

## APPENDIX B

### Studies of an Intervention for Changing Self-Esteem

presented by  
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The Dependable Strengths Articulation Process (DSAP) is a systematic set of procedures designed to help participants articulate a pattern of their self-identified strengths. The process usually takes twelve to eighteen hours to complete. Students in K-12 schools may complete the process in twelve hours if previous activities have prepared the students for small group interactions and self-examination. Part of the process is conducted in quads (fours), during which participants describe three or four of their most effective and satisfying experiences to each other. They listen to other participants as they describe their positive experiences and then identify strengths they recognized in the person who has been describing the experiences. The DSAP includes several other procedures, including the completion of a grid-like chart where the participant systematically checks off words describing strengths that were used during previous experiences. These experiences were selected to meet a set of criteria specifying a sense of accomplishment, enjoyment and pride. Finally, each writes a summary of his or her strengths with experiences which have applied them.

#### Studies of the Effects of DSAP Interventions

The procedures in the DSAP have been described by Haldane (1989), who developed the process during a career devoted to facilitating career development. A research and development project was initiated at the University of Washington in 1987 to study the effects of DSAP interventions and develop ways to expand its usefulness. A secondary purpose of the ten-year project is to develop DSAP materials for use with students in K-12 schools.

Studies of intervention effects are described below:

A Study Involving Adult Career Changers: The initial studies by the DSP staff were conducted in 1988 by administering the Adjective Check List (ACL) to thirty participants before and after DSAP workshops. The methods and results of these studies have been described by Forster (1991). Significant increases in scores were identified for ACL scales measuring Self-Confidence and Achievement Motivation. Workshop participants checked significantly more positive self-descriptions after the DSAP intervention than they had before the intervention. A comparison group, who took the ACL before and after a comparable period in an educational psychology course, showed neither an increase in positive self-descriptions, nor on the two scales mentioned above.

Studies Involving Adult Women: Severson (1991) conducted a three-part series of studies of DSAP effects that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. using methods developed during a pilot study, she collected narrative self-descriptions before and after two DSAP intervention groups of adult women. She also collected pre and post intervention responses on Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Inventory and Rotter's Locus of Control Inventory. A complete set of data was collected on five of the participants. The small number of subjects meant that standard statistical analyses were unadvised. Severson provides a pattern of circumstantial evidence to infer that increases in self-esteem did occur between the pre-intervention and the post-intervention data collection. Judges who were blind to the time the data were collected, rated the narratives on constructs of self-esteem and internal locus of control. The post-intervention narratives of the five participants who completed the pre and post measures were all rated higher than the pre-intervention narratives. Likewise, raters judged post treatment narratives as showing more signs of internal locus of control. The scores of the Rosenberg and Rotter inventories also showed patterns of gain from the pre-measure to the post-measure and the follow-up measure. When participants described their own evaluation of the effects, they indicated that they had increased awareness of key strengths or positive self-constructs.

An Investigation of the Effects of Two Career Counseling Interventions Upon Psychological Well-Being, Self-Efficacy, and Locus of Control: In this investigation, completed at the University of Delaware's Student Counseling Center, Denson (1992) compared changes in two groups of college students receiving DSAP-based interventions with changes in a control group of 25 students who were waiting for an intervention. Treatments resulted in significant gains on the Perceptions of Vocational Attributes Scale, and significant gains over the control group on the Perceptions in Self-Efficacy

Scale. Treatment where the DSAP was stressed resulted in significantly more internal locus of control on Rotter's inventory, than did students in the control group. Likewise, treatment participants showed significantly greater gains on the Mental Health Inventory.

Studies of Clients Participating in Career Exploration: McMurrer (1989) described another study where 17 clients completed the DSAP as part of their career exploration process at the Clinical Services and Research Center on the University of Washington campus. These clients were administered the Adjective Check List (ACL) before and after the exploration process. These participants showed significant gains on the number of favorable items checked, as well as on the Self-Confidence Scale and the Achievement Motivation Scale. Since a comparison group did not show a similar increase in ACL scores, it is argued that the DSAP-component contributed to most of the increased self-esteem found in this group of participants.

McMurrer also described another study where a group of 22 teachers, who had previously taken the ACL showed a significant gain on a ratio score after the DSAP intervention.

### Conclusions and Implications

Several studies using the DSAP intervention have documented that measures of self-esteem and positive functioning were significantly higher after participants completed the process than was the case before they started. Follow-up studies have not been attempted, so the staying power of these changes is unknown. Haldane has collected a large number of evaluations completed by DSAP participants in the last fifteen years. These evaluations indicate that nearly all participants report that they learned something new about themselves, and feel they will get along better with others. Post-intervention evaluations show that participants are nearly always appreciative of the DSAP experience.

The results obtained in the studies of DSAP interventions discussed appear to be compatible with general conclusions made by Hattie (1992) in his chapters on enhancing self-concept. Hattie describes how he located approximately 650 studies on self-concept change and then conducted a meta-analysis of the 89 having sufficient data for these analytical procedures. When discussing the implications of his meta-analysis, Hattie (1992) states that "It is clear that the cognitively oriented programs are likely to produce more positive effects than affectively oriented programs. To enhance self-concept, programs may need to

consider cognitive restructuring and goal- and task-oriented activities where positive thoughts and experiences are continually reinforced."

Studies of the DSAP that have been conducted since 1987 can be better understood by considering the general findings of Hattie's meta-analyses. Hattie has provided evidence that interventions having many of the characteristics of the DSAP do produce positive changes in self-concept. With the knowledge that interventions similar to the DSAP have demonstrated significant enhancements of self-concept, it is easier to stand behind the overall conclusion that the DSAP is likely to increase the self-esteem of participants who enter in to the recommended version of the intervention.

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