GOALS AND HOPE IN ADOLESCENT AT-RISK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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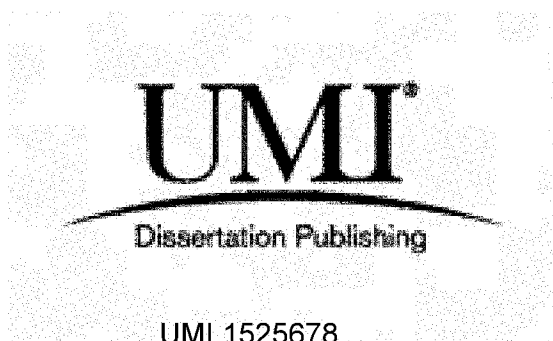
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Abstract

This study utilizes Snyder et al.'s (1991) hope theory as a tool in cooperation with Feldman, Rand, Kahle-Wrobleski (2009) goal-specific hope scale to look at how hope theory, as defined by Snyder, can play a role in improving and supporting students to achieve their goals. Twenty-two students in a senior Alternative Education program in northern British Columbia participated in the study from September 2012 to January 2013.

Students participated in a three month study where they completed Snyder's Adult Hope Scale (AHS) and Feldman's Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS), which required them to set a specific academic goal at the beginning of the process. They participate in five structured goal and motivation individual sessions during the study. They were monitored and completed the AHS after each session. At the end of the study, each student also returned to the GSHS and measured their level of hope specific to the goal they had set at the beginning of the study.

Although there were no statistically significant changes in individuals' overall hope scale, there were significant changes in hope as it related to the specific goal students had set for themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Alternative Education Policy in British Columbia

Students arrive at high school with a variety of backgrounds, personalities and issues. The majority of students are successful within the current model of education. However, there are some students who, often for complex reasons, are unable to manage within a traditional school program. These students are described by the Ministry of Education Alternate Education Policy Rationale in the following manner.

> Students who attend alternate education school programs are most often the most vulnerable population in the school system. Alternate education school programs have disproportionate numbers of children and youth in care, aboriginal students, children and youth living in poverty or the street, gifted children who have difficulty in social situations, children and youth involved in drugs, alcohol and the sex trade and youth with mental health concerns. Alternate education programs offer an opportunity for these vulnerable and at-risk students to experience success (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 3).

Students who have been identified as at-risk can be a challenging population to work with, since they generally have multiple issues in their lives. It can be very difficult for this population of students to concentrate on their academic school work when significant life events are happening to them, both inside and outside of the school environment.

The Province of British Columbia has 60 school districts, and most have some type of alternate education program. These programs are set up by the individual school districts, and are designed to meet the specific needs of the population that is not being served in the traditional system. Thus, alternate programs range from outdoor educational settings, to programs designed to accommodate teenage mothers. The primary goal of the program is to accommodate students' learning needs with respect to their strengths, needs and life circumstances. There are some programs in the province that are run in cooperation with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and

the Ministry of Health. These programs tend to be specialized programs that work with

students who are experiencing behavioural or mental health issues as defined by the

Ministry of Education as Category H - Intensive Behaviour Interventions / Serious

Mental Illness. These are students who are unable to interact safely and appropriately

within a traditional school environment and significantly disrupt the learning of their

peers.

School District #54 (Bulkley Valley) Houston Secondary School Alternative Education Program

School District #54 (Bulkley Valley) operates the Houston Secondary School

(HSS) Alternate Program under the Ministry of Education Alternate Education Policy

which states:

> Alternate education school programs ... focus on the educational, social and
> emotional issues for those students whose needs are not being met in a traditional
> school program. An alternate education program provides its support through
> differentiated instruction, program delivery and enhanced counselling services
> based on student need (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 1).

The Alternate Education program at HSS is a part-time program, having one assigned

teacher for mornings from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Students can access the afternoon

elective programs which run at HSS, although some students, due to the nature of their

history, may be on a modified schedule in which they would only attend the Alternative

Education program. The HSS Alternative Education program is located in a building on

the Northwest Community College (NWCC) campus, which is located adjacent to the

downtown area.

The 2012/13 school year was the first year that the HSS alternate school has been

located off-campus since the closure of the Storefront School in 2002, which was located

in a portable adjacent to the NWCC campus buildings. The relocation off-campus

represents approximately five years of lobbying by an ad-hoc group of individuals who have been working with the target student population.

One of the goals of the HSS alternative education program is to integrate students back into the traditional school programming. A part-time schedule, allowing students to flow back and forth between both programs facilitates this goal. In addition, the alternate education teacher teaches within the traditional classroom environment in the afternoons, which allows the students to see the alternate education program as part of the larger school programming.

The HSS Alternative Education program is designed to be an academic and social support program for at-risk and vulnerable students who are academically capable, although they may have been identified with specific Learning Disabilities or other special needs. Students who have not been academically successful, often have several courses that they have been unable to complete in the traditional classroom. These courses are delivered on an individualized basis to the students within the alternative education program. In addition, there are frequently behavioural issues which interfere with the students' ability to be successful within a traditional classroom environment.

The HSS alternative education program is designed to accommodate students who are 16 years or older, completing coursework from Grades 10 through 12. The age restriction is related to the School Act 3(1, b), which states that a student must attend school until the age of 16. By restricting the program to minimum age 16, the principal, teacher, and the students are allowed to make choices about attendance requirements and disciplinary action. This provides alternatives to the disciplinary approach used within the regular school programs. Students are making a choice to attend the alternative

school, as it is not forced upon them. In addition, students cannot register at NWCC until they are 16 years of age. The HSS Alternative Education program is an integrated program with all students cross-enrolled at NWCC to allow them to access tutoring services. Exceptions were made in the first year of the program, which resulted in several situations where a younger student left the school premises without permission. This incident required significant time and personnel to ensure that student's safety. The result of this incident led to a change in the policy which no longer allows students under the age of 16 into the program.

The program goals focus on completion of course credits to enable students to achieve a 'Dogwood' Grade 12 Graduation Certificate. This requires a combination of programming which includes basic academic programming in all core courses from Grade 10 through Grade 12 and elective courses to ensure adequate credits for graduation. These courses can be either taken through the alternate program or through participation in courses at HSS. In addition, there are program requirements related to behavioural and life skills training. The students' individual needs are identified and a specific learning plan is proposed.

The students generally have significant gaps in their academic knowledge and require specific intensive support. They also struggle with behavioural issues that interfere with their ability to focus and learn. In addition, their behaviour can be disruptive to other students. Thus, the secondary goal of the alternative education program is to work with the students in modifying their behaviour to allow them to be successful in the classroom. The classroom is not a place where students sit quietly in their rows of desks all day; the classroom is now a busy, interactive, noisy place,

requiring skills in cooperation and maturity that some alternative education students do not possess. There are critical thinking skills, homework requirements and levels of interaction that some students are not prepared to handle or capable of handling. The pace of learning in a traditional classroom generally does not allow for significant levels of absenteeism that at-risk students often have. The social skills necessary to interact effectively with others are often lacking. Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour often leads to suspension or increased absenteeism. Thus, the Alternative Education program at the high school level, not only has the goal of teaching academic courses, but it also has a parallel curriculum teaching specific skills to be successful socially within the classroom, and, ultimately, in a worksite.

The students who come into the program have complex backgrounds. A student taking a course with the alternate school system may simply be unable to fit a required course into their timetable and they are not good candidates for taking an on-line course. Other students at the alternate school need significant support, and benefit from regular checks and one-to-one teaching. In addition, there are often one or two students who do not feel prepared to graduate or have specific anxiety about their future after graduation. These students may have failed a required course in first semester. Houston Secondary School has a small enrollment and courses are often only offered once. A student in this situation also will require additional support in the post-secondary transition to either work or additional education.

The students complete their academic courses on an individual learning plan, the courses can be delivered as on-line courses or are locally developed by the Alternative

Education Teacher, sometimes in cooperation with a course teacher at Houston Secondary School.

Process for a Student to be assigned to the Alternative Education Program

Students who may be at-risk, vulnerable, or are having specific difficulties within the classroom, are usually identified by their classroom teachers as needing additional supports. The classroom teacher refers that student to an Administrator or the Special Education Coordinator. The students' file is reviewed and recommendations are made at the School Based Team meeting. The School Based Team meets once a week and is comprised of an Administrator, the Special Education Coordinator, the School Counsellor, the Alternate Education Teacher, and any teacher of the student who wishes to attend. Occasionally, outside agency counsellors, social workers and parents/guardians will be invited to attend to provide additional information on the student. At that meeting, the specific issues and possible interventions and supports are discussed. If the Alternative Education program becomes a possible alternative, a further meeting is scheduled with the parents or guardians of the student. The parents or guardians are made aware of the elements of the Alternative Education program and they sign an agreement to have their child placed in the program.

Researcher's Background

Teaching in an alternate education program can be both extremely rewarding and challenging. The rewards are reflected within the successes; for example, watching the student who has had to overcome significant family and personal issues just getting to school, holding his head up as he walks across the stage to accept his diploma. Success is also evident in the small things. The hesitant smile on the student's face who writes their

first full paragraph independently, discovering they really do have the potential to grow and learn. I believe I am successful as a teacher, when a student, who asks to take a break from their academic work, goes and sits in a comfortable chair and reads a book. This same student was unwilling to even pick up a magazine a few months before. This is why I love what I do.

Some of the challenges that students face and work their way through are harder to cope with. The hardest thing to deal with is the student who sees no hope for the future and sees no reason to live. Other students cannot deal with success; for example, the student who has finally passed a practice English 10 provincial exam and then comes to school intoxicated or high, resulting in a suspension. As a teacher of students who face complex issues in their lives, the most common being low self-esteem and substance abuse issues, it is often hard to remember to recognize the small steps.

As a child, I was made aware that not all youth had good stable parents. My mother began taking in foster children when I was eight years old. I am ashamed to admit that after a few years I begged her to send these children away, only later understanding what an amazing thing my mother was doing. In my early 20s I was involved in working with young street girls and helped with developing a group home for them.

When I was in my 30s, I began working on-reserve for the first time in my life. My mother is aboriginal; however, I was raised off-reserve. I was prepared intellectually, as much of my academic work had been on First Nations history and contemporary issues, but I was not prepared for the reality of reserve life. I was hired to work in transferring health programs to community control and within a few months I was

responsible for all health, social services, child welfare and youth programs. The reality of poverty, overcrowding and poor education was difficult for me to absorb. In addition, the culture of dependency in the community was occasionally overwhelming.

Developing youth programs to change the cycle of dependency became my passion. Through Rediscovery International, a First Nations cultural organization with its roots in Haida Gwaii, we developed community culture camps, reconnecting youth to the land and their Elders. At this juncture, I wanted to understand how to connect with the youth who continued to struggle. Although many of these young people were intelligent, capable, and strong, they struggled with alcohol and drug addiction. I realized that many of them could not see any hope for the future. They did not believe that they could achieve their goals, and it was also difficult for them to live up to the expectations of those around them.

Through specific training programs and workshops, the staff within the Health and Social Services programs began with interventions that were designed to strengthen self-esteem, and building capacity for hope for the future. We started by introducing a variety of workshops on healthy lifestyles, self-awareness, goals and motivation. This is also the point I realized that it was not up to me to heal the community; it was up to the community to develop the internal strength to heal itself. I realized my responsibility was to facilitate the training at the community level so that others could take over responsibility for the programs.

I moved on to working with an urban women and youth organization in another community, again working with the youth to teach them to set goals, lay out steps to those goals and work towards achieving those goals. The students organized and led a

conference they called "YES" (Youth Empowerment Summit) and invited aboriginal

youth from all over the province. The result was over 200 youth from 13 - 18 in

attendance at the conference.

I went back to working on-reserve, taking on an Administrator role in an

elementary school, with a pre-school attached. I also had responsibility for adult

education as well as being the liaison between the community and the local middle school

and high school. Thus, I was working with every generational group in education. This

was my first experience with elementary students. I was amazed at how eager and

willing they were to learn, and their generally happy approach to school. The

involvement of their parents in the on-reserve school was very high. The school was

clearly a community place, with the pre-school next door; all ages were involved and

engaged in learning together. I soon began to hear parents express concern about their

children going to the middle school. There was a feeling that their children changed

when they went to school in town and they really wanted them to continue going to

school locally. I saw many teens around the community, when asked, they would tell me

that they either have dropped out or been kicked out of high school. The adult education

centre became a place where they would try to return to complete their Grade 12 or

participate in trades training and upgrading programs. Spending time with these youth,

and hearing their stories, I was amazed by their resilience and desire to learn, despite

having limited skills to navigate the structure of learning in the off-reserve school system.

When the community member who was being trained to become the administrator took

over, I went to work in an off-reserve high school. I felt I needed to find out what was

happening in high schools from the inside.

Working with the at-risk youth, I began to see some common elements in the conversations. Youth often have a difficult time figuring out what they want to be when they graduate. The School Counsellors spend a significant amount of their time working with students who are uncertain of their future. The curricula in many courses are designed to assist students in figuring out their future. Health and Career 8 and 9, and Planning 10, culminating in the Graduation Transitions program are designed to help students prepare for their futures. However, at-risk youth did not seem to respond to these programs in terms of future goals. The students in an Alternative Education program generally have a complex background emotionally, intellectually, academically and socially. Alternate students often are already involved in drugs and alcohol, with self-destructive patterns of behaviour. These students' parents, if they were involved in their children's lives, were often frustrated and angry with their inability to control their children's behaviour. The School Counsellor, as well as outside agency counsellors, can only see a limited number of students over the course of a day or a week. Youth tend not to end up in crisis on a schedule, and I found that within the classroom environment, I was often dealing with emotional issues. I began to look at programs, research and recommended resources that focused on resiliency and motivation. There are a number of programs designed to be utilized in Alternative Education programs, however, as I reviewed them, I would find parts that seemed to work, but they seemed to be missing an essential element.

When I started the Masters of Education program at the University of Northern British Columbia, it allowed me to begin a process of more formally investigating the problem that I had been unable to answer through all these years of working with at-risk

youth. I began specific research in goal-attainment and factors that seemed to be present in youth who ultimately have been successful in completing their high school graduation. This is when I came across Snyder's (2002) work with Hope Theory. I then completed a study at Northwest Community College for my Leading for Learning Certificate that looked at goals and hope in returning college students, utilizing the adult hope scale. I used five workshop style interventions, using themes that had worked with groups that I had worked with over the years. This was a very small study, with adults from a wide range of backgrounds; it showed that there was an increase in hope over the four months. I felt that I wanted to use this methodology with my Alternative education students to see if this was the missing factor in their lives.

Statement of the Problem

In my personal experience working with youth at risk, I have observed that there seems to be an absence of hope. They do not appear to believe that goals that they set can be achieved. Many of the youth access counselling, from the School Counsellor or Ministry of Health Counsellors who come in to the community on a regular basis to provide service. However, in the north, the number of counsellors is limited. I have anecdotal evidence from my own life that the workshops and interventions seem to improve individuals' outcomes; however, it is important to have formal research to support this anecdotal evidence. In addition, if successful, this research could be shared with other teachers who may choose to implement a similar program within their classrooms.

The following research questions were examined in this study. First, would there be a relationship in course completion rates between students who had higher hope and

goal completion rates than those with lower hope and goal completion rates? Second, would the five discussion topics have an impact on either agency or pathway as defined by Snyder, et al. (1991)? Finally, would there be a change in the overall levels of hope and goal attainment from the beginning of the study to the end of the study and how would this relate to course completion?

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of Hope Theory

Hope theory is located in the field of positive psychology, which is defined as "the scientific and applied approach to uncovering people's strengths and promoting their positive functioning" (Snyder, Lopez, et al., 2011, p. 3). In an address to the American Psychological Association in 1998, Martin Seligman has been credited with the idea that it is important to study people's strengths and their weaknesses (Snyder, Lopez, Pedrotti, 2011). Hope theory, as presented by Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991), puts forward the idea that students will achieve higher academic results when they have higher hope. The student focuses on success rather than failure, feeling that moving forward and seeing obstacles as a challenge that can be overcome rather than as an insurmountable barriers.

Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) provide a comparison between hope theory and "efficacy and outcome expectancies that are described in motivational and personality research" (p. 571). He outlines how hope theory is similar to optimism, but differs in how they determine the influence of expectations and outcomes. In 2003, Snyder et al. states "According to hope theory, hope reflects individuals' perceptions regarding their capacities to (1) clearly conceptualize goals, (2) develop the specific strategies to reach those goals (pathways thinking) and (3) initiate and sustain the motivations for using those strategies (agency thinking)" (p. 122). Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991), then proceed to provide statistical evidence of the reliability of the hope scale.

The hope scale has been tested in a number of studies which are outlined in Snyder's (2005) article *Teaching: The Lessons of Hope*, where he discusses what has been learned from the various studies that have used both the adult hope scale and the

children's hope scale. Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) states, "...without exception, higher hope has related to advantages in academic performance for students of all ages" (p. 74). Snyder et al.'s study had students in their first semester of college complete the Adult Hope Scale and then those students were followed for six years. "Higher Hope Scale scores significantly predicted: (1) higher cumulative grade point averages ... (2) higher likelihoods of graduating ... (3) lower likelihood of dropping out" (p 74).   They also found "hope's predictive power was sufficiently robust that it remained significant when controlling statistically for intelligence, ... previous grades, ... self esteem, ... and entrance examination scores" (p. 75). Snyder continues with providing suggestions for teachers about how to incorporate hope into their teaching and into student goals.

Magaletta and Oliver (1999) provide a brief history of the importance of hope, beginning with the Greek myth of Pandora's Box, hope being the last and only good spirit to escape continuing through to a discussion of hope being introduced in the 1950s as a psychological and psychiatric construct. They draw the links to Bandura's work on self-efficacy, Scheier and Carver's development of optimism, and, finally, Snyder's theory of hope as a specific construct in psychology (pp. 539-541).

Albert Bandura (1997) is credited with developing the concept of self-efficacy. He defines it as "people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions" (p. vii). Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy is based on cognitive development and functioning and relies on a more medical model of brain function as it relates to specific behaviour.

Another major theory which has emerged under positive psychology research is related to optimism. The branch of optimism theory that relates most to hope theory is

that proposed by Scheier and Carver (1985). Scheier and Carver (1985) propose that what a person expects as an outcome influences their behaviour in working towards that outcome. They state that "outcome expectancy influences subsequent behavior in the following way: If expectancies are favorable, the result is renewed effort. If expectancies are sufficiently unfavorable, the result is reduced effort, or even complete disengagement from further attempts" (p. 222). Scheier and Carver (1985) created a Life Orientation Test (LOT) which they have subsequently revised to the LOT-Revised (LOT-R) (Scheier, Carver, Bridges, 1994).

A body of research has emerged looking at comparing and overlap between hope and optimism. Bryant and Cvengros (2004) stated that their research addresses "basic questions with three main goals: (a) to identify the conceptual dimensions underlying hope and optimism, (b) to determine the degree of conceptual overlap between hope and optimism, and (c) to evaluate evidence of discriminant validity for each trait" (p. 274). Their statistical analysis concludes that "hope and optimism share a sizeable portion (64%) of their variance" nevertheless "separate second-order hope and optimism factors have greater explanatory power than does a single global "super" factor" (p. 296). They come to the conclusion that "hope focuses more directly on expectations about the personal attainment of *specific* goals, whereas optimism focuses more broadly on the expected quality of future outcomes in *general*" (p. 298).

Rand (2009) also looked at comparing Hope and Optimism using the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) and the Life Orientation Test – Revised (LOT-R). Rand (2009) outlines the difference between hope and optimism. Hope "focuses on thoughts related to what the person can do to achieve his or her goals", whereas optimism "is an index of generalized

expectations for future outcomes, including factors within and outside of one's control" (p. 235). Rand (2009) supports the concept that both hope and optimism are predictors of positive outcomes, stating that "higher trait hope has been shown to predict better academic performance, even when controlling for student intelligence" (p. 232). Rand (2009) provides summaries from several studies which have found that "measures of trait hope and optimism correlate around .50" (p. 233). This correlation is similar to Rand's (2009) results, with hope and optimism "strongly correlated ($r=.51$)" (p. 242). Finally Rand (2009) concludes that "[T]aken together, these results suggest that trait hope, but not trait optimism, influences the goal-specific expectancy that a student makes for his or her academic performance. Moreover, a student's goal-specific expectancy directly influences his or her actual performance" (p. 249). This study provides statistical evidence for the validity of the hope scale and evidence that hope is a predictor of achievement, which would suggest that developing programming that increases hope in students should improve their academic performance.

Psychologists have been criticized for focusing on how people recover and survive, but "knowing very little about what makes people flourish" (Cheavens et al. 2006, p. 135). Hope theory is identified as addressing this gap in the knowledge, being placed in the field of positive psychology. Cheavens et al. (2006) outline the components of hope theory, identifying goals, pathways, agency thinking and temporal relationships as specific components of the theory. Hope theory is based on a premise that people think in terms of future goals. That as an individual makes decisions throughout their day, they will make those decisions (not necessarily consciously) towards specific goals. Part of this thinking is related to pathways, which is defined as "the perceived ability to

produce successful avenues to desired goals" (p. 137), the idea that a person is able to see a way in which they can get from where they are at the moment to their future goals. In addition to thinking of the goal and being able to identify a path to the goal, the individual also has to have the motivation to work towards achieving that goal. Cheavens et al. (2006) use the children's story *The Little Engine That Could*, as an example of the "I think I can", suggesting this is the "fuel that powers goal-pursuits" (p. 137). Finally, Cheavens et al. (2006), state that "[b]oth pathways and agency thinking must be present in some degree for hope to thrive" (p. 137). Hope theory is clear that if either of the two are significantly low, then the individual will struggle to move forward towards their goals. The authors then outline the difference between the idea of working with reducing hopelessness and introducing the concept of hope. They believe that reducing the one is not the same as increasing the other and that utilizing hope in cognitive psychotherapies is a specifically different treatment plan from working with clients to reduce hopelessness.

Hope Theory in Educational Settings

The use of hope theory in psychotherapy has been outlined to demonstrate the depth of use of the theory and the number of studies that have been conducted using the tool. However, rather than focusing on the therapeutic uses of hope theory, I am interested in the use of hope theory in educational settings. In 1997, Curry et al. published a study utilizing hope theory with two groups of college students. The first group were athletes and the second group were students from the general academic population. They used a stratified random sample to have the two groups be roughly similar for comparison (p. 1258). Curry et al. (1997) discuss the main three theories that

have been used in sports achievement literature: goal setting theory, self-efficacy theory and sport performance positive and negative affectivity. They then proceed to describe how they believe that hope theory, which combines pathway and agency thinking, provides a better indicator of athletic achievement (p. 1258). The first part of the study found that higher hope scores were predictive of the semester GPA of students. The second part of the study, which measured whether hope was predictive of actual sport achievement, determined that " [t]ogether dispositional and state hope accounted for 56% of the variance in predicting sport performance" (p. 1261). They go on to state that "hope may provide a useful predictive tool for coaches in gauging how their athletes will do in sport achievement settings" (p. 1261). The third part of the Curry et al. (1997) study was to look at whether hope had predictive power "beyond projections due to natural talent" (p. 1262). Again, the "Hope Scale scores provide additional information beyond the natural ability in regard to the prediction of actual athletic achievements" (p. 1263). Curry et al. (1997) provide comparative statistical evidence between various other instruments that measure self-worth and achievement (Student Grade Point Average, Self-Perception Profile for College Students, State Self-Esteem Scale, State Sport Confidence Scale, State Profile of Mood States, Physical Ability Rating Scale, Weekly training mileage report and Season Achievement Measurement). Throughout all three sections of their study, they determined that the hope scale provided predictive power over and above what the other scales and measurements could provide individually.

Gilman, Dooley and Florell (2006) completed a study utilizing The Children's Hope Scale (CHS). Snyder, Hoza, et al. (1997) validated this scale in relation to the Adult Hope Scale and other measures in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*. Gilman,

Dooley and Florell (2006) report that "[b]oth hope subscales [pathways and agency] were significantly and positively related to global life satisfaction, personal adjustment, GPA and SEAs, and both subscales were negatively correlated to indicators of psychological distress and school maladjustment" (p. 172). They report that their "findings are consistent with results obtained among college students" (Curry et al., 1997) and older adults (Chang, 2003), suggesting that academic and intrapersonal variables are differentially related to hope levels among school-age youth" (p. 175).

Kaylor and Flores (2007) identify culturally and linguistically diverse students in the United States as being a particularly vulnerable group of students, with lower high school graduation rates and university attendance. They identified that previous researchers "found that certain factors are common among high-achieving minority students" (p. 68). One of those factors, identified by several of the studies, was goal orientation. Kaylor and Flores (2007) designed a study of two groups of students, one group participated in a program designed by the athletic department and the other group participated in a program called *Possible Selves*. "The concept of possible selves contains the premise that an individual sets goals and then creates a plan for meeting those goals by discerning aspirations and envisioning what and who they want to become" (p. 70). The students completed the Children's Hope Scale developed by Snyder et al., (1994) both before and after the program. They also participated in an interview identifying their perceptions about participation in the study. In the results it is noted that although all students improved, the possible selves group reported the greatest increase in academic effort. However, the "greatest difference between groups was observed in the students' goals and action plans. All members of the *Possible Selves*

group developed more specific and realistic goals and action plans" (p. 85).   Kaylor and

Flores (2007) note in their limitations the short duration of the study (12 weeks) and

suggest that it would be interesting to follow these students supporting them in creating

further goals and measuring their achievement.

Lackaye and Margalit (2008) studied a group of adolescences with Learning

Disabilities and compared them to their non-Learning Disabled peers. They used a

number of instruments: Grade reports, Specific Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, General

Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Questionnaire, The

Children's Hope Scale, and Meltzer's Scale for Effort (p. 7-8). Lackaye and Margalit

(2008) results showed that the

> ... discrepancy between the groups of students remained significant at both age
> groups for grades in mathematics and history, as well as in the global measure of
> hope. It seems that regardless of the help and the accommodations that students
> with LD received during their school years, their academic achievement remained
> lower than that of the NonLD group, and they continued to experience lower
> levels of hope for a better future (p. 14).

Lackaye and Margalit (2008) go on to advocate that interventions that are

specifically designed for Learning Disabled students may bring meaningful changes to

the lower of levels of hope regardless of the supports currently in place.

Recent work has used Snyder's Hope Scale to identify whether interventions are

making a difference in academic achievement. Marques, Lopez, & Pais-Ribeiro (2009)

investigate whether a "5-week hope-based intervention with regard to hope, life

satisfaction, mental-health and academic achievement in middle-school students"

(Introduction, para. 5). The intention of this study is not only to look at goal-directed

behaviour in students, but also to provide an intervention which "not only includes direct

work with students, but also includes efforts to modify environments (Introduction, para.

5). Marques et al.(2009) results were consistent with "other students that seek to foster

goal-directed thinking (Cheavens et al. 2006; Curry et al. 1999: Klausner et al. 1998;

Lopez et al. 2000a; MacLeod et al. 2007)" (Discussion, para.1). Their results "suggest

than an intervention designed to foster hope in middle schoolers can produce

psychological benefits, by increasing hope, life satisfaction and self-worth". However,

"the results do not support there being significant changes in mental-health or academic

achievement as a result of the intervention" (Conclusion and Implications, para. 1).

Even though Marques et al.'s (2009) results do not provide statistically significant results

in the improvements for children, they still advocate that the psychological improvement

warrants support for group-based approaches for raising hope in youth and imply that this

could have long term benefits which were not apparent in their short study.

Newell and van Ryzin's (2007) study, which used Snyder's Hope Scale to

measure a school's effectiveness, states that "students who are more hopeful not only set

more challenging school-related goals for themselves when compared to lower-hope

students, but they also tend to perceive that they will be more successful at attaining their

goals even if they do not experience immediate success" (p. 468).

Researchers have begun to utilize a series of interventions to determine if

increasing hope in students will have a significant impact on a number of factors, one of

which is academic achievement (Marques, Lopez and Pais-Ribeiro, 2009, Section 3.1,

para 2).

> Statistically significant difference was found between the intervention and
> comparison groups on post-test ($p < .05$), 6-month ($p < .04$), and 18-month
> follow-up ($p < .05$). The intervention group showed a significant increase in hope
> from pre- to post-assessment $t(60) = -4.29$, $p = .001$ (two-tailed) and to 6-month
> $t(52) = -4.03$, $p = .001$ (two-tailed) and 18-month follow-up $t(49) = -3.38$, $p =$

.003 (two-tailed). The comparison group showed no significant change over time (3. Results section 3.1, para 1).

The Marques et al. (2009) study utilized five instruments, including the Children's Hope Scale. The intervention program utilized delivered a program over five weeks of one hour each. Students worked through the vocabulary of hope, developing and setting goals, learning to identify, utilize and support each other in achieving goals and continuing to plan for the future (Section 2.9, para 1). The intervention was structured, involving groups of 8 to 12 participants and two leaders. The group leaders had specific training and worked from a manual. The control group was assessed at the beginning and at the end of the study, but no specific interventions were administered.

Hope Theory and Goal Attainment

Snyder (2002) has presented an Adult Hope Scale as it relates to motivation to achieve goals. Feldman, Rand & Wrobleski (2009) identified one of the weaknesses of this scale stating "existing measures tap [sic] hope related to goals *overall*, as opposed to hope regarding particular goals. Due to this measurement issue, it has been difficult to evaluate whether hope predicts success on specific goals" (p. 482). Feldman et al. (2009) produced a slightly altered scale using Snyder's Adult Hope Scale and followed a group of college students for three months.

Feldman et al. (2009) identify a gap in the extensive hope theory literature, which is that "the theory's basic hypothesis that hope predicts goal attainment has never been tested" (p. 479). Feldman et al. (2009) acknowledge that since hope theory was introduced in 1991, there were a body of studies that had "empirically documented the relationship between higher hope and better academic performance" (p. 479). Feldman et al. (2009) then proceed to outline their study of college students over a three month

period utilizing the hope scale in cooperation with an instrument they have developed called the goal-specific hope scale. This second instrument identified a specific goal at the beginning of the study and then students were asked to measure their progress towards that goal at the end of the three months. The resulting statistical analysis found that "the importance of a goal influences an individual's cognitive motivation (i.e., agency-related thoughts), which in turn influences goal attainment" (p. 492). Feldman et al. (2009) identify a number of limitations to their study, relating to the age and make up of undergraduates, the fact that the measure of goal attainment was self-reported and that the study only looked at the hope scale and not at other concepts such as optimism, self-efficacy and locus of control.

CHAPTER THREE – METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Rationale for and Description of Research Method

A mixed method approach combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies was originally planned to be utilized. Snyder's Hope Scale (1991) and Feldman's Goal Attainment Scale (2009) were used to collect quantitative data. A classical item analysis of the questionnaires was used, identifying means, standard deviations and correlations. The effects of the interventions were assessed using the results of these questionnaires and analyzed using a Repeated Measures ANOVA. A Repeated Measures ANOVA allowed me to compare the means between Time 1 through Time 8 to determine if any of the intervention discussions made a significant difference in the students' levels of hope.

The qualitative date was to include student profiles on all students and detailed case studies of the four representative students who participated in the taped four-question semi-structured interview conducted at the end of the study. Finally, excerpts from my reflective journal, which included notes from the one on one interviews and the overall process for the study period formed the components of the qualitative data. The quantitative data results were to be informed by the results from the student profiles, interviews and reflections journal.

The qualitative data collected was not able to be used in this study. The size of the study was a factor, with only 22 students completing the study. This small sample size, combined with the small community where the study was conducted created a situation where participants could easily be identified. A simple internet search of the researcher's name would result in both the community and the school being identified. It would then be a relatively easy process to individually identify the students who

participated. Thus, all of the qualitative data was removed from this analysis to protect the participants.

Participants

The study was conducted in the researcher's classroom in a small west-central British Columbia alternate high school. The total high school population is approximately 230 students, in grades 8 to 12. The alternate school students were age 15 – 19 at the time of the study, in Grades 10 – 12. There were 15 females and 7 males, of which 14 are aboriginal (10 female, 4 male). There were 8 (4 male, 4 female) students with either a specific Ministry of Education Special Education designation, or a medical Doctor diagnosis for mental health and/or specific learning disabilities. Two students had children, one student was pregnant. One student was working towards an Adult Dogwood student, generally defined as a student who has not completed all Grade 10 requirements and who is 18 years or older. The age and gender composition of the participant (student) group are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 Participants by Gender and Age

	Age					Total
	15	16	17	18	19	
Male	0	1	6	0	0	7
Female	2	7	3	2	1	15
Total	2	8	9	2	1	22

Table 2 contains breakdowns of the students by gender and aboriginal heritage. Aboriginal heritage was determined through a student registration at Houston Secondary

School, where Aboriginal heritage is self-reported on the registration form. As can be seen in this table, while the males were a roughly equal mix of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students, the females were predominantly Aboriginal.

Table 2 - Participants by Gender and Aboriginal Heritage

	Aboriginal Heritage		Total
	Aboriginal	Non Aboriginal	
Male	4	3	7
Female	10	5	15
Total	14	8	22

The reasons students are assigned to the Alternative Education program are varied, but students are generally struggling with issues outside of the school and have been identified by their previous classroom teachers to have very low motivation and/or skills in various subject areas. In addition, many of the students have not attended or are not allowed to attend the regular high school. This is the first year of operation for the off-campus alternate school. The school is located on the local college campus grounds, and shares building space with some of the college's community continuing education programming. Previous alternate programs were housed either in a classroom within the high school or in a portable on the school grounds. The off-campus program was identified as a need, with the initial expectation that there would be 12-14 students enrolled in the program. There are currently 28 students enrolled in the program of which 22 participated in this study.

The off-campus senior Alternative Education program is specifically designed for students in Grades 11 and 12, who are more than 16 years of age and are cognitively able to achieve a British Columbia High School Dogwood Certificate. There have been specific exemptions which have allowed three 15 year olds to register in the program. The majority of students have fallen behind their graduation cohort and without significant interventions and intense academic support would not graduate with their cohort, or would not graduate with a British Columbia Dogwood Diploma.

All students and their parents/guardians were provided with the informed consent for this study at the time they registered in the off-campus Alternative Education program. All parents/guardians gave permission for their students' data to be used for this study. Subsequently, students were given an additional informed consent which signified that they were aware of the study and that their data would be used in this study. Forms are located in Appendix A.

Instruments

Three instruments were utilized in this study and are contained in Appendix B. Snyder's Adult Hope Scale (AHS) (1991), Feldman's Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS) (2007), and a semi-structured interview with four questions. Snyder's Adult Hope Scale (1991) is a questionnaire, consisting of twelve questions, of which eight questions (four pathway and four agency) form the basis of the scale. Respondents are asked to fill in the questionnaire using a Likert type scale asking for a rating from 1 – Definitely False to 8 – Definitely True. The data can then be analyzed by either Pathways or Agency separately, or by utilizing the combined total, with a higher total indicating higher hope. In 1991, Snyder, Harris, et al. present a review of the development of the (AHS) from 1985, where

in the first stage of development, they began with 45 items. These 45 items were reduced

to the 12 that currently form The Hope Scale (p. 572). Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991)

report an internal consistency of "Cronbach's alphas ranged from .74 to .84 ... For the

Agency subscale, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .71 to .76 ... for the Pathways subscale,

Cronbach's alphas ranged from .63 to .80 (p. 572). The temporal stability (test-retest

reliability) utilized four samples were .85, $p <$. 001, over a 3-week interval; .73, $p < .001$,

over an 8-week interval; and .76 and .82, respectively, $p < .001$, over 10-week intervals in

two samples (pp. 572-573).

Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) then proceed through a factor analysis to separate the

components of Agency and Pathways. They determined that the items that are associated

with Agency load for that factor and not the second and the items that are associated with

Pathways load for that factor (p. 573). In addition, "two factors accounted for 52% and

63% of the variance across the samples" (p. 573). They go on to state that "the agency

and pathways component scores correlated positively in each of the six college student

samples" (p. 573). Snyder, Harris, et al.(1991) continue validating the AHS against other

scales that have already been validated and accepted. In convergent reliability the scales

that were compared were: Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985), Generalized

Expectancy for Student Success Scale (Finbel & Hale, 1978), Burger-Cooper Life

Experiences Survey (Burger & Cooper, 1979); The Problem Solving Inventory (Heppner

& Petersen, 1982), Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Hopelessness Scale (Beck,

Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974), Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Ward,

Mendelsohn, Mock & Erbaugh, 1961), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

(Hathaway & McKinley, 1951), Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank (Rotter & Rafferty,

1950), Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), Self-Presentation Scale (Roth, Harris, & Snyder, 1988). Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) conclude that The Hope Scale can be statistically related to all of these measures in isolating the trait hope from other traits being measured.

To demonstrate that the AHS was a different measure than what was already available, The AHS was compared to the Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) then proceeded to determine if the AHS was actually measuring something unique. Using negative affectivity, the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (Taylor 1953) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger, Gorsuch & Luchene, 1970) were used in a correlational study with the AHS. Additional work was completed using the Ways of Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). They once again came to the conclusion that "the Hope Scale contains unique predictive variance in relation to problem-focused coping that cannot be explained by negative affectivity" (p. 576). Additional studies were conducted to look at relationships with life stress, optimism and loss of control, which resulted in the conclusion that "the Hope Scale contributed unique variance in relation to all other individual-differences dispositional measures discussed in the present section on discriminant utility" (p. 577).

Finally, Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) looked at how goals and goal related behaviours related to the AHS. They state that this was an essential component of hope theory in that "the agency and pathways of high-hope people should be maintained in the face of a stressor ... and the agency and pathways of low-hope people should deteriorate when they encounter an obstacle" (p. 578). It was determined that, in relation to setting and achieving goals, higher hope people when compared to lower hope people would

focus on success and believe that they have a higher probability of achieving their goals (p. 581). Subsequent statistical studies have continued to conclude that the AHS is a statistically valid measurement of hope trait (Magaletta & Oliver, 1999; Bryant & Cvengros, 2004; Rand, 2009; Feldman, Rand, Kahle-Wrobleski, 2009; Seirup & Rose, 2011).

Feldman et al. (2009) acknowledge that there has been extensive research and validation of the AHS. However, they state that despite "this extensive research, the central tenet of hope theory – that hope drives successful goal pursuit and attainment (Snyder, 1994) – has not been tested" (p. 480). Feldman et al. (2009) identify the way in which hope is measured as being the issue, stating that, in previous studies, overall goals have been measured, whereas, they are proposing to measure specific goals. The Goal-Specific Hope Scale (GSHS) contains six questions, three pathway and three agency, slightly reworded, but directly from the Hope Scale. The GSHS uses a Likert type scale with ratings of 1 (definitely false) to 8 (definitely true). There are only six rather than eight questions because one of the Hope Scale agency questions could not be reworded to be specific to a single goal. To keep the questionnaire balanced, they dropped one of the pathway questions as well. In this study, Feldman's et al. (2009) Cronbach alphas ranged "from .74 to .88 across the seven goals [each respondent was asked to identify seven goals at Time 1 and then evaluate those same goals at Time 2] and two time points" (p. 484). They also ran correlations against the Hope Scale that ranged from .30 to .48 across the seven goals (p. 485). The GSHS has two additional items. The first item asks respondents to indicate how successful they have been pursuing a specific goal. The second item is a line, where they are asked to approximate what percentage of progress

they made towards their goal. Feldman et al. (2009) ran a Pearson correlation coefficient to determine if these two items were redundant. The Pearson correlation coefficient across all seven goals was .83 to .97. Therefore, they summed these two for an overall attainment index in the subsequent analyses. The single study by Feldman et al. (2009) is the only published research related to the GSHS this researcher was able to find.

To provide qualitative data to the study, a four question open-ended questionnaire was developed (Appendix B) In addition, individual student profiles were developed for each of the participants.

Procedures

All students were asked to complete Snyder's AHS (1991) in late September, 2012. This provided a baseline for each individual student for comparison to subsequent tests. In addition, each student was given the four interview questions to write down their initial thoughts in answer to the questions. Finally, each student was asked to identify one or two core academic subjects that they felt they could complete by January 2013. The core academic subject was the focus of the Goal Specific Hope Scale (2009) and the students' goals and achievement were tracked relating to this subject. The subject was broken down into its component parts (i.e. chapters or units) and then with a calendar of the period from October to January, students identified how much of the material they felt they could complete weekly. They met with me approximately once a week from October to December and I tracked their progress towards this academic goal.

The majority of students participated in eight meetings over the study period. In most cases these were individual meetings, although in some cases they were small group discussions. The students are all on individual education plans and in some cases have a

modified school attendance schedule. The nature of the student population of an alternate program is that events often happen in a student's life that disrupt a students' ability to complete academic work.

The meetings were structured around goal setting and achievement. The first meeting involved filling out the informed consent, getting the baseline AHS and Interview questions completed. A core academic course was then identified.

The second session involved a discussion related to what is a goal and why it is important to have goals in life. We then took the calendar and worked out a tentative chapter/unit completion schedule.

The third session had us check in on their expected goal. We discussed how they were feeling, whether they completed the goal or not and what interfered in their ability to complete that goal. The discussion that followed depended on whether they had achieved their goal or not. It was either a discussion on how to turn around the negative feelings associated with not achieving the goal or determining whether they had set a realistic goal for themselves. It also involved recognizing and acknowledging legitimate events that interfered in their ability to achieve the goal, as well as recognizing distractions that were work avoidance or based on a social need. For others that had achieved a goal, the discussion was about how good it felt to have set a goal and achieved it. We then discussed whether their goal was challenging enough and whether they had to work hard to achieve the goal, or was it easy.

The fourth session began by once again looking at the previous weeks' goal and whether that goal was achieved. Similar to session three, the discussion was either about the negative or the positive associated with achieving or not achieving a goal. We then

move into a discussion about hope. This is often a very reflective point for the student; it also is a very revealing point for me as their teacher. I continue to be surprised by the students who either don't have a clear understanding of what hope means, or who often have never thought about whether they have hope for their future or not.

The fifth session began the same as sessions three and four. At this point we had a conversation about motivation. This is contained within a larger discussion about their future goals. I asked questions such as, "What do you want to be when you grow up?", "What are you passionate about?", " Where do you see yourself in 6 months?", " a year?". Again, these are often very revealing discussions for both me and for the student. In many cases this is the first time that a student is revealing their deep desire for their future. Conversely, this is also where students who have not been achieving their goals and who are continuing to fall behind on those academic goals begin to have increasing absences and avoidance of discussions with me. This is a difficult time for many of the students, where their inability to complete academic work is clearly highlighted and they can see that this is going to impact their ability to complete their courses. This discussion happened with most of the students as we were distributing report cards. In some cases, the discussion was extended into a discussion with parents about motivation in academic work and why or why not the student was/was not completing their coursework. It is important to recognize that often, students do not have parents who can help them, many of the students live independently, or have parents who are also dealing with various mental health and addiction issues.

The sixth session begins the same as sessions three through five. The discussion falls naturally into priorities and choices at this point. Students who have been achieving,

or almost achieving their goals can see that they have made completing their academic course a priority in their life. We discuss the choices they are making; often this involved discussion around the choice not to sit and chat with friends or take lots of breaks. They realize that they are making a choice to ask for help when they need it, rather than waiting for me to work my way around the classroom and ask if they need assistance. These are things that are discussed and highlighted. Often, the student does not realize they are making a conscious choice they will respond with statements such as, "It was quieter to go work over in the main college classroom, away from my friends. They always ask me to go out for a smoke or to go hang out somewhere... I want to get through this course." It is also very difficult for some students, particularly the younger students, to make a choice that pulls them away from their peers and the social aspects of being at school.

The seventh session began as did three through six, with a review of the students' academic goals and achievements toward that goal. This session can be very positive, as the student realizes they are progressing in a measureable way towards a goal they have set. They can see that they have completed a significant amount of their course work in this time period, with regular acknowledgement of their success and movement towards the course completion. In some cases, the students have already completed a course and have started a second academic course. We had a discussion about celebrating that success, how to acknowledge this and why they should reward themselves for their successes. This session can also be very disheartening as the student realizes that they have made very little progress towards their goal. In some of the meetings, I had to focus

the student on what they had accomplished in spite of what other things were going on in their lives.

Finally, in our eighth meeting, we discussed how the student felt about the process. They completed the Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS), and we identified what percentage of the course or courses they had completed in the period from September 2012 to January 2013.

All students were asked to once again answer the four open-ended questions relating to hope and goals. In addition, the four students who were chosen from the stratified random sample, participated in the taped interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS

Course Completion

Course completion is considered a good indicator of a students' belief in the future. Students who have successfully completed a course, generally have a positive belief in their ability to complete another course. Table 3 compares the number of students who completed one or more courses by the gender of the students.

Table 3 - Number of Students Completing One or More Courses by Gender

	Completed 0 Courses			Completed 1 or more course(s)		
	Number	%Gender	%Sample	Number	%Gender	%Sample
Male	3	42.9	13.6	4	57.1	18.2
Female	5	33.3	22.7	10	66.7	45.5
Total	8		36.4	14		63.6

It would appear that female students are more likely (67%) to complete one or more courses than the males (57%). However, there was no significant association between the two genders and whether a student completed courses or not $\chi^2 (1) = .187, p > .10$. The small population of males in the study, with counts of less than 5, means that the chi-square assumption is not met, so the Fisher's Exact Test was also computed, with similar results of $p > .10$. Therefore, it does not appear that gender is a factor in whether a student did or did not complete courses.

Table 4 compares the number of students who completed one or more courses by whether they had Aboriginal Heritage or not.

Table 4 - Number of Students Completing One or More Courses by Aboriginal Heritage

	Completed 0 Courses			Completed 1 or more course(s)		
	Number	%Heritage	%Total	Number	%Heritage.	%Total
Aborig.	5	35.7	22.7	9	64.3	40.9
Non-Abor.	3	37.5	13.6	5	62.5	22.7
Total	8		36.4	14		63.6

There does not appear that a student was either any more likely or less likely to complete a course based on whether they were of Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal heritage. The results were not significant, χ^2 (1) = .007, p>.10. However, there is a cell with a count less than 5, therefore, Fisher's Exact Test was also used with similar results of p>.10.

It is expected that if a student is expecting to graduate, they would be more motivated to complete courses. Table 5 compare students who completed one or more courses with whether they were in Grade 12 or not.

Table 5 - Number of Students Completing One or More Courses by Whether They Were Graduating or Not

	Completed 0 Courses			Completed 1 or more course(s)		
	Number	%Grad	%Total	Number	%Grad	%Total
Grade 12	1	16.7	4.5	5	83.3	22.7
Grade 10/11	7	43.8	31.8	9	56.3	40.9
Total	8		36.4	14		63.6

There were six of 22 students (27.3% of total students who participated in the study) who could have completed their graduation requirements in June 2013. It would appear that if a student was in Grade 12, they were more likely to complete at least one (1) course (83.3%), compared to the Grade 10 and 11 students of which only 56.2% completed at least one course. A Pearson Chi-Square test was applied, χ^2 (1)=1.383, $p > .10$. Therefore, the results were not significant. However, one cell was less than 5, so a Fisher's Exact Test was also applied, with similar results $p > .10$.

The comparisons indicate that neither gender nor Aboriginal heritage are factors in whether a student is more or less likely to complete a course. The only increase in course completion is apparent when the student is nearing graduation.

Hope Theory – Pathways and Agency

Repeated measures analysis compares the means of a group where participants are the same in each group (Field, 2009). Repeated measures analysis was used in this study to determine if the intervention discussions had any significant change in the agency or pathway levels of students. The 22 students who completed the study participated in

eight one-to-one sessions in which they had an opportunity to discuss their goals and motivation. After each of these meetings, students completed the Adult Hope Scale (AHS). Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, et.al (2003), the AHS is divided into pathways thinking, which individuals believe they have specific strategies to reach goals and agency thinking, which indicates that an individual has the ability to initiate and sustain motivation to utilize the strategies. Repeated measures analysis was expected to provide an indication of whether there was a significant change in students' levels of agency and pathway between the beginning of the study (T1) and the end (T8). In addition, by completing a repeated measures analysis, certainty would be provided that the experimental conditions between students and times were equal, with the requirement that sphericity must not be violated. Table 6 provides the means and standard deviations for each of the time periods for both agency and pathway from the beginning of the study (T1) to the end of the end of the study (T8).

Table 6 - Agency and Pathway Mean and Standard Deviation (N=22)

Time	Agency Mean	SD	Pathway Mean	SD
T1	22.59	3.61	21.23	3.77
T2	22.18	3.36	21.14	4.76
T3	22.59	4.56	21.00	4.80
T4	22.36	3.96	20.59	4.94
T5	22.64	4.24	21.14	5.91
T6	23.09	4.14	21.73	5.36
T7	21.68	4.18	21.05	5.48
T8	22.82	4.23	20.68	5.12

The test for sphericity in a repeated measures analysis is Mauchly's Test of Sphericity, this test is testing for homogeneity of variance (HOV). In both agency and pathways, sphericity was violated $p < .05$. Thus, the F-ratio is not valid if the assumptions of sphericity are not met. The Greenhouse-Geisser and Huynh-Feldt corrections are interpreted such that for values closer to 1, then the more homogeneous and closer to spherical the data. The Greenhouse-Geisser is at .547, which is only marginally closer to 1 than 0, and the Huynh-Feldt is a little better at .684. Neither of these two measures provided confidence that there was not an issue with sphericity.

The decision was made to revert to a dependent t-test utilizing the data collected at the beginning of the study (T1) and the final data from the end of the study (T8). There were no significant differences noted between these two times in the entire group

for agency or pathway as separate entities. Therefore, it is reasonable to use the total

score from the AHS, rather than separating agency and pathway.

Relationships between Adult Hope Scale and Goal Specific Hope Scale

If two variables are related, then each of the variables should deviate from their

mean in a similar way. The students completed the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) and the

Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS) at the beginning of the study, with the AHS being

completed first, then the GSHS, with a discussion about a specific academic goal. It is

expected, given the similarity between the AHS and the GSHS, the data should have a

strong correlation. Table 7 shows the relationship between the Adult Hope Scale and the

Goal Specific Hope Scale which were both administered at the beginning and end of the

study.

Table 7 - Correlation Coefficents for Adult Hope Scale (AHS) and Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS) Responses for the Beginning (T1) and End (T8) Data Collection Time Points.

	Beginning		End	
	Pearson r	p value	Pearson r	p value
Agency	.15	.50	-.01	.95
Pathway	.17	.46	.20	.38
Hope Scale	.30	.17	.57	.01

The correlations calculated at the beginning of the study are concerning; the

expected strong correlation between the AHS and the GSHS are not present with $r = .30$

and $p > .10$. At the end of the study, there is no relationship between r and p for agency

and pathway either. However, the total scores between the two instruments at the end of

the study do correlate with a large effect $r = .57$ and $p < .10$. To ensure that there was no error in data entry for the beginning, all scores were checked against the original documents for accuracy and no errors in input were found.

Hope and Goal Attainment

The Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS) was used in conjunction with the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) to determine if this particular instrument would provide additional information regarding the specific alternative student population in this study. The study design incorporated a process of setting and tracking goals, therefore the GSHS provided an additional measure.

A dependent (paired) t-test was used to determine if there was a change in the hope levels of students from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. The first thing that was completed was correlations between the beginning of the study (T1) and the end of the study (T8), comparing pathways and agency separately, then comparing the overall AHS score, results are given in Table 8.

Table 8 – Correlation between Adult Hope Scale From Beginning to End of Study (N=22)

	r	p
T1-T8 Agency	.37	.09
T1-T8 Pathway	.49	.02
T1-T8 Total Hope	.48	.02

The correlation coefficients are of medium effect size in all cases and statistically significant ($p < .10$). This indicates that the students are relatively consistent in their rank

order, with high hope scores staying high and low hope scores staying low, relative to each other.

A dependent t-test was then completed comparing scores from the beginning (T1) of the study to the end of the study (T8). Results are displayed below in Table 9.

Table 9 - Difference Between Adult Hope Scale Scores From the Beginning (T1) to the End (T8) of the Study (df=21)

	Mean	SD	t	p (2-tailed)
Agency	.227	4.57	.233	.82
Pathway	.545	4.65	.551	.58
Total Hope	.409	6.71	.286	.78

There is no significant difference between the beginning of study and the end of the study in hope scores for the participants ($p > .10$).

The GSHS was administered to students two times during the study. Once at the beginning of the study (GAST1), after the AHS had been administered, on the same day. It is also the point where students identified a specific goal to complete by the end of the study period. The second time the GSHS was administered was at the end of the study (GAST2), after they had completed the AHS (T8) and after a discussion on how much of their original goal had been attained. The correlations between the GSHS at the beginning of the study (GAT1) and at the end of the study (GAT2) are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10 - Correlation of Goal Specific Hope Scale from Beginning (GAT1) of Study until End (GAT2) of the Study (N=22)

	r	p
GAT1-T2 Agency	.43	.04
GAT1-T2 Pathway	.53	.01
GAT1-T2 Total Goal Attainment	.43	.04

As with the AHS, the GSHS correlations indicate that the correlation coefficient ranges from a medium effect size to a large effect size ($r = .4$ to .5) and statistically significant ($p < .10$). Therefore, the students have remained in their rank order from the beginning of the study to the end. A paired t-test is reasonable.

A paired t-test was then completed on the data, with the results below in Table 11.

Table 11 - Difference between Goal Specific Hope Scale scores from the beginning (GAT1) to the end (GAT2) of the study (df=21)

	Mean	SD	t	p (2-tailed)	r
Agency	1.87	3.75	2.33	.03	.49
Pathway	1.75	3.70	2.22	.04	.47
Total Goal Attainment	3.61	6.98	2.43	.02	.52

The Goal Specific Hope Scores have increased and are statistically significant ($p < .10$). This indicates that students' level of hope, specific to goal attainment, has increased from the beginning of the study to the end of the study related to the goal that they had identified at the beginning of the study. The effect size of these changes ranges from medium to large ($r = .47 - .52$).

To check the accuracy of these results, a further correlation was performed

between GAT2 and the Course Completion and Goal Completion by Range with the

following results display in Table 12.

Table 12 - Correlation between GSHS GAT2 scores and Course Completion and Goal Completion Scores (N=22)

	r	*p*
GAT2 & Course Completion	.427	.05
GAT2 & Goal Completion	.374	.08

The correlations would indicate that there is a medium correlation ($r = .3$ to $.4$)

and that the results are statistically significant ($p < .10$).

It would appear that the time of the study period (4 months) does not indicate an

increase in general hope scores, there is an indication that goal specific hope scores have

increased and are related to course completion and goal achievement.

Student Profiles and Taped Interviews

Four semi-structured taped interviews were conducted as part of this study. The

students were divided into four (4) groups. Students were separated by Gender and

Aboriginal Heritage. One name was then drawn from each group to be interviewed.

Profiles of the students and the full text of the interviews are contained in Appendix E. It

is interesting to note that all four students who were chosen were quite willing to talk

until the tape recorder was turned on, then, all but one of the students became very

reluctant to expand on their ideas. Unfortunately, instead of turning off the tape, the

interview was continued resulting in insufficient data to interpret.

In addition, reporting any of the information on the four individuals who participated in the taped interviews would have resulted in the students being identified since each of the students in the alternative education program have very specific backgrounds and challenges. A simple internet search would identify the school and community where I teach and this would make it very easy for someone to identify the students who participated in the study. Therefore, only the demographic information already presented in Chapter 3 was utilized in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION

The data indicated that in the study time period, there was no change in a student's overall hope scale. However, when hope was related to achievement of goals, there was an increase in hope scores. This would indicate that students have a higher hope level when that hope was attached to a specific goal attainment.

When I started the study, I expected that students who had completed courses and thus had been successful would have their overall hope scores improve. This was not the case, the overall hope score did not change from the beginning of the study to the end of the study. There was no difference in the hope levels of the students who had completed courses and the hope level of students that had not completed courses. My expectation was that higher hope students would complete more courses. This would have then provided the teacher with a way of determining which students were the most in need and to focus the limited resource of teacher time and support on those students most in need. Higher hope scores related directly to higher course completion was not supported by the data and the results. This may be because the study was conducted over such a short time period, and therefore, the students overall view of their future had not had time to actually change their attitudes towards the future.

The study was conducted in first semester from September to January. It is possible that the students who were in Grade 12 would increase their motivation to complete in second semester as their graduation date becomes imminent.

A large amount of effort and time was put into the five discussion topics. These five topics have been utilized in my classroom for the three previous years. Anecdotal evidence suggested that they made an impact on the students' attitudes towards their

work and completion of courses. These workshops were previously delivered in a group format. I believe that there was something lost in delivering them in an individual discussion format, rather than the video, group format previously used. The results indicated that the workshops did not significantly improve the overall hope scale, although the workshops may have been a factor in the change in the goal attainment scale.

The only statistically significant result was found in the Goal Specific Hope Scale (GSHS). Although there were still no changes in the overall hope scale, there were positive changes specific to goal attainment. This is directly related to the goal that each student set at the beginning of the study, followed by discussion on how much a student had achieved towards that goal and their feelings of hope related directly to that goal. It is a positive development that when a student has a specific goal and can see a specific measurement towards achieving that goal, their hope of achieving that goal improves noticeably. This would suggest to teachers that if they have clear, measureable goals for a student to achieve and they track that goal achievement on a scale; students will feel more positive about achievement.

Limitations of Design

The classroom is not a static environment; it is a dynamic environment. Therefore, there is a possibility that many things within the classroom could influence a specific individual's level of hope, both positively and negatively. Many outside factors influence the lives of these students, events may affect the way in which students responds to the workshops and the questionnaire.

There were 22 students who completed all aspects of the study. This is a relatively small number to analyze, particularly since some of the data is separated between Agency and Pathway responses. It is possible that a larger sample size may change the results.

It is important to recognize the possibility of a Type II error. If a Type II error is present then I have failed to find a significant change in students' level of hope when there actually was a change. Several factors could have influenced the result; the small sample size, the relatively short time frame of the study and moving from group interventions to individual interventions. Further research in utilizing the same conditions is necessary in order to provide more certainty that no error occurred.

The small sample size also affected the use of qualitative data. The qualitative data could not be used within this study because any data used would have clearly identified a particular student. This issue was only identified during analysis, and discussion of the results. It became apparent that the small size of the study, the small community in which the study was conducted and the ease which the researcher could be identified, would result in the participants being identified.

This study employed a one-to-one method of working through the five intervention themes. In previous years in the classroom, these workshops have been delivered in a group model. I believe that the group model provides a different and important element that is missing from the individual work. I believe that the students support each other in a stronger way when they know that the group has heard the same information and is working on the same types of issues.

Students in an Alternative Education program have by definition a lot of emotional and situational issues going on in their lives. The outside issues definitely affect their ability to focus and complete academic work, which becomes a factor when studying their responses to academic assignments, goals and completion. The students were self-reporting on the questionnaire, so there is a possibility that their emotional state at the time they completed the survey may have affected the way in which they answered the questions, which may not be related to the way they were feeling about their goals or their own lives. For example, if they had had a negative interaction with me on the morning and then were answering the questionnaire in the afternoon, there is a possibility that they were responding with how they were feeling towards me rather than how they were feeling about their own lives.

Implications for Practice

I believe that the use of Hope Theory and the Adult Hope Scale could be very useful within the alternative education system. This research has shown that it needs to be combined with a specific goal to have an effect on students hope scale in the short term. As a teacher, I am always looking for ways in which I can assess students so that I can be more effective in helping them reach their goals. Snyder, Harris, et al. (1991) Hope Scale and Feldman's et al. (2009) Goal Specific Hope Scale in collaboration with each other provide teachers with a way to sort students into categories that allow those teachers to focus their teaching and support in ways that will be the most effective with students. If a student is high Agency (i.e. highly motivated) and high Pathway (i.e. highly skilled), then the teacher just has to provide the material and answer questions from the student. The student will be highly motivated to complete their assignments

with minimal support. A student who is high Agency, but low Pathway, needs the

teacher to work on skill development, but the student is likely self motivated. A student

with low Agency, and high Pathways, has the skills, but lacks confidence and motivation.

Finally, likely the most difficult student to work with is the student with low Agency and

low Pathway scores. That student is going to not only need specific skills teaching, they

are also going to require support to improve their self-esteem and motivation to believe

they can complete course work and achieve success.

Implications for Further Research

This small study appears to be unique in the literature in that it combines the work

of Snyder and Feldman. There is a need for these results to be replicated in a larger study

to either show that the interventions that were employed in this study do make a

difference or that this study is an anomaly. This study's attempt to replicate the large

study completed by Feldman et al. (2009) showed that if a student sets a specific goal and

measures the results, their level of hope increases. It would be useful to complete a larger

study, which included the interventions to determine if they were a factor, or if the

increase in hope was only linked to the measureable goal.

In addition, the connection between specific goals and hope should be explored

with more depth. It would be very interesting to be able to do a study that included

qualitative data, thus allowing for a mixed method study that utilized the quantitative data

to provide the larger picture. The more individual change over time could then be

identified and discussed using the qualitative data. This particular population of at-risk

adolescent youth could utilize interventions that work and increase their overall success

in high school. A larger study, which allowed for in-depth analysis and discussion of

specific cohorts of at-risk youth, for example, young mothers, could provide more concrete interventions to increase their high school completion rates. Aboriginal students may benefit from the specific interventions, which would be very useful in alternate school settings, as First Nations students are often a larger portion of the populations in alternate schools.

Finally, a longitudinal study would identify whether overall hope increases over time as goals are achieved. If a specific group of students were followed over time, and their overall hope as well as their hope levels as they relate to specific goals could be measured and monitored in terms of achievements and success. This could provide evidence and support for utilizing this particular theory to increase student success rates.

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CHAPTER SIX - APPENDICES

Appendix A – Ethics Approval and Letters

Appendix B - Instruments

Appendix A – Ethics Approval and Letters

<u>Goals and Hope in adolescent at-risk high school students</u>

Related to the Thesis for a Masters of Education in Multidisciplinary Leadership

Researcher: Patience S. Cox

Information Letter and Informed Consent for Study Participants

Purpose and Goal of the study.

This study will look at:
- How individuals look at their ability to set and achieve goals;
- What motivates individual students to achieve those goals.

Individuals will be given an opportunity to revisit their goals after eight weeks and determine how much closer they are to achieving those goals and/or what has changed for them in the desire to achieve those goals.
The intention of this study is to look at how hope theory, as defined by Snyder, can play a role in improving and supporting students to achieve their goals.

How were you chosen to participate in this study?

- you are a student in the Alternative Education Program at Houston Secondary School.

What am I asking you to do?

Allow the following information from the Alternative Education Program at Houston Secondary School to be used by Patience Cox for the purposes of completing her Masters Thesis in Education at UNBC.

(Please note: This is part of the regular programming for the Alt program and whether you choose to allow your child's information to be used in the study, the questionnaires and teaching units will be part of the whole class learning for this semester.)

- answer a short questionnaires at the beginning of the semester related to goal setting and motivation;
- set a single goal for the semester;
- participation in a five class unit on goal setting, hope and motivation;
- complete the same questionnaire in eight weeks;
- identify how far you have progressed towards your stated goal;
- participate in a short interview about the experience.

Who will have access to the date?

- Patience S. Cox, as the researcher, will be the only one to have access to all interviews and questionnaires and the list of codes with your names attached.
- Dr. Peter MacMillan (Thesis Supervisor) will have access to all interviews and questionnaires.

Participation in this study is voluntary

- participation is the study is voluntary
- if you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time
- if you withdraw, none of your data will be used for the purpose of this thesis (*however, the data will still be used for program planning within the classroom*).

Potential Benefits and Risks

- you could potentially benefit through identifying relevant goals in your life and school;
- you could potentially benefit from a deeper understanding of what motivates you to achieve those goals;
- the School Counsellor is available to any student who might have an unexpected emotional response.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

- questionnaires are numbered and all interview data will be recorded under a pseudonym.
- the list of names associated with student names will not be stored in the same locked drawer as the questionnaires and interview data.

Information Storage

- all information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at Patience Cox's classroom, located in the Alternative Education Portable, or, on a password protected computer
- all data will be deleted and/or shredded on or before June 30, 2013. The only remaining materials will be presentations and/or papers that relate to the project but do not contain any identifying information.
- Exception will be video clips, **if you have agreed to allow them to be included**, in any academic presentations.

Questions or Concerns about this study

- Contact the researcher – Pat Cox at 250 845 7238 or pcox@sd54.bc.ca or Peter MacMillan, UNBC, 250 960 5828.
- Concerns or complaints, please contact UNBC Office of Research at reb@unbc.ca or 250 960 5650

How do you get a copy of the results?

- An executive summary will be shared with you at the end of the 2011-12 school year.

I am the parent/guardian of _____ and I agree to allow him/her to participate in the "Motivation and Goal Setting in adolescent at-risk high school students" study as described on this Information Letter.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

☐   I will allow the information collected by Patience Cox as part of
_____ participation in the Alternative Education Program to be used
for the purposes of this study.

Goals and Motivation in adolescent at-risk high school students

Related to the Thesis for a Masters of Education in Multidisciplinary Leadership

Researcher: Patience S. Cox

Information Letter and Informed Consent for Study Participants

Purpose and Goals of the study.

This study will look at:

- How individuals look at their ability to set and achieve goals;
- What motivates individual students to achieve goals.

Individuals will be given an opportunity to revisit their goals at the end of the study and determine how much closer they are to achieving those goals and/or what has changed for them in the desire to achieve those goals.

The intention of the study is to look at what motivates adolescents to achieve goals.

How were you chosen to participate in this study?

- You are a student in the Alternative Education Program at Houston Secondary School.

What am I asking you to do?

Allow the following information from the Alternative Education Program at Houston Secondary School to be used by Patience Cox for the purposes of completing her Masters Thesis in Education at UNBC.

(Please note: This is part of the regular programming for the Alternative Education program and whether you choose to allow your child's information to be used in the study, the questionnaires and teaching units will be part of the whole class learning for this semester.)
- answer a short questionnaire (6 questions, copy attached) at the beginning of the semester related to goal setting and motivation and then repeat that questionnaire a further six times within twelve weeks.
- set a single goal for the semester on the Goal Attainment Scale (copy attached), then track progress towards that goal at the end of the study.
- participation in a five class unit on goal setting, hope and motivation;
- allow demographic and historical academic data to be used to create a student profile (anonymity will be maintained)
- participate in a short interview about the experience.

Who will have access to the date?

- Patience S. Cox, as the researcher, will have access to all interviews and questionnaires and the list of codes with your names attached.
- Dr. Peter MacMillan (Thesis Supervisor) will have access to all interviews and questionnaires.

Participation in this study is voluntary

- participation is the study is voluntary
- if you agree to allow your child to participate, you may withdraw him/her at any time
- if you withdraw, none of your child's data will be used for the purpose of this thesis (*however, the data will still be used for program planning within the classroom and as part of their Career and Personal Planning curriculum*).

Potential Benefits and Risks

- you child could potentially benefit through identifying relevant goals in his/her life and school;
- you child could potentially benefit from a deeper understanding of what motivates them to achieve those goals;
- your child could potentially benefit from recognizing how choices they make affect their academic performance in school.
- if there is any unexpected emotional response, the School Counsellor is aware of this project and available to speak to you at any time.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

- questionnaires are numbered and all interview data will be recorded under a pseudonym;
- no identifying data will be used anywhere in the thesis;
- the list of names associated with student names will not be stored in the same locked drawer as the questionnaires and interview data.

Information Storage

- all information will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at Patience Cox's classroom, located in the Alternative Education Building, or, on a password protected computer
- all data will be deleted and/or shredded on or before June 30, 2013. The only remaining materials will be presentations and/or papers that relate to the project but do not contain any identifying information.

Questions or Concerns about this study

- Contact the researcher – Pat Cox at 250 845 7238 or pcox@sd54.bc.ca or Peter MacMillan, UNBC, 250 960 5828.
- Concerns or complaints, please contact UNBC Office of Research at reb@unbc.ca or 250 960 5650

How do you get a copy of the results?

- An executive summary will be shared with you at the end of the 2012-13 school year.

I _____ am a student in the Alternative Education program at Houston Secondary School and I am agreeing to allow the results from my participating in the "Motivation and Goal Setting in adolescent at-risk high school students" study as described on this Information Letter to be used by Mrs. Pat Cox for her Master's Thesis.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Appendix B1 – Adult Hope Scale Questionnaire

Participant Code _____   Date: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____   Age: _____

THE FUTURE SCALE

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.

1= Definitely False 2= Mostly False 3= Somewhat False 4= Slightly False 5= Slightly True 6= Somewhat True 7= Mostly True 8= Definitely True

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Definitely False	Somewhat False		Somewhat True	Definitely True

1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam. _____
2. I energetically pursue my goals. _____
3. I feel tired most of the time. _____
4. There are lots of ways around any problem. _____
5. I am easily downed in an argument. _____
6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me. _____
7. I worry about my health. _____
8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem. _____
9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future. _____
10. I've been pretty successful in life. _____
11. I usually find myself worrying about something. _____
12. I meet the goals that I set for myself. _____

Note: When administering the scale, it is called The Future Scale. The Agency subscale score is derived by summing items # 2,9,10, and 12; the Pathway subscale score is derived by adding items # 1,4,6, and 8. The total Hope Scale score is derived by summing the four Agency and the four Pathway items. Snyder, C. Harris, et.al. 1991.

Appendix B3 – Goal Attainment Scale

Code _____   Date: _____

<div align="center">Goal Attainment Scale</div>

Please take a few moments to think of a goal that you would like to accomplish in the next 6 months. This goal can be in any area of your life. Don't choose too quickly. Take a few moments to think about it. After you have chosen the goal, please write it in the following blank.

Goal: _____

<u>Instructions: As you read each statement below, use the following rating scale to select the number that best describes YOU as you think about this goal. Then, put that number in the blank provided.</u>

1= Definitely False 2= Mostly False 3= Somewhat False 4= Slightly False 5= Slightly True 6= Somewhat True 7= Mostly True 8= Definitely True

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Definitely False		Somewhat False			Somewhat True		Definitely True

_____ I can think of many ways to achieve this goal.

_____ I energetically pursue this goal.

_____ If I had problems achieving this goal, I could think of lots of ways around these problems.

_____ Even when others get discouraged with similar goals, I know I can find a way to attain this goal.

_____ My past experiences have prepared me well for trying to attain this goal.

_____ I believe that I will meet this goal that I have set for myself.

Goal Started/---/Goal Achieved
<div align="center">After 8 weeks – how close to achieving the goal are you?</div>

Appendix B4 – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Goals and Hope in Adolescent at-risk high school students
Individual Interview Questions

Code: _____   Date: _____

1. What does the word 'Hope' mean to you?

2. In your life, name a goal that you achieved.

3. Can you remember how you felt when you achieved that goal?

4. Any other thoughts?