

**AN ANALYSIS OF AN AMELIORATIVE PROGRAM  
FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH**

by 6791

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B.J.C.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE AREA OF INVESTIGATION AND THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The condition of being disadvantaged has been shown to have severe effects upon behavior and functioning. The poor in the United States live in an affluent society. They are frequently exposed to the rewards of affluency but experience only frustration in attempts to share in that affluency. To survive they necessarily develop a different life style. They learn to cope with the reality of their situation. Although the disadvantaged may have internalized the same goals and desires as others, their expectations of achieving these goals or fulfilling the desires may be extremely different from those who are not disadvantaged. Their life situation may lead to behavior which is in tune with the real expectations but discordant with the goals and desires. Or they may seek out other alternatives than those used by the non-disadvantaged for achievement of goals.

One area in which the effects of disadvantage may be observed is the school situation. For the lower class child, education may or may not be perceived as an avenue of upward mobility. Parental influences, home and community conditions, attitudes of peers and siblings, educational background of those in close proximity, and self-image all contribute to the lower class or disadvantaged student's attitude toward school. The combination of these factors and others in the school itself may produce a student who is different from his more affluent classmates in attitude, achievement, and general behavior.

Attempts to ameliorate the condition of the disadvantaged student have taken various forms. For example, there have been concentrated efforts designed to reduce dropout rates in schools. Programs have focused on remedial education, emphasizing in particular the basic skills such as reading as a means of improving the disadvantaged student's chances for academic success. Other programs to reduce juvenile delinquency have utilized both schools and communities in an effort to deal with this problem effectively. Programs such as these have had various degrees of success, as will be shown in a further discussion later in this paper. They are all helpful in that they do point up the significance of the problems of the disadvantaged in school.

This study deals with such a program to prevent dropout and improve disadvantaged students' success in school. It attempts to assess the effectiveness of a project for its participants as compared to a similar group of non-participants in the same school. The data represent the students' achievement and behavior before the Project and in the school semester immediately following it. If the Project achieved its desired results, both achievement and behavior will have improved over the time period for those junior and high school students who were participants in it. As was alluded to previously, the disadvantaged student brings a different background and different expectations to the educational experience. A review of literature should help us to better understand the disadvantaged student and his performance and behavior in the school situation.

#### Environment of the Disadvantaged Child

The disadvantaged child's attitude toward school is influenced significantly by the attitudes of his parents, older siblings, and his

immediate group of peers. In general his family tends to distrust education as a means to self-improvement. This attitude is quickly acquired by the child ( U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968 ). Lower class parents tend to be less educated on the whole than are other parents. They do not really know how to assist their children with homework, and they cannot afford or do not think to take the children to museums, theaters, or other cultural places ( Rudman and Featherstone, 1968 ). The way in which parents spend time with their children has been shown to be especially important in the child's development of skills necessary for school. Most lower class children spend less time interacting with their parents than do middle class children ( Bloom, Davis, and Hess, 1965 ). In many cases both parents work, or perhaps the absence of one parent forces the other to work full time. Not enough effort is concentrated on vital language skills; houses are overcrowded and noisy, and talk is usually not corrected and perhaps even goes unnoticed ( Bloom, Davis, and Hess, 1965 ). Children are not stimulated to do imaginative thinking, problem solving, or analytic reasoning at home with their family. It cannot be said that these parents are not concerned with their children's success in school, but it is evident that many of them simply do not have the time and energy which are necessary to motivate and sustain interest in their children. An abundant environment affords stimulating experiences which help the child adapt to society. While a child's disadvantaged home may indeed have stimulating experiences ( many children and relatives, older children disciplining younger ones, frequent visitors, general confusion of the neighborhood ), they are not the type which usually stimulate a child's mind for scholastic pursuits ( Rudman and Featherstone, 1968 ). Martin Deutsch, in studying the environments of disadvantaged

children, states the two most important deprivations he observes: 1. There is usually a scarcity of materials in the disadvantaged home which are tools commonly used in schools, such as books, pencils, paper, and other printed material. 2. There is a scarcity of parental attention, for both parents usually work. Thus, the child "who is constantly ignored at home develops a psychological set that is a deterrent to his future intellectual and emotional growth ( Deutsch, 1963 )." In addition to these deprivations cited by Deutsch, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development lists a restricted life space, inadequate work models, lack of creative toys, and the fascination of "street corner" life. The disadvantaged child develops a belief, acquired from and sustained by his reference group, that the social system is a trap - permitting few avenues of status improvement by fair means ( U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968 ).

#### The Disadvantaged Child in School

How does the lower class or disadvantaged child view school, and view himself in it? One definition of the alienated student would seem to fit for many of the disadvantaged: The alienated student shows a lack of interest, both in academic and extracurricular activities. He has a history of disciplinary infractions, and usually a desire to drop out when it is legally possible. His environmental background is unfamiliar to his teachers and to many of his fellow students. He is insecure, he lacks initiative, and he has a low level of aspiration and self-esteem in the school situation. He is not prepared, in skills or psychologically, to compete with his contemporaries - and usually he expresses no desire to compete. In general, he is unable or it is undesirable to him to adjust to existing school programs ( Hayden, Talmadge,

Mordock, and Kulla, 1970 ). Neither does he feel that existing school programs will adjust to him.

In his analysis of the culturally deprived child, Riessman ( 1962 ) points out that the deprived child desires an education, only this desire is for different reasons than those stressed by the school. The school may promote education for its own sake, but the disadvantaged child usually wants an education because it appears to lead to a job or enables him to get along in the modern world. High school students are becoming increasingly aware that a dropout is seldom hired, usually the first fired, and scarcely ever the man promoted or advanced ( Buckingham, 1962 ). At the least, school is a resting point - somewhere to be between the time you are small and the time you get married, go to the army, or luckily find a job. It is the place where many of your peers are - it is somewhere to be - something to do.

For those disadvantaged students whose peers are already out of school, the "street corner" society manifests a tremendous pull from school. Many lower class students have given up hope for the future by the time they are in junior or senior high school. "Frustrated by the school's demands and by its repeated punishment ( and lack of rewards ) the culturally disadvantaged student sees little relevance in present school learning for the realities he perceives ahead. All that is meaningful at this stage is his membership in a peer society which finds no place for itself in the school." School may present a sort of undesirable either/or option to one's family and peers. If a disadvantaged student conforms to values and behavior expected by the school and teachers, he may cut himself off from his peers. Hence, school may appear to be a trap but also a possible entry into jobs or careers. It may be seen as a gamble; trading companionship of known significant others for

the approval of unknown significant others in the school situation and a possible chance at upward mobility. In the peer society he may participate in activities with leaders he admires and friends who share a common set of interests and values. "Put in other terms, the school with its emphasis on learning tasks, deferred gratifications, and adult-controlled social activity has a difficult time in competing with a peer society which offers exciting and meaningful activity with immediate and powerful rewards quite independent of adult controls ( Bloom, Davis, and Hess, 1965 )." In this milieu, the status-conferring potential of scholastic achievement "smartness" generally ranges from negligible to negative ( Miller, 1966).

The disadvantaged student is not highly motivated in today's schools - he does not initiate or sustain forces and activities toward scholarly goals. Characteristics of this type of student include a desire for immediate results, a high amount of peer consciousness ( which is more important than consciousness of teachers or the school's middle class virtues ), a desire for ease of competition - to "get by", a low desire for learning activities at school or on the job, a negative self-concept as a learner, a low level of academic compulsiveness to get tasks done, and a high level of fantasizing to escape reality ( Farquhar, 1968 ). Many lower class students believe the teacher rejects them; believing this, they adopt a negative attitude toward themselves ( Davidson and Long, 1960 ). They may always be anxious in school, unable to control anger or excitement, or hostile toward authority that seems unreasonable. A feeling of aimlessness may also arise. The disadvantaged youth may feel he has no goals - or that his goals are unimportant to anyone.

All of these characteristics contribute to the feelings of lower class

or disadvantaged youth in schools. Poverty cannot really be defined as a hard and fast economic standing, for it is also the "feeling" of relative deprivation which is poverty. Schorr ( 1964 ) suggests that "the attitudes associated with the culture of poverty - passivity, cynicism, orientation to the present - are a realistic response to the facts of poverty." Although race is certainly an important factor to be considered in the school situation, it seems that class standing is the overriding common denominator in feelings of disadvantaged youth ( Bloom, Whiteman, and Deutsch, 1963; Groff, 1954 ). Low income youth as a group feel less adequate in school than do middle class youth; some Black youth feel less adequate than do white youth. This will be considered further in a discussion of achievement and academic performance.

The concept of internality is an important one for motivation or some degree of success in school. It is a "sense of personal or internal control of the environment ( U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968 )." This personality variable is relatively lacking in Black and lower class white children. In many cases this lack is linked to the home background and experiences. But for Blacks, it is not so closely related to home as it is to the social environment of the school - the racial composition of the classroom. In a study by Battle and Rotter ( 1963 ), it was found that a relationship between internal control ( as opposed to being controlled by external factors ) and social class existed. Lower class children showed that they felt they had not as much control over their lives as did the external world. Lower class Blacks felt more controlled by external factors than did middle class Blacks or whites. Sex differences in control were not found.

#### Four Indicators of School Success

Let us look at four areas of disadvantaged youths' actions which are indicators of their success in school: achievement ( related to grades in school ), behavior ( whether a student must be disciplined by the school ), attendance ( truant behavior ), and juvenile delinquency ( encounters with the police ). These four areas will be those examined later in the study.

Many youth feel the need for achievement - the tendency to strive for success when one's performance is judged against a standard of excellence. People have "various kinds of orientations and behavioral tendencies which might be expected to be relevant to achievement, including motives, values, aspirations, beliefs about abilities and potentialities, and striving behavior in achievement-relevant situations ( U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1968 )." This achievement disposition or need has been found to be positively related to socioeconomic status among all age levels ( Cameron and Storm, 1965; Bruckman, 1966; Dowan, 1956; Rosen, 1956 ). Considering those in the lower socioeconomic levels, let us examine how their condition affects their achievement in school. These youth have a low expectation of reward coupled with a relatively high expectation of punishment for failure to meet adult demands. The anxiety created by this unity tends to lower both academic performance and expectation ( Kamii, 1965; Hess, Shipman, and Jackson, 1965 ). Thus, it appears that the disadvantaged do value academic competence ( Feld, 1967; Shaw, 1965 ), but they do not expect to achieve it. This difference between desired goals and the expectation of achieving them has an effect on the self-esteem of these youth. For if a person values competence but performs badly, it is likely his self-image will suffer devaluation ( Kozol, 1967; Shaw, 1965 ). The consequences in

school of low self-esteem can be devastating, as documented by Coopersmith ( 1967 ), Diggory ( 1966 ), and Rosenberg ( 1965 ): Lower effectiveness in performing academic tasks, the person anticipates failure and is pessimistic and fatalistic, the person feels he has too little power to improve his future life, and he rejects his own perceptions. All of these effects occur among the poor, and even more so among those who suffer from prejudice. We have already seen that poor Black children feel less control over situations than do their white counterparts. Coleman ( 1961 ) states that Black children have pronounced feelings of inability to affect the future. In addition there is the problem of the "self-fulfilling prophecy" - for all lower class youth and especially for Blacks and other minority groups. Many teachers feel that Blacks and lower class youth cannot learn - and they teach these youth as if they cannot learn. Understandably, the lack of learning is exactly what happens ( Harleston, 1967 ). "Tracking" or "streaming" has the same effect on learning in many cases. If a lower class or minority student is put in a slow stream or track ( supposedly because of his ability and IQ ), often his learning and achievement are hampered by the environment at school and his teachers' attitudes ( Schafer, Olexa, and Polk, 1970 ). Without delving into teachers' responsibilities and attitudes which are not a part of this study, let us still acknowledge the fact that the teachers, administrators, and the school itself play an extremely large part in the motivation and achievement of students. The upgrading of education in this technological age has also had an effect. Improvement of standards may be a major factor in the failure of lower status students ( Parsons, 1959 ). As the acceptable minimum of education rises, persons near or below the margin will be pushed to repudiate expectations that are increasingly difficult for them to fulfill.

"Behavior is a matter of choice as to whose approval you want ( Tannenbaum, 1966 )." For most lower class youth, especially those who are underachievers, the approval sought most often is that of peers and not of teachers or the school. Approval is an ego-reinforcement which derives from positive relationships. These relationships occur most easily with other youth ( Richland County Board of Education, 1968 ). School is often viewed as a temporary phenomenon, and friends are seen as lasting ones ( Commission on Manpower and Full Employment, State of Hawaii, 1968 ).

These considerations combined with the lack of formal discipline at home tend to produce a student who is a behavior problem in the eyes of the school. Once again the self-fulfilling prophecy concept is at work, for the lower class and minority children are not "supposed" to behave well; they are always too active, too noisy, and too undisciplined ( Stein, 1971 ). Often children from lower socioeconomic groups are penalized in school because they do not conform to the school's middle class standards ( Warner, Havighurst, and Loeb, 1964 ). This penalization is applied most often to minority children in large cities, for they conform the least to the standards expected by the school. Black and Puerto Rican youth are usually suspended more frequently and for longer periods of time than are their white classmates ( Stein, 1971; Mochler, 1971 ). The disadvantaged child, regardless of color, is often a problem simply because he is a disruption in a middle class school system. Often a lower class youth does not want to remain in school - he is there because the law requires it. Therefore, he may be suspended for discipline, allowed to drop out without much fuss, or even be pushed out of school. He is a threat to a teacher's control of the class and personal success ( Corwin, 1965 ). Allowance of dropout by the school or numerous suspensions

may be in fact a school's only perceived way to deal with a trouble-maker. But these actions may also be the "school's desire to rid itself of an unwanted student because of its inability to meet his highly individualized need ( Commission on Manpower and Full Employment, State of Hawaii, 1968 )." "As soon as the child reaches sixteen years of age, the task of the teacher is immensely lightened. The simplest way of not teaching the child is to get him out of the school altogether ( Stein, 1971 )." Far too often this is the fate of the lower class youth in school: he is not a "dropout" - he is a "pushout."

Chronic absenteeism from school has been linked to a number of factors: inadequate parental supervision and involvement, incomplete families, large families, working parents, poor basic skills and academic failure ( partially due to irrelevancy of curriculum for some students ), peer influence, drugs, illness, financial need, and for many students the "lack of school orientation" at home ( Frankel, 1969 ). Many of these factors may be characteristic of the lower class. The truant child does not conform to school discipline. He is usually a riddle to the school administrator who deals with him in a traditional way, often ignoring his individualized need. Often this child finds things more exciting outside school, for there is adventure in the streets ( Tannenbaum, 1966 ). Boys are more frequently truant as a general rule, however attendance rates for all chronic absentees decrease as age increases ( Frankel, 1969 ). Truancy is considerably higher among lower class students than among those in other classes ( Nye, Short, and Olson, 1966; Davie, 1953 ).

Although theorists still disagree on the proposition that more instances of illegal behavior or juvenile delinquency occur among youth in

the lower classes ( see Clark and Wenninger, 1966 ), official reported delinquency rates show exactly that ( Reiss and Rhodes, 1966 ). The more serious offenses are committed by lower class urban youth. Miller ( 1966 ) writes that "the dominant component of the motivation of 'delinquent' behavior engaged in by members of lower class corner groups involves a positive effort to achieve status, conditions, or qualities valued within the actors' most significant cultural milieu." Cohen ( 1955 ) basically agrees in his book on delinquent boys, saying that working class boys value middle class status but feel frustrated when they compete for this status ( in school, for example ). Delinquent behavior is the subculture solution to this frustration. Although truancy does not always lead to delinquency, it has been viewed as only a step away, and delinquency only a step from serious crime ( Tannenbaum, 1966 ). The changes that occur in a student who becomes a delinquent, for whatever reasons, are numerous. Perhaps Tannenbaum ( 1966 ) explains it best: "The young delinquent becomes bad because he is defined as bad and because he is not believed if he is good . . . . There is a gradual shift from the definition of the specific acts as evil to a definition of the individual as evil . . . . He ( the individual ) has gone slowly from a sense of grievance and injustice, of being unduly mistreated and punished, to a recognition that the definition of him as a human being is different from that of other boys in his neighborhood, his school, street, community." This feeling contributes to his alienation from school, and may eventually lead to his dropping out. Juvenile delinquency cannot be directly blamed for failure in school, but it may certainly be viewed as contributing to it in many cases.

### Resocialization: A Proposed Rationale for Expecting Change

Numerous ameliorative programs have been designed to aid the disadvantaged in school. Let us now examine a proposed rationale for believing that the disadvantaged can change and participate more fully in the school as an institution of society. It is on this belief that positive change can occur that most ameliorative programs are based.

Socialization is the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them members of their society ( Brim and Wheeler, 1966 ). The individual as a child learns the behavior appropriate to his position in a group through others who hold values or normative beliefs about what his role should be, and who reward or punish him for correct or incorrect actions. Through this learning, the role demands of society are made part of the person and become "internalized." "Significant others" and reference figures around the child play an important part in assuring that the child is socialized to the degree expected by his society at large.

However, socialization received in childhood may not be fully adequate for tasks in later years. Individuals often change their attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior as they assume new roles, have new experiences, or are exposed to significant changes in their circumstances ( Broom and Selznick, 1968 ). Society may begin to expect new things of an individual and demand that he meet the expectations and alter his personality according to the situation ( Brim, 1966 ). The rapid changes in a complex society may require new learning. Socializing agents ( such as the family ) may be unable to do an effective job, agents may be missing - such as one parent in a home, or the parents may be inadequate for the task because they really don't care or do not understand what they should do. The above conditions

are often found in disadvantaged childrens' homes. When the child reaches school, he is often inadequately prepared for what the institution expects of him. Preschool programs to resocialize and improve intellectual capabilities have been described by some as being of little value ( Jensen, 1969 ). It is thought that a lower class child cannot be resocialized to behave and achieve as a middle class child. However, others believe that compensatory programs can help improve basic skills; and as the aims of these programs become more clearly clarified, procedures to develop conceptual learning ability for all will be found ( Hunt, 1959; Cronbach, 1959 ).

Whether or not an individual may be resocialized in order to adapt to expected behavior depends heavily upon the effects of earlier learning, or the lack of these effects. Brim describes the difficulties of socialization after childhood: the qualities of early childhood learning are durable, this learning has been reinforced by others close to the child, the unconscious material of the personality is accumulated at an early age, and characteristic modes of defense are established. Childhood learning may conflict with later learning, or it may serve as a good foundation upon which to structure new behavior. "The absence of early learning clearly will hinder later-life socialization when something that should have been acquired as a basis for learning in later years in fact was not ( Brim, 1966 )." Critical learning periods have not yet been firmly established, but if preliminary conclusions may be utilized it appears that failure to learn material at the appropriate period may make subsequent learning nearly impossible for some youth.

Even with all these limitations, adult resocialization may occur and new behavior may be learned. In general, socialization after childhood

deals mainly "with overt behavior in the role and makes little attempt to influence basic values ( Brim, 1966 )." Thorough resocialization is usually considered impractical, but conforming role behavior is a desired outcome of the process of resocialization. After a period of time, the changed role behavior may in turn become internalized as changed values or beliefs. If the resocialization process is begun against the individual's will, if it downgrades or humiliates the person, or if it deprives the individual of social supports and psychological satisfactions, it is likely to be unsuccessful. On the other hand, if the process includes the individual in his own resocialization, incorporates peer group influence, and support, and is related to values already held by the individual, its chances for success are greater. Resocialization is only one of the modes of control over deviant behavior which society has at its disposal, but it is considered to be the most effective ( Brim, 1966 ). The task for society is to socialize individuals so that work may be done, but still allow for deviance enough to transform the system when it is necessary.

Thus we observe that resocialization may occur or may not occur. Much depends upon previous learning of the individual, and much depends upon the methods used to attempt to resocialize a person. Ameliorative programs to aid disadvantaged youth in school normally contain the characteristics listed above as conducive to successful resocialization after childhood. Attempts are made to change role behavior of these students. As can be expected, these ameliorative programs have varied results. Some are successful in resocializing youth to conform to behavior expected by the school and community - others show negligible results. Still, the implicit assumption is that these programs will be successful. It is also assumed that these

programs are desirable for the students, and that changing their behavior is the best solution to their problems in school.

### Ameliorative Programs for the Disadvantaged

Many types of ameliorative programs have been initiated to aid the disadvantaged student. While numerous programs have occurred only within the school - initiated and run by school personnel - we will examine mainly those which have occurred outside schools but were designed to increase positive school performance, such as the one to be analyzed later in the paper.

Neighborhood Youth Corps programs have tried to provide part-time employment for disadvantaged youth in the summer and during the school year. It is felt by the directors of these programs that the additional funds earned by youth help alleviate the pressures of lower class financial situations and thus help free a student to remain in school until graduation. Eisenthal and Strauss ( 1970 ), in research on students in NYC programs, have found that these students have greater achievement problems and respond to the California Psychological Inventory more like dropouts than like students. NYC males have more behavior problems than females, possibly because the females are more socialized and are better able to cope with the educational situation. The two authors have found that it is hard to maintain an enrollment for NYC students; dropout is also common in programs designed to help prevent dropping out.

The New York City Center for Urban Education designed an Attendance Task Force in 1968-1969 to try to improve the attendance of chronic absentees ( Frankel, 1969 ). The program consisted of concentrated services for absentees and their parents, with the Task Force spending three months

in a number of schools. Personal contact was stressed between the school, the parents, and the students. In one high school, which had a low socio-economic level of students, a 15% increase in attendance was observed for chronic absentees in a period after the Task Force as compared to a period before. Also, a side effect was that fewer students were discharged than in the previous two years. The Task Force felt that direct contact was the main strength of their program. However, no follow-up was structured and no data are available on the students for a later period. No assessment can be made as to the lasting effects of the program.

We have discussed earlier what could be defined as the "alienated student." An attempt to motivate this student at the junior high grade level was the focus of an ameliorative program described by the authors Hayden, Talmadge, Mordoch, and Kulla ( 1970 ). The specific aims of the program were 1. to develop the desire to remain in school after age 16, 2. to increase attendance, 3. to improve academic achievement, 4. to increase interest in extra-curricular activities, 5. to promote closer parent-school relations. The treatment and control groups analyzed consisted of 13 pairs of males. These young men were involved in work projects, group counseling, non-graded classes, and parent-school conferences. The results showed that the students had an atmosphere in which they felt more relaxed and self confident. Achievement increased as self-concept improved. However, a follow-up study after a year showed that the changes were not stable. The program directors concluded that improvement could be maintained only if subsequent teachers continued to convey interest and commitment daily in the school, and it was apparent this had not been the case. A further conclusion was that programs like this and others should be built-in components of the

school and on-going for many years in order to be effective. This would insure that contact with the students was constantly maintained.

The state of Hawaii ran a pilot Dropout Project in a number of its schools ( Commission on Manpower and Full Employment, State of Hawaii, 1968 ). The projects dealt mainly with low income families. Components of the project were incorporated as part of the schools and included counseling activities, a Neighborhood Youth Corps program of part-time employment, and a situation where dropouts helped dropouts and encouraged them to stay in school. The project staff felt that these low-income students were perplexed about school - they felt lost and reacted against the school out of frustration. In many cases youth could not understand why they were compelled to go to school. As E. Z. Friedenburg points out in Hawaii's report, in essence compulsory school attendance is a violation of civil liberty. Schools don't guarantee any good outcome or even fair and decent treatment. In fact, some schools provide none of the above. And yet the school has the legal right to a youth's time whether or not he benefits from the school situation. Most hostility directed at the schools by students was a result of the reaction against the concept of compulsory attendance. Working on this reaction and attendance patterns, the program in Hawaii was able to reduce dropout. Longitudinal data on the situation and changes were not kept; therefore, long-term effects are not known.

The Chicago Area Project was a vast program designed to combat juvenile delinquency in numerous neighborhoods in Chicago ( Kobrim, 1966 ). The procedural principles were: development of youth welfare organizations among residents of delinquency areas, employment of local residents wherever possible, and the fostering and preservation of the groups formed in the

neighborhoods. Those who assessed the amount of delinquency prevention accomplished had a difficult task. As the author points out, the delinquency prevention ( or lack of it ) may reflect influences not at all connected with the program. There is no simple way to decide a program's success. However, those who worked with the Chicago project believed that any improvement in the social climate of a high-delinquency community would necessarily aid the reduction of delinquency. Another positive aspect of the project was that it took place in the youths' own milieu. By doing this the project contributed to the practice of viewing the delinquent as a person in his own world, not as a displaced person in the rest of the world.

The Midcity Project of Boston in 1954-1957 was an effort to involve the whole community in delinquency control ( Miller, 1966 ). Citizens' groups were organized to work with delinquency and community problems, and professional agencies involved youth in community activities and exposed them to the world of work. In addition, professional leaders worked with local groups or gangs of youth to channel their energy into positive effort and basically change their value system. Immense quantities of data were collected and various tests given to the youth. Sadly, after the three years, the staff reported that the project's impact upon juvenile delinquency rates had been negligible. The pressure of the Project to change delinquent behavior had not been as great as the counterpressures brought to bear by the gangs and the community. The lower the class of the individual, the less non-delinquent behavior he exhibited.

While the examples of programs cited are but a fraction of those attempted, they none the less give a broad view of various attempts at helping the disadvantaged and some of the results observed. The picture

is a varied one: youth drop out of dropout programs, although favorable results on attendance or suspension programs do occur - long time results are not stable or not even observed and recorded, the pressure to adhere to basically middle-class standards and values is not as great as the pressure a youth feels to maintain his status in his peer group and community by whatever means necessary. It is usually difficult to organize disadvantaged youth, and programs outside school are not as effective in modifying school behavior as are those inside the school system. These are some of the conclusions drawn by directors, workers, and students in ameliorative programs.

These results and conclusions are consistent with the view of ameliorative programs as a process of resocialization: in some cases the process may be successful, in other cases it may not. Results are as varied as are the youth involved in the programs, and no program can be technically classified as a complete success or failure. The methods employed in various programs may have a positive effect on a number of youth, a negative effect on others, and perhaps no effect at all on some.

### Hypotheses

The Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project was designed as an ameliorative program for disadvantaged students. It was assumed that the special activities in which the students engaged through the program and more importantly alterations in the day to day circumstances of participants would have beneficial effects upon particular aspects of their behavior and performance. The project participants were also "problem" students and thus the program would be described as an attempt at resocialization. The basic question raised in this thesis concerns the relative success of the

program. Simply stated, if the program had the desired effects we expect that changes in selected aspects of pre-program and post-program behavior should occur, and that when compared to a matched control group of non-participant non-problem students greater differences will be observed in pre-program than in post-program behavior. Accordingly the following specific hypotheses are tested:

1. There will be significant difference between Time 1 ( pre-project ) and Time 2 ( post-project ) scores among project S's as follows:
  - A. Grade point average will increase
  - B. Days of suspension will decrease
  - C. Days absent will decrease
  - D. Misdemeanors will decrease
  - E. Felonies will decrease
  - F. Total police encounters will increase
2. No significant difference between Time 1 and Time 2 scores for non-project S's will be observed.
3. Time 1 scores of project and non-project S's will be significantly different as follows:
  - A. Project S's will have lower grade point averages
  - B. Project S's will have more days of suspension
  - C. Project S's will have more days absent
  - D. Project S's will have more instances of misdemeanors
  - E. Project S's will have more instances of felonies
  - F. Project S's will have more total police encounters
4. No significant differences in Time 2 scores for project and non-project S's will be observed.

## CHAPTER II

### SETTING AND METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This chapter will begin with a description of the Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project which prompted this study. The sample and its method of selection will be examined, as well as the basic design of the study. A description of the concepts and definitions of the variables will follow. Finally, the method of analysis of data and methodological procedures will be described.

#### The Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project

##### Location

The Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project and this subsequent study took place in a Midwest town of about 25,000 people. Due to the close proximity of a large Army base, the town has a high percentage of transient families. The population is racially and culturally mixed. There are 1,200 students in the high school: 20 per cent of them are Black students. Of the 850 students in the city junior high, 25 per cent are Black students. Records kept at the high school indicate a dropout rate of 9 per cent for the entire high school body.

##### Personnel and Goals

The NYC Project was conducted jointly by Kansas State University and the Unified School District of Junction City, Kansas. It was financed under provisions of the Economic Opportunity Acts of 1964 which are now administered by the U.S. Department of Labor. Since Kansas State University is

within twenty miles of Junction City, both University and school district people were employed by the Project. The Administrative Staff consisted of a combination of University professors, school administrative personnel, high school teachers, and the head counselor of the high school. Twelve teachers from the high school and the junior high school were employed to work closely with the students. Seven college students served as "role models" or go-betweens for the students and their teachers. Three counselors, one from the University and two from the schools, completed the personnel. The group was divided into six teams consisting of twelve students, two teachers, one role model, and one counselor.

The main goal of the Project was to initiate and attempt a dropout prevention model plan. The team concept and the time schedule of the ten-week project were planned by the administrative staff and other resource people they consulted. Additional desired outcomes were better communication between the students and the teachers, a lessening of hostilities ( both racial and personal ), remedial education benefits, and the return of these students to school in the fall. It was hoped that a good relationship between the world of work and the students' subjects in school could be established. To these ends, a three phase summer project was conducted. Before examining these phases, let us look at the students picked to participate in the project.

#### The Students in the Project

The initial enrollment in the project was seventy-one students, ages 14 through 17. Under Department of Labor guidelines, they had to be classified as from poverty level or below households. They were identified by school personnel and counselors as potential dropouts for these reasons:

1. low grades in school subjects
2. high suspension rates for disciplinary actions ( shown in number of days )
3. low attendance at school
4. juvenile records with police or a high number of encounters with police
5. belligerent or apathetic attitudes toward school

Information sheets and applications were given to students by the school administration before school was out in the spring. The final seventy-one students were chosen during the summer by the staff, and the Project began on 14 June 1970.

#### Phases of the Project

The first two weeks of the Project were spent on the campus of Kansas State University. The students, role models, and various teachers and staff members were housed in one of the University Residence Halls. This was the "getting away" phase, designed to allow the students a change in environment and all the members of the Project a chance to get better acquainted. It was an intensive two weeks filled with individual and group counseling, "rap sessions", discussions on the world of work and legitimate expectations of students and employers, how students viewed teachers and vice versa, personal confrontations, racial confrontations, recreational activities, and field trips.

During the remaining eight weeks the students were employed 40 hours a week, with the grant funds paying them the minimum wage for work in non-profit organizations. This meant that most jobs were located on the Army post. A sampling of jobs included: cashier, secretary, orderly in the hospital, meat cutter in the market, helicopter mechanic, nurse's aide,

nursery supervisor, and truck mechanic. Those who did not work on post were employed in a Manhattan hospital and in the Junction City Police Department and various city offices. After openings and job situations were discovered, students were allowed to choose the type of work they wanted to do. During the eight-week period many changed jobs every two weeks. However, if a student was happy in the position in which he began, he was allowed to remain there. The purpose was to encourage the students to explore different work possibilities. Part of every eight-hour work day was spent in discussion groups, recreational activities, counseling sessions, or field trips of an educational nature.

Unstructured remedial education was the third phase of the summer project. Teachers, role models, and counselors tried to improve basic reading and math skills of the students by incorporating them into the work situation. Each student was visited daily by the members of his team, and the connection between the job the student performed and the classes he took in school was made as often as possible by the team staff. It was hoped this would be added incentive for the students to return to school in the fall. Some more highly structured remedial education took place at the students' request. Different teams organized their own structured education as they desired it.

A follow-up phase was also designed to maintain contact with the students after they returned to school. Two graduate students were employed to do group and individual counseling, meet with the teachers if they encountered difficulties with the students, maintain an NYC club and desired activities proposed by the students, and generally aid both the students and the school staff in their readjustment to each other after the

summer. The graduate students kept regular hours at the high school and the junior high school in which they could meet with students individually or in groups. Various other outside activities included trips to the University, group sessions with classes from the University, and speakers on a variety of topics.

#### Subjects for This Study and Rationale for Their Selection

Forty-eight subjects for this study were selected from among the original participants in the Project. Four areas were chosen as indicators of the effectiveness of the Project: school grades, days of suspension from school for discipline, days absent from school, and police encounters. The data derived from these four areas are examined in two time periods - first semester 1969 and first semester 1970. The data were incomplete in one respect or another for all but the forty-eight chosen. The distribution of the sample was as follows:

Seven (7)	junior high females 6 Black, 1 white
Ten (10)	junior high males 8 Black, 1 white, 1 Spanish-American
Eighteen (18)	senior high females 13 Black, 5 white
Thirteen (13)	senior high males 10 Black, 2 white, 1 Spanish-American

In order to test for the relative effects of the Project, a precision matched sample of non-participants in the Project was chosen. This in essence was a control group not subjected to the experimental aspects of the Project in the summer.

The control group was matched with the Project experimental group on the following variables: socioeconomic level, race, and grade in school. As shown in the review of literature and in numerous other books and research projects, socioeconomic level and/or race make a significant difference in a student's performance in school. Many behavior problems and attitudes, of both students and their teachers, are linked to the social class of the student. While attitudes and self-esteem are similar among all the disadvantaged, there is usually a difference in the outlook of Black youth as compared to their white counterparts. The sample in this study did not allow a racial comparison, due to the relative size of the number of white students to Black students ( 9 white, 37 Black ). It was not felt that such a comparison would accurately reflect true differences. However, the author stresses that research indicates race is indeed an important component of school performance, and in other research similar to this study it should be an item of comparison if at all possible. The individuals were matched as closely as possible on grade level, for literature indicates that many types of behavior related to the areas examined here may change with the age of the student.

The Duncan Socioeconomic Index for Occupations ( decile scores ) was used to give each of the Project students a score according to the occupation of his father which he had listed on a school information card. Further verification of father's occupation ( or head of household's occupation ) was obtained from school counselors, administrators, and the juvenile officer of the Police Department. Then a process of precision matching was employed to obtain a control group of students with similar socioeconomic background who had not been participants in the Project.

The Duncan Index and school information cards were utilized again in this process. Although there is some variance in grade level, the matched pairs are never more than one year apart. Junior high students always have a match who is in the junior high, and the same is true for students in the senior high school. Racial matches are identical. Since race is no longer an item on permanent record in public schools, information for this part of the matching came from personal knowledge of the students involved, pictures on file and in the yearbook, and counselors' and secretaries' acquaintances with the students in their schools.

#### Design of the Study

The study employs a four-cell design with Time 1 and Time 2 measures available on both an experimental and a precision matched control group. The design is post-facto, thus a random assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups before the treatment ( the Project ) was not possible. This will necessitate some degree of condition in conclusions drawn and generalizations made about the effects of the Project, even though all of the logical comparisons of a four-cell design may be made.

A basic assumption in the selection of control group subjects was that the members of this group would be representative of non-problem students or students not likely to drop out. Even though they were of similar socioeconomic level, they were not identified as problem students susceptible to dropout by their school counselors; the students in the Project were so identified as was explained earlier. That the control subjects were not problem students is difficult to demonstrate with finality; however, a Time 1 comparison of the Experimental group and the Control group should give

results which indicate a difference in behavior and achievement in the period before the experimental treatment.

### The Variables

The subjects, who were matched on socioeconomic level, race, and grade in school, were compared in the two time periods on the following four variables:

1. Grade point average for the first semester 1969 and first semester 1970
2. Days suspended from school for disciplinary reasons in first semester 1969 and first semester 1970
3. Days absent from school during first semester 1969 and first semester 1970
4. Police encounters during first semester 1969 and first semester 1970. Encounters are broken into two categories: misdemeanors and felonies.

Data were collected in a period from September 1970 to March 1971. Grades for the two semesters were copied from home room cards and permanent files in the junior high school and the high school. Grade point averages were then computed on a 4.00 scale ( A = 4 points, B = 3 points, C = 2 points, D = 1 point ). Days of suspension were found in permanent and current records on each student. These same records and attendance cards in the high school registered the days absent from school for each student. If the total number of days included a half day, the total number was registered as the next whole number. Police encounters were compiled from the confidential juvenile files in the Junction City Police Department and Geary County Court files. The Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook of the Federal Bureau of Investigation was utilized to categorize the encounters as either felonies or misdemeanors.

The success or helpfulness of the Project is evident in the fact that at least 48 of the students who were classed as potential dropouts completed a successful semester in fall of 1970. ( More than 48 completed the semester, but only 48 had a "complete" record for the purposes of this study. ) However, in order for us to judge the success or effectiveness through the variables defined above, we must define what is "success" in this case.

1. Success concerning grade point averages will mean a rise in grade point from 1969 to 1970, or at least a relative stability of grades.
2. Success concerning discipline will mean a reduction in days of suspension from 1969 to 1970.
3. Success concerning attendance will mean a reduction in total days absent from 1969 to 1970.
4. Success concerning juvenile delinquency will mean a reduction in police encounters from 1969 to 1970.

The significance of differences predicted by the hypotheses will be ascertained by the T test. The level of acceptable statistical significance is set at .10.

### CHAPTER III

#### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATIONS OF FINDINGS

This chapter of the thesis will present the findings of the study. Each hypothesis will be discussed and the interpretations of the tests will be presented. A general summary will follow the presentation of the hypotheses.

##### Presentation of the Hypotheses

1. There will be significant difference between Time 1 ( pre-project ) and Time 2 ( post-project ) scores among project S's as indicated in A-F.

A t test for related samples was utilized to test for significant differences from Time 1 to Time 2. The project group was tested as a whole, and subcategories of junior high - senior high and female - male were also tested. Significant differences did occur for three variables for the total group.

1A. Grade point average will increase from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

The reverse of this hypothesis was found, as shown in Table 1. A significant decrease in grade point average for the 48 S's was observed (  $t = -1.73$ ,  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.088$  ). Further tests on subcategories indicated that project females were those who exhibited the greatest decrease ( Table 2 ). The 25 females showed a t score significant at the .01 level (  $t = -2.72$ ,  $df = 48$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$  ).

TABLE 1. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-1.73	94	0.088
Days of Suspension	1.37	94	0.176
Days Absent	0.79	94	0.436
Misdemeanors	-2.03	94	0.046
Felonies	-1.00	94	0.322
Total Police Encounters	-2.03	94	0.046

n = 48

TABLE 2. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL FEMALES

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-2.72	48	0.010
Days of Suspension	3.10	48	0.003
Days Absent	1.23	48	0.228
Misdemeanors	0.00	48	1.000
Felonies	0.00	48	1.000
Total Police Encounters	0.00	48	1.000

n = 25

It had been hoped that remedial education efforts during the Project would encourage the students to greater achievement during the fall semester. Among the 48 S's of this study, the increase in achievement did not occur; rather, the opposite action occurred. Further, the female S's were those whose achievement scores showed the greatest decrease. It will be recalled from the review of literature that achievement in school was thought to depend greatly upon pre-school interactions at home and continued parental and peer group support. Home environment was not a specific focus of the Project, and perhaps environmental disadvantages which had existed prior to the program were still in effect when the school year began. If these conditions were more of a constant influence than was the project, it is possible that any positive effects incurred by the Project were lost or decreased as the normal routine began again in the fall.

One aim of the Project's work exploration was to illustrate the relationship between the world of work and the S's classes in school. The S's enjoyed their work and stayed with their jobs during the summer. ( Of the original 71 who began the Project, 64 of them completed the entire summer program. ) If further relationships between jobs and schoolwork were not observed by the S's as they participated in the fall semester, perhaps a sense of disillusionment or disinterest in school classes occurred. The achievement levels of the S's may have dropped because they no longer perceived their classes to be relevant for jobs they wanted to pursue later.

Reasons for the greatest decrease in grade point average occurring among the females are difficult to ascertain or propose. Often older girls in disadvantaged homes are charged with the care of smaller children if the mother works. This may well have been the case with a number of S's. The

condition of an incomplete family has been shown to have a worse effect on female children than on male children ( Cavan, 1969 ). This upsetting situation might well have affected school performance. One might also speculate that perceived relationships between classes and the girls' future plans may have been slight.

1B. Days of suspension will decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

For the total group of project S's days of suspension increased, though not significantly ( Table 1 ). When the subcategory of sex was tested ( Table 2 ), a significant increase in days of suspension occurred among the 25 females S's (  $t = 3.10$ ,  $df = 48$ ,  $p \leq 0.003$  ). Days of suspension increased in the three other subcategories ( male, junior high, senior high ), but not significantly.

It would appear that attempts to positively modify school behavior among the females were not successful. Their behavior warranted more suspensions for disciplinary reasons at Time 2 than at Time 1. Undesirable behavior may have been precipitated by a number of factors: peer group pressure, frustration at teachers or the school situation, possible disillusionment over goals and perceived ways of attaining them. It is impossible to determine from these data whether lower achievement affected suspension rates or vice versa ( or whether both were affected by another independent factor ). However, it is reasonable to assume that the conditions of lower achievement and higher suspension rates were somehow related.

1C. Days absent will decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

No significant differences in days absent were observed for the entire group of project S's ( Table 1 ). However, for the subcategory of high school

students in the project, a significant increase in days absent was found for the 31 S's (  $t = 1.93$ ,  $df = 60$ ,  $p \leq 0.059$  ). This is shown on Table 3.

TABLE 3. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL SENIOR HIGH

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-1.33	60	0.190
Days of Suspension	1.05	60	0.300
Days Absent	1.93	60	0.059
Misdemeanors	-1.27	60	0.212
Felonies	-1.00	60	0.324
Total Police Encounters	-1.24	60	0.222

$n = 31$

This finding is consistent with other literature which suggests that absences among chronic absentees increase as age increases. For those students under sixteen who must by law remain in school, truancy may be an acceptable way of avoiding much of school but remaining enrolled for legal reasons. High school students may also find more exciting activities outside of school that they may participate in as adults. Truancy may lead to dropout and thus to jobs, vagrancy, or illegal behavior. Males have been characterized as chronic absentees more often than have females, although this characterization did not occur as a significant finding in this study.

1D. Misdemeanors will decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

A highly significant t score of -2.03 (  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.046$  ) supports

the above hypothesis, thus misdemeanors did significantly decrease for the project S's ( Table 1 ). A further test on the 23 male S's ( Table 4 ) revealed another significant t score of -2.15 ( df = 44,  $p \leq 0.038$  ). No significant t scores were recorded in any other subcategory, although significance at the .10 level was approached for the junior high category.

TABLE 4. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF EXPERIMENTAL MALES

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	0.24	44	0.810
Days of Suspension	0.26	44	0.797
Days Absent	-0.02	44	0.984
Misdemeanors	-2.15	44	0.038
Felonies	-1.00	44	0.325
Total Police Encounters	-2.15	44	0.038

n = 23

Since male juvenile delinquency outnumbers female juvenile delinquency by 4-5 to 1 ( Cavan, 1969 ), this finding is indeed an important one for ascertaining the effects of the project. It is apparent that the Project's components, while not specifically aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, evidently had a strong effect upon the incidence of illegal acts committed by the project S's, especially the males. This is not to suggest that the Project is the sole reason for this reduction, for independent factors may well have been operating in the community at large. Rather it is to propose

that the Project, operating as a variable in the lives of the project S's, was a significant aid in reducing misdemeanors. The Project was an attempt at resocialization of these youth - an effort to change their role behavior. In relation to their delinquent behavior, the effectiveness of the Project is evident and may be deemed successful.

Perhaps these youth who were participants in the Project decided to alter their behavior because of success at their jobs. Juvenile delinquency would have meant possible incarceration and removal of a youth from his community and job opportunities. Or possibly the close association and interaction with law-abiding, successful ( in middle-class general terms and values ) adults precipitated the change. Even though exact causes are not known, the youth obviously perceived some reason why role behavior should change and misdemeanors should be avoided.

1 E. Felonies will decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

No significant differences in incidences of felonies were observed, mainly because of the small amount of them which occurred. Total felonies for the Experimental group was 1 felony at Time 1, and no felonies were performed by S's in the Control group at either time period.

1F. Total Police Encounters will decrease from Time 1 to Time 2 for Project S's.

This hypothesis is also supported by a significant t score of -2.03 ( df = 94,  $p \leq 0.046$  on Table 1 ). However, this is a function of the misdemeanor scores since the number of felonies was negligible.

Of the 4 comparisons really made, 3 indicated a significant Time 1 - Time 2 difference. However, these were in a direction opposite to what was predicted. Only one significant difference was in the direction predicted.

Thus, we cannot conclude support for the hypothesis. Indeed, it would appear that practically the opposite change occurred from what had been predicted in the hypothesis.

2. No significant difference between Time 1 and Time 2 scores for non-project S's will be observed.

Table 5 shows that no t scores significant at the .10 level were observed for the Control group of non-project S's. When subcategories were tested, still no significant differences were found between Time 1 and Time 2 ( see Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 ). Table 6 shows that a significant t score was approached for the variable of days absent (  $t = 1.61$ ,  $df = 32$ ,  $p \leq 0.119$  ), meaning that there was an increase in days absent for the junior high non-project S's.

The second hypothesis is consistently supported by all the data. Since the non-project S's did not undergo the treatment of the Project, significant changes in their achievement and behavior were not expected. It should be remembered that the Project S's were all designated as problem students. The non-project S's, although from the same socioeconomic level, were not designated as problem students. Their behavior remained much the same between Time 1 and Time 2.

TABLE 5. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF CONTROL GROUP

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-0.56	94	0.578
Days of Suspension	0.94	94	0.354
Days Absent	1.17	94	0.249
Misdemeanors	-1.38	94	0.173
Felonies	0.00	94	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-1.38	94	0.173

n = 48

TABLE 6. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF CONTROL JUNIOR HIGH

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-0.59	32	0.564
Days of Suspension	0.64	32	0.533
Days Absent	1.61	32	0.119
Misdemeanors	-0.59	32	0.563
Felonies	0.00	32	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-0.59	32	0.563

n = 17

TABLE 7. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF CONTROL SENIOR HIGH

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-0.26	60	0.798
Days of Suspension	0.70	60	0.492
Days Absent	-0.35	60	0.730
Misdemeanors	-1.44	60	0.157
Felonies	0.00	60	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-1.44	60	0.157

n = 31

TABLE 8. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF CONTROL FEMALES

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-0.52	48	0.611
Days of Suspension	0.70	48	0.493
Days Absent	0.90	48	0.376
Misdemeanors	-1.03	48	0.309
Felonies	0.00	48	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-1.03	48	0.309

n = 25

TABLE 9. TIME 1 - TIME 2 COMPARISON OF CONTROL MALES

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	-0.24	44	0.812
Days of Suspension	0.66	44	0.519
Days Absent	0.79	44	0.437
Misdemeanors	-1.00	44	0.325
Felonies	0.00	44	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-1.00	44	0.325

n = 23

3. Time 1 scores of project and non-project S's will be significantly different as follows:

3A. Project S's will have lower grade point averages.

A significant difference between the scores of the project S's and the non-project S's at Time 1 (  $t = 3.69$ ,  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$  ) was found as shown in Table 10. Differences between the two groups were predicted because the project S's were designated as problem students, one characteristic being low achievement. The non-project S's had no special designation as having low grades. Thus, this first hypothesis is supported.

3B. Project S's will have more days of suspension.

No significant difference was found between the two groups for this variable. Presumably the non-project S's had nearly equal suspension rates as compared to the project S's, even though the former were not designated

as problem students with bad behavior in school.

3C. Project S's will have more days absent.

A significant t score was found for the differences between the two groups (  $t = -2.59$ ,  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.011$  ). Although days of suspension and days absent ( as they are recorded at the school ) could have some overlap, the significant difference between the two groups was found for only the days absent. Table 10 shows that this hypothesis was supported, and project S's did indeed have more days absent.

3D. Project S's will have more instances of misdemeanors.

A significant t of  $-2.04$  (  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.045$  ) was found for this variable, showing that project S's did perform more misdemeanors at Time 1 than did the non-project S's. This evidence is supportive of the hypothesis.

The small number of felonies did not really allow a test of hypothesis 3E concerning the number of felonies. The results of hypothesis 3F, dealing with total police encounters, is only a function of the misdemeanor score. Thus only 4 variables were subject to test out of the original 6. Of these 4, three revealed a significant difference between the two groups at Time 1. Thus the third hypothesis was supported by the data. At Time 1 the students in each group were essentially the same, except that the project S's exhibited performance and behavior which characterized them as problem students in their schools. Thus their lower performance and more undesirable behavior, significantly different from the non-project group, were predicted and found for this hypothesis.

4. No significant differences in Time 2 scores for project and non-project S's will be observed.

If the Project were successful, one could hypothesize that the scores

of the two groups at Time 2 ( post-project ) would be similar, showing that performance and behavior of the problem students had altered and become more like that of the non-problem students. However, this was not exactly the change observed. Table 11 shows that two significant differences remained out of the three observed at Time 1. A significant difference was observed between the groups concerning grade point average (  $t = 3.97$ ,  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$  ). The second significant  $t$  score occurred for days absent (  $t = -2.18$ ,  $df = 94$ ,  $p \leq 0.033$  ). Thus the only change which occurred was that of misdemeanors; the scores for this variable were not significantly different at Time 2 after the Project. Instances of misdemeanors for the project S's were significantly reduced. Thus the fourth hypothesis was not supported by the data: significant differences remained between the two groups at Time 2.

TABLE 10. EXPERIMENTAL - CONTROL COMPARISON AT TIME 1

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	3.69	94	0.001
Days of Suspension	-1.20	94	0.236
Days Absent	-2.59	94	0.011
Misdemeanors	-2.04	94	0.045
Felonies	-1.00	94	0.322
Total Police Encounters	-2.04	94	0.045

$n = 48$

TABLE 11. EXPERIMENTAL - CONTROL COMPARISON AT TIME 2

Variables	T Value	Degrees of Freedom	P Value
G.P.A.	3.97	94	0.001
Days of Suspension	-1.57	94	0.120
Days Absent	-2.18	94	0.033
Misdemeanors	-1.15	94	0.255
Felonies	0.00	94	1.000
Total Police Encounters	-1.15	94	0.255

n = 48

Summary

Data concerning the Project students did not yield the results expected in the first hypothesis. Grade point average decreased for the entire group, and for the female S's especially. Although days of suspension did not increase significantly for the total group, they did significantly increase for the females in the Project. Days absent did not increase significantly for the entire group, but days absent did increase for the project S's who were in the senior high school. There were not sufficient felonies to test, so this variable yielded no significant results. The significant t score for total police encounters was a function of the one observed for misdemeanors. The one variable which changed significantly in the direction predicted was that of misdemeanors. A significant score was observed for the entire group, and especially for the males.

The second hypothesis was clearly supported by all the data presented. No significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2 occurred for the non-project group. Nor did any significant difference occur in any of the subcategories tested.

Results for the third hypothesis indicated that the Time 1 scores were indeed different for the project S's and the non-project S's, and with one exception the differences were as predicted. Of the four variables tested, grade point average, days absent, and misdemeanors were significantly different from project S's to non-project S's. The project S's had lower grade point averages, more days absent, and more misdemeanors. The only variable which did not show a significant difference between the two groups at Time 1 was that of days of suspension. The third hypothesis was supported.

The fourth hypothesis was not supported, for significant differences were still found between the two groups at Time 2 after the Project. These differences existed between the groups for grade point average and days absent. Project S's retained significantly lower scores as compared to the scores of the non-project S's.

Thus the only significant positive results for the Project occurred in the area of reducing juvenile delinquency for the 48 students involved. The Project was conceived as an ameliorative program to reduce dropout and improve performance among disadvantaged students. To the extent to which juvenile delinquency affects negative school attendance, behavior, and achievement, the reduction of juvenile delinquency should positively affect these items. A correlation between juvenile delinquency and school performance has not been dealt with here, but we may speculate that delinquency is indeed a factor in school performance. At the least we may state that

if a student is not involved in juvenile delinquency which may lead to confinement or a correctional institution, his chances for remaining in school are better than if he were participating in illegal behavior.

If the Project is viewed as an attempt at resocialization of disadvantaged youth, as was proposed earlier, the findings are consistent with literature which suggests that resocialization may or may not work. In this case resocialization was not successful concerning school performance and behavior. However, attempts to resocialize community behavior or criminal behavior were successful, for juvenile delinquency decreased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2. One may only speculate as to whether actual values or only role behavior and performance changed as a result of this resocialization. It is possible that either type of change could eventually lead to positive change of other performance, such as that in the school.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

#### Review of the Study

This thesis investigates the effectiveness of an ameliorative program for disadvantaged students. The relative "success" of the project is examined by measuring change in behavior and achievement of the students involved over a period of time. In addition, a similar control group of students is examined to determine if change may be a function of the Project or some independent factor affecting the total sample. The project may also be viewed as an attempt at resocialization, and thus this study affords an additional amount of data concerning the success of resocialization for a specific context - that of the school.

The subjects for this study were 48 junior high and senior high school students who participated in a Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project sponsored by Kansas State University and the school district of Junction City, Kansas. These youth had been designated by their schools as problem students and potential dropouts. A precision matched control group of non-participants was utilized as a comparison or control group. Data were gathered concerning grade point averages, days of suspension, days absent, misdemeanors, felonies, and total police encounters. The data were from two time periods; the fall semester prior to the project and the fall semester immediately following it. Significant changes over the period of time were examined for each group and its subcategories, as well as a comparison of the two groups at both times. After examining conclusions drawn from literature about the success of

ameliorative programs and attempts at resocialization, varied results were predicted and were obtained.

### Findings

Significant differences were observed among the project S's between Time 1 and Time 2, although the change occurred in the opposite direction from the way it was predicted. School performance ( grades, suspensions, and days absent ) changed significantly, but the changes were negative for the entire group or subcategories of it. Grade point averages decreased, days of suspension increased, and days absent increased. Positive change occurred with the reduction of misdemeanors. Reduction for total police encounters was a function of the misdemeanor score.

The control group of non-project S's showed no significant change on any variable between Time 1 and Time 2. Their performance changed in the same negative direction as did the performance of the project S's, but no significant scores occurred. This was as the hypothesis predicted, for the control group had been subjected to no experimental treatment.

Significant differences were found between the project S's and non-project S's at Time 1. They were observed for the variables of grade point average, days absent, and misdemeanors. Since the project S's were designated as problem students and the non-project S's were not designated as problem students ( although they were from similar backgrounds ), differences in scores had been predicted and were found on three of the four variables which were subject to test. The control S's had more negative scores.

Two significant differences between the project S's and the non-project S's were found at Time 2. The significant scores were observed for the

variables of grade point average and days absent, two of the four variables subject to test. Thus the scores of the problem students more closely resembled those of the non-problem students on only one variable at Time 2. This was not as the hypothesis had predicted.

#### Conclusions about the Project

From the data examined in this study, it may be concluded that the NYC Summer Pilot Project was not a success in the terms put forth in the beginning of this paper. While 48 of the Project's participants did complete the fall semester and did not drop out of school, their performance and behavior in school were actually worse in the period examined after the Project than in the period examined prior to the Project. The positive effects of the Project seemed to be only in the area of juvenile delinquency, for there was a significant decrease in illegal behavior from Time 1 to Time 2.

Several reasons may be proposed and examined for the observed effects of the Project. One factor which contributed to the data as we saw them was that the sample of 71 Project participants was reduced to 48 in order to have a study sample with complete records for the two time periods. This selection had the effect of eliminating those students who were the most deviant of the group. The addition of these students' scores in the subcategories tested might have changed the observed scores and differences.

School achievement as measured by grade point average decreased for the entire Project group. Days of suspension and days absent increased for specific subgroups. Even though the Project was designed to increase the students' success in school, it was a constant and daily influence for only

ten weeks. After that period the students' lives returned to their more or less normal routines in their home and community environments. The points to be illustrated here are these: 1. The Project dealt with a limited time segment of the S's lives, hoping to obtain results which would last beyond the Project into the school year. Examining school performance as an indicator, we must conclude this did not occur. 2. The Project also dealt with a limited part of the students' lives. They were more or less removed from their environment during the summer work days, but when the summer project ended they returned to life as usual under the same disadvantaged conditions they had lived before. The Project's impact was understandably small after the students returned to their homes and communities which had been influential from birth.

The Project did not focus on changing the institutions which are most influential for students' behavior and achievement in school - the family and the school itself. Efforts were not as concentrated on aiding the school to adjust to the individual needs of the students as much as they were concentrated upon restructuring the values and role behavior of the students in the school situation. Although some home visits occurred and teachers and administrators were included in the Project to interact with the students, the major focus of the Project remained to alter the students' behavior to fit the expectations of the school. It is in this sense that the Project may be viewed as an attempt at resocialization of these youth: it was their behavior which was to change and adapt to the demands of the institution or society. ( Part of this was due to the components of the Project and part to the inflexibility of certain segments of the school. ) As we saw earlier, efforts at resocialization after childhood had varied results. This is a partial

explanation and rationale for the results of the Project. The success of resocialization depends greatly upon early learning in the home and the original socializing agents. The Project did not have an effect on these early conditions; it dealt with students after childhood and its learning. The components of the Project were conducive to the process of resocialization ( the individual was included in the process, he had peer group support from the other Project students who were also his friends prior to the Project, and some of the values already held by the students were reinforced), but evidently they were not as powerful an influence as previous learning and environment.

The Project dealt mainly with work exploration, hoping to incur positive results on a wide variety of areas such as behavior, grades, and truancy. Perhaps this was an unrealistic expectation. Other such programs have shown that the main progress concerning school performance is made by programs set up and on-going within the school itself. Perhaps the efforts of the Project staff could have produced better student achievement had they attempted to add to school curriculum, initiate new remedial courses, or dealt specifically with teacher - student relationships. It was also observed previously that ameliorative programs often try to deal with only one problem at a time, such as truancy. This Project seemed to represent a "blanket" sort of approach to many problems, whether or not it was originally intended as such. It is likely that concentrated efforts in one area could have produced positive results, at least initially.

The significant reduction in juvenile delinquency was a rather unanticipated and pleasant outcome of the Project. No component was aimed specifically at reducing crime. Perhaps the interaction with non-criminal

adults, new role models perceived, or relative success with job experiences were the main reasons for this outcome. But an additional reason may have been that significant change occurred among the law enforcement agencies when they viewed these problem students completing a summer of work and starting back to school. New and better relationships were formed between the police and these students, some as a result of the students working at the Police Station as part of their job exploration. The aims and attitudes of the law enforcement agency changed over the summer from ones of relatively punitive measures to ones of preventive measures. Thus the institution involved with the students was altered to at least perceive their individual and different needs, as well as the students' illegal behavior being altered to more acceptable societal levels. Benefits accrued to both parties.

The Project could perhaps be deemed helpful to the students and the community because it illustrated some of the students' needs and characteristics, and at least attempted to ameliorate their condition in school. It was definitely an aid to the community at large with the reduction of juvenile delinquency. As has been stated previously, neither positive nor negative results may be solely attributed to the Project, for it was not operating in a vacuum. Other conditions in the community or in the school may well have affected the students' achievement and behavior. For example, it was noted that grade point average for the control group moved in a negative direction during the time period as did the average for the experimental group. One could easily speculate that some factor operating in the school had as much or more influence on all the students as the Project did on its participants. However, the significant differences observed between

the two groups may be logically attributed to the Project since it was the most obvious variable operating for one group and not for the other.

### Suggestions

Several suggestions for future ameliorative programs such as the one analyzed in this study may be garnered from the conclusions drawn above. Perhaps better success would be observed or desired outcomes obtained if the programs could incorporate the following suggestions in their programs:

- A. Programs should try to have constant and long-going interaction with participants.
- B. Programs should attempt to deal with a youth in his own environment, for that is where he exists the majority of the time. They should also attempt to aid the environment as well as aiding the youth.
- C. Better results for all might be possible if institutions dealing with problem youth were made more aware of the problems and were altered somewhat to the special needs of the youth as well as the youth being encouraged to adapt to the demands of the institution.
- D. Programs aimed specifically at school performance at this age level might do well to base themselves in the school and concentrate their efforts on the problems there, whether they arose from background situations or actual school situations. Determining whether problems were a function of the student or a function of the school would be an important segment of these programs.
- E. More effective results might be observed if programs could concentrate on one or a few problems at a time, rather than many. Problems need to be identified and studied before solutions are attempted, thus the real sources of problem situations would be treated rather than the more obvious reactions occurring later.

The major suggestion of this paper is that the concept of resocialization after childhood should be further examined in its

relationship to programs such as the one analyzed in this study.

Ameliorative programs must or should have some rationale for expecting change, whether or not it is expressly stated in the program's goals or description. Those people who propose and initiate such programs must have some concept of why change may occur; else how can they structure a program in order to promote positive change? This is not to infer that previous project directors and staffs have not had specific ideas about why change should occur; rather, it is to propose that future project staffs utilize the concepts, theories, and conclusions concerning resocialization as the basis of their rationale for planning programs which anticipate change in youth.

Resocialization has been characterized as society's most common way of incorporating deviants back into the mainstream of society. Disadvantaged youth, in their achievement and behavior, may be classified as deviants in the middle class school situation and in the community at large. School personnel, community leaders, and concerned citizens all want to contribute to the disadvantaged students' re-entry into "normal" society. They believe it is beneficial to the youth and beneficial to society - this is one reason so many types of ameliorative programs have been attempted to increase aid to disadvantaged youth. These programs have attempted, in many cases, to alter the behavior of the youth who are considered deviant. But this alteration or resocialization has limits to its capacity for success and its benefits to youth, as is shown in the program described here. If more programs were analyzed as attempts at resocialization, perhaps it would be found that this method of operation is not the most productive for increasing the disadvantaged youth's chances for success. An alternative to resocialization

is the alteration of existing social institutions, such as the school. If schools were changed so as to encompass more styles, more interests, more social groups, then perhaps more youth would be importantly and positively effected by the educational process. The ability to deal with students' individual needs must increasingly become a goal of school systems if they are to continue to include disadvantaged students in their populations. Ramifications of a number of studies reaching that conclusion could have important effects upon social institutions and programs, and hopefully eventually have important effects upon the youth themselves.

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AN ANALYSIS OF AN AMELIORATIVE PROGRAM  
FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

by

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This thesis investigated the effectiveness of an ameliorative program for disadvantaged students. The relative "success" of the program was examined by measuring change in behavior and achievement of the students involved over a period of time. In addition, a similar control group of students not participating in the program was examined to determine if change was a function of the program or some independent factor affecting the total sample. The program was viewed as an attempt at resocialization after childhood. The study provided data concerning the success of resocialization for a particular context - that of the school institution.

The subjects for this study were 48 junior high and senior high school students who participated in a Neighborhood Youth Corps Summer Pilot Project conducted jointly by Kansas State University and the school district of Junction City, Kansas. These students were identified as problem students in their schools and as disadvantaged youth by Department of Labor guidelines. A control group was precision matched with the Project group on the variables of socioeconomic status, grade level, and race. They were not identified as problem students.

Data were collected on the variables of grade point average, days of suspension, days absent, and police encounters for the two groups at two time periods - the fall semester prior to the Project and the fall semester immediately following the Project. Significant changes over the period of time were examined for each group and its subcategories of grade level and sex, as well as a comparison of the two groups at both time periods.

Positive changes were hypothesized for the Project students, but these changes did not occur on the whole. Grade point decreased, days of

suspension increased, and days absent increased from Time 1 to Time 2 for the entire group or subcategories. The only positive change that occurred was the reduction of misdemeanors. Since the non-project students had not been subjected to the treatment of the Project, it was hypothesized that no significant change would occur in their behavior or achievement over the period of time. The data confirmed this hypothesis; no changes were observed for the control group.

The Project students had been identified as problem students, and the non-project students were not so identified. Thus, it was hypothesized that significant differences would be observed in the Time 1 scores of the project group as compared to the non-project group. These differences were observed on the following variables: grade point average, days absent, and misdemeanors. The project group had significantly more negative scores. It was predicted that no difference between the groups would be observed after the treatment of the Project, but the data did not support this. Significant differences remained for grade point average and days absent. Thus the only significant positive change occurred with the reduction of misdemeanors for the project group.

From the data examined in this study, the NYC Summer Pilot Project was not deemed a success. With the exception of measures of delinquent behavior, project students' achievement and behavior were actually worse after the Project than before it. However, as other literature on ameliorative programs and resocialization suggest, varied results usually occur in programs of this type and positive or negative results cannot be solely attributed to a program.

It was observed that the positive change in delinquent behavior occurred partially because the institution involved ( law enforcement agencies ) changed as well as the behavior of the students. Suggestions for future programs were made; but in sum, it was suggested that more successful results in aiding disadvantaged students could occur if more effort were directed at changing institutions to adapt to the special needs of the students. This would appear so because traditional programs to resocialize disadvantaged youth are not particularly successful in aiding these youth.