

AN ABSTRACT OF THE
DISSERTATION OF

Margaret Ann Mazzotta for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education
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from Court Mandated Adolescent Males

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Many youth are able to be successful in the traditional school setting. Large numbers are not successful. Dropout rates are alarming. There is little research that examines the drop out problem from the perspective of the youth. Traditionally programs that are designed to help have been designed by adults. This qualitative study focused on the voices of youth. Participants in this study were male clients aged fifteen to seventeen who were adjudicated and court mandated to receive treatment in a drug treatment center. All of the participants had a history of delinquency and poor academic achievement. They had dropped out of school prior to entering the treatment program.

This qualitative study addressed two questions:

1. What are the factors that prevent at-risk youth from being successful in school?
2. What can schools do to help these youth be successful at school?

This study provided information about what schools could have done to help these youth be more successful. It also looked at their current academic success in the treatment program as a possible model to help other youth.

Five youth volunteered to participate in the study. All interviews were confidential. Interviews were also conducted with a probation officer, program administrator, teacher, and a parent that had a youth in the program in order to triangulate results. The voices of students supported the literature with respect to the factors that contribute to students being at risk for delinquency and dropping out of school. Some of these factors include issues surrounding anger management, academic issues, nurturing at school, family situations, school at a treatment center, hiring teachers, childhood experiences, drug use, obtaining drugs, crime and drugs, treatment programs, dual diagnosis, communication and issues surrounding success and failure. The strength of this qualitative research project lies in the fact that the real voices of students did support the quantitative literature in this field.

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Perceptions about Schooling and Substance Abuse
Treatment Success from Court Mandated Adolescent Males

By
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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State Universities libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Margaret Ann Mazzotta, Author

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Introduction and Theoretical Influences

There is a notion in our society that if a student is able to do well in school that student will be able to be successful in life. I am sure that was one of the lures that drew me to the teaching profession. However after teaching for many years, I realize that the dream is more difficult if not elusive for many youth. We have many children that are forgotten in our society. I have seen my share of programs that are designed to help those children. The problem is that they often fail despite the best intentions of adults around them. When I began to question this phenomenon, I discovered that we seldom ask youth what they believe will work. Programs in our society are not set up to take into account the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of the people they serve. This is especially true for youth. Nationwide our drop-out rates are alarming. They are unacceptable to me. We are losing the future benefit that these youth can provide to our society. I thought a group of youth that had not been successful in school might have something to offer us. Maybe they could offer insights that adults are missing? Maybe they might gain insight into their actions if they are given the opportunity to tell their story. I wonder what we as a society can gain if we listen? The purpose of this paper is to introduce you to who I am as a teacher, researcher and person and test my notion that the voices of students can help us design better programs. I believe a person's world view is influenced by the events that have taken place in their lives. My personal experiences contribute to the way I teach, do research and communicate with

others. The perceptions I bring from these experiences influence my personal and professional life and how I deal with others (Cranton, 1996; Sweeney, 1989).

This paper starts by outlining some of the events and people who have influenced my world view. In an effort to keep this paper within a reasonable scope I begin with events and people from my undergraduate years and progress to my current pursuit of a doctoral degree. These experiences have contributed to my philosophy of teaching, learning and doing research.

The Union Era

I begin my story with two men who stood for justice. We are given many people in our history to serve as role models. However, the ones that I consider to be "heroes" are those that work for change despite benefiting from the status quo. I had the privilege of knowing two people who meet this criterion. They were not people of wealth or privilege. Their names are Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes. They were union officials with the International Longshoremen and Warehouseman Union, Local 37. They taught me about fighting injustice and empowering individuals despite the dangers of taking on powerful systems.

I met Silme and Gene while an undergraduate and returning from my summer job as a cannery worker. I was among the third of a crew that had been, in my opinion, arbitrarily fired. The official reason for termination was a "personality conflict." The bunkhouse in which I lived had burned to the ground and I had informed others that we should be compensated for our losses because the company had violated several parts of the union contract (e.g. working smoke detectors, clear exits, etc.).

In the 1980s working in a cannery was a coveted job for a college student in the Northwest: a student could make a lot of money in the summer due to the amount of overtime associated with processing salmon. Many of the students (who were mostly white and upper middle class) resented having to join the union because of dues, but I was not one of them. I grew up with the understanding that a union job meant a better lifestyle. My exposure to the work place substantiated this notion: working for the union, I made more money, had guaranteed hours and overtime, and insurance. I felt fortunate to have a union job.

Very few college students in the cannery trusted our union due in part to the stories about corruption. They did not seem to worry about how the company treated them since these were temporary jobs and most acquired their jobs through "company connections." There were "understandings" about who got which jobs. Most of the less monotonous, higher paying jobs with the most overtime went to the white males and those with company connections. Among the white college students, there were only two of us who did not have a company connection.

I decided to talk with the union when I lost my job. I was told by my college friends that the union would not do anything, but I felt that I could not earn enough for my college education without the cannery job. I told union officials what had happened. When the termination letter was read by union officials they assured me that I could not be fired for "personality conflicts." My employment was reinstated by the company and the superintendent was not asked back the next year. I remember feeling as though I could "fight city hall" and win.

This is when I met Silme. He was interested in the stories that I had heard about the union. He had been "blacklisted" by the canneries several years earlier and had brought a class action suit against them for their discriminatory practices against Filipino and Alaskan Natives. He invited me to a few workshops and gradually the union became part of another world I entered. Despite ethnic differences, I had a stronger sense of belonging and purpose when I was with people from the union than when I was at college. I was fascinated by how politics affected working people and how organizing gave a voice to those who had very little power as individuals.

In the course of the year Silme and Gene had won their union elections: Gene as dispatcher and Silme as Secretary-Treasurer. They were involved in reforming the union. Union corruption was not a secret and they wanted to make changes. It was understood at the time that to get a job with the union certain individuals often took bribes and other "favours." Silme acknowledged that his first union job was the result of his father paying a bribe: practices known as the "compadre system" prevailed in the union. I was impressed by how hard Silme worked to change the system. He could have done many other things; he was bright and an honors graduate of the University of Washington. Yet, he chose to work in a job that paid only six hundred dollars a month (Terri Mast, personal communication, March 1998) because he believed in the work he was doing (local union officials made no more than cannery workers in their jurisdiction).

One afternoon two gunman entered the union office and shot Gene and Silme. The news that evening showed the blood on the floor where Gene had his chair. I was

shocked when I saw the pictures of the office I had visited just days before the shootings. Gene died the day of the shooting. Silme lived for a couple of days and told the paramedics the names of the assailants. Initial reports focused on Gene's refusal to accommodate members of a local Filipino gang. He insisted that union rules be followed for dispatching workers to Alaska. I recall the Seattle paper reporting that this interrupted gambling operations and payoffs.

It turned out that the murder plot went beyond Local 37 of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). A civil trial in 1989 awarded the estates of Gene and Silme \$15 million dollars in damages against Ferdinand Marcos and others (Richard Guitiez, personal communication, March 1998). It was revealed that the Marcos' government funneled money through the Union President to have Gene and Silme killed (Chuchill, 1995). Gene and Silme had presented a resolution to the ILWU Convention to support a cessation of anti-union measures in the Philippines. This resolution, union reform, and their outspokenness against the Marcos regime contributed to their deaths (Chuchill, 1995).

Great leaders lead by teaching. The reform movement did not end with Gene and Silme's death; rather it flourished. The union president was recalled after it was discovered he had moved union money around to his own benefit. The next election provided many changes. The union membership elected reform candidates for every seat. Eventually, a jury found the former president of the union guilty of conspiring to murder Gene. The jury believed that Silme was killed because he was at the hall at the time the gunmen went to kill Gene.

I learned from this that "fighting city hall" can have a great price and the toll can be a heavy one. Those who have power do not share it willingly and will go to extreme and unconscionable measures to maintain it. I have found that caring people often work hard for those that are less fortunate but not always with successful outcomes.

Liberation Theology

During my senior year in college in Tacoma, I became involved in a Catholic parish that was run by Jesuits. It was located on the "Hill Top" in an area that suffered many of the ills of the inner city. I was attracted to St. Leo's because they had a commitment to working for social justice. I volunteered at a drop-in center for street people. In addition to running the drop-in center, the parish had a food bank and worked to educate the community on social justice issues. Social justice and advocacy was such a part of parish life that the church employed a Director of Social Justice.

In the spring of 1983 the parish voted to participate in the "Sanctuary Movement". This movement helped Central American Refugees flee from economic and political oppression. It was a time when many Catholics were angry about the killing of three nuns and a lay worker in El Salvadore and the United States government's lack of action to hold accountable those who were responsible. It was at this time that I was exposed to the writing of Gustavo Gutierrez and the ideas of "Liberation Theology."

Gutierrez is a Roman Catholic theologian who was raised in Peru and received theological training in Europe (Gutierrez, 1983). When he returned from Europe to work in Peru's slums, he found his training of little use. He discovered his learning

needed to take place with the people in the slum. In the world of progressive Catholicism, Gutierrez is the name most commonly associated with "Liberation Theology" but he does not take credit for this view. He " ...has insisted from the beginning....[that] Liberation Theology is a theology of the people, a by-product of the ongoing struggle of the poor to overcome oppression, rather than a theology of the experts crafted in quiet libraries and then offered to 'the masses'" (Gutierrez, 1983, p.vi).

Liberation Theology views Jesus as a liberator of the poor. The church has often encouraged the poor to live a good life and then promises they will have their reward in heaven (Davidman, 1998). Liberation Theology challenges this notion by asserting individuals have a responsibility to build the "kingdom" on earth. A follower of Christ has the responsibility to attack the roots of social injustice. Liberation Theology recognizes the consequences of sin in our society. Alain Gheerbrant (1974) describes the consequences as:

'prostitution' [sic], 'racial discrimination', 'turning the peasants into second class citizens', 'lack of roads', 'inadequate housing and hygiene', 'poor health services', 'concentration of money in the hands of the few', 'take over of land by a tiny group of people', while the vast majority have no land on which to work, 'bank credit available only to one group' while there is nothing available to everyone, 'no democratization of capital and credit', 'a culture that makes no attempt to provide for everyone' despite the fact that everyone would have the intelligence to enjoy it.' (p. 183)

Liberation Theology asserts that the church must live the reality of the poor.

The church's history of supporting the status quo and/or remaining quiet about the evils around her is considered unconscionable in Liberation Theology (Gutierrez, 1973).

Gutierrez asserts: "To be converted is to commit oneself to the process of the liberation of the poor and oppressed, to commit oneself lucidity, realistically, and concretely....Our conversion process is affected by the socio-economic, political, cultural, and human environment in which it occurs" (Gutierrez, 1973, p.205).

Liberation Theology is not without its critics. Gutierrez is accused of connecting Marxism and Christianity (Quade, 1982), and some see the two as incompatible (Marx & Engles, 1992; Quade, 1982). Quade (1982) states the proponents of "[L]iberation Theology and its cousins [i.e. Feminist Theology] are not religion but politics, a series of programs for the economic and political redemption of society" (p.11). Marx and Engles (1992) noted that religion has supported the status quo in "the exploitation of one part of society by the other" (p.41).

Liberation Theology is political in that it advocates a "preferential option for the poor." However, when the church does not speak up against injustice she also makes a political statement. This silence has been to the benefit of the institutional church and the economic and politically powerful patrons (Davidman, 1998; Gutierrez, 1973; Linden, 1980). I do not believe that it is possible to follow the teachings of Christ and not be political. The only choices seem to be either tolerating injustice or working towards change and both are political (Linden,1980).

Marx and Engles (1992) believed that religion could be "modified" but did not believe change would be maintained over time. This question is not easily answered since anyone advocating change must have hope (Freire, 1990; Gutierrez, 1973). If one does not believe change can occur, it probably will not. Marx is not responsible for

oppressive communist regimes but in an effort to stop oppression of organized religion some who claim to hold Marxist ideology have in turn, been oppressive to the faithful (Kennedy, 1997; Knippers, 1997). Marxism and Christianity may be compatible.

Liberation theologies and Marxism share concerns about economic, political, and social injustices. Since the meeting of Fidel Castro and Pope John Paul II in 1996, Cubans have experienced greater religious freedom. The popular press reported that: "New churches opened their doors, and seminaries once again ordained large numbers of priests after four decades of communist repression" (Simon, 1998). Marx may not have envisioned the staying power of progressive groups like the Maryknollers and the Jesuits, just as he could not have foreseen the integration of Capitalism into Communism (Economist, 1992; Sabin, 1994) or socialism into capitalism (Pozner in Marx and Engles, 1992).

The danger of identifying similarities between Marxism and Liberation Theology "...is that Christianity may be reduced to revolutionary doctrine or Marxism may revert to utopian socialism" (Hanson, 1987, p.108-109). Although, they share concerns it is important to distinguish that liberation theology is doctrine based on Christian faith. Marxism is a scientific theory based on social, economic, and political power. Marxism is not designed to meet the spiritual needs of people. The church hierarchy and most liberal theologian in Brazil agree that limits to political involvement are necessary to protect the Church's identity as a spiritual entity. As an example, "[m]ost of the Brazilian church has easily reached the conclusion that priests and religious (e.g. nuns) should not run for office, participate in political parties or tell

others how to vote" (Hanson, 1987, p.257). This position leaves the church the prerogative to criticize injustices that may occur on the political left or right (Hanson, 1987).

Rosemary Radford Ruether, a prominent Feminist Theologian, acknowledges Gutierrez's achievement "as the founder of a movement which reconnected theology with social justice" (Are liberation theology, 1997, p.1). She then criticizes him for "his interest in keeping Liberation Theology within institutional Catholicism rather than venturing out into new areas such as feminism, sexuality, reproduction, ecology, Protestant belief and indigenous religions" (p.1). Gutierrez is from Latin America and a Catholic priest, and he focuses on the issues that are pertinent to his culture and people, particularly the poor. Other social advocates focus on different needs based on their experiences and are often criticized for the particular focus they take. For example, feminists are accused of ignoring race and class because their leaders often belong to the white middle class (Morga & Anzaldua, 1983). Regardless, other movements have benefited from Gutierrez's works.

The Volunteers for Educational and Social Services (VESS) Era

After I completed my teaching degree I made a conscious decision to work with members of society who are viewed or view themselves as disenfranchised. I started my professional career working as a full-time volunteer for Catholic schools in low-income sections of San Antonio, Texas. The organization, Volunteers for Educational and Social Services (VESS), recruited from across the country for workers in programs sponsored by the bishops of Texas. These programs were in need of teachers, social

workers, church ministers and medical personnel. Individuals usually volunteered for a year or two. Many of the volunteers' families often wondered when they would get "real" jobs. I think most of us believed in our work and that our jobs were "real." Our monthly stipend (\$110 for the first year, \$115 for the second year) met most of our needs, since housing and health insurance were provided. The adjustment was not too difficult since most of us were used to the lives of economically marginal students.

My second summer in VESS, I took intensive Spanish at the Mexican-American Cultural Center (MACC). Intensive language instruction was integrated with Mexican-American and church culture and custom. It was during this time that I met Father Rick, a recently ordained priest. Rick was among the clergy who supported women and lay people in non-traditional roles in the church. Rick had a history of standing up to his superiors. Although his order also wanted him to do vocation (recruitment) work for the congregation, he insisted on doing missionary work. He had a commitment to the poor. In his way he was fighting "city hall" (the power structure) for social good and would not be swayed by his superiors. When I met Rick, he was preparing to work in Mexico City and then to move on to Chiapas, Mexico, near Guatemala. Rick told me that his order was not entirely happy with his choice but was willing to accommodate him.

A group of VESS volunteers visited Mexico City before beginning our second year of service. I was excited about the chance to practice my new language skills in Mexico. Although far from fluent when I went to Mexico, I was able to communicate most of my ideas and needs-- people were very patient with my lack of language skills.

Since most of our group wanted to enjoy the clubs and the modern shops of the city, a friend and I separated from them to visit Rick. He was working in the city to improve his Spanish before moving on to Chiapas. He showed us one of *the comunidades de base* (base communities) in his parish. Gutierrez (1973) writes about how these grassroots communities incorporate bible study into their lives to address everyday economic concerns and social injustices. The parish we visited had integrated a carpentry shop, medical clinic and other services into parish life.

The pastor of the parish showed us the city for two days even though he had a parish of 100,000 people. We went to traditional tourist attractions such as the Basilica and the Anthropological Museum, but I enjoyed watching the pastor with the people in the parish. We viewed the overcrowded conditions where people lived in the barrio. In one section people gathered their water from a faucet that served 600. The response to my question about how often they saw North Americans where they lived was, "Never!"

My friend and I reflected on the energy and spirit of those that worked in the parish. The notion of a "preferential option for the poor" that Gutierrez writes about had new meaning. We were profoundly influenced and considered religious lives. My friend, Nancy, lived with a religious order of sisters in Chicago and New Mexico. I lived a year with Sisters in New York before returning to Texas.

When I returned to Texas I decided to pursue a master's degree in counseling with emphasis in mental health and substance abuse. The needs of the youth I taught were beyond what the classroom could address. While completing my degree I

changed my career focus to counseling youth. After finishing my degree I returned to the Northwest to be closer to my own family.

Pathways Era

I joined a program in Eugene that worked with juvenile offenders who were assessed as having chemical dependency. I had planned to stay in the job for a year because I did not want to continue working in a residential setting. I had found this environment frustrating when I was in Texas. Pathways turned out to be one of the best places of employment that I have experienced, and I stayed there for four and a half years.

The program's management had a philosophy that included empowering workers. All full-time employees were given the same amount of money for training, and each person was responsible for determining what they wanted to learn. The budget was posted quarterly for review and management implemented changes based on feedback from clients and workers. The structure of the program provided a lot of freedom for workers as long as client needs were being met. The job used my skills and helped me to develop new ones. I worked as a counselor for two years and then was promoted to a position that included supervisory responsibilities.

The problems faced by clients in the Pathways program were some of the same obstacles that the youth faced in the schools in San Antonio. They often came from homes where parents were addicted to chemical substances, lived in poverty, and witnessed or experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The residents of Pathways often found obstacles in their effort to create positive changes in their lives.

One of these was dealing with the school system. Youth that were ready to return to classes often had to wait weeks to accommodate school calendars instead of educational and treatment needs.

I loved my work at Pathways and continue to work there part-time. I decided to pursue doctoral studies realizing that I would probably not have another work experience as satisfying but I felt a need to continue my education and face a new challenge.

Conscientizacao

I have worked with youth in New York, Missouri, and Texas in a variety of settings. The settings have often changed but my mission has not. I continue to work with individuals who, in my opinion, were denied opportunities in our society because of economic inequities. The experiences of the union, the community of St. Leo and VESS set a standard by which I measure my choices today. I was attracted to Oregon State University in part by conversations I had with faculty and their verbalized commitment to social justice and advocacy. It was the first time I heard about "Social-Critical Theory."

Liberation Theology is a natural base for my research foundation given my religious, vocational, and social experience. Gustavo Gutierrez recognizes the work of Paulo Freire when he states: "...one of the most creative and fruitful efforts that has been implemented in Latin America is the experimental work of Paulo Freire, who has sought to develop a 'pedagogy of the oppressed'"(Gutierrez, 1973, p. 91). Freire's educational philosophy was strongly influenced by Catholic intellectuals (Collins,

1998). Weiler (1991) notes: "Freire's thought and pedagogy were the influence of radical Christian thought and the revolutionary role of liberation theology in Latin America" (p. 451-452). Freire discusses one of the main themes of liberation theology in his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* when he stated:

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words but only by true words, with which men transform the world. To exist humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it....Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection (Freire, 1990), p.76).

Freire appears to use the term "men" in a generic sense. I prefer to use inclusive language in my writing. His use of "men" is not my preference but it seems to be appropriate to his time and culture.

Paulo Freire believed that individuals have a right to their voice, and it is essential that others do not speak for them. Patricia Cranton (1996) notes that to understand motive and interpretation it is essential that educators participate in dialog with others. There is a tendency in research to limit the participation of those being studied (Lather, 1986). Trip contends that "...researchers are not so much outright owners [of data] as they are 'majority shareholders' who must justify decisions and give participants a public forum for critique"(Trip, 1983, p. 39). Although I agree that researchers are co-owners of the data but I believe that they, not the researcher, are majority shareholders. They are the primary "knowers" of the information that the researcher is gathering and the researcher can only **"borrow" what s/he can understand.**

Freire uses the term, *conscientizacao*, to describe an education that is liberating. "Conscientizacao refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 19). Dialog is essential if change is to be a process of empowerment. Honest communication empowers individuals and lets them know that their views matter (Ulichny & Schoener, 1996).

I do not believe that honest communication can take place if individuals do not feel safe since safety is one of our most basic needs (Maslow, 1962). Individuals can only take risks if they feel empowered (feel safe or have little to lose). Gutierrez (1973) accomplishes this through the formation of "base communities." Freire uses dialog to foster trust, a researcher does this by following ethical guidelines (i.e. confidentiality, voluntary participation etc.) and demonstrates a willingness to learn from participants (Kompf, 1993). An investigator must acknowledge that the participants in a study are the primary knowers of the subject matter (Ulichny & Schoener, 1996). Freire (1990) provides precepts for those that desire true dialog. If conversation gets to the point where an investigator is trying to persuade/convince another party then they cease to be in dialog. True dialog requires that the researcher learns along with those in the study. Those that have been oppressed must be part of the transformation process. Feminist researchers Cook and Fonow (1990) note that:

[F]eminist methodology rejects the assumption that maintaining a strict separation between researcher and research subject produces a more valid objective account. One way feminists avoid treating their subjects as mere objects of knowledge is to allow the respondent to "talk back" to the investigator (p.76).

Engaging in dialogue with those that have been oppressed prevents a researcher from becoming an individual of dominance and allows the researcher to learn with those being studied (Freire, 1990). One of my favorite educational experiences was interviewing juvenile offenders on their perspectives of classroom discipline. I believe trust was developed because I acknowledged that they knew their experience better than I. It would have been difficult for me to dominate since only they knew their experience. I had to acknowledge they were the "knowers" in order to learn.

A critical perspective necessitates researchers to re-examine their practice constantly (Freire, 1990). Social reality changes so dialog needs to be continuous; what is true in one time and place is not the same in another (Tavares, 1996). In addition to changing social realities, a researcher engaged in dialog may gain new perspectives that would require examination from the new insight. Self-reflection helps both researchers and participants gain emancipation. Enlightenment comes "through a process of self-reflection that reveals distorted self-knowledge and institutional domination" (Cranton, 1996 p.20)

Researchers also need to be aware of false generosity. There is often a tendency on the part of researchers to believe they are acting in the best interest of those being studied, while those participating in the study perceive they have little to gain (Ulichny & Schoener, 1996). When I was a supervisor at Pathways we were approached on occasion by investigators to do research on our clients. The director was hesitant due to the way she was approached (Sylvia Roehnelt, personal communication, April,

1998). Investigators would inform her of the benefits of the program without assessing if they were the needs or desires of the program or the clients. They would not mention the benefits to themselves and appeared to assume that they were acting in the best interest of the program.

Marjorie Bradford, a former Maryknoll Sister, gives researchers something to consider when she writes: "Those that are well-off satisfy their consciences and try to maintain their human dignity by being 'charitable' to the poor..." (Gheerbrant, 1974, p. 276). When I taught Mexican-American youth, academically talented students often received generous scholarships for college based on ethnicity. I believe this is an example of false generosity. It seemed as though most of these students were not only academically talented but they were also the most acculturated into the dominant culture. Their families were often middle class and they seemed to fit the ideal of the dominant culture while still being viewed as "disadvantaged" because of their Mexican ancestry. Freire (1990) states: "The oppressors do not favor promoting the community as a whole, but rather selected leaders" (p. 139). This approach hinders the advancement of the whole in favor of a few.

Like Gutierrez, Freire is criticized for identifying class as the primary source of oppression (Campbell, 1993). Many who criticize him are feminists from this country (Campbell, 1993; Weiler, 1991). Weiler noted that Freire's thoughts "[need] to be understood in the context of the political and economic situation of the developing world" (p.452). Gutierrez and Freire's primary concerns are about basic survival. They are concerned with men, women, and children having enough to eat and a place to

sleep. There are parts of Mexico I traveled where families were considered well off if they lived in cinder block homes even though they had dirt floor, no plumbing, and no heat. This scenario is not limited to developing countries.

When I was teaching in San Antonio, a child receiving tutoring after school was considered "slow" until it was discovered he was most likely suffering malnutrition. The child improved dramatically after a sandwich and fruit were added to the tutoring session. Unlike the cinder block homes in Mexico, his home did have a floor but it was weak, and you could see the ground through the holes. I wonder how much better he would have done if his home had air conditioning for the blistering summer heat or warmth against the chill of winter?

The heat went out on a regular basis for days at a time in one of the buildings where some of my students lived in New York. Some of the clients with whom I worked with in Eugene were homeless; I wonder how their lives would be different if they had any home at all. Many poor children in the United States deal with conditions that are similar to those of developing countries. In poor areas of Chicago the "infant death rate of newborn babies exceed rates in a number of third world countries including Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Turkey" (Kotlowitz, 1991, p.12). "In the South Bronx....531 infants out of 1,000 require neonatal hospitalization--a remarkable statistic that portends high rates of retardation and brain damage. In [higher income] Riverdale, by contrast, only 69 infants in 1,000 call for such attention" (Kozol, 1991), p.116). It is not enough to select individuals that appear promising to ease the conscious of society while forgetting the rest.

The issues many feminist raised with Gutierrez are also aimed at Freire. They are important but they are not necessarily the same ones as those who advocate for the poor. It is very appropriate that others develop a pedagogy that reflects their own experience. Freire (1990) states: "Because dialogue is an encounter among men who name the world, it must not be a situation where some men name it on behalf of others" (p.77).

Freire is criticized because he assumes that a teacher engaged in dialog will be on the side of the oppressed (Weiler, 1991). Weiler (1991) points out that teacher and oppressed experience different realities and may not agree on the mechanisms of oppression. This may be true since we bring our own experience to our reality (Cranton, 1996). I believe the question is, "What does the teacher do with their power?" Through dialog have the teacher and the oppressed agreed on mutual negotiation and power? This can be done in a classroom setting. As a student I have had instructors investigate the needs of learners and define criteria with students for grading. This has been done to varying degrees with a variety of instructors at different educational levels. This promotes trust and student empowerment; it creates an environment for true dialog between the instructor and students.

Ellsworth (1992) criticized critical pedagogy noting that those without power need to feel safe in order to participate in dialog. She attempted to apply a definition of dialog by Henry Giroux for her class. "According to Henry Giroux, in order for dialog to be possible, classroom participants must exhibit trust, sharing, and commitment to improving the quality of human life" (Ellsworth, 1989), p. 314). She

concluded the heterogeneity of a class she taught made it difficult to develop trust to discuss difficult issues such as racism. I wonder if the class had sufficient time to dialog and evolve? I don't think it is realistic for individuals with little motivation to change, to develop sufficient trust in a semester. Ellsworth does note that students gave her suggestions on how to develop a more trusting environment and the positive outcomes that occurred (Ellsworth, 1989). While criticizing the use of dialog she worked with students through dialog, and it appeared to have worked to varying degrees.

A Personal Interface with Current Literature

I plan to do research working with students that may be at-risk of school failure due to family, socioeconomic, and/or community factors. There are many definitions for the term at-risk as it relates to youth. Frymeyer and Gansneder (1989) found forty-five factors from research to describe the student who is "at-risk." Descriptors include "emotional handicaps, poor health, non-scholarly tendencies, addiction, and antisocial tendencies etc.," (Sartain, 1989). The strength in identifying these factors is that it recognizes the problems many students face are multidimensional. The problem with the use of these descriptors is the student is often described as having a **personal** deficit that has placed them "at-risk" (Waxman, Walker de Felix, Anderson, & Baptiste, 1992).

Pallis (1989) challenged this notion and provided what I believe to be a more useful definition. He recognized that students who are most vulnerable to dropping out of school are those that lack resources from family and the community. The result of these deficiencies is that students often end up with an inappropriate education. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to recognize exposure to situations and circumstances that place them at-risk rather than the possession of inherent traits.

Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of rehabilitation for young offenders. Martinson (1974) found very little difference in recidivism rates of youth who receive services. His work was challenged by Palmer (1976) who noted that Martinson (1974) found partial success in some of his studies and encouraged the use

of these studies to provide indicators for further research. Currently, recidivism rates indicate treatment for juvenile offenders is moderately effective. Lipsey (as cited by Howell et al., 1995) found when youth went through treatment programs recidivism rates were lowered ten to thirty percent compared to youth that did not go through treatment. His study indicated that the most effective programs provided a variety of services and were closely monitored by research teams. This resulted in the lowest recidivism rates.

Unified Crime Reports (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1994) indicated that juveniles account for two million arrests a year. Most commit property crimes and other nonviolent offenses. Many of these offenders are released to community programs to assist in their rehabilitation (Armstrong, 1991; Krisberg, 1993 ; Loughran, 1997; Palmer, 1980). Most of the studies that look at youth in the criminal justice system are quantitative in nature (Brook, 1997; Colder & Stice, 1997; Fendrich, 1998; Paetsch, 1997) or theoretical (Hagerty, 1989; Jensen, 1995) with a few being qualitative (Jones-Brown, 1997). Difficulty with much of the literature in the field is that it does not view or provide insights from the perspectives of youth and does little to look at interconnecting services for delinquent youth.

A study done by Farrell, Peguero, Lindsey, and White (1988) used youth from an at-risk population to gather and analyze data. The youth that were used in the study were known as collaborators and were paid for their assistance. This study came closer in gaining the perspectives of at-risk youth by using students to gather data but they were not the participants.

Bowditch's (1993) conducted a study that provided insight into the workings of a school office that handled disciplinary problems. She reported how school officials actively worked to remove "troublemakers" from their schools. Students in her study were not informed of their rights in regard to suspensions. School officials appeared to intimidate parents and students and knowingly provided false information to students and parents.

Disciplinarians in the school viewed students who misbehave differently. Students who did the same types of behaviors did not receive the same consequences. Students that were perceived to be doing well experienced a "halo effect." If they did well academically, the problem was viewed to rest with the teacher. If students did not do well academically, it was viewed as a problem that rests within the individual. Bowditch gathered and interpreted the data. It did not appear that individuals in her study were given input into her interpretations.

The coursework I have taken contributed to my capacity to conduct research in this area. My courses included studies in Psychology, Social and Cultural Foundations, Ethics, Counseling, Substance Abuse, and Special Education. I believe this multidimensional problem requires a broad understanding of the issues that face many youth today. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (Santrock, 1998) provides a socio-cultural view of child development. His theory reinforced my understanding that a broad understanding was necessary when working with adolescents. He noted that there are five systems in which youth interact. Interactions range from direct influences

from individuals such as parents, peers, and teachers to the socio-historical circumstances in which youth live.

The first system of the Ecological Model (See Appendix A) is known as the Microsystem. The Microsystem is the setting where most of an adolescent's social interactions take place. Peers, family, school and neighborhood are included in this category. Bronfenbrenner (Santrock, 1998) acknowledges that a youth is not a "passive recipient of experiences in these settings, but someone who helps construct these settings" (Santrock, 1998, p.52). This is the system where most of my academic training has focused. My understanding of the direct influences that interact with youth has been enhanced by coursework encompassing Family Systems training, Human Development, and Psychopathology as well as an undergraduate degree in Education.

My coursework in collaboration (Special Education), and group skills (Counseling), have been useful in working within the next system, the Mesosystem. The Mesosystem focuses on the interactions within the Microsystem. Examples include the interactions between the family and the school system and the school system and the peer system. Most of my work experience has involved working with the various interactions between the facets of the Microsystem.

The next system, the Exosystem, focuses on the culture in which we live. My education and counseling courses in Social and Cultural foundations contributed to my knowledge in this area. In addition, as I stated earlier most of my work experience has necessitated that I have an understanding of culture that goes beyond my own.

The Macrosystem deals with attitudes and ideologies of the culture. The culture in which adolescents live is part of this Macrosystem. The beliefs which adults hold about adolescents also impact their behaviors. All of these are encompassed in the Macrosystem.

The last system is known as the Chronosystem and involves the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course and socio-historical circumstances" (Santrock, 1998, p.53). An example that comes to mind is how it is much more acceptable for women to pursue a variety of careers compared to years past. However women still (for the most part) are the primary care-givers to children in our society. This responsibility often makes it difficult or impractical for women to pursue some careers. Courses that have contributed to my understanding of this area include courses in Human Development (education and counseling), Career Development (counseling), Family Counseling and, Social and Cultural Foundations (education and counseling). I have gained knowledge in these areas but the value of the coursework is how it connects to provide services to youth.

My professional work experience has provided me with opportunities to live in different parts of the country which gave me working knowledge and experience in other cultures. This experience has taught me that our educational system and social agencies do not always work to the benefit of children (Bowditch, 1993; Kotlowitz, 1991). It seems those children that are most disenfranchised are also the ones that are most vulnerable (Stricof, 1995). Research seems to indicate that it is not uncommon for children and their parents to be misinformed of their rights (Bowditch 1993;

Kotlowitz 1991). Our educational system appears to be an effort to accommodate itself rather than the needs of the students. This behavior would be appalling if it happened to only a few students but the reality is we are losing too many of our children to the system. When students enter high school in Oregon they will see approximately 21 percent of their peers drop out of school by the time they graduate (Oregon Department of Education, 1999).

I did a pilot study for my class on Classroom Management and used it for one of my projects in a special education class (with instructor approval). Participants in the study were adjudicated adolescent males who had been expelled or dropped out of school. My study looked at the perceptions of these youth towards classroom discipline. When I interviewed the students their responses differed from current research. They did not blame their school failure on external factors (Armistead, Wierson, Forhand, & Frame, 1992; Winters, 1997). However, there did appear to be some external factors that influenced their ability to stay in school. The pilot study found similar factors to those which Bowditch found in her study.

Bowditch's (1993) study reported how school officials actively worked to remove "troublemakers" from their schools. Some of the obstacles she described were encountered by the students I interviewed. Students were not informed of their rights in regard to suspensions, school officials appeared to intimidate parents and students and knowingly provided false information to students and parents. Students in my study believed that a "halo" effect surrounded some of their classmates. They reported

other students would do the same types of behaviors, but would not receive the same consequences.

When they were asked what could have made a difference in their school behavior, all noted it may have helped if they felt more people cared. I was struck by the vulnerability of these students to an inadequate educational system. All three students had a history of behavior problems in the classroom. One student came to school on more than one occasion under the influence of illegal substances. Despite this, he was never referred for a chemical dependency assessment. He only received help after he entered the juvenile justice system. It appeared that the schools these students attended failed in creating an atmosphere where students could be successful.

Under the guidance of another Professor, I surveyed staff at a program that works with delinquent boys. The responses indicated that most had little or no training in the area of special education. I found this interesting due to the large numbers of students in the juvenile justice system with learning disabilities (Larson, 1988).

I believe that that youth who live in poverty have some of the most difficult circumstances to face. Laminson-White (1997) reported that children are the poorest Americans. She found almost thirteen million children live in poverty and nearly five million live in homes with income levels less than half the federal poverty level. The United States Census Bureau (1997) reported that twenty percent of children in this country live in poverty.

Schools are often viewed as the means of opportunity for all children in our society. The reality seems to be something quite different. There are often large

discrepancies in what our country spends on the children of our wealthy citizens compared to the children of our poorest citizens (Edwards, 1998; Kozol, 1991). One of the major problems of inequality in funding is the schools that get the lowest dollars often have the greatest needs to serve. Poor communities often have a higher proportion of social problems, physical structures in need of repair, and students with a primary language other than English (Kotlowitz, 1991;Kozal, 1991). These schools with such need suffer to a greater degree when they lack equitable funding because their dollars must try and meet many more needs and have fewer resources. Poor districts are in need of greater funding dollars than wealthy school districts not less. Their need is greater so they need more funding.

A school funding system that favors the weakest members in our society is in line with the theory of justice brought forward by Rawls (1971). Rawls maintained that it is acceptable to distribute resources so that those with the greatest need receive a greater distribution. There are some that measure equality by the number of dollars that are spent on each child. Gordon (1979) realizes "[w]here there are groups of students known to present themselves at school without the acknowledged prerequisites for optimal learning, social justice requires that they be treated differently in order to serve their needs" (Gordon and Shipman, 1979, p.64).

Our educational system can be oppressive and demoralizing and batter the self-esteem of our most vulnerable citizens. Individuals who do not learn in the same ways as the dominant culture are at high risk of dropping out of school. Often students with disabilities drop out of school. Turnbull (1995) reported that fifty percent of the

students with learning disabilities drop-out of school. This is reason for concern since adjudication of youth with learning disabilities is about twice that of non-learning disabled youth (Larson, 1998). He also stated that students with learning disabilities have disproportionate representation in the juvenile justice system. Rutherford, Bullis, Anderson and Griller-Clark (2002), reported that students with learning disability rates in the juvenile justice system are four to five times greater than their representation in the general population. One of the students in the pilot study was diagnosed with a learning disability after he was incarcerated. In our interview he explained that he had a difficult time following the teacher and found he could get the attention he wanted by acting out. In my experience this is not uncommon.

Research seems to indicate that students with learning disabilities who are considered "high ability" have trouble with our educational system as well. They are often diagnosed late in their educational pursuit, have difficulty with teachers and experience frustration in certain academic subjects (Reis, 1995). When students in these studies have positive experiences around school, it usually centers around one teacher, and/or they usually also have had positive experiences outside the school system (Reis, 1995; Sigel & Gaylord-Ross, 1991).

Misinformation and failure to inform the disenfranchised of their rights is not uncommon. A student in my study said the things that were written about him were often true but written in a way that did not put him in a favorable light. Research substantiated how those that are alienated from the mainstream society through disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic factors are often encouraged to leave school

systems (Bowditch, 1993; Kotlowitz, 1991; Kozal, 1991). This is due, in part, because learning disabilities are often described as a "hidden disability." Many of these students misbehave in the classroom due to an undiagnosed disability.

Learning disabilities can be elusive and are often overlooked. Public schools often have professionals to evaluate students who have learning disabilities. However, it can take months for students to get evaluated. Students who are dual diagnosed (like those that are often in the juvenile justice system) are underserved. Dr. Barb McEwen of Oregon State University (personal communication, June 1999) reported that students with severe problems (i.e. emergency cases) often go several months before an evaluation can be scheduled. Parents do have the option to have an evaluation by a private provider. This is not a viable option for many parents since evaluation costs usually start at approximately \$600. I am not surprised that students choose to leave such a demoralizing system.

There are organizations that advocate for individuals with learning disabilities (i.e. National Center for Learning Disabilities, Learning Disabilities Association of America) but they do not have the political power or influence of other groups that represent individuals with disabilities. When teachers do not understand their students or how to help them it can be a frustrating experience for both students and teachers. Students often feel dumb and foolish (Lavoie, 1989; Turnbull, 1995). Teachers that do not understand or care can become frustrated and punitive (Lavoie, 1989). Since the disability is "hidden," teachers often believe the accommodations that students with learning disabilities received were unfair.

Richard Lavoie (1989) conducted a workshop called F.A.T. (Frustration, Anxiety, and Tension) City that was geared towards understanding children with learning disabilities. He stated the one question that he will not tolerate from mainstreamed teachers is the statement "it is not fair" to provide special services to special need students. His concept of fairness implied that not everyone gets the same but everyone does get what they need. In the special education courses I took, fairness is defined as individuals getting what they need. Lavoie provided the analogy of providing CPR to someone having a heart attack. If I am trained in CPR and someone has a heart attack is it fair for me to give them CPR? After all if I give the heart attack victim CPR, then should I also provide CPR to the rest of the room? If I can't provide the rest of the room CPR then is it fair to provide the heart attack victim CPR? When fairness is put in these terms it makes sense to use a definition that provides individuals what they need. Another example revolves around the issue of glasses. Everyone does not wear them but the person who needs them, wears them and that is fair.

It seems that our educational system often steals the voice of our most vulnerable youth. Too often change has not occurred until those that are disenfranchised resort to the courts [Brown vs. The Board of Education (1954), Parc vs. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) as cited in Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank and Leal (1995)] in order to be heard. If our educational system is going to make a difference for society it must encourage and teach students to dialog. We need to encourage students, especially those at risk, to communicate. Often this is one of their

shortcomings. If we teach them to dialogue, then they will learn to consider the perspective of others and hence understand themselves and their place in the entire ecological system. With dialogue, they are no longer victims. They have the potential to become empowered and hence have choices in life. They can also begin to recognize injustice and draw an appropriate line between fairness and injustice. This is a critical learning for students at risk. Teachers need to be aware of social, political and economic contradictions in our society in order to create a meaningful dialog with students.

Too often those that are promoted within our educational system are individuals who have had little trouble working within the system. They have not experienced some of my frustrations or the frustrations of many students who leave the educational system. The challenging behaviors that these students exhibit are more easily understood when there is insight on why they occur. Instead of removing students from school, I believe it would be more beneficial to remove oppressive elements such as teachers and administrators who do not work for the benefit of students.

I know some of the frustrations experienced by students who learn differently. I have a learning disability and have experienced the discrimination and demoralization by professionals that refused to make simple accommodations to allow me the opportunity to realize my potential. I am a student that was diagnosed late in my academic pursuits. I experienced some of the same obstacles that the students in my pilot study encountered and those described by Bowditch (1993).

Learning

It has been my experience that there are many ways to gather information to strengthen the knowledge and/or skills of individuals. However, in order for learning to take place something more has to happen for the individual. When I wrote my philosophy of education in my first doctoral class I had a difficult time putting a name to this process. I now believe that I was attempting to describe Freire's *conscientizacao* to describe an education that is liberating. It is what I experienced when I worked with Silme and Gene and others in the union. It is a phenomenon that alters one's life to the degree that to return to a former way of working, learning, or behaving would be futile. It is my belief when the metamorphosis occurs, each individual is aware of his or her own transformation.

The only way learning can take place is if an atmosphere is created which fosters the investigative nature in all learners. In counseling there are some clear examples of how individuals and or groups believe this can happen. The first example that comes to mind is the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A). Alcoholics Anonymous is an international self-help group for alcoholics. Many alcoholics have found that they can manage their disease with the help of this program and by working the Twelve Steps of A.A. These are as follows:

1. We admitted we are powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all the persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of those steps we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Individuals learn the 12 steps of the program with the help of other members and a sponsor. After "working" the first 11 steps members build a foundation (developmental process) to work the 12th step. The 12th step states that "having had a

spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs" (The A.A. Grapevine, 1981). It is my belief that the learning that I am referring to for a 12 step member would come from the words "having had a spiritual awakening." The integration of these principles and the "spiritual awakening" is what I would call learning. It is my belief that learning is insightful.

Another attempt at creating this experience in counseling is the use of the Johari Window (Luft, 1970). This is a square that is divided into quarters (windows). One square represents that which is known to us and to others. The second represents that which is known to us but unknown to others. The third is known to others but not to ourselves. The last "window" is that which is unknown to others and unknown to ourselves. The idea is for the counselor and the client to explore the different "windows" to gain insight. The Johari Window was developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram to act as a model to increase self-awareness in group processes (Kormanski, 1988). It is the responsibility of the counselor or group in this process to create an environment so the client can gain insight into his or her thoughts and behaviors.

Lynn Starr Anderlini (1983) found the Johari Window useful in the design of in-service programming for multidisciplinary teams. Part of her in-service includes a lecture on the Johari Window. She believed that services to students are enhanced if all the members of the team participate in the program. In her program, multi-disciplinary team members learn that communication is dependent on one's own self-awareness.

One of the goals of the workshop was to teach participants to actively listen to others and to communicate effectively with others. She believed that effective insight to ones self and others enables groups to serve students better.

This next learning I am referring to is often called the "Ah Ha" experience. Kohler (1926) did some experiments with chimpanzees in developing this theory. He put some bananas just out of reach for chimpanzees in a cage. After several unsuccessful attempts one of the chimps saw that it could put sticks together and they could be used as an extension of the arm to reach the bananas. Kohler concluded that problem solving is insightful and it is upon this premise that the foundation of my own theory of learning rests.

Learning is an enduring change in behavior or in the capacity to behave in a certain fashion which results from practice or other forms of experience (Shuell, 1986). There need to be three criteria in place for learning to occur. First, there must be a behavioral change. The person must be able to do something different from what they could do before learning took place. This could include new knowledge, skills or beliefs. The second criterion is that the behavioral change or capacity to change must be able to endure over time. The third criterion is that learning occurs through practice or other forms of experience such as modeling (Schunk, 1996).

The question becomes what must an educator (employer, trainer, etc.) do to create an environment so individuals can gain insight (learn). The first task is to recognize that we are social creatures (Adler, 1927) and that we gain insight through interactions with others and the environment. These interactions with others and the

environment stimulates or diminishes learning. Bandura (1986) discusses this in his Triadic Reciprocity Model of Causality. He pointed out that behavior, environment, as well as cognitive and other personal factors, interacted with each other to influence learning. Behavior, environment, and other personal factors, form a triangle in this process. At times each entity of this triangle have varying degrees of influence on the individual depending which need is dominate. However, the three factors also work in conjunction with each other in a multitude of ways to influence the individual.

Bandura (1986) pointed out that student's perceived self-efficacy and their actions influence their performance. The environment influenced instruction and behavior. If the teacher is not engaging students to participate it is likely that points of instruction would have to be repeated and students would not be as attentive. Therefore, the opportunity for learning will be diminished. If skill acquisition is diminished then students were more likely to experience low self-efficacy. This in turn would influence choice of tasks to be attempted or completed, effort expenditure, and persistence. This would influence the opportunity for students to gain insight into their work (Bandura, 1982; Schunk & Hanson, 1989).

An example of this was pointed out by Ronnestadt and Skovholt (1993) in their interactions with counseling interns. They noted that interns that are concerned about the supervisor's evaluative process would most likely show skills that demonstrated good progress and would choose themes in which he or she was functioning well. In other words, they would control what the supervisor learned about their skills. However, if supervisors stress the process of skill acquisition and reward or place

positive values on self-awareness and affective and emotional expression (i.e. students are encouraged to express their fears) they may have created an environment in which the intern can begin to gain insight into themselves and the work they do with others. This approach in my opinion created an atmosphere for students to learn and become better counselors, instead of fearing an evaluative process and concealing weaknesses.

One aspect of Social Learning Theory sets the stage for individuals to gain insight. According to this theory, an individual could simply observe a model and perform a behavior and, subsequently, display that behavior without reinforcement (Association for Advanced Training, 1990). Bandura concluded that observational learning involved four processes. Attention-observational skill acquisition required that the learner attend to and accurately perceive the modeled behavior. Retention-reproduction of a modeled behavior required that the learner symbolically process the modeled behavior in memory via visual or verbal coding. In Reproduction, the learner must be able to accurately reproduce and rehearse the modeled behavior. In Motivation, performance is more likely to occur if the learner is reinforced. This reinforcement can be internal or external (Association for Advanced Training, 1990).

In counseling there is a history of using models for skill acquisition. Ronnestadt and Skovholt (1993) offered the following guidelines to help students gain insight into the counseling process;

- (1) The model needs to be a good one- not all models are acceptable. Experience is a logical prerequisite but it seems that some supervisors get better with age and

some get worse. Models must be able to be emulated by students. Inexperienced supervisors and teachers are often strong in some areas and weak in others.

(2) The concept of a potent model. When training new counselors it seems that the strongest modeling power comes from international experts. When students become more experienced, they prefer models that are local experts, who are experienced and respected in the community. One may see this as a movement from an idealistic to a more realistic position (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 1993).

One of the most meaningful steps to insight learning is acquisition of skill through discovery. "Learning becomes more meaningful when students explore their learning environments rather than listen passively to teachers" (Schunk, 1996 p.196). Although, this can be done through a variety of medium it is important that it is organized so that students can gain maximum benefit. If students are not given a direction they may not be able to identify correct solutions and leave with false presumptions. The less a student knows about a topic area the greater the need for structure in the discovery process (Schunk, 1996).

One model of supervision that is used in counselor education is the "discrimination model." This model allowed students to engage in the discovery process at varying degrees depending on where they were developmentally. The supervisory role initially started out as that of a teacher, then progressed to that of a counselor, and finally to a consultant role (Bernard, 1979). It is my observation that the acquisition of skill using the discovery method can take place at any of these stages. It is an important point to

recognize that in order for students to gain insight an instructor must be flexible in the techniques and methods they use.

All of us bring assumptions with us into our learning and teaching. Our assumptions are formed by our experiences and values held by our family and community. Cranton (1996) states that “when we understand what we believe and its roots (whether those be in our childhood, our past experiences, our culture, our language or the media), then we become free to choose if we want to maintain that belief. Without knowing the source of our assumptions, it is difficult to be free to question them” (p.85). One way to gather insight is to examine our assumptions about ourselves and our environment.

Social Learning Theory informs us that individuals will engage in different actions depending on the situation. “Basic modes of behaving are learned in social situations and are inextricably fused with needs requiring for their satisfaction the mediation of other persons” (Bruner, 1966, p. 84). Therefore it is important to “test” one’s thoughts with the help of others to validate or negate learned insight and to benefit from the insight, knowledge and experience of others.

This is significant information for those of us that teach. It is important to create learning environments where individuals can interact with others, have an opportunity to verbalize personal thoughts and insights to learning experiences, recognize how their learning relates and impacts themselves and others. Learning environments must also include a variety of learning mediums. In addition to personal interaction, individuals learn best when a variety of senses are used such as

transforming thoughts/learning into creative work. In counseling the use of clay, collages, journaling as well as other artistic means are often used in the pursuit of learning/self-discovery. After the individual gathers information, if a learning environment fosters the natural inquisitive nature in all us a sense of clarity occurs. This is the point that the individual knows s/he have learned more than what they thought was possible. The unknown to self and others of the Johari window becomes known to the individual. Those in the 12 step community gain a spiritual awakening. Many others simply have clarity and say "Ah Ha".

Personal Criteria for Research

I believe that it is important to pay attention to social settings when conducting research. A researcher needs to hear the "voices" of the participants. If researchers value the principles of Liberation Theology and the teaching of Paulo Freire their inquiry would generally rely on qualitative methods. Qualitative research can be defined as:

inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction (Gall et al., 1996 p.767).

The ideological criteria which guided my research was influenced by Guteirrez (1983) and Freire (1990) in the context of my own experience and values.

My criteria included:

- 1) Do I engage in dialog with the participants? Does the dialog increase the awareness of both the researcher and the participants in the study?
- 2) Do I acknowledge that the participants "own" the data? Do I draw conclusions with the "voice" of the participants being heard? How "trustworthy" is the data (how many "perspectives" do the data represent)? Were the participants allowed to participate in the analyzing the data and the writing of the report? Did participants take part in drawing conclusions?
- 3) Do I promise benefits which constitute false generosity? Were rewards offered that can be considered coercive? Did I acknowledge that I have as much or more to benefit from the investigation than the participant?
- 4) Was the research designed to benefit the group being studied or a select few of the group, or the privileged? Do I take a leader from an oppressed group and facilitate the study in such a way they turn into an oppressor? Are leaders taking from the group in hopes of turning them into the vision of what I believe they should be?
- 5) Was the research emancipatory in nature? Do I facilitate an opportunity for the participants to look at their assumptions in a critical manner? Does the design of the study provide an opportunity to look at their assumptions in a critical manner? Does the design of the study provide an opportunity for reflection by the researcher and participants?

It is my belief that my teaching experience, coursework, and my life experience enable me to begin research in the area of youth who are labeled "at risk." I find the people that have influenced me in my life contribute to my research epistemology. It is my desire to validate the voice of youths in the research that concerns them. It is my belief the violence our schools are experiencing is only a symptom of the despair many of our youth experience from not being heard. It is difficult to change families, the media, or the socio-economic status of students but we can make changes in how we view youth.

We do have choices in creating positive environments in treatment facilities, schools and other programs for youth. It is time to move forward and facilitate a method for them to be heard. It is time we recognize the promise of youth. We can create opportunities among youth that have traditionally been given labels that foster despair. Part of realizing the potential of youth is recognizing they may have many of their own answers. I want to recognize youth and their perspectives as a valuable resource. If youth are included in research perhaps programs to help them could be more effective.

Research Question

Problem

There are many aspects to the juvenile justice system. A strong component of this system is a focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment (Bartollas & Miller, 1998; Empey & Stafford, 1991). My interest and experience center on the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. Over two hundred thousand youth who come in contact with the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable chemical dependency disorder (Cocozza, 1992). The impact of youth who use substances is much greater for the youth and society. The statistics do not inform us if crimes against persons or property are related to chemical dependency. Are the profits of other crimes for the purpose of attaining illegal substances? The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention acknowledges that the current research in the area of youth and substance abuse is inadequate (Bilchik, 1998).

Research has focused on the negative factors that lead to delinquency: poverty, abuse, chemical dependency, learning disabilities, poor school behaviors and other negative problems. Research indicates youth who are considered at-risk tend to have multiple risk factors. When these factors are present they tend to interact and, reinforce one another (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995; Empey et.al, 1999). Most youth programs are designed to deal with these deficits (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). Adolescents in treatment often are resistant to such programs due, in part, to a struggle with authority (Ball & Mick, 1979). Programs for

youth who are at-risk are designed from an adult (authoritarian) perspective with little input from those they are designed to help (Farrell et. al, 1991)

There is little research that examines the problem from the perspective of youth (Farrell et. al, 1991; Kurther, 1995). If the focus of the juvenile justice system is rehabilitation, it stands to reason treatment programs would engage in treatments that teach youth how to empower themselves. There is a program in the Pacific Northwest that attempts to empower delinquent youth who are court mandated for substance abuse treatment. Program developers have identified several success factors for the program that include:

1. Completion of a two week orientation period.
2. Abstinent from illegal substances.
3. Felony offense free during residence.
4. Misdemeanor free during residence.
5. Graduation from the program.
6. Abstinent from illegal substances after residential treatment.
7. Felony free after residential treatment.
8. Misdemeanor free after residential treatment.

These goals are broken down into categories that include time frames, residential treatment and a continuing care program that provides treatment for a year after the residential phase is completed. Do the youth in this program use the same criteria for success? How do they know when they have been successful? Are there unspoken factors that determine success? Are they different for those with power

compared to those with very little power? Does the program attempt to empower youth? If they do, is the emphasis on a select few or the group as a whole? Are those youth that are perceived as successful take on the characteristics of those with power? If they do what are those characteristics? Do the youth try to promote the success of others in the program?

My research focused on two issues. From the voices of the youth themselves, what can we learn about the factors that prevent at-risk youth from being successful in school and what so these youth say about how schools can help these youth attain success at school.

Methodology

This study utilized qualitative data gathered at a county funded treatment facility in the Pacific Northwest. This facility was designed to treat juvenile offenders who were court mandated for substance abuse treatment. Materials included oral school history record, written observations, tape-recorded interviews and publicly available documentation about the treatment program. All taped recorded work was transcribed by the author.

Subjects

The primary subjects were males between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. This population was selected due in part to accessibility as well as the fact that most juvenile offenders in residential care are male (Gallagher, 1999; Stahl, 1998). In addition, data was collected from staff (Program Director and Education Coordinator), a parent of a child in the program, and a county probation officer who referred juveniles to the treatment center.

I selected the participant group after attending a house meeting. The Program Administrator gave me permission to attend the meeting for the purpose of seeking volunteers. There were ten juveniles in attendance at this particular meeting. I described the study to the group (See Appendix B). Several agreed to participate. Five were randomly selected for the study.

Later in the week the Program Administrator signed consent forms for these juveniles to continue the process of being part of the study. At this point I made individual appointments with each of the juveniles. The protocols were read to each

potential volunteer in front of a staff member. They were read the research consent form and were provided a written copy of the form (See Appendix B). Volunteers were notified that they had the right to terminate their consent at any time. They were also informed of the limits to confidentiality. They were told that the information would be used for educational purposes and their real names would be protected. They were also informed that despite the best efforts of the researcher that there was always a possibility of confidentiality being compromised. Participants were also informed that I was a state mandated reporter and that I was required by law to report instances of sexual or physical abuse to Services to Children and Families. This agreement with the program to report law violations or crimes that may be planned could also compromise confidentiality. I recognized that these disclosures may have limited the information that residents were willing to share but personal and professional ethics mandated this course of action.

All five youth continued to be interested and signed the consent form. A staff member from the facility served as a witness and signed the form as well. In addition, the director of the program also authorized the form. The director is the assigned guardian for the youth while they are in the custody of the treatment program. No tangible rewards were offered to staff or residents for participating in the study.

I also interviewed four adults. These included a probation officer, a family member of a youth who was in the treatment facility and the Education Coordinator. The probation officer was selected as a matter of convenience. I went over to the Probation Office to explain my project and he was there and agreed to participate.

The families of all youth met weekly with a family therapist. I contacted the Family Therapist and asked if I could meet with the parents to describe my study and to seek one volunteer parent as part of my study. Out of approximately a dozen in the group, one volunteered to participate. This individual also agreed to sign the consent form (See Appendix B). The role of the adults in the study was to serve as part of a triangulation function to verify the comments I hoped to gain from my juvenile volunteers. This individual also agreed to sign the consent form (See Appendix B). The final adult selected for this study was the Education Director. She also signed a consent form.

Interview Process

After lining up all my participants, I met individually with each juvenile client. The first thing I did prior to meeting with each client was to remind them of my limits of confidentiality and to remind them that I was a court mandated reporter. My protocol for the initial interview of each client was the same. First I utilized the Educational History Form (See Appendix C). The purpose of this form was to utilize something that was non-threatening to begin the interview process. After I completed this form with the client, I moved to the framing questions (See Appendix C). The tape recorder was on throughout the entire interview. This initial interview with the juveniles varied in time length from 45 to 90 minutes. Initial interviews with the juveniles were completed in about two weeks. I then took home the tapes and transcribed the interviews word for word listening to them and typing the text onto a word processing program.

After a week, I returned to the treatment center and met with each client a second time. This time, after reminding them of the limits of confidentiality, I asked them if they preferred to read their script on their own or if they wanted me to read it while they followed along with their copy. One of them wanted me to read it while they followed along; the others preferred to read it themselves. Volunteers were permitted to make any changes either in context or fact to the transcription. The tape recorder was on during this process. My questions were for purposes of clarification only so that I felt I understood both in fact and context the meaning of their statements. Information from this second interview was also transcribed verbatim.

I met with them a third time. Students were able to read this second transcript as well and I asked them if they wanted any changes or if they had anything to add. Again, this was all tape recorded. This information was also transcribed and added to the earlier information.

At the fourth and final session with each juvenile client, they looked at the last transcript and double checked to be sure it reflected their thoughts. This process was completed with each of the four clients. Only one problem emerged with respect to the client base. One of my subjects ran away from the treatment center after the first interview. To compensate for the loss of this subject, I went into my initial subject pool and randomly selected another participant.

Data from the juvenile population was gathered over a period of two months. This abbreviated time frame was essential in working with this population because this

program was designed as a six month residential treatment program. In addition, it is expected that some juveniles will run away during treatment.

After I had my juvenile data, I was able to take more time to gather information from the adults associated with the program. Each adult was interviewed twice. The questions I asked the adults were different from those of the juvenile clients. Their questions emerged from the themes captured from the juvenile interviews. They also were permitted to read their personal transcripts. Our second discussion did not yield new information. I did find it necessary to make a few follow-up phone calls to my adult clients during the second transcription process. This was done to help me clarify some points. All raw data collection was completed in about four months.

Data Analysis Techniques

I analyzed the data from the juvenile population first. I had color coded sheets for each individual client. This was true for all three transcriptions. At this point I began to look for themes from their interviews. It did not take long for me to see the following issues emerged with each of my clients. These included issues about (1) anger management, (2) academic issues, (3) nurturing at school, (4) family situations, (5) school at the treatment center, (6) hiring teachers, (7) childhood experiences, (8) drug use, (9) obtaining drugs, (10) crime and drugs, (11) the treatment program, (12) dual diagnosis, (13) communication, and (14) issues surrounding success and failure.

I made a copy of each set of transcripts. One I kept in my files; the other I utilized to put together a "chart" of comments by each participant under the headings listed above. I cut out the comments about "anger" from each of the transcripts and

pasted them on the sheet labeled "Anger". I continued with this process for all the juvenile interviews. This process utilized most of the interview information provided by the clients so I knew I had captured all the relevant data. Excess data consisted of random "chit-chat" information which was discarded.

For the adults, I utilized a different process. I chose to not interview the adults until I had completed the category analysis of the juvenile data. Then I could ask the adults questions that were specific to the categories of interest. I then added their comments to the category sheets. All this information was then summarized in the results section of this paper.

Results

This research was designed to provide the researcher and the reader with an understanding of the perceptions and personal history of youth at-risk. Each youth interviewed was an individual and their stories were as individual as the youth. In reviewing the material obtained from the interviews with the youth, some trends appeared. These included issues about: (1) anger management, (2) academic issues, (3) nurturing at school, (4) family situations, (5) school at the treatment center, (6) hiring teachers, (7) childhood experiences, (8) drug use, (9) obtaining drugs, (10) crime and drugs, (11) the treatment program, (12) dual diagnosis, (13) communication, and (14) issues surrounding success and failure

Anger Management

People who sense powerlessness become frustrated and out-act their frustration through angry behaviors. Roberto reported frustration in school as early as third grade. His frustrations often resulted in angry outbursts toward teachers or other classmates. He described problems he experienced in third grade.

I do remember some of third grade. It is when my anger really started to kick in. In third grade I stood up in the middle of the class and told her [the teacher] she was a bitch. She was always on my case. She would tell me [whiny voice] " you are never going to do anything right. It was kind of like you are a stupid kind of thing. So, I stood up and told her she was a fucking bitch. That was kind of interesting. The jump to second to third grade is a big one, kind of like the jump from eighth to ninth. It is like going school to school and not

knowing very much, and them [teachers] expecting you to know all sorts of stuff. I just didn't understand, how the other kids knew and I didn't. You know the ones that just studied at school knew the shit they knew [and what] they expected in third grade and I didn't. I was doing first, second [grade work]. I didn't know how in the hell they knew multiplication, simple multiplication really. But, you know I didn't understand how they knew and I didn't. We went to the same school, a lot of us had the same teacher in the same classroom but they knew multiplication and I didn't.

Now, I would get mocked at by this teacher and that is when I told her she was a bitch. She would make those comments like I was never going to amount to anything. The kids would also make fun of me about it too. I would get really embarrassed. You're stupid, that is the kind of thing that I heard at home. I don't know, that is when my anger really started coming out. That is when I noticed that I had an anger problem. That is when it reared its head.

My alcohol use started in third grade. I used to get picked on all the time. I used to get called all the usual names and not only that, people would try and pick fights with me because I was a bigger kid. So, it was like beat the bigger kid up and then you are a bad ass. I guess that is the kind of thing they do when you are a kid. If you can beat the bigger guy up, then you're bigger even if you are smaller. When I was a kid I would only see things in black and white, I wouldn't see the gray area. Even now sometimes it is hard for me to see the gray. So it was either I was going to be a good kid at school or this bad

ass image. I got what I wanted by fear and intimidation. That was the only two ways I saw things. Being good wasn't going to work since I was a slow learner. I thought there is this other way to life and I am big enough to do it. I started doing it, I started fighting and doing all that stuff. It started working. You know I thought I am getting in fights and I am not getting my butt kicked and I am bigger than most people so....

I remember getting in fights since fourth grade. It wasn't all me, I was a lot of the problem after awhile. It was mostly teachers because I was a slow learner telling me if you don't get this down or if you don't do this or don't do that, you are never going to be anything. If you want to be a bum the rest of your life....they tried to use it as motivation but it just put me down. I see that with a lot of kids.

I had a lot of problems [in high school]. I was getting in fights. I almost blew someone's eyebrows off with a lighter. It was like crafts class or something like that. I took a lighter and cranked it way up. The kid pissed me off....and [boom like sound].

A second youth – Lee recalled:

I got in trouble for fighting once. I think it was first or second grade. I got in trouble for pantsing in a fight in fifth grade, I think. Then I got in trouble for harassment at school once in fifth grade. I would be messing with this kid. Like once I think it was pushing him around and calling him names. I would never leave him alone. So, they just said that I was harassing him.

All the way through middle school I had problems. Like fighting people and doing stuff to get kicked out. I wanted to be accepted by my friends. One time when we were in metal shop I took this metal bar and I asked who dares me to throw it at the fire. There was this fire thing [glass door] holding the fire extinguisher, I said who thinks I'll do that? Everyone said you won't, so I did it and broke the glass out of it. I did just to make people laugh and because they said I wouldn't.

Roger recalled a slightly different issue that had the same results.

I know I was labeled because my bothers went through there [school] and raised hell. It is extremely hard to lose a label. The principle just wanted me out. He would do anything to kick me out. I have to go back and change my label and that is going to be extremely hard. It is going to be almost impossible. I am a quick learner, quicker than most [so school was] long and boring. Half of the time or I mean more than half of the time, I was done before anyone else. I would just be sitting there doing nothing. So, I would sit doing nothing. So, I would throw my pencil across the room.

I don't know ... like getting in fighting, yelling at teachers, getting kicked out of class because I was talking ... stuff like that [pause] threats of violence, being late to school and leaving school. Third grade, I had a lot of distracting behaviors ... fighting, bringing a knife to school. Temporarily lighting a female peer's arm on fire [eighth grade]. One time I was walking in the halls and the kid didn't like me and I got up in his face and started yelling

at him. I had like eight people around me that wanted to beat me up and I got in a fight with like four of them. I confronted him and ask what is going on because he used to be my friend. I tried to walk off and one smacked me, So, I got in a fight with him.

My attitude, looks, reputation [made me feel different] I was known as a trouble maker and a bad ass kid. I was an outcast. I would do crazy things so people wouldn't mess with me. I would beat some kid and wouldn't let up, totally thrash them. Then nobody else would want that and nobody would mess with me. I was outcast [people would think] he is crazy! The preppy people; the rich ones. The ones that thought they were cool. They would say "Roger this and that [in a whiny voice]" because I used to be friends with them but then I started smoking weed and stuff. It was like "he got kicked out, he [has] become the outcast now." Ya know, the outsider. They looked at me that way and I got angry. I retaliated, I think.

Yet another set of perceptions from Carl:

After about fifth grade I was used to fighting. That was the theme.

Someone would call you a name and you would sock them in the nose. You wouldn't talk it out or say you hurt my feelings. You would just walk up and punch them. That is what I learned down in California. That is when I just started flipping on people.

Before California it was not more fear, just anger. It was just pure rage and hurt. In California it was fear that someone was going to hurt me or shoot me. They had lots of gangs down there. There were a lot of Asian Mafia people. They would start something with you. If you flipped and acted all crazy and almost kill the dude you are beating up, no one will mess with you after that. It is kind of like marking territory. The bigger dog won't get bit. It is just a front.

The same behaviors are repeated in Nathan's thought.

In fifth grade, I pulled the fire alarm a couple of times and stuff like that, I was in a lot of in-school suspensions. [I've gotten in trouble for a] bunch of different stuff, back-talking teachers, going non-compliant, cussed at one teacher, walked out on them [teachers], almost got in a fight in the classroom [pause] but I never got expelled. I would push my point of view on people. [I would] disagree, argue, try and persuade them that my point of view was right and theirs was wrong. They wouldn't want to hear it, or didn't want it as their point of view and it would piss me off.

[I felt] smarter {laughs} than the other kids. I am a quick learner, quicker than most [so school was] long and boring. Half of the time or I mean more than half of the time, I was done before anyone else. I would just be sitting there doing nothing. So, I would throw my pencil across the room.

I was a troublemaker. A matter of fact the vice principle used to call me a troublemaker all the time. I know she wanted to call me a little son-of-a-bitch or bastard. She used TROUBLEMAKER {raises voice} !!! I think once anyone gets a label it, the label is stuck with them. Like if you are going to school and a girl chooses to be intimate with like five guys, she gets labeled as a slut. She can't get with the guys that aren't interested in just sex, because everyone think she is a slut. It works that way. That is just the best example I could use. People get labeled as all kinds of things. Like if you are labeled as a jock, people are like what in the hell are you doing in the choir or band or something. [If you are label a drug addict and troublemaker] you don't get the respect. I mean there really isn't much respect from teacher to student at all. I mean there is a tiny bit and if you lose it, it is gone. It is that quick {snaps fingers} for you to get sent out of the class. Someone could be over there talking out of turn and then you do it once and you are out of the class. I noticed that, once you have the label.

Adults that I interviewed viewed anger management as a concern for the youth.

The director of the facility stated:

The majority of the residents have issues in their life that have affected their behaviors. They have difficulty sorting out their feelings so they go to anger. It is easier for a teenage boy to display anger in our society rather than other emotions. It is our job to help them sort out their feelings and teach appropriate ways to handle their anger.

The teacher stated:

They are impulsive. They don't step back and think about it (anger) or the consequences.

The probation officer stated:

They often end up manipulating others. Often times it gets to the point of getting physical. As I said, they are individuals, but the behaviors that manifest themselves are the same. Anger management becomes a key to success in school – it is a social setting.

One parent agreed that anger management is an issue he would like to see his son work on:

I would like to see him control his actions regarding his anger.

Sometimes in the past when he got angry, he lost sight of what his real objective was. The anger was all that he saw. I would like to see him direct his anger in a better manner.

Academic issues

Academic issues adversely affected the success of these students. Roberto's description of his experience of being talked at in IEP meetings seemed typical of most of the participants. Some remembered the participation of probation officers in an effort to have them change behaviors but none of them described feeling empowered or helped by an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Roberto described his experience:

All I remember is the word IEP I don't remember much [about] them... remember meetings. I tried not to show up for the meetings between them

[teachers & school officials] and my Mom. I would just get really mad and tell them to go and fuck themselves. I was not really too respectful at the time. I was probably high or drunk at the time and couldn't handle it. It was more of a discussion about me than a discussion with me. So, it got really aggravating to hear them talk about me like I was not even there; just pissed me off. I never repeated a grade. It was kind of like they would say "you are a troublemaker we are just going to send you through. We don't want to deal with him [you]. SEND HIM THROUGH!!! Send him to high school where they can hold him back or send him through like we are doing. It is not our problem--OUT OF HERE!!" So, I passed middle school with F's, D's, and like a C and a B. My lowest grade point average was a .49 or something like that. They didn't care if I could do the work or not they just passed me on.

I swear they had a staff meeting and came to the conclusion that Roberto is a troublemaker, "he always wants to cause problems." Soon as they got my flyer [file] picked up, I became one of the "bad boys", the "bad dog" smoking weed and drinking. I would key [scratch the paint with a key] the teacher's cars. That is why I have so much restitution. I have three or four hundred dollars damage to a little Geo. I kicked her [the teacher's car] hood in, scratched a smiley face, and put a condom on her windshield wiper, [and] a potato in her tail pipe. [I] stuffed one teacher's grill with toilet paper. [I did] stuff like that because "I am a troublemaker, I am a bad ass, unwanted person." It was the label they gave me. They gave me the label of

troublemaker. I am sure you know but I'm not sure other people know. It is like when you are a troublemaker and you are labeled a troublemaker, you live up to that label. You go into the principle's office or I am going to suspend or expel you." So, I go, I am a troublemaker!! You have not seen shit [trying to make a point], [then] I go down the hall and POP! I deck somebody. They always had an attitude towards me. Like, I don't want you here and you don't want to be here.

Lee's experiences are somewhat different:

In middle school classes and stuff started getting bigger. It was hard for the teachers to concentrate and just help one kid. That is when I basically started falling down was in middle school. Liked they [the elementary teachers] helped me a lot; they never gave up on me. Like one teacher in, I think fifth or fourth grade, she would never, no matter how much I wanted to quit or give up, she would never let me. She would always set up special appointments. Like after school to do my work and stuff like that. The teacher in the fourth or fifth grade would not give up on me. My sports coaches always knew I was capable of accomplishing a lot in sports. I wanted to give up a whole bunch of times in sports, when I had games that weren't going my way. They wouldn't let me.

I was doing really bad [in school]. My PO [probation officer] and my Mom, or maybe it was just my PO... I got these progress reports, I got them every Friday. My teachers would fill out [how I did] in each class period,

classes one through six. [It would show] how I did throughout the week and I would have to turn them in. It made me act better in class. It didn't really help me do work or anything but it improved my attitude in class because I didn't want to get locked up. I failed eighth grade and then I started up again [eighth grade] and that is when I dropped out. I just got into trouble, got kicked out.

At first [I was] not [labeled] really because I played sports. [Later] I was labeled as a kid that couldn't stay in school for more than a couple weeks without getting kicked out. There was unfair stuff that happened but I brought it on myself.

They wouldn't put up with as much stuff from me because they were tired of what I was doing. I don't even know [what would have helped me do better in school]. People always tried to help me out in school because I am ADHD. They got me on Ritalin. My mom tried to get me in special classes but they said that I was too smart to be in special classes.

They always tried to help me and stuff but I never really wanted the help. Maybe if I had [been given] incentives.

When I first started middle school, I joined the basketball team. I did good just so I could stay on the basketball team. The baseball coach had all the kids bring their report cards to him and when I started slipping he said that he was going to start benching me if I don't start bringing everything [grades] up, so I did. I had a really good connection with him and the fact that I didn't want to get benched because I was making all stars and everything.

Roger reported:

[As a result of an IEP] I had half days of school, I carried around this little slip that I had to ask my teachers how I did in different categories. The school did all right [in helping] but not as much as they could, they threw me the scraps and said here you go. It was just like I guess this is how we can help you, but nobody cared. But, it was like I guess we have to so they would throw me as little as possible I think. They were looking for any reason to boot me out. I guess [it] was to get rid of the problem. I guess I was the problem [annoyed tone and facetious look].

Carl has another view:

[Teachers] first to sixth grade they were all pretty nice. They were good teachers they helped me out a lot. They knew my situation. I was in the Big Brother program. I used to go to hockey games.

[Third grade is] when I started the TAG program and stuff like that. They gave me special education because I was a little too smart for my classes.... I just had an awfully huge amount of intelligence for that grade. So, they put me in different classes. They moved me around to different schools a lot. They have wanted to put me in high school from fourth grade but my dad wouldn't let them. Because he said that would be odd. In third grade I did half of the day at one school and then half a day at a school that was about three or four miles away. Because certain teachers had certain times they could work with me. Me and three other kids. It was hard [going between schools].

[When you are in the same class] you get to know people and hang out with them.

I had to get on a bus twice a day. Plus after that I had to go to latch key. It was an after school program ... like day care. My Dad didn't take care of me as much as he could, should [have] but stuff like that [happens].

I wouldn't say it killed me but I wasn't using drugs. So my Dad said that you don't have to go. I just stayed out at our house. Finally, Children's Services came out and said why ain't he going to school? We told them that it was because the principal was harassing me, over and over and over again. I never went back to school there. So, I kind of missed the whole year, except for certain parts of it. I skipped part of middle school. It wasn't like I skipped, skipped.

We moved down to California and I didn't go to school there until half the year and then we moved again. Then we moved to where we live now. I wasn't going to school. I would skip school to get high or I would be too drunk or high to go to school. I would hang out with friends that were skipping also. After about fifth grade I was used to fighting. That was the theme. Someone would call you a name and you would sock them in the nose. You wouldn't talk it out or say you hurt my feelings. You would just walk up and punch them. That is what I learned down in California.

The principle in one of the middle schools would just lock us in a room. He was deathly afraid of us. I am pretty biased against gays and he was gay.

[But, it was more the way he treated us]. He would always pick us out of a crowd and because we were the not normal and pretty much try and get us in trouble for something. He would then put us in his office. My friends would flip out and throw desks at him and do crazy stuff. After that year he left and didn't come back.

Then there was Mr. Samuel. He was pretty nice he wasn't the type of person that wouldn't suspend you. He thought that was too easy on you. Yes [I agree it is too easy]. I use to do things just to get suspended. I would smoke behind the school and be pretty nonchalant about it and blow smoke in the school windows if they were open. The teacher would come and say you're smoking. I would blow smoke into the door. They couldn't do anything. I didn't have cigarettes in my locker. I would bring a stick match and a cigarette from home. My parents didn't care if I smoked.

2
Lee remembers:

I got labeled a lot. I got labeled as a dumb kid. I got labeled as kind of a gang banger. I got labeled as all kinds of things. I am losing that now but I think that it did impact me. It kind of made me hate myself and my life. Hate me period. I couldn't do nothing to change it. I'm always worthless, nothing, I am nothing and these guys are all something. I was standing outside of the circle. I got tired of it. I hated that. I thought I was powerless, I couldn't do anything about it. You know it was like, I can't do nothing. In a way I could have, but I don't know.

The program's teacher response was similar to the other adults that had been interviewed. She acknowledged that most of the client's previous school experiences were not the most rewarding for the youth:

[Most of the youth did] not [have a] very [positive school experience].

Most were drop outs, credit deficient, most of them hated public school. They hated the authority figures that have really laid into them. They have had really poor experiences in school.

Nurturing at School

All the participants were able to identify at least one teacher in public school they believed made a difference for them. Participants described at least one nurturing attribute when they described what they believed to be a "good teacher." Participants also noted that "good teachers" looked beyond the labels [troublemaker] that often accompanied the students.

All but one of the participants in the study remembered having Individual Education Plans. The one that did not remember (Roger) did remember having difficulty academically.

Roberto describes a private school he went to for a short period of time. He described this as the most positive school experience growing up:

Ninth grade, my freshman year, I went to a private school for part of it. Then I went [back] to public school. In private school it was like you are going to sit here, you are going to do the work and if not we are going to kick you out. Then you are going to have the cops after you because you don't have

a place to go to school. They always told me "it is an option for you to be here." Be here or you leave but when you are going to be here you are going to do this work.

At public school it was you have to be here or other wise we will sic the cops on you and if you are not here doing the work you are expelled and you have to go to another program anyway. So, it is like you have to be here na, na, na, na.

I just didn't feel as crowded [at the private school], as restricted, you know, "your a troublemaker". [At private school they would say] I know you, I know where you stand, you know where I stand, so just make it through. They actually held me to expectations. In high school it is just you are fuck'in up, whatever. We tried to consequence you and it didn't work so suspend you, suspend you, whatever. We don't want to deal with you. Basically, you are not worth our time.

It [private school] was more one on one. We will help you learn what you need to learn and go at your own pace. It is not you have to keep up with the rest of the class. I have a reading disability and Attention Deficit Disorder. Which for me I think it was a lack of attention from home but that is what they labeled me with so....ever since I was younger I was labeled a trouble maker. I still think they should have a screening on their [teachers] personalities. I swear some of these people have all these certificates on their wall and you go in their office and they are just bricks.

Roberto remembered a special teacher.

Most of the teachers labeled me as [a] troublemaker. [But] this guy [teacher] tried to take me on a personal level. I think he understood where I was coming from. I got kicked off the bus for fighting on the bus and he would give me rides home because he lived in the same direction that I did. It was about a two mile walk, he would drive me to my house.

Once on Thanksgiving, I was smashed out of my brain and he saw me stumbling down the street and would say "Ah, Mr. Garza [last name pseudonym], he has an English accent because he is from England. He would say [uses an English accent] "would you like to come in and have Thanksgiving with me and my family?" I would say "no, but thank you." I didn't want to go in his house with his family all smashed on Thanksgiving. I see how that would have been disrespectful. I gave him respect above all the other teachers because he would do things like that for me, compared to other teachers that would just brush me off. [They] would just brush me off, say "you are a troublemaker, were just going to pass you off and get rid of you. [Good teachers] were willing to work with the kids. They weren't just there for the job. They were there because they liked what they did. It wasn't just about making money, it was about helping kids and making their money. It wasn't like they weren't out to make money because that is -what a job is about but they were also there to help kids.

Roger had a different sense about caring or nurturing in school.

*A spiritual relationship with God [would have helped me do better in school].
If I would have had a relationship with God, if I would have had that strength.
I might have been able to keep going and somebody who cared [soft voice]. I
should say somebody that showed that they cared. Throughout all my school I
didn't see someone who cared, well maybe one person cared. The kind of
things you learn here and instead of giving me negative attention give me
positive attention.*

*There was a teacher of mine in fifth grade [that] cared. He really
helped me. I knew that he knew what he was talking about. He wasn't just
someone yaking up there. He told me I could achieve all this stuff and he
would talk to me. He wanted me to succeed because I was real smart and stuff.
He set high goals for me. I trusted him. If I don't like someone or trust
someone I just as soon flip them off. It takes me a long time to trust someone.*

Carl commented:

*(Mr. Samuel) would make us go to school. He would sit us in his office and
that is where we would do our work. That is where you stayed. He set up a
program for me because I told him that I can't stay in school all day long. He
put all my basic essential classes first through third period and then I could
skip the rest of the crappy classes that you don't need. Then I could just leave.
[He would help me be successful]*

Two (teachers) of them were pretty mean. They would do the same thing as Mr. George (pseudonym) [principle before Mr. Samuels]. They would just pick us out. Mr. George thought we were suppose to behave like his kids. His kids were on the golf team, play croquet and all that English stuff. Like what they do in England and be perfect like them. Every time he wanted that response he would get this kind [holds up middle finger] of response back. Then I would get in trouble and get kicked out of his class. Then there was a wood shop teacher I liked. I would get into a lot of fights in wood shop and he would make me work with that person. You know help them and do a lot of stuff with them. It was like tying us together instead of kicking us out of his class. Sure a couple times he kicked me out of his class. I got this kid so pissed off at me that he threw a stool at me. We got in a big fight and broke a dowel maker.

[I] pretty much [know] some students treated differently. They would say he is this kind of guy so we will put him over here. The guys in the prep club we will put over here. Like one teacher, he likes guys better than he likes girls. He is more of a guy's, guy. He is always rooting for us. The girls are off doing their thing. It is like they're doing their thing, girls are more responsible than guy are so we will just cheer them on because they are doing what they have to do. And we are pretty lazy. Like when we have wrestling for PE and stuff like that. Certain people are better than everybody else. I never wrestled but I was better than the guys that did. He was Oregon State champ

and he would wrestle me. But, he would always Woop me. He always told me that if you wrestle someone better than you. You would get better yourself because you will have to find some way to get out of it.

Lee has this to say about nurturing in the classroom.

I had some teachers that I liked. In fourth grade Mrs. White [pseudonym], I remember her, she was a good teacher. She always read to us and she was real pretty too {smiles}. She always read to us. I liked being read to. Nobody else did it except for her. My Kindergarten teacher, Mr. Todd [pseudonym] was also my second or third grade teacher. I went to Dunes [pseudonym] Elementary until fourth grade.

I liked those teachers, I like their personality. I have had some teachers that really wanted to help me. I didn't want to give them the time because I could care less. I made up my own little world where I didn't need nobody. I didn't need them to teach me nothing. I didn't want anyone else to teach me I taught myself. I wouldn't give them the time because I just gave up on them. Well, any teacher because they all have their own ways of teaching. I think any teaching is good teaching. You just got to listen to that person and hear what they are saying. If you take to heart, you will learn from it.

The probation officer believed that youth needed to have connections with positive adults:

[R]elationship is the key in my opinion. In my position here it is all about building a relationship. Many of the kids I am talking about have been wronged by adults. The very people that they depend on to keep them safe have hurt them, literally and figuratively. They grow up with the notion that you can not trust adults. As a counselor I am saddled with the task of showing them that all adults are not bad but I still have to be there as the hammer also. I see myself wearing several hats; I could be a counselor and Probation Office, and in doing these roles sometimes come across as a father figure.

Family Situations

All the participants noted that a more stable family and positive peers may have helped them to be more successful in school. Roberto felt this way about family.

Family [could have helped me be successful]. Friends would have helped. I really didn't have friends because I had this attitude of "fuck you." I was like if you want to hang out with me you better be a big dog too, or I will be the guy hanging you upside down from your underwear. I just had a bunch of flunkies following me around that had the same problems that I did. They just had a hard time learning like I did and grew up in families like I did, alcoholic, drug using families that fought a lot. I think that is a stronger bond than healthy friendships. The bond of dysfunctional families and junkie families, that is a bond! It is almost like a life bond to be honest but it is easily broken. When you are doing criminal acts and using together, when you are in

the moment of doing it, it is some of the tightest bonds, you would shoot someone for one of your friends that is using when you are using with them. I needed friends that were good in school and tried to help me, instead of laugh at me. That is [where] school could have helped.

Carl remembered:

It was mostly because of family problems at home. I had a lot of family problems. I missed a lot of school because something bad would happen. Like, my Dad would kick me out the door with no shoes on. I would have to go with no shoes. We never had a bed time or nothing. We didn't have a stable family in the house. They were meth users, you know how that goes. I missed a lot of school and played sick a lot; Dad would be at work and nobody would be at home, so I would play sick. After Dad got home from work, I would tell him I didn't go to school. I probably went only three days out of a whole week at the most, tops. That went on from first grade on up. In fifth grade I dropped out. I attended a little bit at sixth, a little bit at seventh, I pretty much skipped my whole eighth, my ninth grade year I went one day-- half a day.

I still feel different [raises voice non-threatening]. Till this day even in here, where we are all treated equally. I feel different. I kind of feel that I grew up quicker. Any kid had a privileged life compared to me except for a couple [at school]. There were a couple kids I could relate to [at school]. My life was so much different from theirs. Everybody there [school] pretty much had a normal life.

All of the adults interviewed shared similar views to the programs teacher:

I would describe their families as fractured. Most of these kids come from a one parent family, or divorced parents that do not communicate, or parents that live together that don't communicate, pretty dysfunctional families. But, I also find some of the families are real willing to learn how to parent their kids differently. I don't think that is the rule. There are some, but there are others [that are like] stone, they don't put the energy into it [parenting]. There are some that have all the information in the world but still don't make the changes themselves. They still enable their kids. We had a kid run and the mother drove over from the coast and took him home. There you go, there is some enabling. Dysfunctional means just really poor parenting skills.

The parent interviewed acknowledged that alcoholism was part of his son's early years:

Yes, there was [drug use]. I am a recovering alcoholic and James' (pseudonym) early childhood up till about four years ago, there was alcoholism. Through the alcoholism, there was all kinds of crap that went with it. I was a heavy drinker. A real heavy drinker! His biological mother and myself divorced when he was not quite one. I had him ever since then. On her side also there is drug use and alcoholism. Actually, the poor kid didn't stand much of a chance [referring to the biological propensity to drug use].

Substance abuse is intermingled throughout the categories. The youth talk about it regarding school, families, and peers. One rather startling statement that stood out in the data came from Roberto.

My alcohol use started in third grade.

We need to be mindful that disengagement from school begins early. What would have helped participants achieve success?

School at the Treatment Center

All the participants described themselves as successful in the school program at the treatment center. They noted that the teachers tailored the program to meet their individual educational needs. The participants identified that one reason for their success was the individual attention the program provided for them and not feeling "different." Roberto described it this way:

I don't have a label here, everyone is just like me. They have learning disabilities, and are drug addicts and alcoholics. It is not like you are a troublemaker. It is we know what your deal is, if you try and put one over on us, we are going to know and we are going to find out, but we will trust you. It isn't this is what we heard from your past school so we are going to keep an eye on you. It is I will learn about you for myself. I will read your flyer [file] after I have my own personal opinion, if it matches I will know it is right. If it don't [sic], I will keep my own personal opinion and throw out [forget] the flyer.

The teachers here will sit you down and say "here is the way you do it." They will simplify it, if it needs to be simplified. Here they say "hey if you have to take short cuts, take short cuts." At [public] school it is like no, do it this way. Here if you can take a short cut and it works and you understand it, and the answer is right. OK do it. That and they are supportive. They reward you for good behaviors. If you are doing good you get some free time. You get to sit and kick back. At [public] school it didn't matter what you did there was always more work. Here they don't keep you in the same place, they move you on as soon as you are ready. If you go faster than the rest of the class it doesn't matter because you are on your own personal schedule.

Nathan compared his experience with public school and offered some suggestions. He stated:

It is great! [I wish] schools on the outs were like the school in here there wouldn't be.. [fades off], I understand that they have a control problem and all that shit. There is not enough [money] so teachers can't teach just] fourteen kids, seven at a time and two teachers [like here]. You can't do that out in the real world but I mean, instead of having a class with thirty kids and one teacher, [what about] one teacher for ten kids. You can have people volunteering, coming in from colleges [etc.]. They can work it out, the government is not stupid, they can work it out. I mean they can make a nuclear bomb and shit. They can work it because, I don't know, because the not [all

kids] are smart kids, and shit like that. Here [they] get all the one on one they need.

In the schools they have resource rooms. Ya know what I am sayin'. I was never assigned to one because I was one of the smarter ones but a couple of my friends were. They got made fun of and shit like that. I went in there and I volunteered because I had like to do work around the school because I skipped school one day. I had been cleaning around the school and volunteering in those rooms and shit during my recess. I don't know [they need] more one on one. Most people are patient and they can wait, but when you are with thirty kids and you got your hand up, and there are ten other kids with their had up, and only one teacher for them to help. You have to wait for an hour, by the time the class period is done you get one problem done. You don't know what the hell you are doing. Then you have a stack of homework and you don't know what the hell you are doing with your homework. Your parents haven't been in school in about ten years so they can't help you.

Jon's feelings about school at the treatment center were also positive.

It is helping me a lot. It is helping me get my GED. It is not just school. It helps with independent living. It helped me realize, like what I am going to be looking at when I go out on my own. Car expenses, if it is better to own a house or to pay rent for awhile. Is it better to get a car or use public transportation? It has really opened up my eyes. It has helped me a lot. I didn't know it was going to be hard. I didn't know about taxes. I mean I knew

about them but I didn't know about them. I know that you had to pay taxes and they take money from you but I didn't know how they did it, or how much, the loop holes or anything like that. Joni is teaching me about the real estate game. Buying the house, fixing it up, making the smallest payments you can then selling it. Like buying a house for eighty thousand, make payments and live there for two or three years. Fix it up and then sell it for one hundred, one hundred and twenty thousand. You get lots of money off of it. She has also kind of helped me out with the stock exchange.

Lee was also positive about school and treatment programs working together.

It depends on each individual. They let you do the work [and] I get to choose what I want to do. I get to do stuff that I like. Like for me they had me do stuff on independent living and they got me out finding a job for school because I am going to need that. They took me to [local community college] and doing what I need to do out there. They give you assignments for stuff you are going to need; tools. They just kind of guide you. They hear us. It is also probably because it is not so long. It is only an hour and a half a day for school. You have three subjects. It is really nice because there is only seven kids in the class and there are two teachers, so you can get a lot of help.

Parents also felt bitter about the school experiences their children had while in the public school system.

They could have given the instructors more explicit training. How to deal with ADHD children and children with other problems. They could have made the class sizes smaller so they could give more individual time. There were years that there were teachers that Jeremy really took a shining to but they just didn't have the time to devote to each student. I think if they could have, Jeremy would have responded really well.

A Teacher at the Treatment Center had this to say about public schools today.

I do [think the public school could do some things differently]. I think there are not enough teachers. Even with just seven kids doing seven different things...we are individualizing their education (which is the way I think it should be done), we are running ragged some days. I think they could [individualize the school system] but they would have to rethink their whole set-up.

The other piece of that is not to have [as many of] the difficult kids as we have here. In a regular setting not all the students are going to have the problems the kids have here. If there were only five high risk out of twenty and a couple of qualified assistants it could be done. The crucial thing here is to have assistants to support the teacher. I think we could do fifteen kids at one time and still do a quality job. It would be difficult but I think we could do it. Especially if we had a bigger physical space, we would have to have a bigger space.

Hiring Teachers

None of the participants felt academic qualifications were the most important assets for a teacher. They all described most essential element for a teacher is one that demonstrates caring. Roberto makes these poignant points.

I think they should have some kind of scanning for teachers and principals. I don't think they should say you have this and your qualifications are this so we will give you a teaching job. I think there should be personality tests because I know they have weird tests like that. [I think a teacher needs to be] just a generous person.

I was really picky and I still am. I wish it was like here. I have two teachers and they are the perfect mix. I like someone who is not a layover [pushover], not the kind of person who will just give in. But I don't like someone who is not willing to listen. Here, I will ask "can I say something?" and they will say "yeah" and I will give them my idea. I will say what about this? They will say O.K. that is a better idea. In high school and public school I will say "can I say something" and they will say go ahead or they say no this is the way we are going to do it.

Lee made these observations about teachers in what he considered would be a perfect world.

I would keep the teachers that I liked. The ones that I didn't have conflicts with and the ones I respected. I guess all teachers are good teachers because they

got hired for a reason. I think what I would try and do is pick more teachers so all kids could get the same amount of help.

Jon focused on how he would interview them prior to hiring.

I would see how they teach in class. It is way more important than what they know or what they look like or any of that. They could be the smartest person in the world and dress really cool but if you sound like the clear eyes guy on TV, you can't teach no one.

None of the adults mentioned academic success as the most critical element for working with these youth. They all viewed caring and respect as important characteristics. The parent that was interviewed expressed that it might be beneficial to have a teacher that has had difficult times academically as well. He stated:

Patience, caring, true concern, understanding. I would hire a teacher that has been there and done that over a teacher that has been a book-learned idiot for twenty years. That happens so much in our society. I would look for a teacher that has children of their own. I might even look for a teacher that has failed once or twice so they know what failure is like. A lot of people go through their whole life not knowing what true failure is. They are the lucky people. People who haven't experienced those things don't know what these kids are going through. Those high achievers don't experience that heartache. To them they don't understand it. They just don't comprehend it. I don't care what people

say. You can give someone a book and they can read and read, and read, and read but until they have done it, they don't know.

Childhood Experiences

All of the participants in this study described parents that abused substances as they were growing up. None of the participants spent more than a couple of their school years with biological parents. Roberto described his childhood experiences this way:

I grew up around it [alcohol] and never thought it was strange. I figured everyone did it. I realized that not everyone drinks out in public but I figured that everyone drank in their home. Those were the thoughts that I had. It was never why do they drink, you know they drink. I grew up around it all my life. Well, nine was all my life [with a smirk].

My Dad would get wasted and leave wine coolers and stuff out in the refrigerator and I had a room right next to the back door refrigerator. I would get in there and drink them. Then my mom and dad would give me wine coolers because I would ask them when they were plowed. I knew I could ask them. I was kind of smart when it came to that kind of stuff.

Part of my past I have blocked out. I can remember bits and pieces. I can remember one time my Mom and Dad got in a fight and they were all drunk and my Dad threw a pitcher at my Mom's head and she got a piece of glass in her head. I can remember certain things, but I can't remember a lot of things.

When I was nine my Mom and Dad got a divorce and I lived with my Mom. That was pretty aggravating to me. Because I went through so much shit doing that. My Dad ended up kidnapping my little sister. A bunch of fighting and arguments [happened]. My Dad [was] trying to tell me, I was going home with my Mom. My Mom [was] telling me that she was not going to try and tell me to try and pick between her and my Dad. But, she was doing it in manipulative ways. I didn't know, I was only nine years old. I didn't even comprehend the word manipulating. I am doing it but I do not comprehend it.

A lot of people don't think outside stuff has to do with school but it has a lot. Everything outside your life has to do with school. They try and keep your school life and your home life separate but a lot of people get stressed. Like for me, I would get hit on at home, so I would go to school and hit on somebody littler than me. It is learned behaviors. I think if my family problems had been taken care of I don't think I would be sitting here right now. [I don't think the school would have helped] I think they have some really fucked up laws. I was one of those kids that knew what happened if you opened your mouth about your parents drinking and stuff. The next thing you know they are going to take you away from your family and friends. I was like fuck that, I saw all these kids around me snitching on their parents.

Me and the kids I hung out with knew. I would tell kids that say I am thinking about saying something, [I would say] don't! They will take you away from your families. So, really all that teaches you is keep your mouth closed

about problems or they will take you away from your family, because honestly that is what they do. You know you go and you say hey, my Mom and Dad are using drugs. Oh really, CSD [Services to Children and Families] or something like that comes down and looks at your house. If it is not up to speed with their expectations or you have bruises on you or something like that, they will take you right on the spot. You know, I knew this from TV and my Mom's friends have had their kids taken by CSD and stuff. They use to talk about it a lot. I wasn't a stupid kid, I just had a hard time learning and understanding stuff like language arts. No matter how stupid I played, I always understood what people were saying. Around my Mom I would pretend I didn't understand what she was saying so she wouldn't be afraid to talk in front of me.

I did a lot of moving around because we couldn't pay rent and stuff like that. I basically moved from one shit hole to the next. I lived in this one place where sewer came up in the back yard. My luck the sewer comes up in the back yard right next to my room. I never opened my window because it always had a stench to it. The house was breaking down on the inside. We moved to a different house, the floors were rotten through by the time we left it was really trashed from me punching holes in the wall. Floor boards were cracking and the roof was leaking. The yard was disgusting we never mowed the lawn. At one point the lawn was almost as tall as I was. Everybody was always drunk nobody cared about the yard. I think it affects me more now because I think about driving around in a decent car and living in a decent

house. I will do anything I can not to live like that. Sometimes I even think I will sell drugs not to live like that. But I look back, I get in such a panic, I over panic myself about the thought of being like that, that I go back [and say] I will go back to using drugs if I can't fucking make the money washing dishes or what ever I need to do to live in a decent place. I need to just slow myself down and [say] look where drugs got you.

Jon also had unique experiences with respect to his family life.

My Mom had lots of boyfriends. The one she had the longest was Mike (pseudonym). She had him for... , I don't remember. He was a thief and stuff. He is finishing up his seven years. He has like three or four [years] left in Walla Walla State Penitentiary. He [has] cancer of something or other. He is dying and...[fades off]. He was the big influence on me...the Dad figure [for] most of my life. I started doing what he does. I think her [Mother] boyfriends that I liked the most were her Mexican boyfriends. Especially [inaudible], Sue's (step-sister) Dad. I liked him a lot. He was an illegal alien and had a warrant out for his arrest. Right now he is in Arizona. He got accused of killing someone although he didn't do it.

Lee continued along the same vein; families with connections to prison life, re-marriages and multiple males in the family.

I know that he [his Father] kidnapped somebody but that is all I know.

He is in prison, ever since I was a little kid. Me my Mom and my sister really don't talk about him a lot. My Step-Dad adopted me like when I was five and they really haven't talked to me [about him] that much.

My Mom worked at Adamston [pseudonym]. One day she got hurt because she had a bad back. She was doing work around the house and got hurt. She got really depressed after that and tried to commit suicide twice. There was nothing for her there [Adamston], so my Mom and Dad decided to move.

When I was a kid [my relationship with my Step-Dad] was really good. He would play sports with me and he would come to my baseball games, and basketball, and football, and stuff. I guess when I started getting older and started hanging out with gangs and stuff, we kind of detached from each other. He started drinking again and I was using and we would get into arguments. When I was about twelve or thirteen we started getting violent with each other. We really don't fight that much anymore. That is the main thing I got locked up for is because I got in a fight with him. The police tried to break it up.

Most of the participants describe experiences of poverty. This is an ongoing theme through all of the interviews. These children have experienced poverty that most of us cannot imagine. Lee had this to say about his experiences with poverty level living.

My Dad has always made really good money and when I was a kid my Mom made good money because she was working. Then she got hurt and we were relying on my Dad and he always made more than plenty of money to support us. Then my Dad started drinking and my Mom started using. My Mom found out I was using, then my sister started using and we were all smoking cigarettes besides my Dad. That took up a lot of our money and priorities. Our priorities were messed up, our addictions came first.

Umm, it was like a big radius, like ten miles [where he lived after his mother got hurt]. Some streets would have apartments that were really run down and ...[pause] it was like you would walk in the laundry room and it would say "lice treatment five dollars." I never lived in those. I just lived in houses, some of them were nice and some of them were run down. There were drug dealers all over. There were a lot of Mexicans. Some of the houses you would walk by and there would be bullet holes in the doors or whatever.

Jon shared his experiences about lack of consistent funding coming into his household.

My Mom can't even afford to get new shocks or front end alignment and a fuel thing, so she can't come and visit. My Mom doesn't have a job right now so she gets sixty-two dollars a week, plus my brothers four hundred dollar check. I don't know, it sucks, not being able to afford anything that I want. It pisses me off that some of the kids in here don't even realize that they got it good. Really good. Like last year I didn't have Christmas. My Mother couldn't

afford it. And the year before that she bought things for the house. We just got a board game and a little bit of candy and that is it.

Roger was the one exception. In his case despite having financial resources his Mother did not manage the money well. He noted that :

She got money because my Dad died [but] she had her priorities out of whack. Her car, her house, her beer, her cigarettes, and fancy stuff, instead of clothes for her kids, an allowance, fun things to do. 'Ya know', she got like two thousand eight hundred dollars for the kids and we didn't get a dime. Out of the year we would get maybe three hundred dollars, maybe.

All the adults that were interviewed acknowledged that most of the youth come from low-income homes. They usually required some kind of government assistance.

The Program Director had this to say:

Most of the youth are low-income. It may not have started that way but because most of the parents were drug involved and chaotic they got to a point where there was very little income and there are a few that don't meet that criteria but for the most part they are pretty poor and have been living on welfare or other kinds of assistance.

Substance Abuse

All the participants stated that their drug use started with friends. The participants acknowledged poly-substance abuse (methamphetamine, alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, LSD, mushrooms, heroine, etc.). Drugs of choice varied. Roberto described how he started using:

First OK. It all started out with just friends. Some of them are in here. First, it started off with the alcohol. I used to get it. My parents would leave the refrigerator in the back room stocked. It had wine coolers so I started off drinking wine coolers. It started when my mom left a bottle of vodka out and we had a bottle of 7-Up and we made poppers. He was just a friend, I don't know where he started. It was "hey, try this" and I was like, all right. I started drinking and got really messed up. That was the first time that I had really gotten that messed up. I passed out on the couch. The same friend got me started smoking weed. I would go over to his house and I had heard all this shit about drugs being bad and drugs are bad for you and I was hesitant. I wouldn't smoke it out of a pop can. It sounds funny to me now. When I sit back and talk to people who smoke weed, they were all afraid to do it. I snorted the pot smoke. I wouldn't smoke it. It is ridiculous, when you think about it but it's not. I realize that we probably got more high. He lit it off a roach clip, I played hackey sac. That was the first time and it started picking up in middle school. I just started meeting people. Once you meet one or two people in that crowd and you start hanging around that crowd, you meet all of them. From there, the kid in here that is a friend of mine, started me on mushrooms and all that other stuff.

Then I met this guy Fred; he was like my Dad. That is when I started doing speed and coke. I was into opium and china white, which is like one step down from black tar heroin. So, I have done a lot of things. It all started with drinking and smoking pot.

My main drug is opium because I went on a binge but then I couldn't find any. The one that I used the most consistently everyday was speed. I used marijuana but the one I had to have was speed. I had to have speed. Marijuana was like if I have it, I have it; if I don't, I don't. Coke, those were my main ones.

Lee talked about his drugs of choice.

Alcohol but I have smoked crack, crank [methamphetamines], used codeine, opium, and marijuana. I have done acid but never fried.

Obtaining Drugs

Carl summarized the ease of obtaining drugs. There were multiple channels for obtaining them. He said that he would obtain drugs in the following manner.

Through friends. When I got high I was still playing sports and it was just the neighborhood really. There was a bunch of gang members down the street and they were partying. I went down there because I was friends with one of the [gang member's] little brother. They forced me to get high. There was a whole bunch of them and I knew them. They took me in a room and asked me if I have ever gotten high, I said no, and they said "do you wanna?" I said no. They were like, we are going to beat you up if you don't. Then I was like, all

right I will do it, and so I did it. [Then] I stopped getting high. Then [I got together with] my best friend, [who] I have known since I was thirteen, [and often] lived with when I was on the run. My Mom was down in California. [We were with] his Aunt on the Fourth of July, four or five summers ago. Ya about four summers ago when I was thirteen. That is the first time I got really high. But the first time I smoked pot I was like twelve.

All the participants recognized that their drug use and criminality were connected. Roberto is the only participant that believed he would not have committed crimes if he was not an addict.

Actually, I used to do it a lot [crimes for drugs]. I used to do crimes to get drugs. I would go get someone the drugs, which is one crime, and then I would sell the drugs, which is another. Or I would just take their money and never come back. I would do that kind of crime. The first time I ever did speed, I got involved in a robbery. I robbed a friend of mine's house. I took a whole bunch of the stuff specifically to get money for a party. We had speed, coke, pot, whatever. It was like throw it together and see what we come up with. We would just get fucked up. I stole a lot of stuff to get money. I would pawn it off here and there. I did it like you are supposed to do. I scattered the evidence all over so they [police] would have a harder time tracing it back. I did a lot of ripping people off.

Yes I do [remorse for crimes]. Now, that I look back it was a really stupid thing to do. When you think of the amount of time I could have done for it, it is just out there. The crimes that I committed, I could be in there [detention] for a long time. It astounds me that I am not at the state training school or the big boys jail. I'm here at treatment. Sometimes I let my humungus mouth.... I think it would have been better [if I didn't have a drug dependence]. I think eventually it would have gotten worse. [A] criminal will steal once or twice and he will just keep going back and it will get worse. They will start off shop lifting, jacking people's money, to ripping people off, then breaking into peoples houses, stealing cars, if they are not eventually caught that is where the bank robbers are. They get the money, quick easy money.

I think it would have just taken longer [to get into serious crime, if I wasn't using]. I think what it is with drugs is that it just speeds it all up. It speeds up everything because you burn money quicker. So, you make the robberies quicker. You are doing it quicker, stealing cars or whatever for money. Because you are buying drugs. If you are selling drugs you aren't really making a profit. I sold speed for awhile making a profit doing dope ourselves and selling it. We ran out of money eventually and we had a big bag of dope and we ended up doing it all. There went the money.

The only way around that is if you don't use the drug you are selling. That is hard to do because you are an addict. I know plenty of people that do that. I just think of that time we ran out of dope when we went to Arizona. We

still had a bunch of dope left and he [Fred] took a bunch of pills and I did some lines. He was driving the motor home and he said Roberto, the yellow line keeps moving, he was like can you drive? I have never driven something the size of a motor home in my life about an hour and a half. I would wake him up because he would fall asleep.

The probation officer acknowledged that most of the youth on his case load had crimes which related to their drug use. But there were a few that had criminality as their primary problem. He stated:

I think they maybe wouldn't have done certain crimes if they hadn't been using. If a kid is out drunk and wrecks a car, obviously the alcohol played a part in that. If a kid is out high on crack or whatever and is out and commits a crime obviously drugs have led to that behavior. Kids go out after they are addicted and commit the crime to get the drugs. I do think the absence of drugs could diminish the criminal activity. There are some kids on my case load that don't do drugs but not many. They just do crimes. About ninety percent of them drugs are somewhere there.

Crimes and Drugs

Lee described the relationship between crime and drugs like this:

Oh ya [like of course] One time I got high and I needed cigarettes so I walked into a mini mart and bought a package of Kool Aid, and then I robbed the mini mart for cigarettes. Once there were these two kids at a Jack-in-the-Box. I saw

this guy and he was loaded [lots of money] and I was like lets go rob them or whatever. My friend and I was jonesing pretty bad so we robbed them.

Only one participant stated that he didn't have any physical problems due to drug use. At the time of the interviews he had the shortest stay in treatment. He also did not have the regular use of as many drugs. Both of these factors may have contributed to his belief that he had not suffered physical problems due to use. Others described a variety of problems from shortness of breath to extreme weight loss. One acknowledged that while using he often got into fights or got hurt. Roberto described his physical problems this way:

I gained a lot of weight from coming off my dope. I weighed about two hundred pounds even. I was pretty stout looking because I was doing the dope and working out. It was eating me up but I looked good. Now, I weigh almost a hundred pounds more. Smoking the crank, smoking the weed, smoking the cigarettes affected my lungs and I can feel it. I have trouble breathing sometimes.

Lee shared some of his physical symptoms and injuries due to drugs

I have been in lots of fights. I got sick for a day on codeine. Mainly getting hurt from fights and stuff. I was running from the police and went to go over a barbed wire fence and sliced my finger to the bone. I got sucker punched by a big Indian guy. I should have gotten stitches, I was on the run and didn't want to. I have gotten jumped. I was using and committing crimes. I was hanging

out with the wrong people where I lived. There was a gang violence thing going on and I tried to stick up for one of my friends.

All the adults recognized that youth had health problems due to their use. The Program Director summed it up like this:

[Their health] has been affected by their drug use. They usually have been not been eating well, poor nutrition. And they haven't been to the doctor or the dentist in a long time. Sometimes never the dentist ever. The meth user, their teeth are in pretty bad shape

The probation officer had this to say about the health of the youth:

Mainly meth has tell tale signs of misuse. It is evident that meth depletes the body. There is weight loss and loss of calcium from the body. Calcium is robbed from the teeth. The teeth basically rot out of their head. Some of the kids may have nose bleeds and chronic nasal congestion due to cocaine use. Some have health problems without even knowing it. Chronic marijuana use causes a kid to be a slug and gradually [they] fail to pay attention to their appearance.

The Treatment Program.

All participants recognized strengths in the program and described benefits that they had gained. Most expressed frustration with what they described as staff "power tripping." Roberto describes the program this way:

I think you should have a few more privileges as you go up [the level system]. Instead of going one, basically no privileges to two which basically just has a

higher allowance to three where all of a sudden you get a radio, a lamp, you get to stay up longer, you get half hour check outs, you can go for trust walks on your home visits, you can negotiate. On level two I think you should get an extra half hour before bed and maybe a lamp. On level three you should get the trust walks, and negotiating skills on level four. I think their PE program is pretty good. I think they should listen a little more to what the kids want. They did at first but now it is like "we are playing racquet ball" and it is like nobody here wants to play racquetball.

They are over protective, I would say they are arrogant about their keys. It is like "I can't open the basketball court right now, I have paper work to do". It would only take them two seconds to get up and unlock the basketball door and go back. Teachers did that a lot too [in school].

Off site rec. [recreation] and stuff is pretty good. Off site meetings [12 step] is a good part of the program. They're [staff are] willing to talk to you. I agree with the twelve steps [and] I agree with the groups.

I think this program can be good but they need to shorten it. They need to shorten it from to four to five months, [instead of the] five to six months [it is now]. [They should] wait till a person gets here before they give them a graduation date, base it individually. If they [clients] have an extremely bad attitude, you know, if they are running around screaming and yelling and they don't want to get clean, then give them six months. But, if they

come in here with a good attitude put them at five because you don't know if they are fronting or not. See how they go from here.

I just got level three, that means that your peers look at you as a leader in the group and that is good for me. I got my grad date back. I am out of here in three weeks. I have two tests left to take on my GED. I am busting my ass to get that stuff back [done]. It is really exciting for me. Thursday I am going to go in and take my math test. Then all I have left is the writing and that is the hard one for me. I have a hard time reading and if you don't read very well then it is even harder to write. I have a hard time spelling and I have a hard time reading.

You ask questions about all kinds of stuff and I get to tell someone what I really think about this fucking program. I also get to say what I like about it. I stop and I think "goddamn, I came from all this shit and look at where I am now. If I go back, look at where I am going to end up. If I stay, look, I got this far and it can only get better. It gets me thinking, I hate this fucking program but it keeps me sober. I went home and tried to get someone to stop, once I said "just fucking disengage" [laughs] they stopped looked and laughed and kept on doing it. Then I come back here and have to find someone to tell them to disengaged so they stop. I think if more people went back to a house like I have they would appreciate this place a little more. When I first got here I didn't think I would be upset when I leave. Now that I am three weeks out it is like "oh my god, I have to go back to my fucking family". Keep

me in treatment please. I never thought I would say that. I do think the program is too long. When I get done it will be seven months and some odd days and that is just too long.

Lee also had good things to say about this particular style of treatment program.

There is a lot of support. The only thing I knew was the people I was hanging out with and the drugs and stuff. Since I have been in here they have shown me positive places to go and fun stuff to do, take us to places that I would always hear about that were cool. They take us to meetings [12 step] and I would meet people there. I think that really helped a lot.

Improve the program: One thing I don't like is the PPC model. I really don't like the fact that everyone gets punished for one person. I think that one person should suffer because they messed up, let them learn from the consequences. It gets people to hold resentments against [members of the] group, or punish people they don't like in a passive aggressive way. It does make you think about how what you do effects everybody else also.

Jon also had some comments about the treatment program.

Running. Well coming here first and then running. It kind of opened up my eyes to all the bullshit that is out on the streets. The friends that you think are there for you but they won't give you a ride home when you are all stoned or something, or your drunk and it is pouring rain even though they are heading that way. I have gotten a chance to see what the other side of the tracks look like and compare the two. The sober life... being able to feel feelings. Getting

in touch with me or being numb and dealing with all the bullshit and the hassling, and the messed up people out there. You always have to look over your shoulder, cause people will take your money or something like that.

All the adults agreed that the connection that staff made with the youth is important in order to make positive changes. The probation officer summed it up this way:

Attitude is turned around because the people over there obviously care about the kids and kids see that. A kid can tell if you genuinely care about them from the interactions you have with them. Just the fact that most of the kids I place there are willing to go back and talk to the staff if they have to. It shows that there was a connection made between the staff and the kid, and the program and the kid. The staff are the program. That is the biggest change that I have seen. People will talk fondly of them and they (youth) make the connection.

Dual Diagnosis

Only one participant was not on prescribed medication. All of those that were on medication were taking at least one of their medications for depression. Roberto is an example of the value of the dual diagnostic model as part of the treatment program.

I am on Zoloft, and I am on an antipsychotic but I can't remember the name. It is suppose to help me sleep. Yes, Resperdal. I use it to help me sleep. Zoloft is for being depressed.

Lee was not on any medication during his stay in the treatment program. However, the director of the program admitted that a large number of residents are on medication.

From a third to a half of our kids are on medication. The most common are for depression and ADHD.

Communication

All participants stated that they had learned new ways to communicate with others. They noted it was difficult at times to try and use verbal skills rather than intimidation but they also described that people in power are more willing to have a discussion with them. Roberto made these cogent remarks:

Anger management has helped me a lot. I will try and I will talk, and I will talk, and talk, and talk, and if you don't listen I will [yell] FUCK YOU, out of nowhere. Then you will listen. That was the only way I learned. But now I have so many different skills but here I can use them but out in the real world it is different. My family doesn't want to listen and my Mom has a power trip. [She says] I am your fuckin' Mother and don't you tell me what to do. [I say] I am not telling you what to do. But, just listen to how unreasonable you are. It is like, Jesus, I want to grab her by the neck and take her to her room and tell her she is grounded. I have learned to listen, that is a big one.

This points out another issue these adolescents have to deal with...non-reception when they are communicating. Positive communication skills are not always effective if the audience does not want to listen. Roberto's statement exemplified this beautifully.

Lee also recognized the power of adequate communication skills as he progressed through the program. Here are some of his words.

Communication skills help me get my point across and get my feelings out. I was never able to do [that] before and talk about triggers or problems that I am having in life. Those things really do help me because if I didn't go that I would relapse or run or something.

All the adults acknowledged that helping the youth with their communication skills was important in order for them to have their needs met. The parent that was interviewed noted these changes in his son:

James is able to more clearly articulate what he is trying to express. Before, he would just say "that sucks." Now he can say "Dad I don't like doing that because..." and explain why. He still needs to work on it because when he gets frustrated he has a hard time but he is developing that ability. These kids are pretty good at manipulation already. There is a difference between manipulation to gain a drug and manipulation to gain respect. James as well as the other kids here realize that when you can express yourself well, and truly get the other person to come over on to your side through understanding. It is a bigger difference than trying to get [people] to feel sorry for you, or agreeing just to shut you up. He is beginning to learn there is more than just what James wants. He now knows that to every argument that there is two sides. He now knows that to every argument there is more information to understand. Instead of just saying that "I don't like that guy." Now, he can say why he doesn't like that guy and what the reasons are that something is

happening. When he finds out the reasons for that sometimes that sways his opinion.

The probation officer agreed:

Yes, I think they do a good job of that because they operate on kids identifying their feelings and them being able to express that in ways other than criminal behavior. They are exposed to better communication skills. You and I know that unless they are willing to put them to use, nothing is going to happen. Dealing with responsible decision making and not blame others. Be able to communicate with others so they do not feel they are being blamed for the behavior. They learn to use I statements and stuff like that.

Issues Surrounding Success or Failure.

When asked "do you work for success or work to avoid failure" responses did not seem to examine at any length why many of them struggled with sobriety. Roberto's response was typical:

I work toward success. The difference is for me, when you work toward success you are going for your goals. You are not going to shoot under, you are going to reach your goals. If you don't then you don't make it. But you are going to go for it! Working to avoid failure is doing just what you can not to fail. There was a time when I was just going to go to meetings, get off probation, and do this program and then go back to what I was doing before.

Only Roger looked at why he may have had difficulty in treatment.

I came in here and I didn't want to fail and I failed. Then I worked for success and I failed because I am a self-sabotager as [are] most people in here. Then it got to a point my last two or three months here I worked for success and I stopped working to fail because it was inevitable, I am a human being and I am going to fuck-up , just like everyone else in here. Most people who make it, end up working for success at one point in time.

Lee commented on why he felt he had been successful in the program.

If I get out and keep with the plans that I have made and don't give up on everything and keep staying clean and sober and going to meetings. I am kind of scared of success because with me it is like if you experience success eventually you are going to experience failure. I don't work to stay away from failure or to experience success, just to stay in the middle to be stable so I know I am going to be safe.

The adults had different views on how to approach success or avoid failure. The

Program Director had this to say:

[We] work toward success. We really emphasize having goals for themselves rather than just, don't get arrested. It is what do you want to do when you get out of here. Do you want to go to college, do you want to have a job, what field do you want to be in? Not just a job but a career, those kind of things.

The probation officer also had a view about goal-setting and its impact on the clients.

That could be both ways. One suggests the other on some level. If they are working toward success they are not failing. If they try to avoid failure then they are being successful. I think kids come in here and [try to] avoid being bad. A lot of their goals are to avoid criminal behavior. They really don't say to themselves "the way I avoid criminal behavior is to change my peer association, or change the way I think, criminal thinking, or I am going to stop using drugs. They don't really connect that. They are saying "I can't screw up or I will go to detention.

All of the participants felt they benefited from being part of the study. The greatest benefit for the participants seemed to be letting them tell their story and reflecting on what they said. Roger stated it this way.

It was all right, nothing was bad about it. It was kind of different to look at it from a different perspective, from me telling it and listening to it. kind of being interrogated [smiles], not in a bad way. It got me thinking about some stuff that I have been trying to forget. That is good because I need to work it out; like the molestation thing. I talked to my RC [residential counselor]. I haven't talked to him lately [about the molestation], I have talked to him before. I get to know that I helped somebody today. Maybe from my words someone won't use. Maybe they will change something about a program or something about school. Maybe something I say might make a difference in somebody else's life.

Carl had this to say about his participation in this project.

Ya, it helps me get a lot of the stuff I don't even talk about in here to anybody off my chest. The people you share your information with don't know me from God knows what. They are not going to be able to put a picture of my voice or name. I get a lot of benefit from this just as much as you do. You learn more about me and I learn some about the system and some about myself. [It gives me a chance to reflect] on my past and my life

Roberto's final comments were also interesting.

You ask questions about all kinds of stuff and I get to tell someone what I really think about this fucking program. I also get to say what I like about it. I stop and I think "goddamn, I came from all this shit and look at where I am now." If I go back, look at where I am going to end up. If I stay, look, I got this far and it can only get better. It gets me thinking, I hate this fucking program but it keeps me sober.

Discussion

Bandura's triadic reciprocity model comes to mind when I think about the youth in this study. The youth in this study began their educational endeavors coming from environments that put them at a disadvantage. All of the youth experienced fractured and dysfunctional homes and adult role-models who did not provide them with skills to get along with others. These negative factors influenced their behaviors. Their efforts to gain some control and acceptance in their lives seem to have resulted in verbal threats and physical harm. They did not perceive themselves being successful in their performances at school. Even Carl who was identified as TAG had difficulty. The school's attempts to have him meet his educational potential resulted in him missing out on developing a sense of community with his peers. School had the potential to be the one place where he could have felt a sense of stability but that opportunity was missed when they would bus him to a different school for half the day to attend TAG classes.

It seems significant that all the students felt successful in the treatment program's school. The program's teacher implemented a curriculum that had meaning for the students. They were not passive observers in their school program. She focused on what had meaning to them. The youth verbalized that one of the programs strengths was that it did not belabor school tasks. Once the youth had a concept they could move forward.

The big key to the program seemed to be the individual attention students were able to receive. All the students recognized that frustration levels went up when they had to sit and wait for assistance. It did not seem reasonable to have students in

classrooms where it was difficult for them to receive the help they needed. In this program they also had caring staff who cared about their whole environment. They were held to expectations throughout the day. They were not dismissed from the classroom or program as often happens in public education. Standards were set and expectations met. The students indicated in their interviews that the teachers they most admired held them to expectations. There was a qualified assistant who was also able to meet their needs. Public school class sizes are just too big to meet the needs of our learners. Assistants can help. It is time to start building programs rather than penitentiaries. The sooner the public recognizes this fact, the sooner 25% of the school population will receive support.

This research project met the ideological criteria set forth in the beginning of this study. Both the participants in the study and I increased our awareness about the issues that surround students at risk. All the participants stated that they got value from participating in the study. Since I am familiar with the types of clients the program has and have worked in the field for many years, I was not surprised by the stories of the clients.

What did surprise me was the congruence between their stories and the published literature. This group of students corroborated, through their own voices, much of the established literature relative to at-risk youth. Now we have the voices of youth telling us what the voices of academics and educators have been saying for years...it is time to set standards and hold to them and to provide the support students need during their early learning years. If these students had been helped as early as third

grade, some of them would not be where they are now. Schools and service agencies need to work together to provide services that serve the whole child. The voices of these youth tell about family problems and poverty. They tell about youth solving these problems themselves by turning to what they know from the streets...drugs and crime. Why can't the helping institutions see the connections here and provide assistance? Why can't we convince agencies that their role is to assist families rather than break them up? Why can't our governmental policies seek to serve youth rather than fractionate them? The comments these youth made about the role of teachers and social service agencies was heartbreaking. We have much to learn by listening.

I was struck by the fact of how much more I gained by looking at these youth with a different set of lenses. In previous work, I was in a position of authority and cared about them making progress to be successful. In this study, I was prepared just to listen to their story. I did not need for them to succeed. It gave me an opportunity to just appreciate them for who they are at this time. They taught me.

I debated about using the voices of the adults that work with the youth. I decided to include it because it helped me to establish the trustworthiness of the data. I believe that it added credibility to the voices of the youth that were interviewed. The perspectives of the youth and the adults seem to match in most cases. The one exception would be on how staff member used their power. But, even with that most of the youth were positive about their experiences in the program.

The one design that I would like to change if I were to repeat this study or do another would be having more participation of the youth in the writing of this paper.

Due to the requirements of the academy and the transitory nature of the clients in this study, it would not have been practical for the youth to author this paper. However, I do believe that their perspectives are well represented.

The youth did not receive any coercive rewards for participating in this study. One youth came back early from a home visit to participate in one of the sessions! I knew and the youth knew that I was the one receiving most of the benefit from the study.

One advantage of this study was that the youth who participated ranged in the amount of time they had been in the program and in the levels they had attained in the program. They were also volunteers. They were not clients that the staff or those having authority recommended. This insured that they were not the clients that the programmed perceived to have the most positive voices for the benefit of the program.

Participants in the study were given an opportunity to look at their assumptions and reflect. I thought that one case was especially interesting when Roberto started to share his experiences about the program. Initially he expressed frustration with the staff and the amount of time he had to be in the program. As he spoke he started to reflect on some of the positive things he was taking from the program, he reflected on how far he had progressed since he started the program. He came to the realization that he did not like the program but it kept him sober and his life was better when he is sober.

These youth did experience many of the problems that are reflected in the culture of at-risk youth. Students reported that after their behavior got to a certain point school officials actively worked to remove them from the school setting. Some

placed the blame on the school others took put the responsibility on themselves. This may have been due in part to their progress in the program. The program encourages personal responsibility. Those that had a longer stay in the program tended to take more responsibility for their behaviors. A few of the youth placed the responsibility for poor school performance on themselves. It is important to note that all the youth recognized they lacked family and community resources for success. When the youth in this study did come from families that had financial resources, the money was often allocated to support the parent's addiction. The youth in this study support the literature (Bowditch, 1993; Paetsch and Bertrand, 1997; Rutherford, et. al., 2002) in that the problems they face are often multidimensional. Most of the youth were on medication for depression. These youth had most of the descriptors that consider them to be at-risk.

All of them were viewed as having personal deficits in school. Students turned to anti-social behavior when they were confused or unsure what to do next or were frustrated by the system. With few exceptions the youth were able to realize that school officials often focused on their deficits and ignored their strengths. They noticed the inequality of treatment within their classrooms. Those who were "not normal" never received the benefit of the doubt.

This changed when the youth were in treatment. The school program enlisted the youth to take an interest in their learning and incorporated their interests into the curriculum. This gave them an opportunity to see their strengths and to build upon them.

It was encouraging that the youth were able to identify at least some people in their life that cared and were positive role models. The problem seemed to be that none of the youth had a person that they identified with these characteristics that spanned most of their young life. It was interesting to note that even when these adults were not present in their lives for a majority of their life they thought of them with respect and appreciation.

One of the difficulties in this study was that the youth were not as verbal as some of the youth that I have worked with in a regular school setting. Only Roberto did not seem to need extra prompts in the interview process. They all mentioned how they felt more empowered with improved communication skills. They noted that others were more apt to listen to their point of view and this seems to be a major emphasis of the program. Despite not having strong communication skills they all enjoyed having an adult listen to their story. And I enjoyed hearing their stories.

Implications

Schools have received a lot of attention in recent years. There has been a great deal of attention paid to the academic needs of students. Youth in this study would want principals and teachers to focus on the affective curriculum. Youth are telling us that early childhood... ages eight to nine years old is... when the behaviors that place youth at high risk for failure begin. Ed Hume (1996) reported that intervention efforts are most effective for this age group. He reports that anti-delinquency intervention efforts that are implemented at age eight are effective three out of four times. He goes

on to say that if we wait until age thirteen, programs are effective only one out of four times.

There has been research to support what youth are saying. The State of California's Little Hoover Commission (1994) studied various aspects of crime, including juvenile crime. Their recommendation was that early intervention and prevention programs be a top priority. Spending money on prevention needs to be a priority. Despite this it seems that prevention programs take disproportional cuts in tough budgetary times.

Teacher education programs must also change. Principals and teachers must address the affective curriculum. In order for us to hear the voices of the students that come to our schools we must create ways for them to be heard. We need to spend time teaching anger management, and communication skills. Many of our students who are at-risk are not eager and ready to learn. Students that come to school reflect all the problems that are present in our society. They come from homes that reflect many of the ills of society. Many of our students come from homes with poverty, addiction, and violence. These students bring problems to school. Since schools are one of our lines of socialization, this can also be an opportunity for intervention. The youth in this study tell us they do not want to fail. We must create environments where failure is not an option.

Some of the schools in 4J school District in Eugene, Oregon have been using innovative strategies to help close the achievement gap. One example includes schools which have offered a program called "homework club." Students needing academic

help are referred by teachers to participate in a program after school that provides tutoring in a nurturing environment. Students are given help and a snack. Most teachers and administrators agree that the program is successful. It provides help for at-risk children that are unable to receive help at home. It may be because of family work schedules, parents might not have the skills to help, their homes may be chaotic, or a variety of other reasons.

Another successful program is one which emerged from the "Safer Schools, Healthy Students" Federal Grant monies. This program incorporates the components of crime prevention, mental health services and the school system to provide a school-wide behavioral support system. School officials can place the grant monies where there is the most need. Administrators look at the schools and determine which may be more vulnerable with respect to crime. The goal is crime prevention through environmental design. Crime prevention specialists who work in this program have been trained in education, counseling and family development. They work directly with the youth as well as the school staff and parents. They are assigned to a group of schools and are in those schools daily. Sometimes it is necessary to spend more time at one program than another depending on the particular set of issues. This program works with elementary and middle school youth. The results from programs like this are promising.

These model programs are often initiated with grant money and when the money runs out the programs are cut. There always seems to be more of a need than

there is help available. It is also important to note when a program like this is offered students and parents take advantage of the opportunity.

We must stop asking teachers and school administrators to do more with less. All the youth in the study recognized one of the major factors that contributed to their success was small class size and the individual attention the teachers were able to provide to them at the treatment school.

The changes that are needed in schools are going to cost additional monies. However, it is necessary if we are going to go beyond the rhetoric of "No Child Left Behind". If we are serious about making an impact on disenfranchised youth it will take action. As it stands now, youth often need to enter the juvenile justice system before they can get the services they need. We spend millions of dollars in our current system trying to correct attitudes, behaviors, and habits that are preventable through early intervention. The voices of our youth are telling us the truth...they need help during their school years or else they will be requiring assistance for the balances of their lives.

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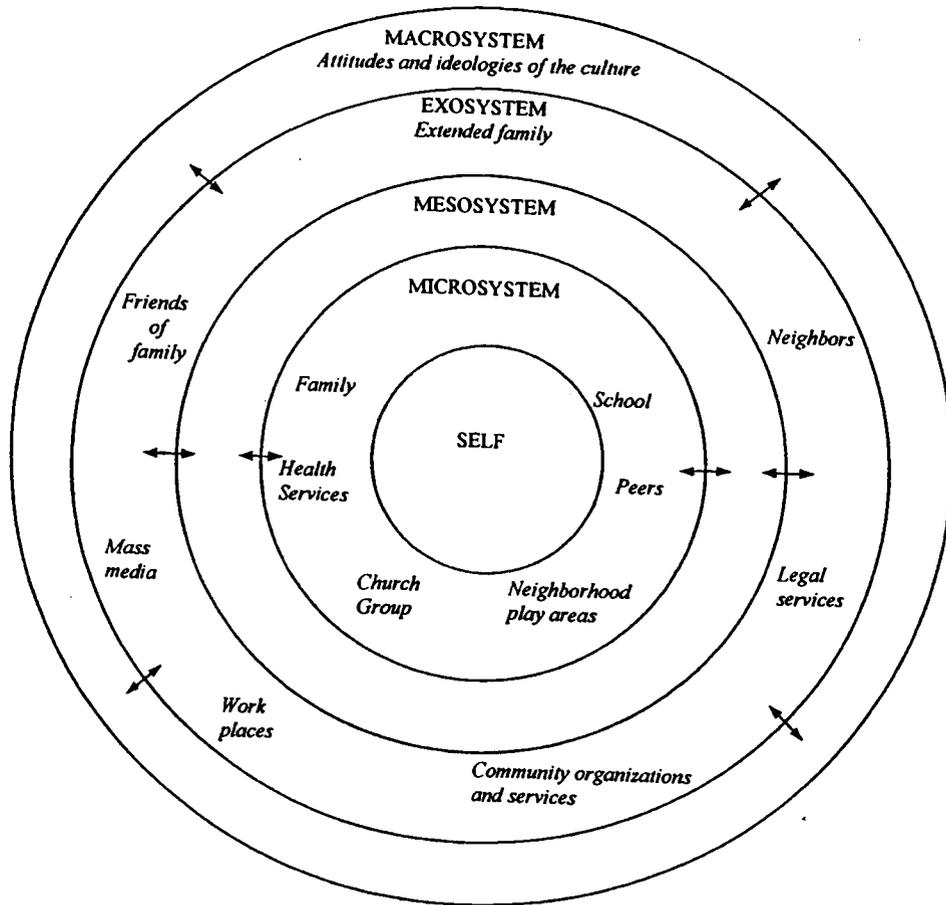
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Appendix B: Consent Forms



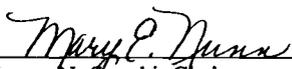
OREGON STATE
UNIVERSITY

**Report of Review by the Institutional Review Board for the
Protection of Human Subjects**

TO: Warren Suzuki, Education
COPY: Margaret Mazzotta, Education
RE: Perceptions of schooling and treatment by at-risk youth

The referenced project was reviewed under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The committee has **approved** your application. The approval of this application expires upon the completion of the project or one year from the approval date, whichever is sooner. The informed consent form obtained from each subject should be retained in program/project's files for three years beyond the end date of the project.

Any proposed change to the protocol or informed consent form that is not included in the approved application must be submitted to the IRB for review and must be approved by the committee before it can be implemented. Immediate action may be taken where necessary to eliminate apparent hazards to subjects, but this modification to the approved project must be reported immediately to the IRB.



for Warren N. Suzuki, Chair
Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
(Education, )

Date: 2-7-00

[REDACTED]

INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT BY AND FOR THE PARTICIPANT

- A. **Title of the Research Project.** Perceptions of schooling and treatment by at-risk youth.
- B. **Investigators.**
Warren Suzuki, Principal Investigator, [REDACTED]
Margaret Mazzotta, Researcher, [REDACTED]
- C. **Purpose of the Research Project.** The focus of this study is understanding the perspectives of youth about their schooling prior to their court mandated chemical dependency treatment and their schooling while in treatment. Research has historically focused on adult perspectives. There is little research that examines the problem from the perspectives of the youth.
- D. **Procedures.** I understand that as a participant in this study the following will happen:
1. **What I will do during the study.**
 - a. I will be interviewed by Margaret Mazzotta about my school experiences prior to becoming a client at the county-funded youth program and during my treatment at the county-funded youth program. The first interview may take about one hour. The Researcher may interview me again to confirm what I have said or to ask new questions. There should not be more than four follow-up interviews, and each of these interviews should not be longer than one hour. Interviews will take place in the county-funded facility if I am still in the residential phase of my treatment or at a place Margaret Mazzotta and I mutually agree to if I am in the continuation treatment phase.
 - b. Interviews will be audiotape recorded. What I say during the interviews may be transcribed by Margaret Mazzotta or a professional transcriptionist who understands that what I say is private. My real name will not appear in the typed transcriptions of what I say. I will be given the opportunity to look over the transcripts of my interviews and to suggest any corrections or interpretations of what was recorded. The audiotapes will be destroyed when this study has been completed.
 - c. Margaret Mazzotta may interview my parent or guardian about how treatment may have affected me and how any changes in my behavior may have affected my family. She may also interview the county-funded youth program staff members and probation officer about the treatment I receive.
 2. **Foreseeable risks or discomforts.** There are no known risks to me other than what is described in "Confidentiality," below.
 3. **Benefits to be expected from the research.** I will get neither tangible nor direct benefits by participating in this study. The only benefit might be the opportunity for self-reflection on issues (drug use, a school program, opportunities for success) surrounding my chemical dependency treatment. My participation may some day also help schools better understand people like me.
- E. **Confidentiality.** To the extent permitted by law, Margaret Mazzotta and Warren Suzuki will keep confidential any information I provide during this study that can be identified with me. Despite their best efforts, however, there is always the possibility that confidentiality may be compromised since they are state-mandated reporters. As such, they are required by law to report to Services to Children and Families any instances of alleged sexual or physical abuse that I might tell them about. Based on an agreement with the county-funded youth program, they will report to the county-funded youth program's Director any crimes that I may have committed or am planning to commit including escaping from the county-funded youth program.

- F. **Voluntary Participation.** I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that if I withdraw from the study before it is completed, what I said will be destroyed.
- G. **If I Have Questions.** I understand that any questions I have about the research study or specific procedures should be directed to Margaret Mazzotta, [REDACTED] or Warren Suzuki, [REDACTED]. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the IRB Coordinator, [REDACTED] Research Office, [REDACTED] or the county-funded youth program' Director who will notify IRB Coordinator about my concerns.

My signature below indicates that I have read, that I have been given an oral explanation and that I understand the procedures described above, and that I give my informed and voluntary assent to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: [REDACTED] Date: [REDACTED]
 Printed name of participant: [REDACTED]

My signature below indicates that I give my informed and voluntary consent to the participant taking part in the study as described above. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

[REDACTED] Date: [REDACTED]
 Director of county-funded program

My signature below indicates that I give my informed and voluntary consent to the participant taking part in the study as described above. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Parent/Guardian if the Participant is younger than 18 years of age and interviews will be conducted during the Continuation Phase of Treatment Date: _____

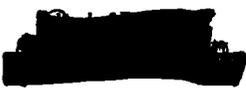
[REDACTED]

**INFORMED CONSENT BY A COUNTY-FUNDED YOUTH PROGRAM
STAFF MEMBER OR PROBATION OFFICER**

- A. **Title of the Research Project.** Perceptions of schooling and treatment by at-risk youth.
- B. **Investigators.**
Warren Suzuki, Principal Investigator, [REDACTED]
Margaret Mazzotta, Researcher, [REDACTED]
- C. **Purpose of the Research Project.** The focus of this study is understanding the perspectives of youth about their schooling prior to their court mandated chemical dependency treatment and their schooling while in treatment. Research has historically focused on adult perspectives. There is little research that examines the problem from the perspectives of the youth.
- D. **Procedures.** I understand that as a participant in this study the following will happen:
1. **What I will do during the study.**
 - a. I will be interviewed by Margaret Mazzotta about treatment provided by the county-funded youth program. The first interview may take about one hour. The Researcher may interview me again to confirm what I have said or to ask new questions; each of these interviews should not be longer than one hour. There should not be more than four follow-up interviews. Interviews will take place in the county-funded facility or my office.
 - b. Interviews will be audiotape recorded. What I say during the interviews may be transcribed by Margaret Mazzotta or a professional transcriptionist who understands that what I say is private. My real name will not appear in the typed transcriptions of what I say. I will be given the opportunity to look over the transcripts of my interviews and to suggest any corrections or interpretations of what was recorded. The audiotapes will be destroyed when this study has been completed.
 2. **Foreseeable risks or discomforts.** There are no known risks to me other than what is described in "Confidentiality," below.
 3. **Benefits to be expected from the research.** I will get neither tangible nor direct benefits by participating in this study. My participation may some day help others to better understand youth and clients in this situation.
- E. **Confidentiality.** To the extent permitted by law, Margaret Mazzotta and Warren Suzuki will keep confidential any information I provide during this study that can be identified with me. Despite their best efforts, however, there is always the possibility that confidentiality may be compromised since they are state-mandated reporters. As such, they are required by law to report to Services to Children and Families any instances of alleged sexual or physical abuse that I might tell them about.
- F. **Voluntary Participation.** I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that if I withdraw from the study before it is completed, what I said will be destroyed.
- G. **If I Have Questions.** I understand that any questions I have about the research study or specific procedures should be directed to Margaret Mazzotta, [REDACTED] or Warren Suzuki, [REDACTED] if I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the IRB Coordinator, [REDACTED] Research Office, [REDACTED]

My signature below indicates that I have read and that I understand the procedures described above, and that I give my informed and voluntary assent to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____
Printed name of participant: _____



INFORMED CONSENT BY A PARENT OF A COUNTY-FUNDED YOUTH PROGRAM CLIENT

- A. **Title of the Research Project.** Perceptions of schooling and treatment by at-risk youth.
- B. **Investigators.**
Warren Suzuki, Principal Investigator,
Margaret Mazzotta, Researcher, [REDACTED]
- C. **Purpose of the Research Project.** The focus of this study is understanding the perspectives of youth about their schooling prior to their court mandated chemical dependency treatment and their schooling while in treatment. Research has historically focused on adult perspectives. There is little research that examines the problem from the perspectives of the youth.
- D. **Procedures.** I understand that as a participant in this study the following will happen:
1. **What I will do during the study.**
 - a. I will be interviewed by Margaret Mazzotta about how the county-funded youth program's treatment of my son/ward may have impacted on his behavior and the treatment may have affected my family. The first interview may take about one hour. The Researcher may interview me again to confirm what I have said or to ask new questions. There should not be more than four follow-up interviews, and each of these interviews should not be longer than one hour. Interviews will take place at a time and in a place that is mutually convenient to both Margaret Mazzotta and me.
 - b. Interviews will be audiotape recorded. What I say during the interviews may be transcribed by Margaret Mazzotta or a professional transcriptionist who understands that what I say is private. My real name will not appear in the typed transcriptions of what I say. I will be given the opportunity to look over the transcripts of my interviews and to suggest any corrections or interpretations of what was recorded. The audiotapes will be destroyed when this study has been completed.
 2. **Foreseeable risks or discomforts.** There are no known risks to me other than what is described in "Confidentiality," below.
 3. **Benefits to be expected from the research.** I will get neither tangible nor direct benefits by participating in this study. My participation may some day help schools better understand youth similar to people like my child.
- E. **Confidentiality.** To the extent permitted by law, Margaret Mazzotta and Warren Suzuki will keep confidential any information I provide during this study that can be identified with me. Despite their best efforts, however, there is always the possibility that confidentiality may be compromised since they are state-mandated reporters. As such, they are required by law to report to Services to Children and Families any instances of alleged sexual or physical abuse that I might tell them, whether it involves me, my child or others. Based on an agreement with the county-funded youth program, they will report to the county-funded youth program's Director any alleged crimes that my son/ward is planning.
- F. **Voluntary Participation.** I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that if I withdraw from the study before it is completed, what I said will be destroyed.
- G. **If I Have Questions.** I understand that any questions I have about the research study or specific procedures should be directed to Margaret Mazzotta, [REDACTED] or Warren Suzuki, [REDACTED] If I have

questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the IRB Coordinator, [redacted] Research Office,

My signature below indicates that I have read and that I understand the procedures described above, and that I give my informed and voluntary assent to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of participant: _____

[redacted signature]

Date: _____

[redacted date]

Printed name of participant: _____

[redacted printed name]

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

School History

Grade/School	Grades	Activities (Sports, Music, etc.)	Problems (Fighting, Skipping, etc.)
1st grade Age _____ School _____			
2nd grade Age _____ School _____			
3rd grade Age _____ School _____			
4th grade Age _____ School _____			
5th grade Age _____ School _____			
6th grade Age _____ School _____			
7th grade Age _____ School _____			
8th grade Age _____ School _____			
9th grade Age _____ School _____			
10th grade Age _____ School _____			
11th grade Age _____ School _____			
12th grade Age _____ School _____			

Script for Recruiting Volunteers

My name is Margaret Mazzotta, and I used to be a staff member here at _____. Currently, I am a graduate student at Oregon State University. A major assignment I have to do for my degree is to complete a research project, and I would like your help. When I looked at research that has been done on people like you, most of it has been done from the point of view of adults. What I would like to do is find out what you think has been valuable in treatment and/or school from your past and present. I would like you to help me tell your story.

If you are willing to help me out, I will ask you a series of questions about your school history and treatment. Questions will include where you went to school, how long you went to school, what activities you participated in, what kinds of things were happening in your family, were you using substances, did you like your teachers, etc. The interview should take about 45-60 minutes. There will be at least one follow-up interview to make sure you agree with what I heard you tell me. I anticipate three interviews, but there may be more or maybe less. When I am done I will make reasonable attempts to have you read what I have written to make sure the information is correct.

Your participation is completely voluntary! You are not required to answer any of my questions, and you may stop the interview at any time. There will be no penalty if you choose to stop the interview.

The information that you provide is for educational purposes. However, please remember that I was a staff member and have a responsibility to share information that is relevant to your treatment with staff members. I have an agreement with the program to report any crimes that you may have committed or crimes that you plan to commit. I am also a state-mandated reporter and required by law to report instances of sexual or physical abuse to Services to Children and Families.

I will audio tape conversations but will not use your name outside of _____ program. A code number or a fake name will be used to provide any results or information to others. The person that transcribes the tape will sign a confidentiality agreement with me and the tapes will be destroyed after the study. I will do my best to protect your confidentiality but despite my best efforts there is always the possibility of confidentiality being compromised. An example is that if someone knows you are in treatment and reads the study they may be able to figure out who you are from my description of you and the information that you provided to me.

If you have any questions about the interview, I may be contacted by _____ staff. Do you have any questions?

Framing Questions for Interviews

Client

1. What are residents perceptions about their school experiences?
 - a. Describe your school experiences.
 - b. Compare your current school experience with your previous school experiences. What do you believe would have helped you be successful in this (program) school?
 - c. What has been your most successful experience in treatment? What do you want to take away from this school experience? How are you going to make it happen?
 - d. What aspects of your life have improved while in treatment? What are some of the frustrations that you have experienced while in treatment?
 - e. In what ways do/can participants empower themselves?
2. What factors or people seem to influence their decision making?
 - a. Please describe your past efforts in creating change in your life? What changes have you made in treatment? How was the change initiated?

Staff or Probation Officer

1. What aspects of treatment do you believe are the most valuable for residents?
2. What factors determine if a youth is successful (how do you measure success)?

Parent/Guardian

1. Have you seen any changes in your son's behavior since he has been in treatment?
2. What changes (if any) would you like to see your son make?
3. How has your son's treatment impacted you/your family?