical significance to minimize the probability of obtaining spurious results.

Objective 6

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to importance of team compositional and operational variables including the following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provision of documentation of decisions; b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally; c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions; d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members; e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members; f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members; g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members; h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson; i) full

participation by regular education teachers as team members; j) equal participation by team members; k) designation of adequate time for planning and presenting information; l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

The data analyses for Objective 6 utilized the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients to determine the extent of a relationship between the importance of the compositional and operational variables and the success oriented goals of the Student Study Teams. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed between each compositional and operational category and each level of success to determine if the ratings of the success factors increased or decreased as the perceived importance of the compositional and operational variables increased. Of the 119 correlations computed, 11 correlations were found to be statistically significant at the .01 level, as indicated in Table 27.

A total of 3 statistically significant correlation coefficients were found between the importance of the compositional variables and the success factors, all of which were negative relationships. A negative correlation was found between the importance of parents serving on the SST and the ability of the team to enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom. Two negative correlations were found between the importance of

Table 27

Correlations between Importance of Compositional and Operational Variables and Success Factors

	Success 1	Success 2	Success 3	Success 4	Success 5	Success 6	Success 7
Import A	- .0267 p=.359	.0836 p=.129	.0020 p=.489	.0498 p=.250	- .0228 p=.379	.0429 p=.282	- .1112 p=.065
Import B	.1018 p=.083	- .0190 p=.399	.0511 p=.245	.0080 p=.457	.0114 p=.439	- .1028 p=.083	.0465 p=.264
Import C	- .1417 p=.027	- .0455 p=.271	- .0906 p=.111	- .0922 p=.107	- .1000 p=.089	- .1465 p=.024	- .1733 p=.009*
Import D	- .2235 p=.001*	- .0619 p=.203	- .1704 p=.010	- .0594 p=.211	- .0606 p=.207	- .0246 p=.370	- .2196 p=.001*
Import E	.1648 p=.012	.1182 p=.055	.1768 p=.008*	.0078 p=.458	- .0195 p=.396	.0287 p=.350	.1989 p=.003*
Import F	.0474 p=.261	.1482 p=.023	.0388 p=.300	- .0697 p=.174	- .0182 p=.403	- .0129 p=.431	- .0146 p=.422
Import G	.1107 p=.067	.1443 p=.026	.1276 p=.043	.0400 p=.295	.0129 p=.431	.0526 p=.241	.0160 p=.415
Import H	.0286 p=.002*	.0551 p=.230	.1365 p=.032	.0371 p=.309	.0312 p=.337	.0516 p=.244	.1486 p=.022
Import I	.1788 p=.007*	.2044 p=.003*	.1908 p=.005*	.0927 p=.104	.1215 p=.049	.1250 p=.045	.1366 p=.031
Import J	- .0168 p=.410	.1222 p=.050	.1509 p=.020	.0296 p=.345	.0331 p=.328	.0199 p=.394	- .0401 p=.294

Table 27 (continued)

	Success 1	Success 2	Success 3	Success 4	Success 5	Success 6	Success 7
Import K	.0130 p=.431	.0255 p=.366	.0169 p=.410	.0657 p=.188	.0153 p=.419	.0221 p=.383	- .0939 p=.102
Import L	.0367 p=.310	.0884 p=.117	.1293 p=.040	.1002 p=.088	.0552 p=.228	.0720 p=.167	.1347 p=.034
Import M	.1385 p=.029	.0662 p=.185	.2000 p=.003*	.0453 p=.270	.0020 p=.489	.0400 p=.294	.0990 p=.089
Import N	.0701 p=.171	- .0224 p=.487	.0624 p=.199	.0474 p=.261	.0369 p=.309	.1647 p=.013	- .0121 p=.435
Import O	- .0351 p=.319	- .1650 p=.013	.0451 p=.273	- .0501 p=.251	.0172 p=.409	.0320 p=.335	- .0711 p=.170
Import P	- .2309 p=.001*	- .1548 p=.018	- .1402 p=.029	.0479 p=.259	.0816 p=.135	.1330 p=.036	- .1575 p=.016
Import Q	- .1568 p=.016	- .1681 p=.011	- .1278 p=.041	- .0110 p=.441	- .0036 p=.481	.0821 p=.134	- .0488 p=.255

* $p < .01$

students serving on the SST and the ability of the SST to develop pre-referral intervention techniques and the ability of the team to enable students to experience more success in the regular classroom.

In addition, there were 8 correlations found to be significant between the importance of the operational factors and the success factors. A negative correlation was found between the importance of team members participating in training prior to serving on the team and the ability of the team to develop pre-referral intervention techniques. A positive correlation was found between the importance of team members receiving leadership, coordination, and support from the chairperson and the team's ability to implement pre-referral intervention techniques and to enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom. Another positive correlation was found between the importance of the team members participating in follow-up activities to team suggestions and the team's ability to develop pre-referral intervention techniques. Three positive correlations were found between the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust existing between members and the team's ability to develop document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques. Finally, a positive correlation was found between the importance of the team members participating as equals and

the team's ability to implement pre-referral intervention techniques.

In summary, there was little relationship detected between the importance of the majority of the compositional and operational variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. However, there were 4 negative correlations found to be significant at the .01 level. In these instances, as the importance of a compositional or operational variable increased, the ability of the team to meet a success factor decreased and vice versa. In addition, there were 7 positive correlations found to be significant at the .01 level. In these instances, as the importance of a compositional or operational variable increased, the ability of the team to meet a success factor also increased or vice versa. Overall, a correlational relationship was not found to exist between the importance of most compositional and operational variables and the success factors of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study. Thus, the rating of the success factors did not increase or decrease as the rating of the importance of the compositional and operational variables increased.

Objective 7

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to <u>implementation</u> of team compositional and operational variables including the

following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provision of documentation of decisions; b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally; c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions; d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members; e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members; f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members; g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members; h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson; i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members; j) equal participation by team members; k) designation of adequate time for planning and presenting information; l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

The data analysis for the first part of Objective 7 utilized Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients to determine the extent of a relationship between the implementation of the compositional and operational variables and the success oriented goals of the Student Study Teams. A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed between each compositional and operational category and each

level of success to determine if the ratings of success factors increased or decreased as the implementation of the compositional and operational variables increased. Of the 119 correlations computed, 45 correlations were found to be significant at the .01 level. All correlations were found to be positive rather than negative in nature as indicated in Table 28.

Only one significant correlation was found between the implementation of compositional variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. No significant correlations were found between the implementation of special education members, parents, and students serving on SST and any of the success factors. However, one significant correlation was found between the implementation of the principal serving as chairperson of the SST and the ability of the team to develop pre-referral intervention techniques.

No significant correlations were found between the implementation of three of the operational variables and the success factors. No relationship was found between team rivalry or role conflict being minimized by members, teams meeting during released time or teaching hours, and the assignment of chairperson rotating among SST members and any of the success factors.

However, a variety of significant correlations were found between the implementation of many of the operational variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams.

Table 28

Correlations between Implementation of Compositional and Operational Variables and Success Factors

	Success 1	Success 2	Success 3	Success 4	Success 5	Success 6	Success 7
Implementation A	.1387 p=.058	.0979 p=.185	.1519 p=.038	.0601 p=.415	.0370 p=.616	.0503 p=.497	.0125 p=.865
Implementation B	.2304 p=.001*	.0500 p=.498	.1566 p=.032	.0834 p=.257	.0342 p=.642	.0063 p=.932	.0873 p=.233
Implementation C	- .0718 p=.330	.0220 p=.767	- .0153 p=.836	- .0181 p=.807	- .0113 p=.879	- .0837 p=.259	- .0499 p=.499
Implementation D	- .0869 p=.238	.0556 p=.453	- .0424 p=.566	.0315 p=.670	.0164 p=.825	.0643 p=.386	- .0406 p=.583
Implementation E	.3390 p=.000*	.2802 p=.000*	.2666 p=.000*	.0912 p=.218	.0870 p=.240	.0666 p=.370	.3272 p=.000*
Implementation F	.3119 p=.000*	.4705 p=.000*	.3129 p=.000*	.0625 p=.399	.0593 p=.424	.0109 p=.884	.2552 p=.000*
Implementation G	.1950 p=.008*	.2560 p=.001*	.2335 p=.002*	.1455 p=.050	.1070 p=.150	.1070 p=.152	.1019 p=.170
Implementation H	.4960 p=.000*	.3602 p=.000*	.4464 p=.000*	.2559 p=.000*	.1975 p=.007*	.1178 p=.112	.3732 p=.000*
Implementation I	.3967 p=.000*	.4601 p=.000*	.4433 p=.000*	.2148 p=.003*	.2194 p=.003*	.1811 p=.014	.3885 p=.000*
Implementation J	.2655 p=.000*	.3736 p=.000*	.3597 p=.000*	.1552 p=.036	.1444 p=.052	.0643 p=.390	.2860 p=.000*

Table 28 (continued)

	Success 1	Success 2	Success 3	Success 4	Success 5	Success 6	Success 7
Implementation K	.1337 p=.070	.1852 p=.012	.1571 p=.034	.1057 p=.154	.1037 p=.163	.0823 p=.269	.0558 p=.452
Implementation L	.2759 p=.000*	.3369 p=.000*	.3970 p=.000*	.2534 p=.001*	.1971 p=.007*	.2196 p=.003*	.3391 p=.000*
Implementation M	.3151 p=.000*	.2946 p=.000*	.3986 p=.000*	.2247 p=.002*	.2506 p=.001*	.1585 p=.032	.2577 p=.000*
Implementation N	.2815 p=.000*	.2219 p=.002*	.2141 p=.003*	.1379 p=.061	.1765 p=.016	.1280 p=.083	.1373 p=.062
Implementation O	.1502 p=.043	.0198 p=.792	.1731 p=.020	.0518 p=.489	.0733 p=.327	.0029 p=.969	.1111 p=.135
Implementation P	.0757 p=.306	.0391 p=.600	.1427 p=.053	.1402 p=.058	.1973 p=.007*	.0776 p=.295	.0780 p=.291
Implementation Q	- .1097 p=.137	- .1145 p=.123	- .0270 p=.716	.0622 p=.402	.0946 p=.200	.1007 p=.174	- .0282 p=.704

* $p < .01$

For example, one significant correlation was found between team members having participated in training prior to serving on the team and the team's ability to decrease the number of students assessed for special education service.

In addition, four significant correlations were found to exist between the implementation of three operational variables and the same four success factors. A relationship was found between team members receiving leadership, coordination and support from the chairperson, the team developing a written plan (goals and objectives) for a referred student and providing documentation of decisions, and goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members being clarified and understood by team members with the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques as well as ensure that students experience more success in the regular education classroom.

Beyond that, three correlations were found to be significant between the implementation of two operational variables and three success factors. A relationship was found between the team members communicating decisions and actions with one another in written form rather than verbally and time designated for planning and presenting information being adequate and the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques.

Moreover, six significant correlations were found between the implementation of three operational variables and

all but one measure of success. A relationship was found between the team members participating in follow-up activities to team suggestions, interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust existing between members, and team members participating as equals and all success factors except the team's ability to decrease the number of students placed in special education programs.

Furthermore, on the implementation of one operational variable, significant correlations were found between the variable and all success factors. A relationship was found between regular education teachers participating as fully as other members and all success oriented goals of the Student Study Team.

To address the second part of Objective 7, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were computed between the perceived importance and implementation of each of the compositional and operational variables. The intent of this statistical analysis was to determine to what extent a correlation existed between the perceived importance of each variable and the extent of its implementation as indicated in Table 29.

The data analyses of the second part of Objective 7 revealed that there were positive correlations between the importance and implementation of all compositional and operational variables. The more important SST members viewed the variable, the more it was implemented; the less important SST members viewed the variable, the less it was implemented.

Table 29

Correlations between Importance and Implementation of Compositional and Operational Variables

	Impl A	Impl B	Impl C	Impl D	Impl E	Impl F	Impl G	Impl H	Impl I	Impl J	Impl K
Import A	.5663 p=.000*	.0049 p=.946	- .0686 p=.342	- .0529 p=.465	.0868 p=.231	- .0122 p=.867	.0458 p=.530	.0484 p=.504	- .0216 p=.764	- .0258 p=.724	.1383 p=.056
Import B	.0234 p=.746	.7276 p=.000*	- .0911 p=.206	- .1417 p=.049	.0655 p=.366	- .0283 p=.697	.0367 p=.615	.0475 p=.513	- .1000 p=.165	.0007 p=.992	- .0568 p=.435
Import C	.0589 p=.416	- .0987 p=.170	.7297 p=.000*	.3668 p=.000	- .0862 p=.235	- .0127 p=.862	.0666 p=.363	- .1250 p=.085	- .0075 p=.918	- .0455 p=.534	- .0087 p=.905
Import D	- .0471 p=.516	- .1329 p=.065	.3186 p=.000	.5745 p=.000*	- .0596 p=.413	- .0969 p=.184	.1196 p=.102	- .2411 p=.001	- .1132 p=.118	- .1199 p=.101	- .0515 p=.482
Import E	- .0399 p=.582	.0524 p=.468	.0805 p=.266	- .0308 p=.672	.5008 p=.000*	.1191 p=.101	.0641 p=.381	.1484 p=.040	.0842 p=.244	.2039 p=.005	- .0024 p=.974
Import F	- .0156 p=.829	- .0895 p=.215	- .0556 p=.443	- .0242 p=.740	.0876 p=.227	.5210 p=.000*	.2389 p=.001	.1712 p=.018	.0404 p=.576	.0709 p=.331	.1373 p=.059
Import G	.0408 p=.575	- .0514 p=.479	.1143 p=.116	.1389 p=.057	.1097 p=.132	.2275 p=.002	.7689 p=.000*	.0435 p=.552	.0923 p=.204	.1074 p=.143	.0970 p=.184
Import H	.1113 p=.122	.0566 p=.433	- .1375 p=.057	- .2130 p=.003	.1105 p=.128	.1344 p=.062	.0922 p=.207	.4019 p=.000*	.0756 p=.295	.0523 p=.472	.0531 p=.467
Import I	.1026 p=.153	.0098 p=.892	.0586 p=.417	- .0134 p=.853	.1445 p=.045	.1488 p=.038	.0827 p=.255	.2705 p=.000	.3664 p=.000*	.1415 p=.050	.0935 p=.197
Import J	.0907 p=.207	- .0927 p=.198	- .0237 p=.744	- .0852 p=.241	.1274 p=.079	.0737 p=.310	.0688 p=.347	.0627 p=.388	.1092 p=.130	.4218 p=.000*	.1708 p=.018

Table 29 (Continued)

	Impl L	Impl M	Impl N	Impl O	Impl P	Impl Q
Import A	.0782 p=.283	.0584 p=.419	.0326 p=.652	-.1512 p=.038	-.1865 p=.009	-.1355 p=.062
Import B	.0047 p=.948	-.0681 p=.347	.0348 p=.631	-.0737 p=.313	.0960 p=.186	-.1040 p=.152
Import C	-.0402 p=.583	-.0080 p=.912	.0308 p=.671	.0229 p=.755	.0677 p=.352	.0683 p=.349
Import D	-.1040 p=.155	-.0917 p=.207	-.0696 p=.339	.0717 p=.329	-.0698 p=.338	.1609 p=.027
Import E	.0455 p=.534	.0303 p=.676	.0199 p=.784	-.0137 p=.852	.0310 p=.670	-.2766 p=.000
Import F	-.0248 p=.735	.0231 p=.749	.1149 p=.113	-.0430 p=.558	-.0334 p=.646	-.0907 p=.213
Import G	-.0481 p=.512	-.0472 p=.517	.0562 p=.441	.0236 p=.749	.1138 p=.119	.0557 p=.448
Import H	.0076 p=.918	.0723 p=.317	-.0030 p=.967	.0160 p=.827	-.0328 p=.651	-.2311 p=.001
Import I	.1781 p=.014	.2435 p=.001	.0370 p=.609	.0088 p=.904	.0510 p=.480	-.1562 p=.031
Import J	.0408 p=.577	.0754 p=.297	.0403 p=.579	.0069 p=.926	.1539 p=.033	-.0659 p=.366

Table 29 (continued)

	Impl A	Impl B	Impl C	Impl D	Impl E	Impl F	Impl G	Impl H	Impl I	Impl J	Impl K
Import K	.2078 p=.004	- .0909 p=.209	.0690 p=.343	.0408 p=.576	.0340 p=.641	.0138 p=.850	.0530 p=.469	.0428 p=.557	.0520 p=.473	.0062 p=.932	.7024 p=.000*
Import L	.1165 p=.107	- .0628 p=.384	- .0378 p=.603	- .1513 p=.037	.0536 p=.462	- .0239 p=.743	- .1181 p=.105	.0429 p=.555	.0980 p=.175	.0415 p=.571	.1860 p=.010
Import M	.2328 p=.001	- .0508 p=.479	- .0694 p=.336	- .1429 p=.047	.0845 p=.242	.1154 p=.109	- .0182 p=.803	.0871 p=.227	.1030 p=.151	.0584 p=.421	.1212 p=.094
Import N	.1256 p=.081	.0187 p=.795	- .0033 p=.964	- .1311 p=.070	.1175 p=.105	.1021 p=.159	.0428 p=.557	.0502 p=.489	.0679 p=.347	.0524 p=.473	.2272 p=.002
Import O	- .0781 p=.284	.0386 p=.596	.0783 p=.284	- .0035 p=.962	- .1432 p=.050	- .1502 p=.040	.0546 p=.459	- .0723 p=.324	- .1300 p=.074	- .1373 p=.062	.0036 p=.961
Import P	- .0477 p=.509	- .0319 p=.659	.0832 p=.252	.0891 p=.220	- .0459 p=.528	- .1393 p=.054	.1125 p=.123	- .1876 p=.009	- .1259 p=.080	- .0211 p=.773	.0300 p=.681
Import Q	- .0506 p=.486	- .0203 p=.779	.0285 p=.696	.1860 p=.010	- .2134 p=.003	- .1931 p=.007	.0177 p=.810	- .2532 p=.000	- .2327 p=.001	- .1668 p=.022	.0048 p=.948

* $p < .01$

Table 29 (continued)

	Impl L	Impl M	Impl N	Impl O	Impl P	Impl Q
Import K	.0749 p=.307	.0871 p=.231	.0186 p=.798	.0252 p=.732	-.0358 p=.624	.0301 p=.681
Import L	.4547 p=.000*	.2391 p=.001	.1005 p=.166	-.0918 p=.210	.0458 p=.529	-.0603 p=.408
Import M	.2271 p=.002	.3649 p=.000*	.0565 p=.434	-.0743 p=.308	-.0732 p=.311	-.0462 p=.524
Import N	.0117 p=.872	.0254 p=.726	.3119 p=.000*	-.0173 p=.812	-.1729 p=.016	-.1143 p=.115
Import O	-.0230 p=.755	-.1121 p=.125	-.2192 p=.002	.4468 p=.000*	.0084 p=.908	-.0153 p=.835
Import P	.0138 p=.850	-.0920 p=.203	-.1046 p=.149	.0954 p=.193	.4101 p=.000*	.2132 p=.003
Import Q	-.0471 p=.521	-.1791 p=.013	-.2058 p=.004	.0110 p=.882	.0015 p=.983	.5491 p=.000*

In summarizing the findings of Objective 7, there was no correlation found between the implementation of the majority of the compositional variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. However, the respondents definitely indicated that a relationship existed between the implementation of almost all of the operational variables and at least half of the measures of success. Overall, there were 45 positive correlations. In these instances, as the importance of a compositional or operational variable increased, the ability of the team to meet a success factor increased. The levels of success determined to be most important were the development, documentation and implementation of pre-referral intervention techniques rather than the decrease of students referred, assessed, and placed in special education programs.

In conclusion, a correlational relationship was not found between the importance of most compositional and operational variables and the success factors. However, a correlational relationship was found between the implementation of many compositional and operational variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. It also needs to be emphasized that a positive correlation was found between the importance and implementation of all compositional and operational variables of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study.

Objective 8

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to the following Student Study Team functions: a) assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs; b) developing pre-referral intervention techniques; c) providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques; d) reducing referrals to special education; e) providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education; f) assisting mainstreamed students; g) assisting students exited from special education.

The data analysis for Objective 8 utilized the Spearman Rho procedure to determine whether or not a correlation was found between the ranking of the primary functions of the SST and the ranking of the measures of success. A Spearman Rho Correlation was computed between the two sets of rankings. There were 7 functions and 7 measures of success. The SST functions as established in this study included:

a. assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs
b. developing pre-referral intervention techniques
c. providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques.
d. reducing referrals to special education

e. providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education or who are mainstreamed into regular education settings.

f. guaranteeing that all resources in regular education are utilized prior to initiating a referral for special education

g. helping prepare students to move from special education programs into regular education programs

The measures of success were the seven outcomes of the 100 Student Study Teams participating in this study as indicated in Table 30.

Each of the 222 participants rank ordered the variables indicating success. A rank of "1" meant that the variable was the most important indicator of successful team functioning. A rank of "7" meant that the variable was the least important indicator of successful team functioning. Likewise, the participants rank ordered the primary functions of the SST from 1-7. Again, a rank of "1" meant that the function was the most important, and a rank of "7" meant that the function was the least important. A Spearman Rho Correlation was computed in order to determine the existence of a correlation between the ranking of the success factors and the ranking of the functions.

Table 30

Spearman Rho Correlations between SST Functions and Success Factors

	Success 1	Success 2	Success 3	Success 4	Success 5	Success 6	Success 7
Function 1	- .1053 p=.150	- .0387 p=.600	- .0092 p=.901	.1347 p=.066	.1025 p=.163	- .0274 p=.710	- .0293 p=.690
Function 2	- .2579 p=.000*	- .1673 p=.023	- .1066 p=.148	.0042 p=.954	- .0117 p=.874	- .0779 p=.290	.0002 p=.998
Function 3	.0218 p=.768	- .1546 p=.036	.0460 p=.533	- .0093 p=.899	.0282 p=.702	- .0158 p=.831	.1303 p=.075
Function 4	.1615 p=.028	.0761 p=.304	.0657 p=.374	- .0234 p=.752	- .0123 p=.868	- .0542 p=.464	.1331 p=.070
Function 5	- .0019 p=.979	.0817 p=.269	.0232 p=.754	- .0909 p=.217	- .0999 p=.175	- .0270 p=.715	- .0650 p=.376
Function 6	.0263 p=.722	.0128 p=.864	- .0415 p=.575	- .0306 p=.680	- .0403 p=.585	.0284 p=.701	- .0512 p=.488
Function 7	.1414 p=.056	.1612 p=.030	.0757 p=.308	.0589 p=.429	.0105 p=.888	.1896 p=.010	.0382 p=.607

* $p < .01$

Of the 49 Spearman Rho Correlations computed, only one correlation was found to be significant at the .01 level. The second function was negatively correlated with the first success factor. Both of these variables concerned the development of pre-referral intervention techniques. No other correlations were found to be significant. Again, this finding must be viewed with reservation due to the large number of correlation coefficients which were computed.

In summary, generally no relationship was found between the variables indicating success and the functions of the Student Study Teams. The one statisically significant negative correlation was declared to be insignificant data due to the two variables being identical in concept.

The statistical analyses of the data obtained from this study provided some interesting information regarding relationships between the compositional and operational variables thought to make SST effective. Some descriptive statistics are worth mentioning. It is important to note the order in which the variables necessary for effective SST functioning, the indicators of successful team functioning, and the functions of SST were ranked by the 222 participants as indicated in Tables 31, 32, and 33.

The respondents indicated that the most crucial variable both in importance and implementation of effective Student Study Team functioning was the equal participation of team members. The second most crucial variable was the full

Table 31

Mean Ranking of the Importance and Implementation of Variables to Successful SST Functioning

Variable	Importance		Implementation	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
a. Special education members serve on SST	4.53	8	4.50	3
b. Principal serves as chairperson of SST	2.83	13	2.80	12
c. Parents serve on SST	2.57	15	2.18	14
d. Students serve on SST	1.74	17	1.46	17
e. Members receive leadership, coordination, & support from chairperson	4.58	5	4.31	5
f. Team develops written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provides documentation of decisions	4.50	9	4.06	8
g. Members communicate decisions and actions with one another in written form rather than verbally	3.58	12	3.25	11
h. Team members participate in follow-up activities to team suggestions	4.57	6.5	3.97	9
i. Interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust exist between members	4.72	3	4.38	4

Table 31 (continued)

Variable	Importance		Implementation	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
j. Goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members are clarified and understood by team members	4.64	4	4.16	7
k. Team rivalry or role conflict are minimized by members	4.47	10	4.25	6
l. Regular education teachers participate as fully as other members i.e., special education members or principal	4.76	2	4.52	2
m. Team members participate as equals	4.83	1	4.69	1
n. Time designated for planning and presenting information is adequate	4.57	6.5	3.75	10
o. Team meets during teaching hours (Released time)	2.69	14	1.86	15
p. Team members have participated in training prior to serving on team	3.66	11	2.49	13
q. Assignment of chairperson rotates among SST members	2.40	16	1.73	16

Table 32

Indicators of Successful SST Functioning

Variable	Ranking	Implementation
a. developing pre-referral intervention techniques	2	3.68
b. documenting pre-referral intervention techniques	4	3.65
c. implementing pre-referral intervention techniques	3	3.66
d. decreasing the number of students referred for special education assessment	5	3.38
e. decreasing the number of students assessed for special education service	6	3.36
f. decreasing the number of students placed in special education programs	7	3.46
g. enabling students to experience more success in the regular education classroom	1	3.85

Table 33

Functions of SST Ranked in Order of Importance

	Mean	Ranking
a. assessing student's academic, behavior and social needs	2.33	1
b. developing pre-referral intervention techniques	2.96	3
c. providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques	4.38	5
d. reducing referrals to special education	5.53	6
e. providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education or who are mainstreamed into regular education settings	4.29	4
f. guaranteeing that all resources in regular education are utilized prior to initiation of a referral for special education service	2.80	2
g. helping prepare students to move from special education programs into regular education programs	5.57	7

participation of regular education teachers. The third most crucial factor in terms of importance was the existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust between members, while the third most crucial factor in terms of implementation was the presence of special education members on the Student Study Team.

The participants' ranking of the indicators of successful team functioning revealed that the most important indicator of success was the team's ability to enable students to experience more success in the regular education classroom. The second most important indicator was the team's ability to develop pre-referral intervention techniques, and the third most important indicator was the team's ability to implement the interventions.

When the participants ranked the various functions of the Student Study Team in the order of importance, the rankings indicated that the most important function of the SST was the team's ability to assess the student's academic, behavioral, and social needs. The next important function was the team's ability to quarantee that all resources in regular education be utilized prior to initiating a referral for special education services, while the third most important function was the development of pre-referral techniques. One of the least important functions, according to the rankings, was the team's ability to reduce referrals for special education services.

It is important to emphasize that the information utilized in this study was provided mostly by regular education teachers, resource specialist teachers, and principals as indicated in Table 34. The majority of the schools participating in the study had an enrollment of 501-1000, while very few of the schools had an enrollment above 1000 (Table 35). Moreover, over one-half of the Student Study Teams served communities which were rural rather than urban or suburban in nature (Table 36). Responses to the research questionnaire by role, enrollment, and community were examined in order to determine the effect of these variables on the effectiveness of the SST, as well as to provide a basis of generalization for the findings of the study.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to delineate prerequisite compositional and operational variables necessary for successful Student Study Team functioning. This was done through an analysis of the perceptions of Student Study Team members relative to factors which were believed to contribute to their team's effectiveness. Ninety-one schools returned the completed survey questionnaires. Information provided by this 91% response rate was utilized as a basis for descriptive and interpretive statistical analyses. Results

Table 34

Position of SST Members Completing Survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Regular Education Teacher	55	24.8	24.8
Resource Specialist Teacher	52	23.5	23.5
Principal	47	21.2	21.2
Psychologist	11	5.0	5.0
Counselor	11	5.0	5.0
Special Education Teacher	9	4.1	4.1
Vice-Principal	7	3.2	3.2
Speech-Language Specialist	7	3.2	3.2
Chapter 1 Teacher	2	.9	.9
Parent	2	.9	.9
Bilingual-Coordinator	1	.5	.5
Superintendent	1	.5	.5
GATE Teacher	1	.5	.5
Remedial Teacher	1	.5	.5
Nurse	1	.5	.5
Secretary	1	.5	.5
Director Student Guidance	1	.5	.5
Didn't respond	12	5.4	5.4
Total	222	100.0%	100.0%

Table 35

Enrollment of Schools Operating SST

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1 - 500	64	28.8	32.3
501 - 1000	128	57.7	64.6
1001 - 1500	6	2.7	3.0
Didn't Respond	24	10.8	Missing
	222	100.0	100.0

Table 36

Type of Community Served by SST

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Rural	106	47.7	57.9
Suburban	54	24.3	29.5
Urban	23	10.4	12.6
Didn't Respond	39	17.6	Missing
	222	100.0	100.0

of the statistical treatments to address the study's purpose were presented in this chapter and are summarized below:

Objective 1

This study revealed that Student Study Teams were operating on 91.8% of the school sites. The majority of these schools have based the operation of their SST on District or County developed guidelines. Nevertheless, over two-thirds of the members believed that they would benefit from compositional and operational guidelines since team composition and operation vary from site to site. In over three-fourths of the cases, an administrator (usually the principal) served as a member, but not always did the principal serve as chairperson of the SST. In one-third of the cases, the principals served as the chairperson; when they did not serve, the resource specialists usually assumed the responsibility. The assignment of the chairperson was static and often was assumed by the person assigned to the position designated to accept the leadership role. Over nine-tenths of the SST members were special education personnel making the process a special education rather than regular education based process. In addition, over two-thirds of the members were female. Parents and students participated very little in the SST. Meetings which were scheduled on a regular basis were usually held on the members' personal time.

Objective 2

Differences of the perceived success of functioning Student Study Teams were not found between role/gender categories. Special education members ranked the measure of success dealing with the team's ability to enable students to experience more success in regular education classrooms higher than regular education members. Thus, SST members serving in a special education capacity viewed the SST as more successful at meeting this particular goal than team members serving in a regular education capacity. However, this finding is tentative since the large number of tests yielded a very small number of significant findings.

Objective 3

Differences of the perceived success of functioning Student Study Teams were found between demographic categories involving enrollment but not between categories involving the type of community served. Members of SST serving schools with an enrollment of 500-1000 viewed three functions of the SST as more successful than those members serving smaller or larger schools. Members serving on teams located in a middle-sized school ranked the measures of success involving the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques higher than members of teams located in schools of 1-500 and 1001-1500.

Objective 4

Differences of the perceived success of functioning Student Study Teams were not found between compositional categories except for one tentative instance. In cases where the principal served as chairperson, the SST was viewed as more successful in developing pre-referral intervention techniques than in cases where another SST member other than the principal served as chairperson. Again, this finding is tentative since the large number of tests yielded a very small number of significant findings.

Objective 5

Differences of perceived success of functioning Student Study Teams also were not found between operational categories except for one tentative instance. In schools where SST meetings were held on a regularly scheduled basis, the SST was viewed as more successful at helping implement pre-referral intervention techniques and at decreasing the number of students assessed and placed in special education programs than in schools where SST were held irregularly. The tentativeness of this finding must be emphasized due to the large number of tests computed.

Objective 6

Correlations, for the most part, were not found between the importance of the compositional and operational variables and the success oriented goals of the Student Study Teams.

As the importance of a compositional variable increased, the ability of the team to meet a success oriented goal did not increase or decrease to a significant degree.

Objective 7

Correlations, for the most part, were also not found between the implementation of the compositional variables and the success oriented goals of the Student Study Teams. However, significant correlations were found between the implementation of almost all of the operational variables and at least half of the success oriented goals of the Student Study Teams. As the implementation of an operational variable increased or decreased, the ability of the team to meet the success oriented goal increased or decreased respectfully. In addition, a positive correlation was found between the perceived importance and the implementation of all compositional and operational variables of the Student Study Teams participating in this study. As the importance of a variable increased, the implementation of the variable also increased. Thus, the variables which SST members viewed as important were usually implemented as part of the SST process.

Objective 8

Significant correlations were not found between the compositional and operational variables indicating success and the functions of the Student Study Teams. The one

significant negative correlation was declared irrelevant since the two variables were identical in concept.

In Chapter 5, the problem, methodology, and results of the study are summarized. Significant findings are discussed in relation to the literature review and to the problems in the research design. Finally, applications to the field and recommendations for future study are presented.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Problem Statement and Purpose

The utilization of Student Study Teams is increasing in California's elementary schools as is the rate of referral for special education assessment and placement. The teams were created to address the problem of regular education teachers failing to maximally utilize and/or document pre-referral intervention techniques. This problem resulted from a deficiency in training and/or the absence of a vehicle to facilitate such utilization and documentation. Legislation has mandated that modifications be made and documented prior to the placement of students in special education programs. Student Study Teams have evolved in order to meet this legislative and programmatic requirement.

The teams vary in composition, roles, functions, procedures and evaluation techniques. A review of the literature was completed to identify compositional and operational variables which are perceived as necessary for successful Student Study Teams. The literature revealed that compositional and operational variables necessary for successful functioning have not been clearly delineated

although they have been clearly portrayed for general team decision making processes.

Seventeen factors were identified as prerequisites for successful general team decision making. Questions relating to these factors were included in the questionnaire survey utilized to collect data for this study.

The purpose of the study was twofold. First, it was conducted to determine if these general team decision making prerequisites are also the prerequisites for successful Student Study Team functioning. A secondary purpose was to determine the extent to which these compositional and operational variables have been incorporated into current Student Study Team processes.

Methodology

A stratified random sample of 100 elementary schools was selected from a total of 319 schools located in the seven counties included in this study. By utilizing the stratified random sampling procedure, the number of teams chosen was proportionate to the number of schools located in each county and the number of schools classified in the three categories of student enrollment. As a result, the majority of the schools participating in the study were located in rural counties and had an enrollment of 500-1000 ADA.

The survey questionnaires, cover letters, and follow-up communication were sent to the principal of each of the

schools. The principal was directed to choose three members of the Student Study Team to complete the survey: the chairperson, one regular education teacher, and one other member.

The content validity and reliability of the survey instrument was established before the data were collected. A panel of experts and a pilot study provided clarification of suggestions regarding the wording of instructions and questions as well as the format of the survey.

Once the survey was disseminated, follow-up letters and phone calls were directed to the principals to encourage participation. A standardized script served as the basis of the researcher's phone conversation in an attempt to elicit responses in a consistent manner. As a result of the original cover letters and instructions, follow-up letters, and phone calls, agreement was obtained from 91% of the schools to participate in the study.

The data generated from the returned surveys were tabulated to address the eight objectives of the study. The research analysis instruments included ANOVA's, Pearson Product Moment Correlations, Spearman Rho Correlations and charts depicting percentages and frequency distributions.

Findings

The data analysis provided specific findings for each objective of the study. The interpretation of these findings

become particularly meaningful when considered in the context of previous research or theoretical constructs. Possible explanations for the results are also included in the description of the findings for each of the eight objectives.

Objective 1:

To summarize demographic statistics.

Ninety-one percent of the elementary schools participating in the study utilized the Student Study Team process. The leadership role of the team was not always assumed by the principal as was suggested in previous research. In some schools, various other members including the resource specialist assumed the role of chairperson. In most of the schools, the assignment of chairperson did not rotate among the members of the team. Usually, the person assigned to a specific position (i.e. principal or resource specialist) was designated to accept the leadership role. The Student Study Team did not appear to be a regular education process encouraging parental involvement as was suggested in other research. Many of the team members were female special education personnel, and few of the members were parents or students. The meetings were usually held on a regularly scheduled basis either before or after school rather than during released time. Despite the fact that a definitive statewide model has not been developed, most of the schools participating in this study operated teams which

were based on written district or county guidelines. Nevertheless, the majority of the members believed they would benefit from guidelines generated from this study.

Objective 2:

To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following categories of raters: a) role (administrative/non-administrative, chairperson/non-chairperson, regular/special education, parent/other), b) gender.

The study revealed that in most instances a significant difference in perceived effectiveness of Student Study Teams was not found between team members when compared according to role or gender categories. The members did not view the SST differently when rating the success of its attempt to meet the goals established by this study.

The only exception to this conclusion was related to the team's attempt to help students experience more success in the regular education classroom. The special education members perceived the team as more successful at meeting this goal than regular education teachers.

The reason for this difference possibly could be attributed to the special education members' perception of the team as being a successful vehicle to reduce referrals

for special education service. If fewer children are being referred, more children could be perceived as experiencing more success in the regular education classroom. As a result, the SST might be viewed as the vehicle which facilitates success in the least restrictive environment. This finding substantiates the utilization of the Student Study Team to develop, document, and implement modifications prior to referral of a student for special education assessment and placement.

Objective 3

To determine whether or not perceived success of Student Study Teams differs between the following demographic categories of the school: a) size of school (1-500 ADA, 501-1000 ADA, 1001-1500 ADA); b) type of community (rural, suburban, or urban).

The study revealed that in most instances a significant difference in perceived effectiveness of Student Study Teams did not exist between team members when compared according to community categories. However, a significant difference in perceived effectiveness did exist between team members when compared according to enrollment categories.

When compared between the community categories, team members in rural, suburban, or urban schools did not perceive the SST differently when rating its attempt to meet the success oriented goals established in this study. However,

members of SST representing the schools of 501-1000 enrollment perceived the team as more effective in developing, documenting, and implementing pre-referral intervention techniques than members of SST representing the schools of 1-500 and 1001-1500 enrollment.

It would be difficult to speculate on the reasons for the differences in ratings by enrollment without additional research. However, the perceived lack of effectiveness of teams operating in schools with enrollments of 1000-1500 could be a result of insufficient data since so few schools in this enrollment category participated in the study. The conclusion concerning the development, documentation, and implementation of pre-referral intervention techniques consequently is based on a very small number of responses from schools with a greater enrollment than 1000.

The possibilities of generalization are limited by this finding. The ability of the team to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques could be generalized to other schools with an enrollment of 501-1000 located in the seven counties included in the study. However, applying the generalization to schools of lesser or greater enrollment would be premature without a replication of this study.

Objective 4

To determine to what extent success of Student

Study Team factors is related to team compositional variables including the following: a) presence of special education members serving on Student Study Team; b) presence of the principal serving as chairperson; c) presence of parent serving on Student Study Team; d) presence of student serving on Student Study Team.

The study revealed that in most instances a significant difference in perceived effectiveness of Student Study Teams was not found between teams when compared on compositional variables. However, a significant difference was found between teams on which the principal served as chairperson and on teams in which the principal did not serve as chairperson. In the schools where the principal served as chairperson, the team was perceived as more effective at developing and implementing pre-referral intervention techniques. This significant difference might have resulted because the principal was assuming a leadership role and was helping facilitate the development, support, and follow through of these activities in regular education classrooms. Because of this support, these members might not have been as fearful of admitting the need for such assistance as some previous research indicated. Moreover, the members may have welcomed the suggestions and consequently viewed the team as

more effective in developing and implementing the intervention techniques.

These results substantiated previous research findings which indicated that the success of Student Study Teams was facilitated by the principal assuming a leadership role. However, it did not substantiate the research which suggested that parental or student involvement was important for successful SST functioning.

Finally, there was no significant difference in perceived effectiveness between teams which included special education members and those which did not include these members. This finding might support the advantages and disadvantages listed in general team decision making research concerning the inclusion of "experts" on the team. Sometimes, this variable fails to contribute to the effectiveness of the team because the "experts" dominate the discussion and inhibit regular education teachers from participating in the decision making process. In other instances, the specialists provide a great deal of support and assistance by sharing their expertise and making suggestions regarding the minimization of learning difficulties.

Objective 5

To determine to what extent success of Student Study Team factors is related to team operational

variables including the following: a) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members; b) SST meeting regularly; c) SST meeting during released time or during school.

The study revealed that overall a significant difference in perceived effectiveness of Student Study Teams was not found between teams when compared on operational variables. However, a significant difference was found between teams which met regularly and teams which met inconsistently. In the schools where Student Study Teams were scheduled on a regular basis, the team was perceived as more successful in implementing pre-referral intervention techniques and in helping decrease the number of students assessed and placed in special education programs than in schools where SST meetings were scheduled irregularly.

It is suggested that the regular scheduling of the SST allowed for more follow through of the team's suggestions and facilitated the implementation of the pre-referral intervention techniques. Additional follow through could enable students to be more successful and less likely to be referred for special education assessment and/or placement. Possibly if teams were not meeting regularly, students with learning difficulties would be referred more quickly to special education. A thorough pre-referral process including the documentation and implementation of several interventions

might not be completed. The lack of discussion of numerous viable alternatives could result in more assessments and possibly more placements. This result of the study supported previous research which indicated that regular scheduling of team meetings is crucial for successful team decision making and the reduction of referrals to special education.

However, this study did not substantiate previous findings which suggested that the role of the chairperson should rotate among team members. It did not seem to matter to these members whether or not one specific member consistently assumed the leadership role.

It also did not appear relevant to members whether or not released time was provided for these meetings. The time of day was not as important as the regularity with which the meetings were scheduled. As long as team members were receiving emotional and professional support from the principal, support in the form of released time may not have been as important to the successful functioning of the teams.

Objective 6

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to importance of team compositional and operational variables including the following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provision of documentation of

decisions; b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally; c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions; d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members; e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members; f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members; g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members; h) receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support of chairperson; i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members; j) equal participation by team members; k) designation of adequate time for planning and presenting information; l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

This study revealed that in most instances significant correlations were not found between the perceived importance of the compositional and operational variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. Of the 45 correlations computed, only 11 were found to be significant at the .01 level. It is important to emphasize that the existence of correlations does not imply causation. However, it does imply that a positive or negative relationship exists

between the compositional or operational variables and the success factors.

Moreover, it is important to note the variables which were positively or negatively correlated to the success factors and possible explanations for these correlations. There were 3 significant negative correlations found between the compositional variables and the success factors. The inclusion of parents and students as part of the team composition was negatively correlated with the success factors involving the development of pre-referral intervention techniques and the assurance of success in the regular classroom. The team members did not perceive a positive relationship between the importance of parents serving on the team and team achievement of these success oriented goals. Again, these results failed to substantiate previous research findings which indicated that parental involvement was important to the success of SST functioning. Team members may have felt that parents lacked the expertise to develop the intervention techniques as well as the presence in the regular classroom to help students utilize these modifications successfully.

In addition, there was a significant negative correlation found between one operational variable and one success factor. Despite previous research indicating that lack of team success was attributable to a lack of training, the variable of member participation in training prior to

serving on a team was negatively correlated to one success factor. To the extent that training increased, the ability of the team to develop pre-referral intervention techniques decreased or vice versa. Prior training may not have emphasized the importance or manner of attempting a variety of teaching structures and strategies prior to referring a student for special education assessment and placement. It would appear that future training programs could place more emphasis on possible modifications available for problems experienced in the regular classroom by students with learning disabilities.

The other significant correlations found between the operational variables and the success factors were positive in nature. The variable of the chairperson providing leadership, coordination, and support was found to be important in general team decision making research. In relation to SST decision making, this variable was found to be positively correlated with the team's ability to assure the pupil's success in the regular classroom. The significance of this variable is very similar to the importance which has already been established for the principal to assume the assignment of chairperson and to provide leadership to the team. The probability of the teams meeting regularly and successfully is probably greater when the team members receive support from their leader.

Another positive correlation was found between the team members participating in follow-up activities and the team's ability to develop pre-referral intervention techniques. This result substantiated previous research which indicated that a lack of team success could be attributed to a lack of follow-up activities. The correlation could be related possibly to the team's ability to apply previously adopted and successfully proven techniques to new students and new situations.

The variable of interdisciplinary collaboration, equal support, and trust existing between members was found to be positively correlated with the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques. This result substantiated research cited in the general team decision making literature which indicated that collaboration increased involvement, validity in decision making, and the possibility of implementing recommendations. It also inferred that the lack of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust could negatively affect decision making. The strength of working together and supporting one another probably allows members to share viewpoints and strategies and to be more productive in developing solutions to problems.

The last positive correlation to be found also substantiated general team decision making research. The importance of the team members participating as equals was

correlated with the team's ability to implement pre-referral intervention techniques. When members participate equally, they may feel a greater degree of satisfaction and consequently develop better alternatives for students having learning difficulties. Problems surface when roles or responsibilities of team members are unclear or conflicting.

Objective 7

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to implementation of team compositional and operational variables including the following: a) team development of written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provision of documentation of decisions; b) communication between team members regarding decisions and actions in written form rather than verbally; c) participation by team members in follow-up activities to team suggestions; d) existence of interdisciplinary collaboration and trust between members; e) clarification of roles and responsibilities of team members; f) rotation of position of "chairperson" among team members; g) minimization of team rivalry or role conflict by members; h) receipt by team members of leadership,

coordination, and support of chairperson; i) full participation by regular education teachers as team members; j) equal participation by team members; k) designation of adequate time for planning and presenting information; l) participation of team members in training prior to serving on team.

The study revealed that in most instances a significant correlation was not found between the implementation of the compositional variables and the success factors of the Student Study Teams. However, significant correlations were found between the implementation of almost all of the operational variables and at least half of the success factors. Of the 119 correlations computed, 45 were significant at the .01 level.

These statistical treatments involving compositional variables reinforced the fact that a correlation was not found between parents and students serving on the SST and the team achievement of any of the success oriented goals. In addition, correlations were not found between the presence of special education members serving on the team and the team meeting any of the success oriented goals. This finding is noteworthy considering the fact that so many members of the SST were special education personnel. Even though the process was intended to be a regular education decision making process, it appears to be oriented towards special

education. A relationship between the utilization of members with special education expertise on the team and the success factors appears to be non-existent despite the large proportion of members being aligned to the special education profession.

The significance of the principal serving as chairperson was reinforced by this statistical treatment which helped further support previous research. A correlation was found between the implementation of this variable and the team's ability to develop pre-referral intervention techniques. The reason for this significance could be the leadership, coordination, and structuring role played by the principal. This guidance might help the team remain on task and successfully influence the development of alternative instructional techniques.

The lack of correlations found between the operational variables concerning the minimization of team rivalry or role conflict, meetings being held during released time, and the chairperson assignment rotating among SST members did not support previous general team decision making research. The team members did not perceive the success of the teams being influenced by the implementation of these variables.

The respondents contradicted the perceived lack of importance of members receiving training prior to participating as team members as established in previous research. A correlation was found between the implementation

of this variable and the team achievement of the success oriented goals. However, a correlation had not been found between the perceived importance of this variable and the team achievement of the success oriented goals. The members did not believe this variable to be a prerequisite for successful team functioning. However, they implemented it as part of the team process. The implementation of this variable was correlated to the decrease of students being assessed for special education service. Possibly, the training helped members move more cautiously toward premature assessment for special education simply because a referred student was exhibiting learning difficulties.

Correlations were found between the implementation of the variables concerning (a) the receipt by team members of leadership, coordination, and support from the chairperson, (b) the team development of a written plan (goals and objectives) for a referred student and the provision of documentation of decisions, and (c) the clarification and understanding of goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members and the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques as well as to ensure success in the regular education classroom. These findings supported previous research completed on general team decision making which established the importance of these variables for successful team functioning.

The implementation of these variables would probably keep the SST members on task with a higher degree of interaction resulting in more orderly and efficient decision making. Possibly, the clarification and understanding of roles and responsibilities could reduce friction and incompatibility and increase the sharing of information and the rate of productivity. Consequently, the development, documentation, and implementation of the regular education modifications would more likely occur.

Correlations were found between the implementation of (a) written communication of decisions and actions between team members, and (b) designation of adequate time for the planning and presentation of information and the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques. These findings supported previous general team decision making research. Similar correlations had been found between the importance of these variables and the team's ability to meet success oriented goals. The members not only perceived these variables as important, but they implemented them as well.

The reasons for the correlations being found between these variables and the success factors of the SST supported previous regular team decision making research. A lack of adequate time could cause ambiguity and conflict and result in decreased productivity and goal accomplishment. Moreover, once the decisions are made, the written documentation seems

critical if the plan is to be clearly and consistently implemented by team members as well as the regular education teachers receiving the recommendations.

On three variables, a relationship was found between the variables and all success factors except the team's ability to decrease the number of students placed in special education programs. This finding again supported general team decision making research. The rating of the success factors increased as the implementation of the following operational variables increased: a) participation by team members in follow-up activities, b) the existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust between members, and c) equal participation by team members.

The implementation of member participation in follow-up activities could result in shared responsibility by team members as well as the involvement and support of regular education teachers. This involvement could in turn facilitate the accomplishment of the success oriented goals. The presence of collaboration, as has been stated before, usually increases involvement and the possibility of implementing team recommendations. The participation of team members as equals could result in a feeling of success. Consequently, team members could be more productive in meeting the goals of the SST. If the development, documentation, and implementation of pre-referral techniques is accomplished, the referral and assessment for special education may

decrease while the success felt in the regular classroom by teacher and student may increase.

The one variable which was significantly correlated to all success factors was the implementation of the full participation of regular education teachers. The research indicated that regular education teachers were not satisfied with the team process and apparently desired a more substantial role in the development of suggestions. Those SST members, who were primarily special education personnel, perceived all of the success factors being correlated with the implementation of this particular variable. The frequency distribution revealed that the SST was composed of primarily special education rather than regular education personnel. However, this statistical treatment appears to indicate that the regular education teachers, despite their minority composition, are fully participating as team members. Furthermore, this equal participation is increasing the chance of the team to meet all of the success oriented goals established by this study.

The second part of Objective 7 indicated that there was a positive correlation between the variables perceived important and those variables which were being implemented. For the most part, the SST members were implementing the variables which they perceived to be important, while they were not implementing those variables which they did not perceive as important to successful functioning. The

perceived success of the SST may be increasing as a result of the inclusion of these compositional and operational variables in the team process.

Objective 8

To determine to what extent perceived success of Student Study Team factors is related to the following Student Study Team functions: a) assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs; b) developing pre-referral intervention techniques; c) providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques; d) reducing referrals to special education; e) providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education; f) assisting mainstreamed students; g) assisting students exited from special education.

Only one of the 49 Spearman Rho Correlations was found to be significant at the .01 level. Because both of the variables were related to the development of pre-referral intervention techniques, the function and the success factor pertaining to this concept were found to be correlated to each other. Due to the similarity of the concepts involved, this correlation was declared insignificant. Overall, the respondents did not perceive a relationship existing between the rankings of the functions and the success factors.

The validity and reliability of this objective was difficult to establish since the functions were so similar to the success factors. It is suspected that the respondents may have had difficulty ranking both of these lists as the concepts in each list were so similar in importance to one another. As a result, the data obtained from this statistical treatment appears to be insignificant.

Subsequent Analyses

In addition to the inferential analyses completed on the compositional and operational variables thought to make SST effective, descriptive analyses were completed also. The respondents' rankings of these variables, in terms of both importance and implementation, provided noteworthy information.

Of the 17 variables, the respondents ranked the same two variables first and second both in terms of importance and implementation. The variables involving equal participation of team members and full participation by regular education teachers were ranked first and second respectively. Significant correlations had been found between the existence of these variables and most of the success factors when statistical treatments were computed.

The variable which was ranked third in terms of importance, was the existence of interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust between members. The importance of this variable had been correlated

positively with the team's ability to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques. The variable which was ranked third in terms of implementation was the presence of special education members on the SST. In contrast, the implementation of this variable had not been correlated to any of the success factors. The fact that this variable was ranked so high in implementation could have resulted from the majority of the respondents being special education members. It should be emphasized, however, that the inferential statistics did not substantiate the importance of special education members serving on Student Study Teams.

The respondents' ranking of the indicators of success and the functions also revealed some substantative descriptive information. The team members perceived the most important indicator of successful functioning as the team's ability to enable students to experience success in the regular education classroom. The variables ranked second and third were the team's ability to develop and implement pre-referral intervention techniques. It is important to emphasize that most of the significant correlations between the compositional and operational variables and success factors involved these same three indicators of success.

The participants' ranking of the SST functions revealed similar noteworthy data. Again, SST members perceived the functions involving assessment, utilization of regular

education resources prior to making a referral to special education, and the development of pre-referral intervention techniques as most important.

The function involving the decrease of referrals to special education was not perceived important. Likewise, it is imperative to emphasize that few significant correlations involving the compositional and operational variables and this success factor were found.

Finally, the team members did not perceive the SST function of moving students from special education to a regular education setting as being important. Probably the reason for this perception is the lack of the utilization of the SST team for this purpose. The Student Study Teams address problems noted prior to a referral being initiated for special education assignment. The IEP Team assumes the function of transferring the student from special education to regular education classes rather than having this possibility of change and placement discussed and decided upon by the SST.

One of the functions perceived to be much less important was the team's ability to document pre-referral intervention techniques. This finding not only contradicted previous research, but it contradicted some of the significant correlations found in this study. Many of the correlations which had been found significant involved the team's ability to document these interventions. Thus, only the actual

implementation of the documentation seem to have been supported. The team members may be perceiving the team's function as developing the pre-referral intervention techniques. However, the record keeping might be occurring without its actual importance being realized.

The responses to the survey questionnaire were made primarily by regular education teachers, resource specialist teachers, and principals working in schools with an enrollment of 1-500 or 501-1000. Over half of the SST served rural communities.

Because the number of schools with an enrollment of 1001-1500 were so limited in the study, generalization of this study's findings to schools of this particular size would be inappropriate. Likewise, because the number of Student Study Teams serving schools in urban communities were almost as limited, generalizations of the study's findings to urban communities would be inadviseable as well. However, generalizations to schools of 1-1000 located in rural or suburban communities within the 7 counties participating in this study would be appropriate. The application could be substantiated further by a replication of this study in a sample population including either rural or suburban counties or schools with 1-500 or 501-1000 enrollment.

The findings of this study provide numerous conclusions which have very definite applications to the field.

Conclusions

Delimitations, Limitations, and Considerations in Research Design

Delimitations and limitations were delineated before the study was conducted. In addition, considerations in sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis have been noted. These restrictions must be taken into account when conclusions are drawn and interpreted from this study.

Delimitations

1. The study was limited to data received from Student Study Teams operating at the elementary level. Consequently, conclusions could not be appropriately generalized to the secondary level.

2. Only the Student Study Teams located in the counties of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne were included in the study. Since the information was derived primarily from rural and suburban counties, conclusions being generalized to urban counties would be premature without subsequent replicative studies.

3. Not all members of each Student Study Team completed the questionnaire survey. To a certain extent, the members completing the survey were those members who were chosen by the principal and/or those members who were willing to accept the participation responsibility. A broader representation

or a random sampling of each of the teams might provide different data.

4. The sample was limited to schools with an enrollment of 1500 or less. Very few responses were received from schools of 1000-1500. Consequently, generalizations to schools of 1000 or more would be inappropriate without replicative studies.

Limitations

1. Student Study Teams were not operational at all schools participating in the study. However, the percentage of schools not utilizing the team process was small. Thus, this limitation did not appear to be as significant as thought prior to the initiation of the study.

2. Identifying the Student Study Teams at each site also did not seem to be as significant of a problem as projected prior to the collection of the data. Despite the various terminology utilized for the SST process, principals appeared to understand the concept of Student Study Teams when follow-up phone calls were made.

3. The interpretation of "successful" team processes may have varied among study participants. However, the effect of this limitation on the study was impossible to determine.

4. Student Study Teams had not been previously specified as the most effective vehicle by which to document regular education modifications. The results of this study,

however, may provide support for the utilization of the SST for this important purpose.

Considerations in Research Design and Effect on Replication

1. Two questions on the survey questionnaire should be reworded if the study is to be replicated. The questions requiring the rank ordering of the functions and the rank ordering of the measures of success of the SST were too similar to one another in concept. It appeared to be difficult to rank each of them individually because the items in each list seemed so similar to one another in importance. The wording of these questions probably had an influence on the lack of significant correlations being found as a result of the computation of the Spearman Rho Correlations.

2. The findings concerning the Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the importance and implementation of each compositional and operational variable were questionable. A positive correlation between the importance and implementation of each variable was found. However, it was difficult to determine if the correlations actually existed or if the respondents simply assigned both items in each list the same ranking. A less subjective technique to glean the same information might be employed if the study is replicated.

3. In future replications of this study, more questions on the survey regarding operational variables should be

included. Consequently ANOVA's could be computed and analyzed on these variables in the same manner in which ANOVA's were run and examined on the compositional variables. This statistical treatment would be computed to determine whether or not differences of means were significant. These additional questions could provide further supplementary analytical information to be utilized to substantiate the objectives.

4. Prior to disseminating surveys in the future, it might be beneficial to call each district office and secure approval for participation in the study. Such calls completed prior to the initiation of this study might have prevented a group of surveys from not being returned due to a lack of approval from the district's administrative unit.

5. Three members at each site did not always complete the surveys. Even though instructions were given regarding the dissemination of the surveys, it is difficult to determine how closely they were followed. For example, some members might have been given the surveys simply because they were willing to complete them. In future replications, it is suggested that all members be requested to complete the questionnaire so that the sample number would be larger. As a result, the probability of Type I errors would be minimized.

6. One set of tables provided questionable information. One table revealed that 81.5% of the respondents were special

education members, and that 8.1% of the respondents were not special education members. Another table, however, indicated that 26.1% of the members served as regular education teachers. Errors in the completion of the survey appeared to occur, and these errors probably contributed to some sampling error. However, statistical analysis treatments hopefully corrected for the sampling error and facilitated accurate interpretation of the data.

7. A future replication of the study might include a question regarding the number of students referred, assessed, or placed in special education prior to and following the initiation of Student Study Teams. These data would have facilitated the determination of the effect of the SST on the actual rather than the perceived reduction of referrals, assessments, and placements as well as provide further substantiation of the effect of the SST on ensuring success for students with learning difficulties in the regular education classroom.

The findings and subsequent analyses of this study have led to the following conclusions despite the previously discussed delimitations, limitations, and considerations in the research design.

Conclusions

1. The utilization of Student Study Teams has increased in the elementary schools in California.

2. The Student Study Team process is oriented toward special education rather than regular education in terms of membership.

3. Overall differences in perceived success did not exist between Student Study Team members when compared according to role, gender, enrollment, and the importance of compositional and operational variables.

4. The implementation of the following compositional and operational variables influence the successful functioning of the Student Study Team.

a. Principal serves as chairperson of SST.

b. Team members receive leadership, coordination, and support from the chairperson.

c. Team develops written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provides documentation of decisions.

d. Team members communicate decisions and actions with one another in written form rather than verbally.

e. Team members participate in follow-up activities to team suggestions.

f. Interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust exist between members.

g. Goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members are clarified and understood by team members.

h. Regular education teachers participate as fully as other members, i.e., special education members or principal.

i. Team members participate as equals.

j. Time designated for planning and presenting information is adequate.

5. The implementation of the following compositional and operational variables do not particularly influence the successful functioning of the Student Study Team.

a. Special education members serve on SST.

b. Parents serve on SST.

c. Students serve on SST.

d. Team rivalry or role conflict are minimized by team members.

e. Team meets during teaching hours (released time).

f. Team members participate in training prior to serving on team.

g. Position of "chairperson" rotates among SST members.

6. Student Study Team members implement compositional and operational variables which they interpret as important prerequisites to successful functioning.

7. The Student Study Team is perceived as a vehicle to develop pre-referral intervention techniques and ensure success in the regular education classroom. The team process

is not perceived as a vehicle by which to reduce referrals for special education assessment and placement.

Applications to the Field

The prerequisite variables for successful Student Study Teams have been delineated by this study. Proposed activities for planning, implementation, and follow-up as well as suggested functions and procedures of the team were proposed. Guidelines evolving from this study may assist administrators in developing organizational and procedural policies as they initiate a new Student Study Team process or modify an existing one. Administrators may utilize these guidelines as a basis for inservice training for prespective Student Study Team members. Training based on these prerequisite variables could result in smoother functioning and more effectiveness.

Implementing the Student Study Team process as suggested in this study could result in more success and less failure in the regular education classroom. The generation of viable alternatives for students with learning disabilities could result in fewer referrals for special education assessment and placement as well as a better utilization of regular education resources, services, and programs.

The Student Study Team process could improve cohesiveness, communication, and cooperation between regular and special education teachers, administrators, parents, and

students. Principals could take a more active involvement in the development, documentation, and implementation of pre-referral intervention techniques. More consistent follow through could facilitate the provision of the least restrictive environment.

The successful implementation and monitoring of pre-referral techniques could result in regular education teachers feeling more positive about working with the handicapped. As attitudinal barriers begin to diminish, the two separate entities of special education and regular education could merge into one system emphasizing togetherness and success.

Recommendations for Future Research

Student Study Teams appear to be an appropriate vehicle by which pre-referral intervention techniques can be developed, documented, and implemented. This study has delineated prerequisite compositional and operational factors necessary for successful functioning. The following recommendations for further research studies are made:

1. It is recommended that a replication of this study be conducted utilizing Student Study Teams operated at the secondary level to identify prerequisite compositional and operational factors necessary for successful functioning of secondary Student Study Teams.

2. It is recommended that a replication of this study be conducted utilizing Student Study Teams operated at

schools with an enrollment above 1500 in order to identify prerequisite compositional and operational factors necessary for successful functioning at schools with enrollments above 1000.

3. It is recommended that a replication of this study be conducted utilizing a sample which includes a majority of urban counties to determine if prerequisite compositional and operational factors necessary for successful functioning differ from those prerequisite factors deemed necessary by team members in rural and suburban counties.

4. It is recommended that a replication of this study be conducted utilizing all members of Student Study Teams participating in this study to further substantiate the prerequisite compositional and operational factors determined necessary for successful functioning.

5. It is recommended that a follow-up study be completed in order to determine the effects Student Study Teams, utilizing the compositional and operational guidelines delineated in this study, have had on the reduction of referral, assessment, and placement of special education students.

6. It is recommended that a follow-up study be completed in order to determine if inservice training, conducted for members to be participating on Student Study Teams, reflects the compositional and operational

prerequisite factors necessary for successful functioning as established in this study.

7. It is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted in order to determine the reasons for statistically significant differences existing in the perceptions of prerequisite compositional and operational factors for successful functioning based on the enrollment of the schools participating in this study.

8. It is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted in order to determine the reasons for statistically significant correlations existing between the implementation of operational variables and success factors but not existing between the importance of operational variables and success factors.

9. It is recommended that a follow-up study be conducted in order to compare the Student Study Team process and other processes utilized by elementary schools to develop, document, and implement pre-referral intervention techniques in order to determine the most effective process for meeting the success oriented goals of this study.

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APPENDIX A

PANEL OF EXPERTS

APPENDIX A

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Linda Bourgaize	SELPA Director San Benito - Santa Cruz
Ed Charlton	RS - Sonora Elementary
Dave Delgardo	Vice-Principal Jamestown Elementary
Don Hack	SELPA Director Sonoma County
Mike Harrison	Psychologist for Calaveras County
Gill Grimsley-McKee	Coordinator of Special Education Programs Tuolumne County
Dr. Jose Martinez	Research Unit State Department of Education
Larry Naegeli	Superintendent/Principal Soulsbyville Elementary
Ron Nicholson	Coordinator of Special Education Programs Amador County
Diana Page	Teacher Soulsbyville Elementary
Ron Parker	Superintendent Summerville Elementary
Dr. David Ragsdale	Research Unit State Department of Education
Leo Sandoval	Administrator Consultant Services-North State Department of Education

Gary Seaton	SELPA Director Sutter County
Madeline Sharp	Principal Twain Harte Elementary

APPENDIX B

SURVEY - QUESTIONNAIRE

The intent of this questionnaire is to determine characteristics necessary for an effective Student or Child Study Team. Please complete each question in relation to your school's team which serves students prior to making a formal referral to Special Education. Return the questionnaire to your principal. All responses will be kept confidential. The number on Page 4 is a code so I know which school has not responded. This number will facilitate follow-up activities which may be necessary to secure the required responses for my study. If desired, you will receive a copy of the results of this study. Thank you for your time and effort during this busy time of year.

1. Does your school operate a Student Study Team (SST)?
   a. Yes b. No

   [If no, please go to the last page, No. 24].

2. Is the formation and operation of the SST based on written guidelines which have been established by your district or county?
   a. Yes b. No

3. Does the principal serve on your team?
   a. Yes b. No

4. Do you have an administrative role on your SST?
   a. Yes b. No

5. Do you serve on your SST as chairperson?
   a. Yes b. No

6. Do you serve on your SST as a regular education teacher?
   a. Yes b. No

7. Do you serve on your SST as a special education member?
   a. Yes b. No

8. What is your gender?
   a. Female b. Male

9. What is the enrollment of your school?
   a. 1 - 500 b. 501 - 1000
   c. 1001 - 1500

10. What type of community is served by your school?
    a. Rural b. Suburban
    c. Urban

11. Do special education members serve on your SST?
    a. Yes b. No

12. Does your principal serve as the chairperson?
    a. Yes b. No
    If not, who serves? _____

13. Does the assignment of chairperson rotate among members of your SST?
    a. Yes b. No

14. Are parents usually invited to serve on your SST?
    a. Yes b. No

15. Are students usually invited to serve on your SST?
    a. Yes b. No

16. Does your SST meet regularly?
    a. Yes b. No

17. When does your team usually meet?
    a. Before school c. During lunch
    b. After school d. During "released time"

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate (1) how important the following variables are to successful SST functioning and (2) to what degree your SST presently is implementing these variables as part of your SST process. "Low" indicates you feel the variable is not very important or that your team is not implementing it very much, while "high" indicates you feel the variable is very important or that you are implementing it often.

Importance						Implementation				
Low				High		Low				High
1	2	3	4	5	a. Special education members serve on your SST	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	b. Principal serves as chair-person of your SST	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	c. Parents serve on your SST	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	d. Students serve on your SST	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	e. Team members receive leadership, coordination, and support from the chairperson	1	2	3	4	5

					f.	Team develops written plan (goals and objectives) for referred student and provides documentation of decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	g.	Team members communicate decisions and actions with one another in written form rather than verbally.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	h.	Team members participate in follow-up activities to team suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	i.	Interdisciplinary collaboration, emotional support, and trust exist between members.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	j.	Goals, roles, and responsibilities of team members are clarified and understood by team members.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	k.	Team rivalry or role conflict are minimized by members.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	l.	Regular education teachers participate as fully as other members, i.e., special education members or principal.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	m.	Team members participate as equals.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	n.	Time designated for planning and presenting information is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	o.	Team meets during teaching hours (Released).	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	p.	Team members have participated in training prior to serving on team.	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	q.	Assignment of chairperson rotates among SST members.	1	2	3	4	5

19. On "A", rank order from 1 to 7 the variables indicating success. A rank of "1" will mean that this variable is the most important indicator of successful team functioning. A rank of "7" will mean that this variable is the least important indicator of successful team functioning. On "B," please indicate how successfully your SST is functioning by indicating to what extent your SST is successful in helping to meet each of the variables.

		Low				High
_____	a. developing pre-referral education intervention techniques	1	2	3	4	5
_____	b. documenting pre-referral education intervention techniques	1	2	3	4	5
_____	c. implementing pre-referral education intervention techniques	1	2	3	4	5
_____	d. decreasing the number of students referred for special education assessment	1	2	3	4	5
_____	e. decreasing the number of students assessed for special education service	1	2	3	4	5
_____	f. decreasing the number of students placed in special education programs	1	2	3	4	5
_____	g. enabling students to experience more success in the regular education classroom	1	2	3	4	5

20. With regard to the primary functions of your SST, please rank order from 1 - 7. A rank of "1" will indicate that this function is the most important. A rank of "7" will indicate that this function is the least important.

_____ a. assessing student's academic, behavioral, and social needs

_____ b. developing pre-referral intervention techniques

_____ c. providing documentation for pre-referral intervention techniques

_____ d. reducing referrals to special education

_____ e. providing consultation service to students declared ineligible for special education or who are mainstreamed into regular education settings.

_____ f. guaranteeing that all resources in regular education are utilized prior to referral for special education

_____ g. helping prepare students to move from special education programs into regular education programs

21. Do you feel your SST would benefit from compositional and operational guidelines?

a. Yes b. No

22. Please list your position.

Position_____

23. Please make any additional comments regarding your attitude and support of the SST process:

_____

_____

_____

24. If you would like an abstract of the results, please write your name and address below:

_____

_____

_____

Please return completed questionnaire to principal who will send it to me. Thank you.

Sandee Kludt
Director of Special Education
175 So. Fairview Lane
Sonora, CA 95370

School Number_____

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO SURVEY

175 South Fairview Lane
Sonora, CA 95370
April 22, 1987

Dear

I am in the process of completing a doctoral dissertation on the characteristics necessary for an effective Student ~~(Child) Study Team.~~ I am looking at operational and compositional variables. Your school has been selected to be one of 100 randomly chosen schools which will be completing the enclosed questionnaire. All answers will be kept confidential. However, upon completion, you will receive the results of the study. Hopefully, I will try to determine what variables of the Student Study Team process team members feel are important and whether or not schools are implementing them.

I am requesting that three people on your team complete the survey: the chairperson, a regular education teacher, and one other person of your choosing, i.e., resource specialist, special education member, Chapter I or II specialist, parent, etc. Should more than one regular education or special education teacher serve on the team, please give the survey to the member whose last name appears last alphabetically. Upon completion of all three surveys, please return them to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

I realize that this is a very busy time of year. However, it is important for me to collect the data before school ends so I would appreciate you returning the surveys to me by May 13th. Thanks for your extra time and effort. Hopefully, the results of the survey will be helpful to you and your team members.

Sincerely,

Sandee Kludt
Director of Special Education
Tuolumne County Schools Office

SK:dh

APPENDIX D

FOLLOW-UP LETTERS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

175 South Fairview Lane
Sonora, CA 95370
May 18, 1987

Dear

This is a friendly reminder. A few weeks ago you should have received three surveys which needed to be completed and returned to me so that I could complete my doctoral dissertation. So far I have received responses from 55% of the participants. Unfortunately, I need an 80% return rate to be able to complete my data analysis. Thus, I need your help.

If you have completed the surveys and they have not yet reached me, thank you for your time. I realize this is an extremely busy time of year for everyone. If you have not yet had your team members complete them, please encourage them to take a few minutes to do so. Hopefully, the information will provide you with much insight. The information I'm receiving is most interesting.

Again, I am looking at operational and compositional variables. Your school has been selected to be one of 100 randomly chosen schools which will be completing the enclosed questionnaires. All answers will be kept confidential. However, upon completion, you will receive the results of the study. Hopefully, I will try to determine which variables of the Student Study Team process team members feel are important and whether or not schools are implementing them.

I am requesting that three people on your team complete the survey: the chairperson, a regular education teacher, and one other person of your choosing, i.e., resource specialist, special education member, Chapter I or II specialist, parent, etc. Should more than one regular education or special education teacher serve on your team, please give the survey to the member whose last name appears last alphabetically. Upon completion of all three surveys, please return them to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

Please return the survey to me by June 1st. Thanks for your extra time and effort.

Sincerely,

Sandee Kludt
Director of Special Education
Tuolumne County Schools Office
SK:dh

June 8, 1987

Dear

The intent of this note is to update you on my data collection efforts.

My surveys are still coming back to me. I am hoping that you will be able to have a few people complete these before they leave. From my follow up phone calls, I learned that some of you had misplaced these so I'm sending another set just in case you need them. Because of the busy time of year, I have extended my due date to June 30, 1987.

In my sample, I only need responses from _____ more school(s) to have 100% participation from your county. The cooperation has been superb. Hopefully, the response rate will be high enough that I will not have to impose upon your time and energy again in the fall.

Again, thank you for your time and effort. Have a restful and relaxing summer.

Sincerely,

Sandee Kludt
Director of Special Education

SK:dh

APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SCRIPT

APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SCRIPT

Hello, Mr./Ms._____

This is Sandee Kludt, Director of Special Education of Tuolumne County. I am calling to make sure you received the questionnaire surveys for my doctoral dissertation. It is being completed on the Student Study Team process. If you did not receive them or have misplaced them, I'll be happy to send you another set.

It is important that I receive all three of the surveys completed. They are to be completed by the Chairperson, a regular education teacher, and one other member of your choosing. The deadline for receipt of the surveys has been extended to June 30, 1987.

I appreciate your time and willingness to cooperate during this busy time of year.

Thank you and have a good day.