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A study of the relationship of credits with attendance in continuation education

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF CREDITS WITH ATTENDANCE

IN CONTINUATION EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State

University, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education

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by

Holly Piligian McDonagh

April, 1987

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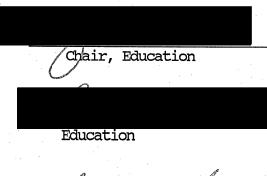
University, San Bernardino

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Holly Piligian McDonagh

April, 1987

Approved by:

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Chair, Education   Date

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ABSTRACT

The nature of continuation education students is that they
are poor attenders and that they are behind in credits upon
entering the continuation setting. This project is a study of
the relationship of credits earned with attendance in a
continuation school. To facilitate the study of this issue the
null hypothesis was stated: "There will be no statistically
significant relationship between credits earned with attendance
in an alternative education setting".

A correlation of credits earned with attendance for two
groups of students drawn from a total student population of 400
students was used. The sample groups were made up of students
ranging from 16-18 years. Each group was comprised of 15
students who were enrolled for one entire semester (360 class
periods). After the sample had been drawn information on the
variables of attendance and credits earned was considered. Once
data was collected for each variable, a correlation was
calculated to determine if a relationship exists. The data was
subjected to the Pearson product-moment correlation. A
comparison of r-values of the two groups was made and showed
that there was virtually no difference between the two groups.
The findings further showed that the r-value for neither group
was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level and
that there was no relationship between credits earned and
attendance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educators are generally concerned with student achievement and attendance. They are continually searching for ways to improve both. Educators working with students with special needs are concerned with these same problems: achievement and attendance.

It has become evident that continuation high school students exhibit poor school attendance. There is also concern about the number of credits earned over a period of time. It is generally believed that a relationship exists between student attendance and credits earned. The major concern of this writer then, is to study the relationship of credits earned with attendance in an alternative education setting, in this case a continuation school. A second concern is the relationship of credits earned with attendance with regard to students designated as learning handicapped or special education students.

It will be determined, through study, if: (1) a relationship between school attendance with credits earned does exist; and (2) if it does exist, is that relationship the same relationship for the special education population as for the regular (non-special education designated) population. The nature of

continuation education students is that they are poor attenders and are behind in credits upon entering the continuation education setting. To study the relationship between credits earned with attendance might bring some insight to educators as to how they can better serve the continuation education population. In addition to the study of the two variables, consideration will be given to other factors which might effect student achievement and attendance.

At this point, it is appropriate to define terms which will appear throughout the study. These terms include continuation school, attendance (and how figures are obtained and measured), semester (length of time of the study), special education student, regular student, credits earned, credit check, and TEAM.

Continuation School: Continuation school is a form of alternative school which helps to meet the needs of students who do not fit into the comprehensive high school system. Valley View High School, part of the Chaffey Joint Union High School District in Ontario, California, will be used for the study.

Attendance: Attendance is the amount of time one attends school. In a continuation school, students are required to attend 15 hours minimum per week or 260 minutes per day. For the purposes of this study, this is a four period day

made up of four fifty-minute period classes (time is
allotted for breaks and lunch). For one semester a student
is enrolled 90 days or 360 class periods of attendance.
For the study, the total number of periods of attendance
shall be considered as this gives the most complete
picture of student attendance. The attendance figures used
will come from the school district's attendance profiles
of each student. These profiles show the daily and period
absences of each student. For the study, this writer shall
not be concerned with what kind of absences (excused or
unexcused) the students had, but the number of absent
periods and the number of periods in attendance. The
reader will note that the kind of absence is not important
in this study because an absence means that a student was
not present to receive instruction regardless whether
he/she was excused or not excused for that period of
attendance. The kind of absence that a student has will
make a difference for average daily attendance (ADA) and
the monies received for that student but for the purposes
of this study the kind of absence will not effect credits
earned. It is the absence itself which may or may not
effect student achievement.

  Semester: For the purposes of this study, this writer
  shall limit the study to the students' attendance over
  the period of one school semester. A semester is

comprised of 18 weeks or 90 school days. Each student
has a potential of attending 360 class periods during
the semester.

Special Education Students: For the purpose of this
study, special education students are those who have
been designated as in need of the "resource" program at
Valley View High School. Generally they are students
whose ability levels are far below their age or grade
level in one or more areas. These students have been
designated as special education students and have gone
through the I.E.P. process to be declared so. The
majority of these students would be considered learning
disabled.

Regular Education Students: For purposes of this
study, regular education students are those students
who have not been designated as special education
students.

Credits Earned: A credit earned is equivalent to 12
semester hours of study. The reader will note that
students must do school work equivalent to 12 hours and
do not get credit for just attending 12 hours of
school. It is also important to note that in a
comprehensive school, students who attend and complete

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their assignments will earn 5 semester credits per class.
Students in a continuation school, on continuous progress,
may earn more or fewer credits. Continuous progress allows
the student to work at his/her own pace. Students are given
assignments varying in credit. One credit is equivalent to
12 hours of work. As students complete semester classes,
they continue on to complete additional classes. This
differs from comprehensive schools in that in a
comprehensive school students may only earn 5 semester
credits per class. Students on continuous progress may earn
more or fewer credits per class. Credits are the units of
measure by which students graduate from high school.
Students in the Chaffey Joint Union High School District are
required to earn 220 semester credits to graduate in 1987
and 230 semester credits to graduate in 1988 and beyond.

Credit Check: At Valley View High School, student progress
towards graduation is monitored monthly. This system of
monitoring credits earned and attendance is called credit
check. Students' credits are posted on a monthly basis by
their respective teachers. Students who do not meet the
accepted standard of credits and attendance for the monthly
credit check are placed on contracts for the ensuing credit
checks.

TEAM: Team is the Teacher Expectation Attendance Model used

at Valley View High School. It is a method of monitoring student attendance, behavior, and credits earned while the student attends Valley View High School. Each student is assigned an advisor. Each advisor monitors student attendance, behavior, and credits earned for each member of his/her TEAM.

The population of this study will be made up of two groups of students ranging in age from 16-18 years. Each group will be comprised of 15 students who have been enrolled for one entire semester (90 days). The samples are small due to several factors. Many students either drop out of school mid-way through the semester or they are not enrolled in the program until several weeks after the semester begins. These students will be drawn from the school population which is approximately 400 students. One Group (GROUP 1) will be comprised of regular education students and the other group (GROUP 2) will be comprised of special education students. For the study, two TEAMS will be used: one special education advisor's TEAM and one regular education advisor's TEAM. Each group will be compared with respect to the variables of credits earned with attendance.

As stated earlier, the nature of continuation education students is that they are poor attenders and that they are behind in credits upon entering the continuation education setting. Regardless of whether they are special education

students or regular education students, they are faced with these same problems. To study the relationship between credits earned with attendance with respect to these two student populations might bring some insight to educators as to how students in the continuation education setting can better be served.

CHAPTER II

TRENDS IN LITERATURE

The study of continuation education is not extensive. The variety and number of articles surrounding the study of continuation schools is lacking. What literature exists concerns itself with how continuation schools operate and the populations served. Much of the literature surrounding attendance deals with comprehensive school attendance, elementary schools, and junior colleges.

The National Society for the Study of Education annually studies one or more issues in education. In 1947, they studied the topic of juvenile delinquency and in 1961 they dealt with individualized instruction. To date they have not studied continuation schools specifically.

Trends in literature lean towards a discussion of the type student served by continuation schools, the function of continuation schools, and how credits and grades are earned.

Continuation high school students are students with special needs. They are generally poor attenders who are often times behind in credits. Students are sent to or choose to attend continuation school for a variety of reasons among them truancies, credit deficiencies, behavioral problems, and special education needs. These students are considered "at risk". They are often students

with low self-esteem who have met with failure in many areas of their young lives. In her article, "The Students Served in Continuation Education", Janet Knoeppel describes several kinds of students who attend continuation schools. According to Knoeppel, these students include students who are deficient in credits, students who are working full-time and need an alternative form of education, pregnant minors, students with emotional or educational handicaps, students who have excessive truancies and behavioral problems, and finally students who need the individualized approach to education and an increased opportunity for success. (Knoeppel, 1969) Although written nearly 20 years ago, Knoeppel's article pinpoints the variety of students who continue to attend continuation schools. She believes that while these students are so different in their attitudes, problems, and needs, they have one need in common: they need help. This attitude is one that prevails throughout much of the literature available on continuation school students: they have special problems and needs, and they all need help. The prevailing attitude is one of concern for the individual needs of the students and the desire to meet these needs.

J. Gillespie agrees that high school students are referred to continuation schools primarily because of attendance, discipline, and deficiencies in credits. She also feels that these same problems figure into the histories of learning disabled students. Questions arise as to "whether or not a significant number of continuation high school students have serious weaknesses in academic skills which would prevent their successful participation in regular high school

programs. Do a significant number of students with low academic skills meet the generally accepted criteria of LD students? Are the students with learning disabilities being dismissed from high school programs as the result of behavior which is secondary to the learning problems that could be resolved through appropriate assessment techniques and instructional programs in their school of residence?"[1] Gillespie argues that while many students are sent to continuation schools because of attendance and behavior problems, assessment measures would suggest that a number of unidentified learning disabled students are being placed in continuation schools. She further argues that many students would meet the criteria for identification as learning disabled students. She concludes that continuation students are not dropouts rather they have been pushed out of their regular schools for attendance and behavior problems. Gillespie feels that many of those students could remain at their regular schools with appropriate identification and treatment of their special needs. (Gillespie 1982) Once again we can see that the prevailing attitude is one of concern for the special needs of these students and a desire to meet these needs.

Up to this point, we have discussed the student population served by the continuation school and their special needs. The trends in literature would suggest that most comprehensive schools do not fulfill the needs of all students. According to Donald Reed in his article, "The Nature and Function of Continuation Education", there is small but growing number of youth who get lost in the comprehensive school system. For them school is a waste of time.

Continuation schools direct their attention to these students.
"Continuation high schools, working in cooperation with the 'regular'
schools, provide an alternate approach to common educational goals:
to utilize human resources fully, and to give all youth the
knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to achieve worthy personal
and social goals."2 Reed further states that "the philosophy of
these schools centers on an understanding that the student is indeed
a divergent youth; this philosophy can perhaps be expressed simply as
an acceptance of any student at his own level, regardless of his
problems or his degree of learning, and a diligent role in life
within the framework of his own ability and personality."3

In his article, "The nature and Function of Continuation
Education", Donald Reed has given us several major characteristics of
continuation education. These characteristics include: the
individualized approach, a guidance and counseling orientation, short
term goals and frequent rewards, and the development of meaningful
relationships with adults.

The first characteristic in continuation education is the
individualized approach. Each student is given as much attention as
possible not only by his teachers but by the entire staff. A second
characteristic of the continuation school is that it is more guidance
and counseling oriented. The main concern is to motivate students
who may never have been motivated in the past. Students are taught
to accept responsibility for their own actions. A student must
learn to make decisions for himself whether he/she will be
productive (earn credits) or not; whether he/she will attend school

or not. A third characteristic, according to Reed, is the use of short term goals and frequent rewards. Learning tasks are given in small segments. Students are made to feel that each accomplishment is a step toward graduation. A final major characteristic is the development of meaningful relationships with adults. Students are encouraged to develop meaningful relationships with teachers as well as adults in the community. The attempt is made to guide students into relationships they will encounter when they leave school, thus enabling them to function more competently. The ultimate goal or objective of the continuation school according to Reed is to help the student become a productive citizen. (Reed 1970)

The majority of articles pertaining to the topic of continuation education and how it functions agree with the characteristics given by Donald Reed. The low teacher-student ratio of the continuation school, its flexibility in terms of entering the program and earning credits, and the individualized approach to learning all appear to be key factors in student success.

The emphasis of the continuation school is different from that of the comprehensive school. As stated before, it is designed to meet the needs of the student population it serves. According to Galas and Winans, "one of the distinct advantages of the continuation school lies in its method of earning grades and credits."[4] According to Galas and Winans, credits can be earned in a variety of ways of which usually one or two are most widely accepted: the Work Completed Approach and the Productive Hour Approach. With the Productive Hour Approach, students are required to to attend a

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specific number of hours and work productively in class in order to receive credits. With the Work Completed Approach, students are given credits based upon actual work they complete. Assignments are generally broken down into segments and students are given credit when they complete each segment. The student works independently at his/her own rate. Galas and Winans feel that students in the continuation school should be given every opportunity to work at his/her own speed and that credits should reflect the successful completion of work. (Galas and Winans 1969)

As stated earlier, the variety and number of articles surrounding the study of continuation schools is limited. There are no studies available specifically concerning continuation school students and attendance. What literature exists concerns itself with the nature and function of continuation schools and the population served. As well, much of the literature available is concentrated in the late 1960's to early 1980's. This lack of literature would suggest that perhaps further study of continuation education is warranted.

CHAPTER III

PROJECT DESIGN

Working from the premise that there is a relationship between credits earned with attendance in an alternative education setting, in this case a continuation school, to facilitate study of this issue, the null hypothesis will be stated: "There will be no statistically significant relationship between credits earned with attendance in an alternative education setting." In order to reject this null hypothesis, a significance level must be found at the .05 level or greater. To test the hypothesis the Pearson product-moment correlation will be used to determine if a relationship between the two variables does exist. "The Pearson product-moment correlation is used to determine if there is a relationship between two sets of paired numbers."[5] (Bruning, Kintz 1977)

The procedure used in identifying the relationship between credits earned with attendance was to first determine the population and describe the procedures used in determining the two sample groups. A correlation of credits earned with attendance for two groups of students drawn from the total student population was determined. The two sample groups were drawn from a total student population of 400 students at Valley View High School in the Chaffey Joint Union High School District. The sample groups were made up of

students ranging in age from 16 years to 18 years. Each group was comprised of students who were enrolled for one entire semester (90 days or 360 class periods). For the study it was beneficial to use data generated from the first semester after attendance and credits had been posted.

Group One is comprised of 15 regular education students ages 16-18 years. There are 3 males and 13 females. The ethnic composition of the group is as follows: 2 Hispanic students, 1 Black student, and 13 Caucasian students.

Group Two is comprised of 15 special education students ages 16-18 years. There are 9 males and 6 females in the group. The ethnic composition of the group is as follows: 2 Hispanic students and 13 Caucasian students.

For the purposes of the study two TEAMS were used: one special education advisor's TEAM and one regular education advisor's TEAM. This method of selection is sampling by classroom units and is a recommended procedure for conducting school research. Each sample of 15 was selected from the TEAMS using the criteria of length of enrollment as one semester (90 days). The samples are small due to several factors. First, many students in the continuation school do not enroll until mid-semester. Second, many students in the continuation school setting drop out of the program due to poor attendance or low achievement.

After the sample had been drawn, the following information was compiled for each subject. The first variable considered was attendance. Attendance is measured in terms of days and class

periods, the time one attends school. In a continuation school, students are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours per week or 260 minutes per day. One school day is made up of four fifty-minute class periods (time is allotted for breaks and lunch). Each full day missed is considered a full day's absence. Class periods missed are considered period absences. The number of class periods attended over a semester was compiled. This data is available for each student and can be broken down into period absences or daily absences. From these figures one can ascertain the number of periods each student attended. For this study the total number of class periods attended was used. Attendance patterns for continuation education students are inconsistent and often times students will attend parts of days. Each student in the study has a potential of attending 360 class periods (90 days X 4 periods per day). The use of total class periods attended gives the most complete picture of students' attendance.

The second variable considered was credits earned. Credits earned are the units of measure equivalent to hours of study. According to California state guidelines, one semester hour of credit is equivalent to 12 semester hours of study. The reader will note that the hours of study are not hours spent sitting in class. Credits are the units of measure by which students graduate from high school. In a comprehensive high school, students who attend and complete their assignments will earn 5 semester credits per class. Students in a continuation school, on continuous progress, may earn more or fewer credits. Data is available for each student and can be

broken down into how many credits were earned for the semester. This data can be further broken down into how many credits were earned for every four week credit check. For the purposes of the study, however, the data compared was based upon the total credits earned during the entire semester.

Once the data was collected for each variable, a correlation was calculated to determine if a relationship exists. As stated earlier, the data was subjected to the Pearson product-moment correlation. A comparison of attendance (class periods attended) with credits earned was made to determine if a relationship exists. The writer was then able to either reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis based upon the findings.

The comparison of attendance with credits earned was made for both groups. A comparison of r-values of the two groups was made. This comparison showed that there was virtually no difference between the two groups. A further discussion of this comparison will follow in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

To determine if a relationship between credits earned with
attendance exists, data gathered was subjected to the Pearson
product-moment correlation and then a t-test for significance.

Data gathered for each of the two groups studied included the
the variables of number of credits earned for one semester and number
of periods attended for one semester. Data was available for each
student in each of the two groups. The findings of the study can be
reported as follows:

For each group a total of 5400 periods of attendance was
possible. The combined number of periods attended for Group 1 was
3995 periods of attendance. The highest number of periods attended
by any one student in Group 1 was 323 out of 360 periods possible.
The lowest number of periods attended by any one student in Group 1
was 217 out of 360 periods possible. The average number of periods
attended for Group 1 was 277.33 periods. The absence rate for Group
1 was 25.73% (see figure 1). The combined number of periods attended
for Group 2 was 3997 periods of attendance. The highest number of
periods attended by any one student in Group 2 was 313 out of 360
possible periods. The lowest number of periods attended for Group 2
was 214 out of 360 possible periods. The average number of periods

attended for Group 2 was 277.57 periods. The absence rate for Group 2 was 25.60% (see Figure 1).

The total number of credits earned for Group 1 was 463.5 credits. The range of credits earned was 57.5 to 17.0 credits for Group 1. The average number of credits earned for Group 1 was 30.9 credits (see Figure 2). The total number of credits earned for Group 2 was 395 credits. The range of credits earned for Group 2 was 45 to 17 credits. The average number of credits for Group 2 was 27.33 credits (see Figure 2).

The data for each group was subjected to the Pearson product-moment correlation to determine if a relationship between credits earned and attendance exists. Once an r-value for each group, the groups were then compared to each other. The r-value found for Group 1 was +.23 and the r-value for Group 2 was +.25. The Critical Values of Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient for Five Alpha Significance Levels (Bruning, Kintz 1977) was used to determine significance at the .05 level or greater. Finding the appropriate degrees of freedom (n'-2), the r-value for neither group was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Any comparisons between Group 1 and Group 2 or interpretations of the data presented above will be made in subsequent chapters of this project.

FIGURE 1

ATTENDANCE

	Group 1	Group 2
Total Possible Attendance Periods	5400	5400
Total Periods Attended	3995	3997
High	323	313
Low	217	214
Mean	277.33	277.57
Median	257	275
Mode	---	277
% Absent	25.73%	25.60%

FIGURE 2

CREDITS EARNED

	Group 1	Group 2
Total Number of Credits Earned	463.5	395
Highest # of Credits Earned	57.5	45.0
Lowest # of Credits Earned	17.0	17.0
Mean	30.9	27.33
Median	29.5	24.0
Mode	20.0	----

FIGURE 3

r-VALUES

	Group 1	Group 2
r-value	+.23	+.25

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CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The anticipated outcome of this study was that there would be
a significant relationship of credits earned with attendance in the
continuation school setting. I anticipated that those students who
attended school the most class periods would be the students who
earned the most credits. As well, it was expected that there would
be a significant difference between the two groups. The actual
outcome of this study proves otherwise.

In this chapter I will do the following: (1) interpret the
data for each group individually, (2) interpret the data in
comparison of both groups, and (3) discuss any compounding variables
which might have contributed to the outcome and account for any
similarities or differences between Group 1 and Group 2.

Initially I anticipated that the outcome of the study would
show there to be a significant relationship between credits earned
with attendance. The study showed, however, that for Group 1 there
was no significant relationship between the two. The r-value for
Group 1 was +.23. The average periods of attendance was 277.33 and
the average number of credits earned was 30.9 credits. The highest
number of periods attended by any one student was 323 class periods
and the highest number of credits earned was 57.5 credits. One would

think that the person having the highest attendance would have earned the most credits. In actuality this person had an absence rate of 18 percent. The person who had the best attendance was near the bottom of the credit earning list earning only 23 credits and having an absence rate of 10% (see figures 4 and 5). What this seems to indicate is that perhaps it is not necessary to attend school in order to earn credits. These exceptions will discussed later on in this chapter.

I also expected there to be a similar significant relationship between credits earned with attendance for Group 2. The study revealed that there was also no significant difference between the two variables. The r-value for Group 2 was +.25. The average number of periods of attendance was 277.57 and the average number of credits earned was 27.33 credits. The highest number of periods attended by any one student was 313 class periods and the highest number of credits earned was 45 credits. As with Group 1, the person having the highest number of periods attended did not earn the most credits. This person in fact had the worst attendance of the entire group with an absence rate of 40 percent. The person with the best attendance of Group 2 (13 percent absence rate) earned closer to the average number of credits earned by the group as a whole. These numbers indicate that perhaps one need not attend school in order to earn credits. Compounding variables which might effect these outcomes will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Looking at the data for each group separately gives us an incomplete picture of the study. After comparing the two groups with

each other we get another interpretation of the data presented. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show a comparison of the two groups. The reader will remember that Group 1 is made up of regular education students and Group 2 is made up of special education students. Figure 1 shows the attendance figures of both groups. Each group had the potential of attending 5400 class periods total or 360 class periods for each student. Group 1 was present 3995 class periods and Group 2 was present 3997 class periods. There is no significant difference in attendance for the two groups. They both average approximately 277 class periods; both groups' low attenders were very close in number (217, 214) as were both groups' high attenders (323, 313) (see figure 4). The average percent absent for each group was approximately 25 percent. One would think that the special education students would have had poorer attendance because of their special problems and needs but the reverse is true. The special education students actually attended more class periods (2 class periods total). This difference is negligible.

Figure 2 shows credits earned for both groups. The difference in credits earned is a little wider spread than for attendance. Group 1 earned 463.5 credits with the top earner earning 57.5 credits and the low credit earner earning 17 credits. Group 2 earned 395 credits with the top credit earner earning 45 credits and the low credit earner earning 17 credits. The average number of credits earned for Group 1 was 30.9 and for Group 2 was 27.33 The differences between Group 1 and Group 2 is 68.5 credits overall. The low number of credits for each group is 17 and there is 12.5

difference of credits earned between the top credit earner in Group 1 and the top credit earner in Group 2. The differences in credits earned between the two groups may be contributed to other factors will be discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 3 shows the r-values for each group. The r-value for Group 1 is +.23 and for Group 2 is +.25. The differences between these two groups is negligible. The r-value for neither group was found to be statistically significant as reported in Chapter 4. These figures indicate that there is really no significant difference between the group of regular education students (Group 1) and the group of special education students (Group 2) with regard to the variables of attendance and credits earned.

The range for attendance is 107 for Group 1 and 100 for Group 2 (see figure 4). The difference in range for attendance is not significant. The range for credits earned overall in Group 1 is 41.5 and for Group 2 is 29.0 credits. When examining the breakdown of credits earned by subject for each of the two groups, it becomes evident that the greatest difference is primarily with the English subject area. The mean for Group 1 (regular education students) is 13.93 and the mean for Group 2 (special education students) is 7.82 credits; nearly twice as much. The discrepancy in credits can be attributed to the learning and language disabilities of the special education students. Other areas where a large discrepancy exists in the mean credits earned by Group 1 and Group 2 are PE, Art, Driver's Education, Resource, Business, and Homemaking (see figure 6).

There are several factors which may contribute to the

similarities in attendance and the differences in credits earned between Groups 1 and 2. Factors which might contribute to attendance are advisors and student mobility. Factors which might contribute to the differences in credits earned between the two groups are homework, teacher differences, and extra curricular activities such as work experience and Regional Occupation Program.

Attendance figures might be effected by student mobility. Students have the ability to change classes whenever they finish a class (earn 5.0 credits), complete the graduation requirements for that department, or whenever they desire a change. Attendance record-keeping cards are transferred from teacher to teacher as the student changes classes. Attendance is computerized and class changes do not always appear on attendance sheets. Sometimes attendance figures can be effected by this changing of classes, especially if the students change frequently. For the most part students in both groups did not change classes often and their attendance figures are accurate.

A second factor which could effect attendance is the student's advisors. As stated earlier, each student is assigned an advisor. Each advisor interacts differently with his/her students. The responsibilities of the advisor include following up on student attendance. Each advisor undertakes this task differently. Some advisors call parents daily to inquire about student attendance while others call once per week to update parents. Student attendance can be effected by the advisor interaction with students and parents. The more aggressive the advisor, generally the better the student

attendance. In this case, both groups had similar attendance and these factors appear to have not effected attendance. The attendance of these two groups was in keeping with the rest of the school's attendance figures for the semester studied.

Other factors which can effect a student's attendance might include motivation, home life, work, health, and maturity level to name a few. Each of these factors will effect some students differently than others or not at all. They are generally some of the problems advisors encounter when making home calls to follow up on student attendance.

Compounding variables which might contribute to the outcome and account for the differences in credits earned include: homework, teacher differences, and extra curricular activities such as work experience and the Regional Occupation Program. Differences in student ability levels might also account for differences in credits earned by the two groups.

The first compounding variable which might effect the number of credits earned by the two groups and account for the differences between the two groups is homework. As previously stated, students in the continuation school are on a continuous progress program of earning credits. They have the option of excelling in the amount of work they do. Many students are behind in credits upon entering the By doing homework in addition to their regular assignments, students are able to earn more credits. Some students are motivated to do more homework than others. Similarly, some teachers will assign more homework than other teachers. So depending upon student motivation

and the teachers and classes he or she takes, some students might earn more or fewer credits than others.

A second compounding variable which might contribute to the outcome of the study and account for the differences in credits earned is the teacher differences. Teachers have different methods of instruction, different systems of grading, and assign varying amounts of classwork and homework. Students respond differently to varying teacher methods of instruction. In addition, advisor differences might effect the numbers of credits earned. Each advisor has a different style and students respond differently to advisor differences. Some advisors expect more of their students and try to motivate them to do more homework and earn more credits. Other advisors approach their students with a more relaxed attitude and allow their students to work at their own pace without really pushing them beyond their desires. Each teacher-advisor is different. Students react differently to their advisors and to the teachers they have. Ideally teachers and advisors want their students to do the best they can and to earn as many credits as possible. Part of the teacher-advisor role is to promote good attendance and student achievement. Depending upon the advisor and teachers each student has, he or she might earn more or fewer credits than others.

The third compounding variable which might effect the number of credits students earn is extra curricular activities such as work experience, Regional Occupational Program, athletics, and Peer Counseling. Many students are enrolled in extra curricular activities which are in addition to their regular programs. Many of

these activities take place after school and offer students the opportunity to earn additional credits. As an example, a student who participates as a member of a team such as a volleyball or baseball team can earn physical education credits for their participation. Students in a continuation school are encouraged to participate in these activities to earn extra credits. As stated previously, students in continuation schools are often behind in credits. Participating in extra curricular activities such as R.O.P., work experience, athletics, and Peer Counseling gives them the opportunity to make up credits they are lacking. The number of extra credits each student earns depends upon the hour he/she completes. While not every student will take advantage of the opportunities provided, the opportunities to earn extra credits are there and many students do take advantage of them. So, much like homework, depending upon student motivation and the amount of extra time he/she puts in, some students might earn more or fewer credits than other students and this could effect the outcome and account for the differences in the number of credits earned by each group.

Finally, the ability level of the students in each group might effect the outcome and account for differences between the two groups. The reader will remember that Group 1 is comprised of regular education students and Group 2 is comprised of special education students. The special education students have been so designated because they are learning disabled and are either below age or grade level in ability. Their varying levels of learning

disabilities can effect student performance and thus effect the number of credits earned as well as attendance. The students in a continuation school are already risk students and the special education students are even more so. This ability difference in the two groups could account for the differences in credits earned between the two groups.

As a teacher in the continuation education school where the two samples were drawn and studied, the writer believes that all of the compounding variables discussed effect the outcome and account for similarities and differences between the two groups to some degree. The anticipated outcome of the study was that the null hypothesis would be rejected and a significant relationship between credits earned with attendance would be found in both groups. The actual outcome, however, proved otherwise. Certainly many factors effect student achievement and the credits they earn. It appears that the effect attendance has on credits earned is virtually nil and that there is virtually no difference between the special education group and the regular education group. The original intent in studying the relationship between credits earned with attendance was to bring some insight to educators as to how students in the continuation education setting could better be served. If attendance is not related to credits earned as indicated by the study, then educators must look to what variables do relate to attendance. Student motivation is certainly a key factor. What motivates students to attend school? What motivates students to earn credits? What can educators do to improve student attendance and achievement?

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The data generated by this study and the interpretation of this data points to a need for further research of alternative programs for at risk students such as those served by continuation schools.

FIGURE 4

RANK ORDER OF ATTENDANCE

Group 1		Group 2	
1.	323	1.	313
2.	310	2.	298
3.	300	3.	297
4.	295	4.	294
5.	294	5.	279
6.	291	6.	277
7.	290	7.	277
8.	257	8.	275
9.	252	9.	273
10.	250	10.	263
11.	235	11.	262
12.	231	12.	240
13.	227	13.	219
14.	226	14.	216
15.	217	15.	214

Range   107   100

FIGURE 5

RANK ORDER OF CREDITS EARNED

Group 1   Group 2

1.   57.5   1.   45.0

2.   41.5   2.   35.0

3.   39.5   3.   33.0

4.   37.5   4.   30.0

5.   34.5   5.   29.5

6.   33.5   6.   27.0

7.   32.0   7.   26.5

8.   29.5   8.   24.0

9.   28.5   9.   23.5

10.   28.0   10.   23.0

11.   23.0   11.   22.0

12.   21.5   12.   21.5

13.   20.0   13.   19.5

14.   20.0   14.   18.5

15.   17.0   15.   17.0

Range   41.5   29.0

FIGURE 6

MEAN CREDITS EARNED BY SUBJECT

Subject	Group 1	Group 2
English		
number	15	14
mean	13.93	7.82
Team		
number	15	15
mean	2.7	3.2
PE		
number	3	8
mean	1.66	3.56
Science		
number	9	7
mean	2.83	2.29
Social Studies		
number	13	10
mean	3.73	3.75
Math		
number	8	7
mean	3.125	3.57
Art		
number	8	6
mean	5.56	1.5
Driver's Ed.		
number	0	4
mean	0	4.375
Resource		
number	0	15
mean	0	4.43
Business		
number	4	0
mean	4.75	0
Homemaking		
number	5	3
mean	3.7	1.66

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ENDNOTES

1 Jacquelyn Gillespie, "The 'Pushouts': Academic Skills and Learning Disabilities in Continuation High School Students", <u>Journal of Learning Disabilities</u>, 15 (November 1982): 538.

2 Donald R. Reed, "The Nature and Function of Continuation Education", <u>Education Digest</u>, 35, (February 1970): 52.

3 <u>Ibid</u>, p. 53.

4 Georgiana K. Galas and Sadie V. Winans, "Credits and Grades in a Continuation High School", <u>Journal of Secondary Education</u>, 44 (November 1969): 319.

5 James L. Bruning and B.L. Kintz, <u>Computational Handbook of Statistics</u> (Dallas: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1977), p. 171.

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