Children's Attributional Style and the Length of Stay in an Alternative Education Program

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CHILDREN'S ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE AND LENGTH OF STAY IN AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Previous research has linked attributional style in children to self-esteem, loneliness, depression, general distress, and reading persistence in the learning disabled. The current study sought to determine if specific attributional styles in children were correlated with their length of stay in a behaviorally based Alternative Education program. Sixty-two first-grade through sixth-grade children were recruited from two Alternative Education campuses in Polk County, Florida. They each completed two administrations of the Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire (CASQ), separated by a two-week interval, and one administration of the Performance Expectation Questionnaire (PEQ), which assessed the children's expectation of their ability to perform tasks specific to the response cost system of the Alternative Education program. A backward stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationship among attributional style, self-efficacy, and length of stay in the Alternative Education program. It was predicted that internal-stable-global attributions for failure, external-unstable-specific attributions for success, and both the level and strength of efficacy expectations would all correlate significantly with length of stay. None of the hypotheses were supported.
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INTRODUCTION

The causes of events are always ambiguous (Metalsky & Abramson, 1981); but when an individual experiences either success or failure in any given situation, that person still tends to attribute the outcome to some cause in an idiosyncratic manner which is relatively stable across time (Peterson et al., 1982; Seligman et al., 1984). This personal, stable manner of attributing cause is known as an attributional style, and permits the individual to interpret life events in a consistent manner. For example, a person who performs well on math tests and feels that the results are simply due to luck will be likely to always attribute good math grades to luck. Similarly, one who feels that failure with the opposite sex is due to personal character defects will be likely to continue to feel this way.

Metalsky and Abramson (1981) presented an extensive discussion about the development of personal attributional style and the manner in which both situational information and generalized beliefs interact to determine the specifically attributed cause of an event. They pointed out that an attributional style is not simply a summary of the true causes of events in a person's life. An important part of the attributional process involves the way that people choose to ignore or discount some information in favor of
other information. For example, it is likely that a teenager who has been repeatedly told by her mother that she is ugly will discount any compliments she receives and continue to believe that she is ugly. In this case, a strongly held belief ("I am ugly") overpowers the situational information of the compliment. The teenager may then rely on this particular attribution to explain her failure in obtaining a date for the prom, whether or not this is the true reason.

Frequently, situational information about the cause of an event is sparse. If a fifth grade boy has just failed the first math test of the school year, he may not know whether he lacks ability in fifth grade math, whether he did not try hard enough, whether the teacher gives hard tests, whether that particular test was hard, or whether he just had bad luck. He now relies on his personal attributional system to assign a cause to his failure, even though the cause he assigns may not represent fact.

Attributional styles may therefore be thought of as a filter through which reality is interpreted. Because these filters are relatively stable, it may be conceptualized that the particular filter that each individual uses would produce results somewhere along a continuum from beneficial to insidious. Research has shown this to be the case. Various attributional styles have been linked to positive and negative self-esteem (Marsh, Cairns, Relich, Barnes, &
Debus, 1984; Zautra, Guenther, & Chartier, 1985), loneliness (Anderson, Horowitz & French, 1983), depression (Kaslow, Rehm, & Siegel, 1984; Peterson et al., 1982; Seligman et al., 1984), general distress (Zautra et al., 1985), and reading persistence in learning disabled children (Fowler & Peterson, 1981).

**Attributional Dimensions**

Researchers have been divided as to whether the most useful measure of attributions is sources or dimensions. Sources are such factors as ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, and have frequently been used in educational research (Fielstein et al., 1985; Jacobsen, Lowery, & DuCette, 1986; Whitley & Frieze, 1985). As will be demonstrated, dimensions subsume some sources and are confounded by other sources. The three most prominent dimensions used in current research are internality, stability, and globality (Peterson et al., 1982; Seligman et al., 1984).

Internality refers to whether an individual views the reasons for success or failure as due to either something about the person (internal attributions), or to something about the situation (external attributions). In past research, internality has often been incorrectly referred to as locus of control (Bar-Tal, 1978; Cooper, Burger, & Good, 1981) because it was assumed that internal attributions,
such as effort, were under the control of the individual while external attributions, such as luck, were not. This has resulted in confusion between the concepts of causality and control.

Internal attributions, for example, may or may not be under the control of the individual. Effort and ability are both internal because they deal with something about the person and not about the situation. Effort, however, is usually under the control of the individual and will vary across time depending on the situation, while ability is typically thought of as a relatively stable, innate characteristic that is not under individual control. Therefore, it is more accurate to view the internality dimension as locus of causality (Weiner, 1985) rather than as locus of control.

Stability is a time dimension which refers to whether events are attributable either to nontransient factors (stable attributions), such as being a brilliant public speaker, or to transient factors (unstable attributions), such as the belief that a particular test was unusually hard. Ability is therefore typically considered an internal-stable attribution, because it does not vary across time, while effort is usually thought of as internal-unstable.

It should be noted that Strube (1985) and Weiner (1985) argue that particular sources, such as ability and luck, do
not always fit neatly into dimensional categories, as has typically been assumed. Normally, ability is considered to be internal-stable and luck is considered to be external-unstable. Ability, however, may be viewed as internal-unstable when individuals believe that learning has the potential to increase ability. Likewise, luck may be viewed as internal-stable when individuals believe that they are "lucky" or "unlucky" people. Research which has made the a priori assignment of sources such as effort, ability, task difficulty, and luck to particular dimensions has run the risk of forcing subject's attributions into categories which they did not intend.

For example, the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Scale (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965) is one popular instrument that collapses effort and ability into the internal dimension and collapses task difficulty and luck into the external dimension. The resultant confounding of sources and dimensions has therefore limited the usefulness of the several hundred attributional studies (see Cooper et al., 1981) in which it has been utilized (Fielstein et al., 1985; Marsh et al., 1984).

The third dimension, globality, refers to whether an individual believes that the causes of events are present in a variety of situations (global attributions) or whether they are present only in particular types of situations (specific attributions) (Peterson et al., 1982). Research
has only recently begun to center on a combination of all three of these dimensions. In the past, internality alone, or the combination of internality and stability has served as the defining characteristic of attributional style (Bar-Tal, 1978), which has limited the ability to generalize the research across situations. The globality dimension, which has appeared in recent research (Peterson et al., 1982; Seligman et al., 1984), appears to be a logical means for overcoming this deficit.

Not all researchers agree that internality, stability, and globality are the three primary attributional dimensions. In his review of research, Weiner (1985) found no support for the globality dimension. Most of the research he reviewed, however, was based in a particular behavioral domain, such as exam performance or sports performance, which limited the ability of the studies to detect global attributions.

In the same review, Weiner also argued for the need of establishing a separate dimension of controllability. Even though controllability may be logically orthogonal to other attributional dimensions (Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale, 1978), almost all controllable attributions are internal-unstable, and most internal-unstable attributions are controllable. As will be shown, the internal-unstable category is one of the least important in current
attributional research. Therefore, the utility of an additional dimension at this time is questionable.

At the other end of the spectrum, Anderson et al. (1983) opposed the use of all predetermined sources and dimensions in their studies of attributional styles in lonely and depressed people. Instead, they opted to determine "the most common ways that people express their attributions in everyday life" (p. 128) and then adapt theory to fit their results. They began by having subjects imagine themselves in each of twelve situations, divided evenly between success and failure outcomes, and then write the most likely cause for that particular outcome. Ten psychology graduate students classified the answers into six dimensional categories, which were further reduced to the three most popular: ability, effort, and strategy. The results indicated that both effort and strategy attributions were made in similar situations, which is not surprising because both effort and strategy may be classified as internal-unstable sources. Despite the authors' claim for the necessity of permitting subjects to select unique attributions, the results indicated the emergence of familiar attribution categories.

**Attributional Styles and Motivation**

Motivation for a future activity depends upon how well the individual expects to perform (Anderson et al., 1983).
These efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977) have, for example, been shown to be highly accurate predictors of the degree of behavioral change following the desensitization of chronic snake-phobics (Bandura & Adams, 1977). Further, Dowd, Claiborn, and Milne (1985) have demonstrated that lowered self-efficacy was also correlated with depression.

Because efficacy expectations are affected by the interpretation of past performance (Bandura & Adams, 1977), attributional styles tend to color these expectations in ways which will either enhance or detract from an individual's motivation. Most researchers have shown that people have separate attributional styles for both good and bad events, instead of having just one global style (Marsh et al., 1984). Consequently, the overall way in which people interpret their past (i.e., attribute causes to the events of their past) depends upon their particular combination of good and bad attributional styles.

For example, a person who attributes failure to internal-stable-global causes, such as a general lack of ability ("I can never do anything right!"), and attributes success to external-unstable-specific causes, such as a random instance of luck, is engaging in a pattern of interpretation which produces not only a decrease in motivation, but which actually leads to depression. These findings have been demonstrated with both adults and children (Kaslow, Rehm, & Siegel, 1984).
Seligman et al. (1984) administered measures of both attributional style and depression to 96 third through sixth graders at two times, separated by a six month interval. The results showed a strong correlation between attributional style and depression. Further, the composite style of internal-stable-global attributions for bad events at the time of the first administration was found to predict the level of depression at the time of the second administration, after controlling for initial depression.

Taken together, the above studies suggest that performance is affected by motivation, motivation is affected by self-efficacy, and self-efficacy is affected by attributional style. It is therefore expected that levels of performance would be correlated with attributional styles. The current study sought to determine if specific attributional styles in children were correlated with their performance in a behaviorally based Alternative Education program. Specifically, it was hypothesized that internal-stable-global attributions for failure and external-unstable-specific attributions for success would each correlate with the length of stay for children in the Alternative Education program. Further, it was hypothesized that both the level and strength of the children's efficacy expectations of their ability to perform the tasks specific to the response cost system of the Alternative Education program would correlate with their length of stay.
METHOD

Subjects

Sixty-two first-grade through sixth-grade children were recruited from two of the Alternative Education campuses in Polk County, Florida (one in Winter Haven, one in Lake Wales). The Alternative Education program serves as a behaviorally based discipline unit, functioning primarily through a response cost system, which requires the children to earn two hundred points, at a maximum rate of ten points per day, in order to return to their regular classroom. The primary reason for referral to the program is "disruptive behavior" (i.e., violation of the county discipline code). Children who have a diagnosed learning disability or emotional handicap are not admitted.

Each campus admits children to the program through individual intake sessions which require at least one parent or guardian to be present. At this time, an informed consent form (Appendix A) was presented to both the child and the parent or guardian of those children who were in at least first grade and who had not previously attended the Alternative Education program during the same school year. All children, except for one, who met the criteria and who were admitted to the campuses during the months of January through April 1987, participated in the study.
Of the sixty-two children who signed consent forms, one was dropped because of moving away before the study was completed, and two were dropped for not being able to correctly follow the instructions given to them, resulting in unusable questionnaires. This resulted in a sample of fifty-five males and four females. The females were subsequently dropped from the study in order to create a more homogeneous sample.

Materials

The Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire (CASQ)

The CASQ (Appendix B; Seligman et al., 1984) consists of 48 items, each presenting a hypothetical good or bad event involving the child and two possible causes for that event. The child selects the cause that best describes why the event happened to them. The two listed causes hold constant two of the attributional dimensions while varying a third. A sample item that measures internality while holding constant stability and globality is as follows: A good friend tells you that he hates you; (a) My friend was in a bad mood that day (external); (b) I wasn't nice to my friend that day (internal). One third of the questions pertain to each of the three dimensions (internality, stability, and globality). One half of the questions describe good outcomes and one half describe bad outcomes.
The CASQ is scored by assigning a 1 to each internal, stable, or global response, and a 0 to each external, unstable, or specific response. Subscales are formed by summing these scores separately for good events and for bad events. The overall summary score is the subscore for good events minus the subscore for bad events. The lower the score, the more depressive the attributional style (Kaslow et al., 1984; Seligman et al., 1984).

Information on the psychometric properties of the CASQ is sparse. Seligman et al. (1984) reported that stability over a six month test/retest interval was $r_s = .71$ for the good event subscale and $r_s = .66$ for the bad event subscale ($p < .001$ for each).

**Performance Expectation Questionnaire (PEQ)**

The PEQ (Appendix C) was designed for the current study to assess the level and strength of children's expectation of their ability (i.e., self-efficacy) to perform the tasks specific to the response cost system of the Alternative Education campuses. It consists of ten behaviors which the children rank on a five point scale from a low of one ("I will do this every day") to a high of five ("I will not do this at all").

The level of self-efficacy is the number of behaviors which are ranked at two or greater, indicating that there is at least some expectation of success. The strength of
self-efficacy is computed by summing all of the rankings for each child and dividing by the number of behaviors.

**Procedure**

All subjects were tested in groups by the researcher in a quiet location isolated from the classroom. Copies of the CASQ and the PEQ were coded with a number, rather than with the child's name, for the purpose of identification. Within two days after admittance to the program, the children completed the first administration of the CASQ. At this first session, they each received a copy of the instrument and the following instructions were read by the researcher:

> You are about to help me with scientific research. This is not a test and neither your teacher nor your parents will know any of your answers. It is important that you answer the best you can so that the results of this research will be accurate.

> I am going to read to you some different things that could happen to you. I want you to read them silently along with me. When we read each one I want you to pretend that it has really happened to you. Then we will read two different reasons that tells why it could have happened. You are to circle the letter of the best reason why this could have happened to you. Sometimes neither reason will seem exactly right, but you are to choose the best of the two reasons you are given.

One week after the administration of the CASQ, the PEQ was administered to each subject. The children were given a copy of the instrument, and the following instructions were read by the researcher:
Now we will read a list of the different things for which you can lose points while you are here in school. As we read each one I want you to circle the letter that best tells how often you think you will do those things for the rest of the time that you are here. Remember, I want to know how often you think you will do these for the rest of the time you are here, not how often you have already done them.

One week after the administration of the PEQ, the CASQ was readministered, using the same instructions given during the first session.

**Length of Stay**

For the purposes of this study, length of stay was defined as the number of school days which a child spent at the Alternative Education campus, including the day that the child was enrolled in the program. For children who completed their stay during the course of this study, length of stay was determined by obtaining from the teachers the actual date of exit and calculating the number of school days.

Because it was expected that many children would not have time to work their way out of the Alternative Education program during the period of this study, the total number of points earned by each of the children after they had completed seventeen school days (a period of time chosen for convenience in data collection) was obtained from the teachers. This was considered to be equivalent (although inversely related) to measuring the actual length of stay,
because it was expected that the greater the number of points the children earned the sooner they would be released.
RESULTS

The means and standard deviations for the CASQ scores at the two times of administration are depicted in Table 1. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients were calculated between the scores from these two times. Only the subscore for good events displayed a significant correlation between Time 1 and Time 2 ($r = .45, p < .01$). However, dependent t-tests revealed no significant differences between any of the scores across the two time periods.

Table 2 summarizes the means and standard deviations for the PEQ. None of the CASQ scores correlated significantly with either the level or strength of performance expectation. Further, the stronger the reported performance expectation, the greater the number of categories in which the children reported they had at least some expectancy for success ($r(45) = .68, p < .001$).

Of the fifty-five males used in the data analysis, twenty-eight worked their way out of the Alternative Education program during the course of the study ($M = 28$ school days). For these twenty-eight children, the length of stay did correlate significantly with the number of points earned through day seventeen ($r = -.46, p < .01$).
### TABLE 1

**MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, STABILITIES, AND t SCORES FOR THE CASQ ACROSS A TWO WEEK INTERVAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Stability&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>t Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good Events Subscale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.45&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>11.91</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bad Events Subscale</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composite Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 1</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.*  
<sup>a</sup> with same measure in 2 weeks.

### TABLE 2

**MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, MINIMUMS, AND MAXIMUMS FOR THE PEQ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The following data analyses were conducted separately on both the full group of fifty-five and the subgroup of twenty-eight. Because the statistics program used for the data analysis dropped subjects with any missing data, the number of children used in each analysis is reported along with the results.

A backward stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to determine what contribution, if any, each of the measures made in predicting the number of points earned by the children. The results indicated that, in the larger group, none of the measures made a significant contribution toward predicting the number of points earned by the children ($F(1,38) = 3.65, \text{ns}$). In the smaller group, only the level of performance expectation made a significant contribution ($F(1,20) = 5.04, p < .05$).

Table 3 contains the results of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients which were computed for both groups. Only two of these correlations were significant, both of which occurred in the smaller group. First, the level of performance expectation significantly correlated with the number of points ($r = .45, p < .05$). Examination of the data indicated, however, that two extreme scores primarily accounted for the calculated correlation. When these scores were removed from the sample, the correlation became non-significant ($r = -.14, \text{ns}$).
TABLE 3
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELECTED MEASURES AND LENGTH OF STAY
AND POINTS IN THE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Completers (N = 22)</th>
<th>Full Sample (N = 40)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of Stay</td>
<td>Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>-0.49*</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Entry</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Stay</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASQ Time 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good events</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad events</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASQ Time 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good events</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad events</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEQ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05 (two-tailed)
Second, the Alternative Education campus the children attended significantly correlated with their length of stay ($r = -.49, p < .05$). Because the Winter Haven campus was coded as campus 1, and the Lake Wales campus was coded as campus 2, the direction of the correlation indicated that the children’s stay was significantly longer in Winter Haven than in Lake Wales. Further, the number of points earned by the children through their seventeenth school day did not significantly correlate with the campus they attended ($r = .19, \text{ns}$).
DISCUSSION

Neither the CASQ nor the PEQ were adequate instruments for predicting the length of stay for children in the Polk County, Florida Alternative Education program. There were several possible factors which may have contributed to this. First, neither of these instruments may possess sufficient reliability or validity. Published studies on the CASQ have been sparse, and no data were available on the PEQ because it was designed for the current study.

It is interesting to note that, in the current study, the CASQ subscore for good events correlated significantly across a two week interval while the subscore for bad events did not. Seligman et al. (1984) found that, in their study, both the good and bad event CASQ subscores correlated significantly across a six month interval. It is possible that the CASQ simply lacks the necessary reliability to make it a useful measure.

Second, the particular population chosen for this study may have influenced the results. The children who were enrolled in the Alternative Education program had all violated the county discipline code. Although they appeared cooperative while completing the questionnaires, the same factors which contributed to these children displaying
problem behaviors in their regular school may also have affected their manner of participation in the study.

Further, the possibility exists that this select group of children may have an attributional style significantly different from children who do not exhibit problem behaviors. The CASQ composite scores obtained in both administrations in the current study showed that, on the average, the children were slightly more likely to make external attributions to good events and internal attributions to bad events than were the children from regular classrooms used by Seligman et al. (1984). The composite scores from both studies were, however, within one standard deviation of each other, and were not statistically significant.

Third, the response cost system at the Alternative Education campuses may not provide a strong enough link between motivation and performance. Although not reflected in the data, many of the children verbally expressed that they felt unable to control the number of points they earned (or lost, as the case may be). If achievement in the point system is not truly under the children's control, attributional style would have no significant impact on the length of stay.

It is important to note that that only six children had completed their stay at the Lake Wales campus during the course of this study. Many Lake Wales children who entered
at the same time as did Winter Haven program completers were still attempting to work their way out of the program at the conclusion of this study. This difference is accounted for by differing criteria used by the two campuses for awarding the points which the children accumulated during the week for advancement toward completion of the program. Though the results of this study indicated that children spent significantly longer at the Winter Haven campus, this was not truly the case. Only those Lake Wales children who stayed for a relatively short time, compared to other Lake Wales children, had time to work their way out during the course of this study.

Also, though both campuses differ in the way they ultimately award points and even though there was a significant difference in the length of stay between the two campuses, the number of points earned by the children through their seventeenth school day did not differ significantly by campus. This indicates that, at least through the first three weeks of the children's stay (which was also the period of data collection for this study), there were no major differences between the campuses in the children's advancement toward completion of the program. The question of whether or not the children actually have a significant degree of control over their length of stay at these campuses remains to be answered.
Fourth, children may not be very good at reporting performance expectations. Interestingly, almost all of the children reported on the PEQ that they expected to achieve at least some success in at least 9 out of 10 behaviors. Their desire to achieve success may have been more influential in their reporting than was their actual expectation.

Finally, on both the CASQ and the PEQ, the children may have sought to provide answers which were more socially acceptable than accurate. Even though they were assured that neither their parents nor their teachers would see any of their answers, their desire to quickly work their way out of the Alternative Education program could certainly be considered a strong motivation for providing answers to make themselves look good.

In conclusion, many of the above issues remain to be resolved before examining any direct link between attributional style and performance in a real world setting. Further research must seek to answer questions of reliability and validity in the CASQ and PEQ. If these should prove to be inadequate instruments, new methods must be designed for more accurately assessing attributional style and performance expectation in children.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Your child is being asked to participate in a research project conducted by a master's level clinical psychology graduate student, Bill Pinnell, from the University of Central Florida, under the supervision of Bernard Jensen, Ph.D. This investigation is designed to determine if the reasons that your child believes that he or she succeeds and fails affects the length of time your child remains in the Alternative Education program.

The children who participate will be asked to complete three questionnaires over a three week period concerning their attitudes toward success and failure. This will require a total of approximately two hours of the children's regular school time. The children's grade level, gender, and length of stay in the Alternative Education program will be obtained from the teacher. The teacher will not have access to the answers on the questionnaires.

No individual will be personally identified in this project. This consent form will be maintained separately from the questionnaires. All information will be confidential and only the experimenter and three faculty members at the University of Central Florida will have access to the data. All questionnaires and consent forms
will be destroyed following the final acceptance of the research results by the University.

A complete copy of this research project will be available during the next school year at the Alternative Education campus. In addition, a bound copy will be available at the University of Central Florida library under the author's name.

You or your child will be able to terminate your child's participation in this study at any time, by saying so, without negative consequences.

Signature of parent or guardian

Signature of child

Date

Date of Birth
APPENDIX B

THE CHILDREN'S ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (CASQ)
1. YOU GET AN "A" ON A TEST.
   A. I AM SMART.
   B. I AM GOOD IN THE SUBJECT THAT THE TEST WAS IN.

2. YOU PLAY A GAME WITH SOME FRIENDS AND YOU WIN.
   A. THE PEOPLE THAT I PLAYED WITH DID NOT PLAY THE GAME WELL.
   B. I PLAY THAT GAME WELL.

3. YOU SPEND A NIGHT AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE AND YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.
   A. MY FRIEND WAS IN A FRIENDLY MOOD THAT NIGHT.
   B. EVERYONE IN MY FRIEND'S FAMILY WAS IN A FRIENDLY MOOD THAT NIGHT.

4. YOU GO ON A VACATION WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE AND YOU HAVE FUN.
   A. I WAS IN A GOOD MOOD.
   B. THE PEOPLE I WAS WITH WERE IN GOOD MOODS.

5. ALL OF YOUR FRIEND'S CATCH A COLD EXCEPT YOU.
   A. I HAVE BEEN HEALTHY LATELY.
   B. I AM A HEALTHY PERSON.

6. YOUR PET GETS RUN OVER BY A CAR.
   A. I DON'T TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY PETS.
   B. DRIVER'S ARE NOT CAUTIOUS ENOUGH.
7. Some kids that you know say that they do not like you.
   A. Once in a while people are mean to me.
   B. Once in a while I am mean to other people.

8. You get very good grades.
   A. School work is simple.
   B. I am a hard worker.

9. You meet a friend and your friend tells you that you look nice.
   A. My friend felt like praising the way people looked that day.
   B. Usually my friend praises the way people look.

10. A good friend tells you that he hates you.
    A. My friend was in a bad mood that day.
    B. I wasn't nice to my friend that day.

11. You tell a joke and no one laughs.
    A. I do not tell jokes well.
    B. The joke is so well known that it is no longer funny.

12. Your teacher gives a lesson and you do not understand it.
    A. I didn't pay attention to anything that day.
    B. I didn't pay attention when my teacher was talking.
13. YOU FAIL A TEST.
   A. MY TEACHER MAKES HARD TESTS.
   B. THE PAST FEW WEEKS MY TEACHER HAS MADE HARD TESTS.

14. YOU GAIN A LOT OF WEIGHT AND START TO LOOK FAT.
   A. THE FOOD THAT I HAVE TO EAT IS FATTENING.
   B. I LIKE FATTENING FOODS.

15. A PERSON STEALS MONEY FROM YOU.
   A. THAT PERSON IS DISHONEST.
   B. PEOPLE ARE DISHONEST.

16. YOUR PARENTS PRAISE SOMETHING THAT YOU MAKE.
   A. I AM GOOD AT MAKING SOME THINGS.
   B. MY PARENTS LIKE SOME THINGS I MAKE.

17. YOU PLAY A GAME AND YOU WIN MONEY.
   A. I AM A LUCKY PERSON.
   B. I AM LUCKY WHEN I PLAY GAMES.

18. YOU ALMOST DROWN WHEN SWIMMING IN A RIVER.
   A. I AM NOT A VERY CAUTIOUS PERSON.
   B. SOMEDAYS I AM NOT A CAUTIOUS PERSON.

19. YOU ARE INVITED TO A LOT OF PARTIES.
   A. A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ACTING FRIENDLY TOWARD ME LATELY.
   B. I HAVE BEEN ACTING FRIENDLY TOWARD A LOT OF PEOPLE LATELY.
20. A GROWNUP YELLS AT YOU.
   A. THAT PERSON YELLED AT THE FIRST PERSON HE SAW.
   B. THAT PERSON YELLED AT A LOT OF PEOPLE HE SAW THAT DAY.

21. YOU DO A PROJECT WITH A GROUP OF KIDS AND IT TURNS OUT BADLY.
   A. I DON'T WORK WELL WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE GROUP.
   B. I NEVER WORK WELL WITH A GROUP.

22. YOU MAKE A NEW FRIEND.
   A. I AM A NICE PERSON.
   B. THE PEOPLE THAT I MEET ARE NICE.

23. YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING ALONG WELL WITH YOUR FAMILY.
   A. I AM EASY TO GET ALONG WITH WHEN I AM WITH MY FAMILY.
   B. ONCE IN AWHILE I AM EASY TO GET ALONG WITH WHEN I AM WITH MY FAMILY.

24. YOU TRY TO SELL CANDY, BUT NO ONE WILL BUY ANY.
   A. LATELY A LOT OF CHILDREN ARE SELLING THINGS, SO PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO BUY ANYTHING ELSE FROM CHILDREN.
   B. PEOPLE DON'T LIKE TO BUY THINGS FROM CHILDREN.

25. YOU PLAY A GAME AND YOU WIN.
   A. SOMETIMES I TRY AS HARD AS I CAN AT GAMES.
   B. SOMETIMES I TRY AS HARD AS I CAN.
26. YOU GET A BAD GRADE IN SCHOOL.
   A. I AM STUPID.
   B. TEACHERS ARE UNFAIR GRADERS.

27. YOU WALK INTO A DOOR AND YOU GET A BLOODY NOSE.
   A. I WASN'T LOOKING WHERE I WAS GOING.
   B. I HAVE BEEN CARELESS LATELY.

28. YOU MISS THE BALL AND YOUR TEAM LOSES THE GAME.
   A. I DIDN'T TRY HARD WHILE PLAYING BALL THAT DAY.
   B. I USUALLY DO NOT TRY HARD WHEN I AM PLAYING BALL.

29. YOU TWIST YOUR ANKLE IN GYM CLASS.
   A. THE PAST FEW WEEKS THE SPORTS WE PLAYED IN GYM CLASS HAVE BEEN DANGEROUS.
   B. THE PAST FEW WEEKS I HAVE BEEN CLUMSY IN GYM CLASS.

30. YOUR PARENTS TAKE YOU TO THE BEACH AND YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.
   A. EVERYTHING AT THE BEACH WAS NICE THAT DAY.
   B. THE WEATHER AT THE BEACH WAS NICE THAT DAY.

31. YOU TAKE A TRAIN WHICH ARRIVES SO LATE THAT YOU MISS A MOVIE.
   A. THE PAST FEW DAYS THERE HAVE BEEN PROBLEMS WITH THE TRAIN BEING ON TIME.
   B. THE TRAINS ARE ALMOST NEVER ON TIME.

32. YOUR MOTHER MAKES YOU YOUR FAVORITE DINNER.
   A. THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT MY MOTHER WILL DO TO PLEASE ME.
   B. MY MOTHER LIKES TO PLEASE ME.
33. A TEAM THAT YOU ARE ON LOSES A GAME.
   A. THE TEAM MEMBERS DON'T PLAY WELL TOGETHER.
   B. THAT DAY THE TEAM MEMBERS DIDN'T PLAY WELL TOGETHER.

34. YOU FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK QUICKLY.
   A. LATELY I HAVE BEEN DOING EVERYTHING QUICKLY.
   B. LATELY I HAVE BEEN DOING SCHOOLWORK QUICKLY.

35. YOUR TEACHER ASKS YOU A QUESTION AND YOU GIVE THE WRONG ANSWER.
   A. I GET NERVOUS WHEN I HAVE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.
   B. THAT DAY I GOT NERVOUS WHEN I HAD TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

36. YOU GET ON THE WRONG BUS AND YOU GET LOST.
   A. THAT DAY I WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT WAS GOING ON.
   B. I USUALLY DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT'S GOING ON.

37. YOU GO TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK AND YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.
   A. I USUALLY ENJOY MYSELF AT AMUSEMENT PARKS.
   B. I USUALLY ENJOY MYSELF.

38. AN OLDER KID SLAPS YOU IN THE FACE.
   A. I TEASED HIS YOUNGER BROTHER.
   B. HIS YOUNGER BROTHER TOLD HIM I HAD TEASED HIM.
39. YOU GET ALL THE TOYS YOU WANT ON YOUR BIRTHDAY.
   A. PEOPLE ALWAYS GUESS WHAT TOYS TO BUY ME FOR MY BIRTHDAY.
   B. THIS BIRTHDAY PEOPLE GUESSED RIGHT AS TO WHAT TOYS I WANTED.

40. YOU TAKE A VACATION IN THE COUNTRY AND YOU HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME.
   A. THE COUNTRY IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE TO BE.
   B. THE TIME OF THE YEAR THAT WE WENT WAS BEAUTIFUL.

41. YOUR NEIGHBORS ASK YOU OVER FOR DINNER.
   A. SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE IN KIND MOODS.
   B. PEOPLE ARE KIND.

42. YOU HAVE A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER AND SHE LIKES YOU.
   A. I WAS WELL BEHAVED DURING CLASS THAT DAY.
   B. I AM ALMOST ALWAYS WELL BEHAVED DURING CLASS.

43. YOU MAKE YOUR FRIENDS HAPPY.
   A. I AM A FUN PERSON TO BE WITH.
   B. SOMETIMES I AM A FUN PERSON TO BE WITH.

44. YOU GET A FREE ICE-CREAM CONE.
   A. I WAS FRIENDLY TO THE ICE-CREAM MAN THAT DAY.
   B. THE ICE-CREAM MAN AS FEELING FRIENDLY THAT DAY.

45. AT YOUR FRIEND'S PARTY THE MAGICIAN ASKS YOU TO HELP HIM OUT.
   A. IT WAS JUST LUCK THAT I GOT PICKED.
   B. I LOOKED REALLY INTERESTED IN WHAT WAS GOING ON.
46. YOU TRY TO CONVINCE A KID TO GO TO THE MOVIES WITH YOU, BUT HE WON'T GO.
   A. THAT DAY HE DID NOT FEEL LIKE DOING ANYTHING.
   B. THAT DAY HE DID NOT FEEL LIKE GOING TO THE MOVIES.

47. YOUR PARENTS GET A DIVORCE.
   A. IT IS HARD FOR PEOPLE TO GET ALONG WELL WHEN THEY ARE MARRIED.
   B. IT IS HARD FOR MY PARENTS TO GET ALONG WELL WHEN THEY ARE MARRIED.

48. YOU HAVE BEEN TRYING TO GET INTO A CLUB AND YOU DON'T GET IN.
   A. I DON'T GET ALONG WELL WITH OTHER PEOPLE.
   B. I CAN'T GET ALONG WELL WITH THE PEOPLE IN THE CLUB.
The CASQ was used with the permission of Martin E. P. Seligman and the University of Pennsylvania. Table 4 lists the items comprising each of the subscales of the CASQ, and the choice (A or B) leading to a score of 1 for that item.

**TABLE 4**

**SCORING KEY FOR THE CASQ**

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APPENDIX C

THE PERFORMANCE EXPECTATION QUESTIONNAIRE
1. TALKING WITHOUT PERMISSION
   A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
   B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
   C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
   D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
   E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

2. BEING OUT OF MY SEAT WITHOUT PERMISSION
   A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
   B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
   C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
   D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
   E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

3. THROWING THINGS
   A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
   B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
   C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
   D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
   E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

4. HAVING TOYS, GUM, OR CANDY AT SCHOOL
   A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
   B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
   C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
5. USING BAD LANGUAGE
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

6. NOT KEEPING MY HANDS AND FEET TO MYSELF
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

7. FIGHTING AND NAME CALLING
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

8. NOT DOING MY SCHOOL WORK
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

9. NOT STAYING IN MY SEAT
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL

10. LYING
A. I WILL DO THIS EVERY DAY
B. I WILL DO THIS A LOT, BUT NOT EVERY DAY
C. I WILL DO THIS NOW AND THEN
D. I WILL DO THIS ONCE OR TWICE
E. I WILL NOT DO THIS AT ALL
REFERENCES


