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A Buddy Scheme to assist the Adjustment of
High School Transfer Students

by

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A Field Study Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Education in the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

Date: November, 1979.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help and encouragement given to me by my supervisor, John Fraser, to complete the present project. Thanks are due to Wayne Ransley for his assistance in the computing area; and to my husband and children for their patience and forbearance.

Abstract

The purpose of the present investigation was to attempt to improve the adjustment of students transferring to a new high school part way through the year by the introduction of a buddy scheme. During the period between March 7th and September 18th, 1978, 54 new students were randomly allocated to an experimental group (i.e. paired with a buddy) or to a 'no buddy' control group for three weeks from the date of their enrolment.

The buddies consisted of 12 volunteers from each of years seven to ten, who attended four training sessions with the counsellor (four for each form). The training centred round a discussion of their feelings and needs when encountering new school situations and led to a delineation of practical things which could be done to help new students. Emphasis was also given to communication skills.

After the new students had been at the school for a month (or 20 school days), they completed L.S. Wrightsman's School Morale scale and a student questionnaire which provided two measures of adjustment, viz. the students' perception of whether or not they had formed new friendships and their 'adjustment' to school. At the end of their first two months, the number of days absent (apart from those for sickness) were noted.

There was no significant difference between the adjustment of transfer students in the experimental group compared to the control group as measured by the four outcome measures. That is, there was no significant difference between the two groups as measured by School Morale scores, their perception of the formation of new friendships, adjustment to school (a questionnaire

measurement) or the mean number of days absent.

Buddies with effective communication skills were successful in helping new students make a satisfactory adjustment to their new school. The continuation of the scheme was favoured both by the buddies and by the transfer students. Buddies felt that the scheme helped new students to settle in more quickly to the classes and to make friends. Transfer students felt that the scheme helped them to learn about the school very quickly, to meet the teachers and to make friends.

Contents

Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii-iv
Acknowledgements	v
Contents	vi
Caption to Figure	vii
Introduction	1
Ch.1 Student-Transfer and Adjustment	3
Ch.2 Adjustment programs for transferring students	12
Ch.3 Buddy Programs	21
Ch.4 Buddy Training	40
Ch.5 A Buddy Scheme for newly enrolled students	49
Buddy training	56
Results and Discussion	61
Measures of Adjustment	61
Subject Variables	66
A Case Study	76
Buddy Characteristics	78
Evaluation of the Programme by Buddies	85
Evaluation of the Buddy Scheme by new Students	90
Ch.6 Conclusions	94
Bibliography	98
Appendices	
Appendix A : Information sheet from new students	104
Information sheet from buddies	105
Appendix B : Wrightsman's School Morale Scale	106
Appendix C : Student questionnaire	110
Appendix D : Buddy Handout	111
Appendix E : Checklist for Buddies	112
Appendix F : Evaluation of Buddy Communication Skills	114
Appendix G : Questionnaire for Buddies	115
Appendix H : Buddies' Evaluation of Training Sessions	116
Appendix I : Raw data	117

Figures

Figure 1 Buddies' Opinions of the Training Scheme and
their Communication Skills

87